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Logo Redesign of Kampung Lali Gadget in Sidoarjo Regency

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Abstract

Kampung Lali Gadget is an educational space that emerged as a solution to the high dependency of children on gadgets, by introducing traditional games and activities rooted in local culture. The absence of a strong and representative logo has made the visual identity of this community less recognizable. This study aims to design a logo that reflects the spirit, educational values, and local character upheld by Kampung Lali Gadget. The research uses a qualitative method with data collection techniques including direct observation and in-depth interviews with the community manager, activity companions, and participating children. Observation was conducted to understand the activities and atmosphere in the field, while interviews explored the vision, mission, and core values of the community. The logo design is inspired by the expressions and movements of children while playing, which represent joy, freedom, and closeness to nature.

Keywords: Kampung Lali Gadget, Logo, Visual Identity, Traditional Games

1 INTRODUCTION

Every region in Indonesia has a unique cultural identity, one of which is reflected in traditional games. As a valuable cultural heritage, these games help children develop imagination, recreation, creativity, and physical activity, while also fostering social skills, manners, and agility [1]. However, traditional games are increasingly being abandoned by children, and many are no longer familiar with them [2]. In the current digital era, almost all human activities are closely connected to the use of technology, particularly smartphones. This phenomenon is reflected in data from 2021 showing that 89.63% of Indonesia's population uses smartphones, with daily usage durations ranging from 3–4 hours, 5–6 hours, to more than 7 hours [3].

To address the challenges of children's dependency on digital devices and the declining interest in activities based on local cultural values, Kampung Lali Gadget was established as an educational space as well as a social movement in the fields of education and culture. Located in Bender Hamlet, Pager ngumbuk Village, Wonoayu District, Sidoarjo Regency, Kampung Lali Gadget seeks to revive interest in traditional games, arts, and culture through fun and participatory activities. Since its establishment in August 2018, this initiative has served not only as a place for activities but also as a symbol of resistance against the negative impacts of digitalization on children. Kampung Lali Gadget has received various forms of appreciation and support from practitioners, academics, youth organizations, as well as government and private sectors, making it a real example of a community-based cultural movement that grows from grassroots initiatives.

In order to strengthen the visual identity of Kampung Lali Gadget, a logo design is required that is capable of representing the educational, cultural, and social values promoted by this initiative. As the primary face of a brand, a logo plays an important role in shaping the image and attractiveness of a program or institution in the eyes of the public.

The existing Kampung Lali Gadget logo has several weaknesses that make it less optimal in representing its identity and values. From a visual perspective, the use of a windmill symbol is considered too generic, while the layout and composition of elements appear less balanced, which affects readability and application across various media. The bright color palette does reflect the children's world; however, it is not well structured to form a strong and consistent identity. In addition, the use of neutral typography and inconsistent clear space further reduce the professional and communicative impression of the logo.

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As an effort to strengthen visual appeal and improve the communication of educational values, a redesign of the Kampung Lali Gadget logo is required.



Figure 1. Kampung Lali Gadget Logo

This rebranding aims not only to improve visual quality but also to ensure that the logo and other visual elements are able to represent the spirit of cultural preservation and traditional games more strongly and relevantly. Therefore, this research focuses on the logo design of Kampung Lali Gadget as part of a strategy to strengthen the visual identity of this educational village.

The problem formulation in this design is how to redesign the Kampung Lali Gadget logo so that it achieves consistency across various media and usage situations, as well as how to design visual elements capable of building a comprehensive visual identity. The objective of this design is to update the logo in order to achieve visual consistency in communication while creating a design that represents educational character, child-friendly values, and local cultural strengths as the main identity of Kampung Lali Gadget. The scope of this design is limited to visual elements such as logo, typography, color, and basic applications across various media.

2 LITERATURE REVIEW

Branding is a unique element that functions as the identity of an institution, allowing the public to easily recognize it. Building a brand requires a strategic approach in order to produce a significant impact so that the brand can stand out and be widely recognized. Therefore, a brand is not merely a symbol but an important asset that must be maintained, nurtured, and strengthened by an institution in order to sustain its existence in the market and build long-term relationships with its audience [4].

Gestalt is a psychological theory which states that individuals perceive what they see in their environment as a unified whole. This theory was developed by Max Wertheimer (1880–1943) and his colleagues and explains perceptual tendencies formed in human cognition [5]. The principle of similarity refers to objects that share similar shapes or elements being perceived as part of the same group. Closure refers to the perception of an object as a complete form even when it is not fully closed or complete. Figure-ground refers to the perception of objects either as foreground or background, or both as objects. Impossible figure refers to objects that cannot exist in three-dimensional reality.

A logo is clearly the main attribute that is physically visible, similar to a face in humans. Through a logo, all non-physical attributes that represent the essence of an entity can be reflected, such as vision and mission, organizational values, organizational culture, and overall characteristics. Designing a logo requires consideration of uniqueness, simplicity, and flexibility, which can be applied in form, color, and size [5]. Therefore, it is important to design a logo that is able to effectively reflect the character and essence of the brand [6]

Color plays an important role in design by influencing the emotions and perceptions of viewers. The appropriate use of color can strengthen visual messages, make them more attractive, evoke emotions, and create a lasting impression on the audience [7]. Primary colors are the three basic colors that cannot be created by mixing other colors. These primary colors serve as the basis for creating all other colors [7]. Secondary colors are produced by mixing two primary colors in equal proportions [7].

In general, typography can be considered as the discipline that discusses techniques for selecting and arranging typefaces as well as distributing text within a given space or medium. The purpose is to convey meaning and create a particular impression that enables readers to comfortably read and understand the text [8]. Serif typefaces have additional strokes at the ends of characters that are typically pointed in shape. These typefaces also have contrast between thick and thin strokes, which provides a relatively high level of readability [9]. Sans-serif typefaces, on the other hand, do not have additional strokes at the ends of characters and tend to have uniform or nearly uniform thickness. Sans-serif typefaces reflect simplicity, clarity, a contemporary character, and a futuristic impression [9].

3 RESEARCH METHODS

This research employs a qualitative approach. The qualitative method is used to obtain a deeper understanding of social and cultural contexts through direct observation and in-depth interviews. This qualitative research aims to understand phenomena based on real-life situations in the field without manipulation of conditions [4]. The data used in this research consist of primary and secondary data collected from various sources to support the analysis and design process.

The subjects of this design include Mr. Achmad Irfandi as the initiator and main manager of Kampung Lali Gadget, as well as accompanying visitors and participating children as supporting informants. The object of this design is Kampung Lali Gadget as an

educational medium and a place for preserving traditional children's games.

The data used in the logo design process of Kampung Lali Gadget were obtained from primary and secondary sources. Primary data were collected through direct field observations and in-depth interviews with the management. Observations were conducted by examining activities at Kampung Lali Gadget, including interactions between managers and children, traditional game activities, and available facilities. Meanwhile, in-depth interviews were conducted with the initiator of Kampung Lali Gadget, Mr. Achmad Irfandi, in order to explore information regarding the vision, mission, background of establishment, and core values to be conveyed. Secondary data were obtained through literature studies, including scientific journals, online articles, and internal documents such as the Brand Identity Book.

The design procedure carried out in this study is as follows:

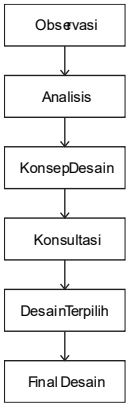


Figure 2. Design Process Flowchart

1. Observation
   At the initial stage, direct observations were conducted at Kampung Lali Gadget to collect information regarding ongoing activities, interactions between the management and visitors, as well as available facilities. This observation aimed to obtain a clearer understanding of how the programs at Kampung Lali Gadget are implemented.

2. Analysis
   After the data were collected through observation and interviews, an analysis was conducted to gain a deeper understanding of the conditions at Kampung Lali Gadget. The findings obtained from the field were then processed to identify important aspects that could serve as the basis for developing a visual identity strategy for the logo that aligns with the character and needs of the community.

3. Design Concept
   Based on the analyzed data, several visual identity design concepts for the Kampung Lali Gadget logo were developed. These concepts include logo design, color selection, and typography that reflect the character of Kampung Lali Gadget.

4. Consultation
   At this stage, consultations were conducted with related parties such as the Kampung Lali Gadget management as well as visitors or members of the surrounding community in order to obtain feedback on several design alternatives that had been developed. This consultation aimed to ensure that the resulting design corresponds with the needs and identity of Kampung Lali Gadget.

5. Selected Design
   After receiving input from various parties, revisions were made to the selected design. These revisions aimed to improve the quality and suitability of the design with the intended concept, as well as to ensure that the final design represents the values promoted by Kampung Lali Gadget.

6. Final Design
   At the final stage, the refined design was applied to various media required by Kampung Lali Gadget, such as billboards, brochures, and other promotional materials. The final design is expected to strengthen the visual identity of the logo and enhance the attractiveness of Kampung Lali Gadget in the public's perception.

4 RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Observation

The observation results indicate that Kampung Lali Gadget possesses strong visual identity potential through elements such as bamboo gateways, signage with vernacular typography, and authentic cultural activities. However, inconsistencies are still found in the application of visual identity, particularly in signage that is less informative and souvenirs that do not fully reflect the brand image. In addition, the use of overly soft natural colors has not been effective in attracting the attention of the main audience, namely elementary and junior high school students.



Figure 3. Site Observation

4.2 Analysis

The logo design of Kampung Lali Gadget in this project is limited to the development of the logo as the primary element representing the character and values of the community. The design does not include the development of supergraphics, icons, or a comprehensive visual system. The logo concept was derived from observations of children's activities while playing freely within the village environment. Their dynamic, expressive, and joyful movements became the main inspiration in forming a visual logo that represents the spirit of freedom, happiness, and the educational atmosphere offered by Kampung Lali Gadget.

4.3 Logo Concept

The logo combines a pictorial mark and a wordmark. The wordmark uses the name "Kampung Lali Gadget," while the pictorial mark represents the spirit and uniqueness of Kampung Lali Gadget. This combination creates an identity that is easily recognizable and reflects a cheerful, educational, and culturally based local atmosphere. The initial stage of the logo development process involved creating sketches.

4.4 Icon Study

The first stage in designing the Kampung Lali Gadget logo was conducting an icon study as the basis for developing the logo form. This study was carried out to explore various visual forms that are relevant to the character and values of Kampung Lali Gadget, such as educational and child-friendly qualities. The designed logo illustrates children playing together in a circle with enthusiasm. The spiral formation represents a process of growth and enjoyable learning, in line with the mission of preserving traditional games.

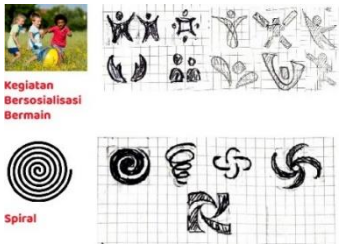


Figure 4. Icon Study

After completing the icon study, the next stage involved creating alternative logo sketches as a means of visual exploration. These sketches include various styles, compositions, and formal approaches to identify the most appropriate and communicative visual solution. This process aimed to develop initial ideas into several design alternatives that could be compared, evaluated, and selected based on their suitability with the character of Kampung Lali Gadget. These sketches served as the foundation for refining the logo before entering the digitalization stage.



Figure 5. Alternative Logo Sketches

After the alternative sketching stage was completed, the next process was digitalization. At this stage, the sketches were developed digitally using graphic design software. The digitalization process allowed the logo to achieve greater precision in terms of form and proportion.

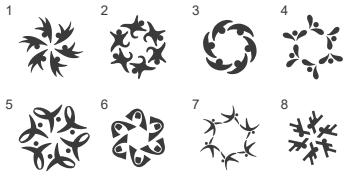


Figure 6. Digitalization of Logo Alternatives

The Kampung Lali Gadget logo applies principles from Gestalt theory in order to create a cohesive and easily recognizable visual impression. One of the most relevant principles is similarity, in which hand-like shapes arranged in a circular formation share uniform colors and forms. This makes the elements perceived as a single visual unit rather than as separate objects. In addition, the principle of proximity is reflected in the distance between the hand elements, which are placed close to each other to form a coherent graphic unit. The arrangement of the text "Kampung Lali Gadget," although divided into two lines, is still perceived as a single name due to consistent spacing between letters and words. The logo also reflects the principle of closure, in which the arrangement of hands forming a circle is not completely closed but is still recognized as a unified form due to the human tendency to mentally complete incomplete shapes. The application of these principles makes the logo visually accessible and capable of conveying a sense of togetherness and joy in accordance with the values promoted by Kampung Lali Gadget.

4.5 Typography Study

The typography used in the visual identity of the Kampung Lali Gadget logo is a sans-serif typeface, which is known for its high readability and its ability to convey a professional yet friendly impression. The primary typeface used is Hore, which has a modern,

cheerful, and approachable character that reflects the spirit of play and exploration associated with the world of children.



Figure 7. Logo Identity Typography

The wordmark in the Kampung Lali Gadget logo is a modified version of the Hore typeface that represents an educational, cheerful, and friendly character. In the initial version, the typography still maintained the original form of the Hore typeface, with a separated appearance between the words "KAMPUNG" and "LALI GADGET." In the modified version, adjustments were made to the proportions and spacing between characters in order to create a more unified appearance. The letter heights between the two lines were balanced to produce a more solid and harmonious visual impression. A significant change can be seen in the letter "L" in the word "LALI," which was shortened to create a more open visual space so that the composition does not appear too dense. Meanwhile, the letter "A" was positioned slightly outside the alignment of the letter "L."



Figure 8. Wordmark Development Process

4.6 Logo Synthesis

Through the design and visual exploration process, the final Kampung Lali Gadget logo was developed as a combination of an icon and a logotype. The pictorial mark consists of six child figures jumping in a spiral formation within a circle, representing dynamism, growth, and togetherness in a joyful traditional play environment. The logotype "Kampung Lali Gadget" uses playful typography while maintaining clear readability, reinforcing the friendly and educational character promoted by the program.



Figure 9. Pictorial Mark and Wordmark Results

The composition between the icon and the text is arranged in a balanced side-by-side layout, showing a harmonious relationship between visual and verbal identity. This synthesis results in a communicative logo that is adaptable across various media and capable of strengthening the image of Kampung Lali Gadget as a safe, inclusive, and culturally rich play environment.



Figure 10. Combination of Pictorial Mark and Wordmark

4.7 Color Study

The Kampung Lali Gadget color palette reflects the spirit of play, education, and cultural preservation. Bright colors such as red, orange, yellow, and purple emphasize cheerfulness and creativity, while green and blue convey peace, balance, and closeness to nature. These colors attract children as the primary audience and stimulate curiosity and excitement.

Green symbolizes balance with nature. Green lies in the middle of the color spectrum, so the eyes require minimal adjustment to perceive it. Therefore, green is considered a calming color that reflects balance and harmony [10]. Blue represents peace, stability, and trust. Some positive characteristics associated with blue include logic and clarity of thought. Lighter shades of blue are often associated with mental calmness, peace, and reflection [10]. Orange adds energy and enjoyment. Orange has a playful yet warm character and is a color that stimulates social interaction and friendly conversation. In addition, orange symbolizes abundance [10]. Purple or violet is a combination of the strength of red and the calmness of blue. As a color with the shortest wavelength, purple is often associated with spirituality, reflection, and the search for deeper meaning [10].



Figure 11. Color Palette

The next stage involved exploring various logo variations using different color combinations derived from the predetermined color palette. This exploration aimed to find the most appropriate color harmony to represent the character of Kampung Lali Gadget, such as cheerfulness, warmth, closeness to nature, and local cultural values.



Figure 12. Color Application Exploration on Logo Alternatives

4.8 Logo Evaluation

The evaluation of several alternative logos for Kampung Lali Gadget was conducted by considering three main aspects: uniqueness, flexibility, and simplicity. This assessment aimed to select the logo that most effectively represents the character and values of Kampung Lali Gadget visually.

Alternatif Logo	Unik	Fleksibel	Simple
	● ●	● ●	● ● ●
	● ● ●	● ● ●	● ● ●
	●	● ● ●	● ● ●
	●	●	●

Figure 13. Logo Evaluation

Based on the evaluation results, the second logo alternative showed the best performance. This logo received the highest scores in all aspects: unique, flexible, and simple. The visual form of the logo was considered capable of reflecting the joyfulness, togetherness, and educational values that form the core of Kampung Lali Gadget. Its simplicity makes the logo adaptable for various media applications, both print and digital.

The design validation was carried out by Prasetyo Adi, a branding practitioner from Kawakibi Digital Branding with extensive experience in brand identity development. His professional perspective strengthened the design direction to remain relevant, communicative, and aligned with the values upheld by Kampung Lali Gadget. In addition, the validation also involved Alfian, a partner and stakeholder of Kampung Lali Gadget who is directly involved in managing and developing the programs. His input was important to ensure that the resulting design truly represents the spirit, needs, and unique character of Kampung Lali Gadget authentically.

4.9 Selected Logo

Below is the main logo that has been selected and further developed with the addition of a logotype. This addition aims to strengthen the overall visual identity while creating balance between the symbol and text elements.



Figure 14. Final Logo

4.10 Logo Philosophy

The Kampung Lali Gadget logo represents the spirit of freedom and joy of children playing without dependence on digital devices. The main visual features six children jumping happily, forming a spiral composition within a circle. Each figure represents expressions of happiness, curiosity, and the spirit of exploration, which are the core philosophy of Kampung Lali Gadget.

The circle in the logo symbolizes a safe, inclusive, and collaborative space, reflecting a positive play environment that supports children's growth and development. Meanwhile, the spiral movement formed by the children's positions illustrates the process of growth, continuous learning, and an enjoyable exploratory journey—aligned with Kampung Lali Gadget's mission to preserve local cultural values through traditional games.



Figure 15. Logo Philosophy

4.11 Logo Implementation

The selected logo was then implemented across various supporting media as an effort to strengthen the visual identity of Kampung Lali Gadget. These media include mugs, pencil cases, and keychains commonly used by children and visitors. This implementation aims to enhance visual recall and expand branding reach both functionally and emotionally.

The mug was designed as a souvenir for parents or companions visiting Kampung Lali Gadget. The consistent use of design elements strengthens the branding while also serving as a keepsake representing the educational and cultural values of Kampung Lali Gadget.



Figure 16. Logo Implementation on Mug

The pencil case design is one of the implementation media of the new visual identity of Kampung Lali Gadget. Elements such as the logo and colors are displayed to strengthen the visual image of Kampung Lali Gadget.



Figure 17. Logo Implementation on Pencil Case

The keychain design is also part of the implementation of Kampung Lali Gadget's new visual identity. The logo element is presented in a simple and attractive way, making it easily recognizable and representing the cheerful, educational, and nature-oriented character of the village. As a small and portable object, the keychain serves as an effective promotional medium as well as a distinctive souvenir that reinforces the visual impression of Kampung Lali Gadget.



Figure 18. Logo Implementattion on Keychain

5 CONCLUSION

Kampung Lali Gadget is an educational space established as a response to contemporary challenges, particularly children's dependence on digital devices. In this place, children are encouraged to rediscover the joy of direct play through traditional games and various activities that promote local cultural values. However, until now Kampung Lali Gadget has not had a strong logo capable of visually representing its identity. This condition has limited its broader recognition, especially in terms of branding.

This study aims to design a new logo that reflects the spirit, educational values, and local uniqueness that form the essence of Kampung Lali Gadget. Data collection was conducted through direct field observations and interviews with the program managers and activity facilitators. The logo design concept was inspired by the expressions and movements of children playing joyfully, representing freedom, cheerfulness, and closeness to nature. It is expected that the logo will become a communicative and easily recognizable visual symbol that can strengthen the image of Kampung Lali Gadget.

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Desain Buku Visual tentang Sejarah Label Rekaman Independen dalam Komunitas Musik Alternatif di Surabaya

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Abstrak

Musik memiliki peran penting dalam kehidupan manusia, tidak hanya sebagai sarana untuk mengekspresikan perasaan, tetapi juga sebagai media hiburan yang mendukung terbentuknya solidaritas dalam komunitas. Dalam ranah musik alternatif, peran label rekaman independen menjadi sangat signifikan, khususnya di Surabaya, yang dikenal sebagai kota dengan sejarah panjang dalam mendukung pertumbuhan komunitas kreatif lokal. Label rekaman independen memberikan kebebasan berekspresi bagi musisi serta mendorong inovasi artistik yang sering kali tidak diakomodasi oleh industri musik arus utama. Namun, keberadaan dan kontribusi label rekaman independen di Surabaya masih kurang terdokumentasikan secara visual maupun naratif, sehingga banyak pihak yang belum mengenal peran mereka dalam mendukung ekosistem musik alternatif. Untuk mengatasi kesenjangan informasi ini, dirancanglah sebuah buku visual yang bertujuan untuk mengenalkan sejarah serta peran label rekaman independen di komunitas musik alternatif Surabaya. Perancangan ini menggunakan metode penelitian kualitatif dari data kuesioner yang telah terisi sebanyak 109 responden, Focus Group Discussion, dan Wawancara. Buku ini dirancang dengan memadukan narasi yang informatif, gambar, dan ilustrasi yang menarik, sehingga tidak hanya menyajikan informasi, tetapi juga membangun pengalaman visual yang memikat pembaca. Buku ini diharapkan tidak hanya berfungsi sebagai arsip sejarah yang merekam perjalanan label rekaman independen, tetapi juga sebagai media edukasi dan inspirasi.

Kata Kunci: Desain, Buku Visual, Label Rekaman, Musik Alternatif, Surabaya

Abstract

Music plays a vital role in human life, not only as a means of expressing feelings but also as a medium of entertainment that fosters solidarity within communities. In the realm of alternative music, the role of independent record labels is particularly significant, particularly in Surabaya, a city known for its long history of supporting the growth of local creative communities. Independent record labels provide musicians with freedom of expression and encourage artistic innovation that is often overlooked by the mainstream music industry. However, the existence and contribution of independent record labels in Surabaya remains poorly documented, both visually and narratively, leaving many unfamiliar with their role in supporting the alternative music ecosystem. To address this information gap, a visual book was designed to introduce the history and role of independent record labels in Surabaya's alternative music community. The design utilizes qualitative research methods, drawing on data from completed questionnaires from 109 respondents, Focus Group Discussions, and interviews. The book is designed by combining informative narratives, engaging images, and illustrations, thus not only presenting information but also creating a captivating visual experience for readers. It is hoped that this book will serve not only as a historical archive documenting the journey of independent record labels, but also as a medium for education and inspiration.

Keywords: *Design, Visual Book, Record Label, Alternative Music, Surabaya*

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1 PENDAHULUAN

Musik adalah karya seni yang mengungkapkan pikiran dan perasaan penciptanya melalui irama, melodi, harmoni, dan ekspresi, serta dapat dikelompokkan ke dalam berbagai genre, termasuk musik alternatif [1]. Musik alternatif sendiri merupakan genre yang tidak dapat didefinisikan secara kaku karena karakteristiknya yang fleksibel, serta lahir dari ranah underground, non-komersial, dan independen. Istilah "alternatif" telah lama digunakan untuk menggambarkan band dan artis yang berada di luar arus utama.

Dalam perkembangan musik alternatif, label rekaman memegang peranan penting. Terdapat dua jenis label, yakni major label dan indie label. Indie label atau label independen adalah perusahaan rekaman berskala kecil yang tidak terikat pada korporasi besar, dan cenderung memberi kebebasan lebih kepada musisi serta berfokus pada genre tertentu [2]. Meski terbatas dari segi dana dan distribusi, kemajuan teknologi dan platform streaming kini memungkinkan indie label bersaing secara global. Mereka juga bertindak sebagai penghubung antara musisi dan pasar, menyediakan dana produksi, promosi, pengelolaan hak cipta, serta pengembangan karier [3].

Dilansir dari *superlive.id*, indie label turut membangun koneksi antarband lintas daerah dan mempromosikan band lokal ke wilayah lain, sekaligus menjual merchandise dalam berbagai acara musik. Semangat ini menjadi bentuk pelestarian budaya dari arus minoritas agar tidak tergerus oleh tren musik mainstream yang terus berubah. Karena alasan inilah banyak musisi memilih bekerja sama dengan indie label yang menawarkan kontrol lebih atas karya serta mendukung etos DIY (Do It Yourself) yang memperkuat hubungan antara musisi dan penggemar (*superlive.id*, diakses 16 September 2024).

Di Indonesia, komunitas musik alternatif telah lama menjadi ruang berekspresi bagi musisi dan kreator yang ingin lepas dari batasan industri arus utama. Genre ini memiliki basis pendengar tersendiri dan membentuk komunitas solid. Surabaya, sebagai salah satu kota besar, memiliki sejarah panjang dalam perkembangan komunitas ini. Kota ini telah melahirkan banyak band orisinal seperti Dewa 19, Padi, dan Boomerang. Di balik kesuksesan mereka, terdapat peran signifikan dari label rekaman independen lokal.

Label-label seperti Paska Records, Loverman Records, dan Bojakrama Press tak hanya menerbitkan rilisan musisi independen, tetapi juga mengorganisir acara, memproduksi kaset, CD, dan vinyl dalam jumlah terbatas, serta membangun jaringan komunitas di tingkat lokal maupun nasional. Meski kontribusinya besar, keberadaan label independen ini masih kurang terangkat. Hal ini diperkuat oleh hasil observasi di toko buku dan perpustakaan di Surabaya yang menunjukkan minimnya literatur tentang sejarah label rekaman independen. Selain itu, data kuesioner menunjukkan bahwa 24,8% responden tidak mengetahui perbedaan major label dan indie label, 39,4% tidak tahu kelebihan dan karakteristik indie label, dan 89% dari 109 responden tidak mengenal label rekaman independen di Surabaya, meskipun 69,4% di antaranya berasal dari kota tersebut dan 28,4% pernah menghadiri event yang diselenggarakan oleh indie label.

Kondisi ini menunjukkan adanya kebutuhan akan media informasi yang mendokumentasikan sejarah label rekaman independen, khususnya dalam komunitas musik alternatif di Surabaya. Sebanyak 76,2% responden menyatakan tertarik mengenal label-label tersebut melalui media visual, dan 76,6% menganggap buku visual efektif sebagai media edukasi. Oleh karena itu, penulis merancang buku visual yang memadukan narasi, gambar, dan ilustrasi dengan pendekatan desain layout majalah musik yang khas, agar lebih menarik dibandingkan media berbasis teks semata.

Sasaran utama buku ini adalah audiens berusia 18-35 tahun, yang memiliki keterlibatan tinggi dalam budaya musik alternatif, baik sebagai pendengar, pelaku, maupun pendukung komunitas lokal.

Kelompok usia ini tidak hanya akrab dengan akses digital terhadap musik, tetapi juga menghargai media fisik dan visual sebagai bentuk ekspresi artistik. Kesadaran sosial, budaya, serta semangat mendukung kreativitas lokal menjadikan mereka audiens yang potensial. Melalui pendekatan visual yang menarik, buku ini bertujuan mengarsipkan dan menyebarkan informasi tentang peran label independen dalam komunitas musik alternatif Surabaya.

Lebih dari sekadar dokumentasi, buku ini diharapkan menjadi inspirasi bagi musisi, pelaku industri kreatif, dan komunitas independen untuk terus berkarya. Dengan mengedepankan nilai kebebasan berekspresi dan solidaritas komunitas, buku ini menjadi penghubung antara masa lalu, masa kini, dan masa depan musik alternatif Surabaya.

2 KAJIAN PUSTAKA

2.1 Landasan Teori Buku

Buku merupakan media cetak yang terdiri dari kumpulan lembaran kertas atau bahan lain yang dijilid menjadi satu kesatuan dan berisi teks, gambar, atau kombinasi keduanya. Menurut Kamus Besar Bahasa Indonesia (KBBI), buku adalah kumpulan lembaran yang terjilid, baik berisi tulisan maupun kosong. Dalam konteks yang lebih luas, buku dirancang sebagai sarana untuk menyampaikan informasi, hiburan, atau edukasi kepada pembaca, dengan bentuk dan ukuran yang bervariasi sesuai dengan tujuan serta fungsinya [4].

Secara fungsional, buku memiliki berbagai peran penting. Pertama, buku berfungsi sebagai sumber pengetahuan, terutama dalam bidang akademik dan ilmiah. Kedua, buku mendukung proses pendidikan dan peningkatan literasi, baik dalam sistem pendidikan formal maupun informal. Ketiga, buku berperan sebagai dokumentasi sejarah, mencatat peristiwa dan kebudayaan yang diwariskan antar generasi. Keempat, buku juga menjadi media hiburan yang menyuguhkan pengalaman imajinatif melalui karya fiksi. Terakhir, buku dapat berfungsi sebagai alat kritik dan refleksi sosial, dengan menyuarakan pandangan terhadap fenomena sosial, politik, dan budaya yang berkembang di masyarakat.

2.2 Landasan Teori Buku Visual

Buku visual merupakan bentuk media informasi yang menggabungkan elemen teks dan visual untuk menyampaikan pesan secara lebih efektif. Berdasarkan Kamus Besar Bahasa Indonesia (KBBI), buku adalah kumpulan lembaran kertas yang terjilid dan berisi tulisan atau kosong, sedangkan visual merujuk pada segala hal yang dapat ditangkap oleh indera penglihatan, seperti gambar, lukisan, atau ilustrasi. Secara umum, buku visual dapat dipahami sebagai media komunikasi yang mengutamakan penyampaian informasi melalui bahasa visual, dengan tujuan agar isi buku lebih mudah dipahami oleh pembaca [5].

Fungsi utama buku visual adalah sebagai sarana penyampaian informasi yang mampu mempercepat dan mempermudah pemahaman. Dengan memadukan elemen grafis seperti gambar, warna, dan ikon bersama teks, buku visual memperkuat pesan yang disampaikan dan menjadikannya lebih menarik serta mudah diingat oleh audiens yang beragam [6]. Pendekatan visual ini dinilai lebih efektif dalam menjembatani komunikasi, khususnya dalam konteks edukatif maupun informatif.

2.3 Landasan Teori Sejarah

Secara etimologi, kata "sejarah" berasal dari bahasa Arab syajaratun yang berarti "pohon kayu", melambangkan pertumbuhan dari akar hingga cabang, dahan, daun, bunga, dan buah, yang menggambarkan rangkaian peristiwa dari masa lalu. Dalam bahasa Inggris, sejarah disebut history, berasal dari bahasa Yunani histori yang berarti "apa yang diketahui karena penyelidikan", yakni pengetahuan tentang berbagai kejadian [7].

Sebagai ilmu, sejarah menggunakan langkah-langkah penelitian ilmiah dengan objek manusia dalam masyarakat, mencakup perubahan, proses, waktu, dan tempat, serta bersifat diakronik. Ini membedakan sejarah dari ilmu sosial lain seperti sosiologi dan antropologi yang bersifat sinkronik, fokus pada ruang dan kondisi masa kini. Sejarah lebih menekankan pada proses kejadian, sedangkan ilmu sosial lainnya lebih menyoroti struktur [7].

2.4 Landasan Teori Label Rekaman Independen

Label rekaman independen adalah perusahaan yang memproduksi, mendistribusikan, dan memasarkan musik secara mandiri tanpa keterikatan dengan label besar. Biasanya didirikan oleh musisi atau komunitas musik, label ini memberikan kebebasan kreatif dan kontrol lebih kepada artis dalam produksi dan distribusi musik mereka. Selain memperkenalkan karya ke pasar yang lebih luas melalui platform digital maupun fisik, label independen juga menyediakan pendanaan, promosi, pengelolaan hak cipta, dan pengembangan diri musisi [3].

Label independen berperan penting dalam mendukung genre alternatif, menawarkan hubungan yang lebih personal dengan musisi, dan membantu mereka menjangkau audiens spesifik, terutama di komunitas musik alternatif. Selain itu, label ini memberikan kesepakatan finansial yang lebih adil, memungkinkan musisi mempertahankan kontrol atas karya mereka serta membangun kemandirian dalam karier musik.

2.5 Landasan Teori Musik Alternatif

Menurut Kamus Besar Bahasa Indonesia (KBBI), alternatif berarti pilihan di antara dua atau beberapa kemungkinan. Musik alternatif adalah kategori musik rock yang muncul dari musik independen bawah tanah pada tahun 1970-an. Musik ini menjadi sangat populer pada tahun 1990-an. Istilah "alternatif" dalam musik ini merujuk pada perbedaan genre dari musik rock atau pop mainstream atau komersial.

Dilansir dari situs kumparan, Musik alternatif merupakan genre yang tidak dapat dimasukkan ke dalam satu kategori secara utuh. Karena selain karakter dan gaya bermusik dari musisi, tidak ada ketentuan aransemen yang menjadikan karya tersebut murni genre tertentu. Istilah “alternatif” sendiri sudah dipakai sejak lama untuk menginterpretasikan band dan artis dari ranah musik underground (bawah tanah), non-komersial, dan independen. Musik alternatif juga mengalami perkembangan, sehingga mampu menjadikan subgenre yang beragam, di antaranya rock, shoegaze, grunge, noise pop, dan indie. Diakses pada 30 September 2024, dari www.kumparan.com

2.6 Landasan Teori Komunitas Musik Alternatif di Surabaya

Komunitas musik alternatif di Surabaya adalah komunitas yang berkembang pesat, menawarkan

berbagai genre yang berbeda dari musik mainstream. Dalam beberapa tahun terakhir, kota ini telah menjadi pusat bagi musisi dan band indie yang menciptakan suara unik dan inovatif. Dengan diversitas genre, mulai dari rock, punk, metal, folk, hingga elektronik, musisi lokal seringkali menggabungkan elemen dari berbagai jenis musik untuk menghasilkan karya yang khas. Komunitas yang solid mendukung pertunjukan live melalui konser, dan, festival memberikan platform bagi musisi baru untuk memperkenalkan karya mereka.

Banyak musisi di Surabaya memanfaatkan platform digital untuk mempromosikan musik mereka, menggunakan media sosial dan layanan streaming untuk menjangkau audiens yang lebih luas. Venue-venue musik, seperti kafe dan bar, sering menjadi lokasi pertunjukan yang mempertemukan band lokal dengan penonton. Selain itu, fokus pada kemandirian menjadi karakteristik penting, di mana musisi berusaha mandiri dalam produksi dan distribusi karya mereka. Komunitas musik alternatif di Surabaya terus berkembang, menawarkan banyak peluang bagi para musisi untuk berekspresi dan berkolaborasi (Wawancara bersama Didi pemilik Paska Records pada tanggal September 2024).

3 METODE PENELITIAN

Artikel ini menggunakan metode kualitatif. Metode ini berfokus pada deskripsi dan observasi untuk memperoleh wawasan mendalam dari fenomena di lapangan dan dari studi pendukung tentang pengaruh desain sampul pada buku visual tentang label rekaman independen dalam komunitas alternatif di surabaya. Adapun pengumpulan data dilakukan menggunakan beberapa teknik seperti Observasi Pengamatan langsung terhadap objek dan lingkungannya, FGD, dan kuesioner. Wawancara dilakukan terhadap pihak terkait seperti pembuat majalah visual musik yaitu Rona Cendera, pengamat musik Eri Rukmana, serta pelaku di industri musik. Sedangkan Studi Literatur dilakukan dengan meninjau materi tertulis atau kajian pustaka yang bertujuan untuk memperoleh informasi tentang subjek penelitian.

3.1 Teknik Penumpulan Data

Berdasarkan sumber pengambilannya, data dibedakan menjadi dua jenis, yaitu:

1. Data primer adalah sumber data yang secara langsung memberikan informasi kepada pengumpul data. Dalam penelitian ini, penulis memperoleh data melalui wawancara dengan informan, yaitu pelaku usaha/pemilik usaha dan konsumen, serta didukung oleh dokumentasi berupa pengambilan gambar atau foto sebagai bukti pelaksanaan penelitian. Berikut ini merupakan data primer yang akan digunakan oleh penulis:

   a. Observasi: Observasi adalah metode yang dilakukan penulis dengan melakukan pengamatan terhadap subjek dan objek. observasi lapangan dilakukan dengan menghadiri acara-acara musik alternatif di Surabaya untuk memahami bagaimana label rekaman independen terlibat dalam kegiatan-kegiatan ini dan bagaimana visualisasi mereka diaplikasikan dalam ruang publik. Observasi terhadap ruang fisik, seperti toko musik, studio rekaman, dan venue konser, juga menjadi bagian penting dalam memahami konteks kultural dan visual yang melingkupi komunitas musik independen di kota ini.

   b. Wawancara: Penulis mewawancarai beberapa narasumber yang mempunyai kredibilitas dalam label rekaman independen di Kota Surabaya yaitu Didi Paskalis selaku pemilik label rekaman Paska Records Kemudian, wawancara dengan Rona pemilik media zine Ronascent.

   c. FGD: Dalam FGD ini penulis mengambil beberapa narasumber sebagai penambah informasi untuk menguatkan data perancangan penulis seperti Dimas Gizwa Prasida (Pengamat musik surabaya dan personil band Shrine), Eri Rukmana (Pemilik Label Rekaman Anti Trust dan DJ Dancing Tiger), dan Rona Cendera (Pembuat Buku Visual Ronascent) yang merupakan pegiat musik untuk mendapatkan data tentang sejarah label rekamanindustri musik di Surabaya dan masukkan untuk perancangan yang dibuat oleh penulis.

2. Data sekunder adalah informasi yang sudah ada dan dijadikan sebagai data pelengkap untuk kebutuhan penelitian. Data sekunder adalah sumber data yang tidak langsung memberikan data kepada pengumpul data, seperti lewat orang lain atau lewat dokumen. Berikut ini merupakan data sekunder yang akan digunakan oleh penulis:

   a. Dokumentasi: Dokumentasi yang didapat oleh penulis dan arsip dari sumber lainnya.

   b. Kuesioner: Menyebarkan beberapa pertanyaan kepada target audiens terkait label rekaman dan musik alternatif.

c. Studi Pustaka: Penulis menggunakan studi pustaka berupa jurnal yang berisikan teori yang berkaitan dengan perancangan.

d. Internet: Untuk mendapatkan data tambahan, penulis menggunakan media internet berupa website yang berkaitan dengan teori perancangan.

3.2 Segmentasi Audiens

Pada perancangan yang dibuat, target pengambilan populasi sebagai berikut :

Tabel 1. Segmentasi Audiens

No.	Segmentasi	Deskripsi
1.	Geografis	Surabaya dan sekitarnya sebagai target utama, karena buku ini akan mengulas komunitas musik lokal di Surabaya. Namun, juga dapat mencakup audiens dari kota-kota besar lain di Indonesia seperti Jakarta, Bandung, Yogyakarta, atau Malang.
2.	Demografis	Umur : 18 – 35 tahun Jenis kelamin : Laki-laki dan perempuan Pendidikan : Kuliah atau Bekerja
3.	Psikografis	- Memiliki minat yang tinggi terhadap musik - Sering membaca media informasi seputar music - Sering menghadiri gigs, festival musik, atau acara komunitas kreatif. - Hidup dalam berkomunitas pergerakan musik lokal - Orang-orang yang mengapresiasi seni dan budaya alternatif.
4.	Behavior	- Mengikuti perkembangan zaman modern - Minat pada musik dan literasi

4 HASIL DAN PEMBAHASAN

Identifikasi pengaruh desain sampul pada buku visual tentang sejarah label rekaman dalam komunitas musik alternatif di Surabaya akan dimulai dengan tujuan kreatif, program kreatif, dan pendekatan kreatif. Berikut Uraiannya :

4.1 Konsep Visual

4.1.1 Layout

Pemilihan layout yang digunakan merupakan jenis layout Multi panel. Layout ini umumnya digunakan untuk menyusun konten secara konsisten berdasarkan tema tertentu, sehingga menciptakan keterpaduan visual yang harmonis. Selain itu, elemen-elemen dalam layout Multi Panel disusun secara saling terhubung, memungkinkan aliran informasi yang lebih dinamis dan mudah dipahami oleh audiens. Jenis layout ini banyak diaplikasikan dalam berbagai media desain, seperti majalah, buku, poster, serta berbagai materi promosi lainnya, karena kemampuannya dalam menghadirkan tampilan yang estetis sekaligus fungsional dalam menyampaikan pesan visual (https://myedusolve.com/ diakses pada tanggal 31 Januari 2025).

Pemilihan layout tersebut digunakan atas dasar keterkaitan dengan karakteristik khas komunitas musik alternatif di Surabaya. Komunitas ini dikenal dengan semangat mandiri (*do-it-yourself*) dan kebebasan berekspresi yang kuat. Gaya *raw* menciptakan kesan spontan dan autentik, menghadirkan tampilan yang tidak terlalu terikat pada aturan desain formal. Hal ini sejalan dengan sifat komunitas musik alternatif yang sering kali menolak estetika mainstream.

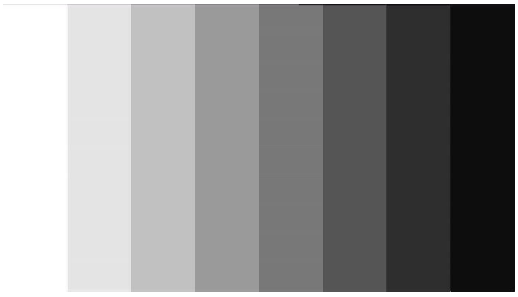
Pendekatan abstrak digunakan untuk menciptakan ruang interpretasi yang luas, menggambarkan keberagaman ide dan ekspresi dalam komunitas musik alternatif. Komposisi yang dinamis dan bentuk yang tidak konvensional mencerminkan kreativitas tanpa batas yang dimiliki komunitas ini. Dengan menggabungkan ketiga elemen tersebut, buku visual ini diharapkan mampu memberikan pengalaman membaca yang unik dan sesuai dengan jiwa komunitas musik alternatif Surabaya, sekaligus menjadi representasi visual yang relevan dan inspiratif.



Gambar 1. Referensi Warna Buku Visual

4.1.2 Warna

Setiap warna memiliki makna yang berbeda-beda. Dalam arti psikologi warna, semua warna memiliki efek masing-masing terhadap psikologi seseorang. Setiap masing-masing warna memancarkan energi tertentu yang berbeda satu sama lain [8]. Dalam perancangan penulis menggunakan warna-warna grayscale yang berupa warna hitam, abu-abu, dan putih sebagai warna utama dalam perancangan buku visual ini didasarkan pada karakteristik dan nilai-nilai yang relevan dengan komunitas musik alternatif di Surabaya. Pemilihan warna dalam perancangan identitas visual buku ini didasarkan pada upaya menciptakan keselarasan tema yang merepresentasikan esensi dari skena musik independen di Surabaya. Warna-warna tersebut digunakan sebagai elemen pendukung sebagai pengiring foto dan informasi didalam buku yang berfungsi sebagai elemen estetika, juga memiliki makna simbolis yang mendukung narasi visual dalam menyampaikan karakter alternatif, eksperimental, dan autentik dari subjek yang diangkat. Konsistensi penggunaan palet warna diterapkan secara sistematis pada elemen desain, termasuk tipografi, ilustrasi, dan tata letak, guna membangun pengalaman visual yang kohesif dan memperkuat identitas buku.



Gambar 2. Referensi Warna Buku Visual

4.1.3 Tipografi

Dalam perancangan buku visual ini, font dekoratif *Schabo Condensed* dipilih untuk bagian judul, sementara *Helvetica* digunakan untuk isi narasi. Pemilihan ini didasarkan pada kebutuhan untuk menciptakan keseimbangan visual antara elemen estetika yang menarik perhatian dan keterbacaan yang optimal.

Font *Schabo*, dengan karakter dekoratifnya, memberikan kesan tegas dan ekspresif yang sesuai untuk memperkuat identitas visual buku ini. Tipografi ini mampu menciptakan daya tarik visual pada judul, menggambarkan semangat kreatif dan energi dinamis dari komunitas musik alternatif yang menjadi fokus utama buku. Gaya dekoratifnya juga memperkuat kesan unik, sekaligus menonjolkan peran judul sebagai elemen yang membangun suasana dan identitas keseluruhan desain.

Sementara itu, *Helvetica* dipilih untuk bagian isi narasi karena karakteristiknya yang sederhana, modern, dan mudah dibaca. Font ini menghadirkan kontras yang harmonis dengan *Schabo*, menciptakan tampilan visual yang seimbang. Penggunaan *Helvetica* memastikan narasi dapat disampaikan dengan jelas dan efisien tanpa mengurangi nilai estetika keseluruhan desain. Kombinasi ini mencerminkan pendekatan desain yang mengutamakan fungsi tanpa meninggalkan sentuhan artistik, sehingga mampu merepresentasikan konten dengan cara yang relevan dan menarik bagi pembaca.



Gambar 3. Font Schabo Condensed



Gambar 4. Font Helvetica Medium

4.1.4 Gaya Visual

Gaya visual yang digunakan dalam perancangan buku visual ini mengadopsi pendekatan estetika yang erat kaitannya dengan budaya komunitas independen, khususnya yang tercermin dalam media zine. Salah satu elemen visual utama yang dihadirkan adalah motif robekan. Elemen ini tidak hanya berfungsi sebagai pemanis visual, tetapi juga membawa makna simbolis yang kuat. Motif robekan merepresentasikan nuansa alami, tidak sempurna, dan spontan, yang menjadi ciri khas dari zine sebagai media ekspresi bebas. Selain itu, penggunaan motif ini memperkuat kesan organik dalam keseluruhan tampilan buku, sekaligus berfungsi sebagai pembatas antara elemen gambar dan narasi, sehingga menciptakan ritme visual yang dinamis namun tetap kohesif.

Lebih lanjut, buku visual ini juga menerapkan gaya pengeditan bergaya *raw editing*, yakni pendekatan teknik penyuntingan foto yang mencerminkan kesan mentah dan belum selesai (*unfinished*). Teknik yang digunakan antara lain efek *posterize*, *threshold*, dan *halftone*, yang umumnya ditemukan dalam estetika majalah musik alternatif. Ketiga teknik tersebut menghasilkan visual yang bertekstur dan mencolok, sejalan dengan semangat kebebasan dan eksperimentasi dalam komunitas musik independen.

Sebagai pelengkap visual, buku ini juga menambahkan berbagai elemen pendukung seperti foto polaroid, klip kertas, dan cipratan tinta. Kehadiran elemen-elemen tersebut tidak hanya memperkaya tampilan visual, tetapi juga mempertegas kesan personal, arsip, dan dokumentatif yang ingin disampaikan melalui buku ini.

4.1.5 Konsep Media

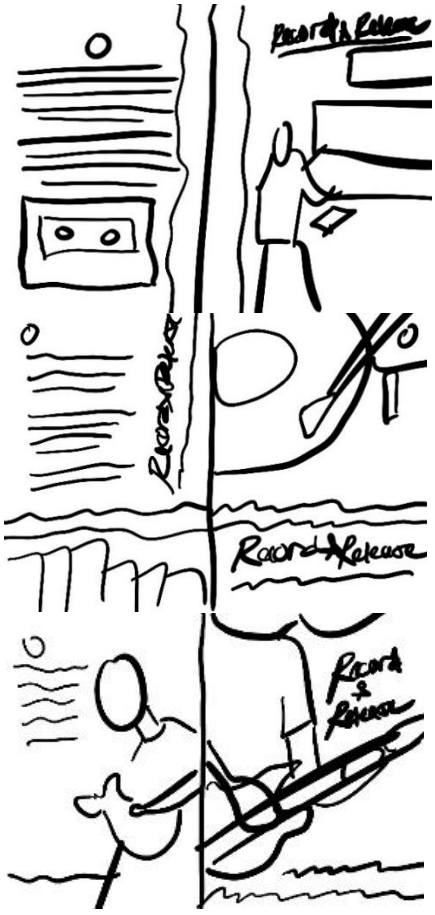
Pemilihan media utama dalam perancangan buku ini didasarkan pada analisis consumer journey dan consumer insight yang dilakukan oleh penulis. Proses ini bertujuan untuk memahami perilaku, kebutuhan, serta preferensi target audiens dalam mengakses dan mengapresiasi informasi terkait skena musik alternatif di Surabaya. Media utama dalam perancangan ini memiliki konsep dalam perancangannya, sebagai berikut:

- Buku memiliki ukuran 21,5 cm x 25,4 cm berbentuk portrait.
- Buku ini berjudul "Behind the Alternative Sounds: The History of Independen Label Alternative Scene in Surabaya"
- Bahan yang digunakan untuk isi adalah kertas artpaper 210 gsm yang akan dijilid hardcover dengan laminasi doff.
- Cover belakang pada buku akan berisi sinopsis sekilas tentang buku dalam perancangan ini.
- Buku ini memuat informasi tentang buku visual yang mengupas perjalanan sejarah label rekaman independen di komunitas musik alternatif Surabaya. Buku ini menyajikan kisah-kisah inspiratif tentang para pelaku di balik layar, eksplorasi kreativitas mereka, serta dampak yang ditimbulkan terhadap perkembangan skena musik lokal.
- Buku ini akan dijual dengan kisaran harga Rp.50.000,00. – Rp. 75.000,00. Harga tersebut ditentukan berdasarkan pertimbangan modal bahan dan juga proses dalam pembuatannya.

4.2 Proses Perancangan Desain

4.2.1 Rough Design (Sketsa Kasar)

Sketsa kasar atau *rough design* merupakan tahap awal dalam proses ilustrasi yang berfungsi untuk menunjukkan garis besar dari rancangan visual yang belum disempurnakan. Pada perancangan buku visual ini, sketsa kasar digunakan untuk mengeksplorasi berbagai alternatif komposisi layout, ilustrasi, serta elemen tipografi yang akan digunakan dalam penyusunan halaman-halaman buku. Tahap ini menjadi penting dalam menentukan arah visual yang sesuai dengan konsep dan karakter komunitas musik alternatif yang diangkat. Melalui sketsa kasar, perancang dapat lebih leluasa mengevaluasi dan menyempurnakan ide-ide visual sebelum masuk ke tahap finalisasi desain.



Gambar 5. Rough Desain Cover Buku Visual

Desain sketsa cover ini dirancang dengan memadukan empat elemen visual utama kaset, turntable, studio rekaman, dan sosok yang sedang memainkan alat musik. Setiap elemen dipilih secara cermat untuk merepresentasikan semangat kolektif dan budaya do-it-yourself (DIY) yang menjadi jiwa dari label rekaman independen di Surabaya.

Kaset dan turntable menjadi simbol dari pentingnya rilisan fisik yang masih dijaga eksistensinya di tengah arus digitalisasi. Keduanya tidak hanya menjadi medium distribusi musik, tetapi juga bagian dari pengalaman mendengarkan yang personal dan autentik.

Studio rekaman dalam sketsa ini menggambarkan ruang kreatif tempat ide-ide musik diracik, dicoba, dan diwujudkan sebuah proses yang sering kali dilakukan secara swadaya dengan peralatan terbatas, namun penuh semangat dan dedikasi.

Sementara itu, ilustrasi orang yang sedang bermain musik merepresentasikan keterlibatan aktif para pelaku skena: musisi, produser, teknisi, hingga penikmat. Mereka semua adalah bagian dari ekosistem yang saling mendukung dan membentuk identitas musik independen Surabaya.



Gambar 6. Rough Desain Layout Isi Buku Visual

Dalam desain layout ini, elemen robekan, cipratan, dan roll kaset dipilih untuk memberi kesan bebas, ekspresif, dan penuh energi. Robekan dan cipratan mewakili semangat DIY yang berani, spontan, dan tidak terpaku pada aturan. Sementara itu, roll kaset menghadirkan nuansa nostalgia dan menunjukkan pentingnya rilisan fisik dalam skena musik independen.

Desain ini menggunakan layout Multi Panel, yaitu tata letak yang menyusun elemen secara konsisten dan saling terhubung berdasarkan tema. Layout ini membantu menciptakan alur visual yang rapi, dinamis, dan mudah dipahami. Jenis layout ini sering digunakan dalam majalah, poster, dan media promosi karena mampu menggabungkan tampilan yang menarik dengan pesan yang jelas (sumber: https://myedusolve.com/, diakses 31 Januari 2025).

4.2.2 Komprehensif Desain



Gambar 7. Hasil Digitalisai Desain Cover Buku



Gambar 8. Alternatif Desain Tipografi Judul



Gambar 9. Hasil Digitalisasi Desain Layout

Desain sampul buku ini menampilkan gaya visual yang kuat dan ekspresif dengan pendekatan teknik *digital imaging* yang khas. Menggunakan elemen olahan

foto seperti threshold, posterize, hingga splattered effect, desain ini secara langsung merepresentasikan karakter underground, mentah, dan penuh energi khas dari komunitas musik alternatif di Surabaya.

Efek threshold dan posterize menghadirkan nuansa visual kontras tinggi hitam-putih yang menciptakan kesan arsip visual era DIY (do-it-yourself), mengingatkan pada estetika flyer gig, sampul rilisan kaset, dan zine independen. Efek *splattered* memberi sentuhan liar dan ekspresif, memperkuat identitas musik alternatif yang lepas dari aturan visual konvensional.

Penempatan foto-foto seperti kaset, turntable, studio rekaman, dan aktivitas memainkan alat musik bukan hanya sebagai ornamen visual, tapi juga sebagai narasi visual dari peran label rekaman independen: merekam, merilis, dan mendistribusikan karya secara mandiri.

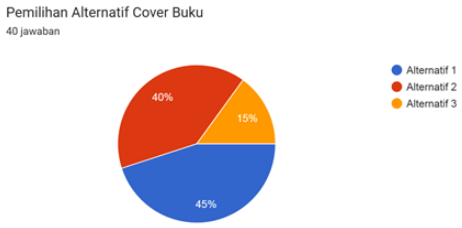
Tipografi yang digunakan adalah jenis huruf dekoratif dengan bentuk tegas dan padat, memberikan kesan industrial dan resistensi terhadap arus utama. Kombinasi ini memperkuat semangat komunitas dan semangat DIY khas label rekaman independen di Surabaya yang menjadi sorotan utama dalam isi buku.

4.2.3 Validasi Desain

Validasi desain merupakan proses pemilihan hasil dari alternatif desain komprehensif yang telah terpilih dan akan digunakan pada buku visual.



Gambar 10. Desain Cover Terpilih



Gambar 11. Hasil Kuesioner Pemilihan Desain Cover

Dari berbagai alternatif desain yang dikembangkan, **alternatif 1** terpilih sebagai desain utama berdasarkan hasil kuesioner yang diisi oleh 40 responden. Mayoritas menyatakan bahwa desain ini paling mewakili semangat, energi, dan karakter visual yang sesuai untuk menjadi cover buku visual tentang musik alternatif. Pilihan ini menunjukkan adanya kesesuaian antara konsep desain dan persepsi audiens terhadap identitas skena yang ingin ditampilkan.

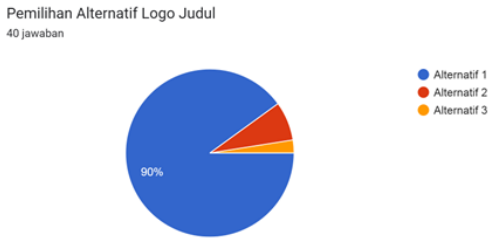
Eksplorasi desain cover ini menggunakan efek *splattered*, *noise*, dan *posterize* untuk menciptakan tampilan yang kasar, berantakan, namun penuh energi—selaras dengan karakter musik alternatif di Surabaya yang bebas, jujur, dan tidak terpaku pada aturan. Efek-efek ini memberi nuansa visual yang liar dan mentah, mencerminkan semangat komunitas yang tumbuh secara organik di tengah keterbatasan.

Jenis font yang digunakan adalah font dekoratif dengan tampilan *unfinished*, seolah belum selesai digarap. Pilihan ini bukan tanpa alasan—ia mewakili semangat eksperimental dan do-it-yourself (DIY) yang menjadi napas utama dalam skena musik alternatif. Font ini mempertegas bahwa dalam dunia ini, ketidaksempurnaan justru menjadi kekuatan.

Salah satu elemen utama dalam desain adalah gambar musisi yang sedang memainkan gitar. Gitar dipilih karena merupakan simbol kuat dalam musik alternatif. Lebih dari sekadar alat musik, gitar juga menjadi perwujudan ekspresi personal dan keterlibatan langsung antara musisi dengan karya yang mereka hasilkan.



Gambar 12. Tipografi Terpilih



Gambar 13. Hasil Kuesioner Pemilihan Tipografi Judul

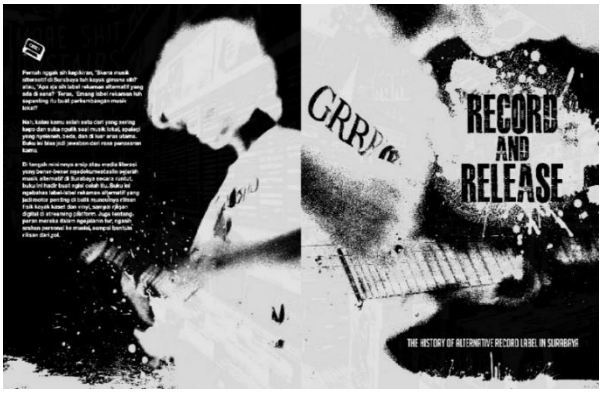
Dari beberapa pilihan tipografi yang diajukan, font **Damage** dipilih karena paling cocok dengan tema desain cover. Font ini mempunyai tampilan yang kasar, belum selesai (*unfinished*), dan terkesan rusak, yang sesuai dengan karakter musik alternatif yang bebas, jujur, dan tidak terpaku pada aturan.

Pemilihan font ini juga didukung oleh hasil kuesioner dari 40 responden. Sebagian besar menilai bahwa font **Damage** paling kuat mewakili semangat

DIY dan energi mentah dari skena musik alternatif di Surabaya. Selain menarik secara visual, font ini juga memperkuat pesan dan identitas yang ingin disampaikan lewat desain cover.

4.2.4 Desain Final (Final Artwork)

Desain final merupakan tahap terakhir setelah proses validasi. Desain yang telah melalui validasi awal melalui google form akan disempurnakan dan mendapat persetujuan akhir dari dosen pembimbing. Berikut ini adalah hasil desain yang telah melalui tahap finalisasi.



Gambar 14. Desain Final Cover



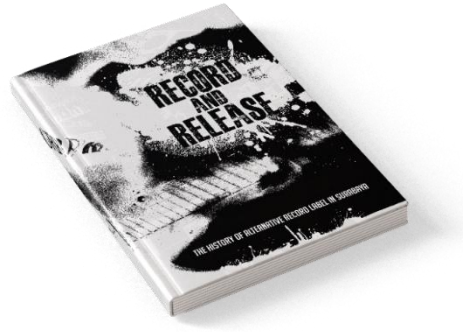
Gambar 15. Desain Final Halaman Daftar Isi



Gambar 16. Desain Final Halaman Isi Buku Visual

4.3 Implementasi Desain

Berikut merupakan implementasi desain pada mock-up buku sebagai gambaran desain visual yang diterapkan pada media utama.



Gambar 17. Implementasi Desain Menggunakan Mock Up

5 KESIMPULAN

Berdasarkan hasil penelitian dan pembahasan, dapat disimpulkan bahwa desain sampul buku visual yang mengangkat tema label rekaman independen musik alternatif di Surabaya memiliki pengaruh terhadap persepsi audiens terhadap buku itu sendiri. Desain sampul yang mengedepankan elemen visual khas subkultur musik alternatif, penggunaan tipografi yang ekspresif, serta komposisi visual yang autentik mampu menciptakan daya tarik visual.

Desain sampul bukan hanya pelengkap visual, melainkan juga bagian penting dalam membentuk persepsi dan minat baca. Untuk penelitian selanjutnya, disarankan agar kajian diperluas pada respons audiens terhadap elemen visual lainnya dalam buku, seperti tata letak isi, ilustrasi, dan tipografi internal, guna memperoleh pemahaman yang lebih utuh mengenai pengaruh desain visual terhadap persepsi pembaca.

Berdasarkan proses dan hasil perancangan buku ini, terdapat beberapa saran untuk pengembangan lebih lanjut. Pertama, kolaborasi lebih luas dengan komunitas, pelaku kreatif, dan akademisi dapat memperkaya konten serta menjaga validitas informasi sejarah yang disampaikan. Kedua, penting untuk melakukan uji coba dan evaluasi konten kepada target audiens secara berkala guna mengukur efektivitas penyampaian pesan, daya tarik visual, serta tingkat keterlibatan audiens terhadap topik yang diangkat.

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The Effect of Sales Service Communication Quality and Product Prices of PT. Raja Bearindo Aditama on Customer Satisfaction in the Jakarta Area

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Abstract

B2B (business to business) business competition requires companies to improve the quality of salesservice communication and appropriate pricing to create customer satisfaction. This study aims to analyze the effect of sales service communication quality and prodct pricing on customer satisfaction of PT Raja Bearindo Aditama in the Jakarta area. This study uses a causal associative quantitative approach with a survey method of 43 reguler customers of PT Raja Bearindo Aditama. Data were collected through a questionnaire using a likert scale and analyzed using multiple linear regression. The result of the parlial test show that the variable of sales service communication quality (X_1) such as clarity of information, responsiveness and ability to provide solutions has a calculated t value of 2,749 with a significance of 0,009<0,05. This confirms that the quality ofsalesservice communication has a significant influence on customer satisfaction partially because customers prioritize product reliability and technical support. However, the result of simultaneous test show that the quality of salesservice communication and product pricing together have a significant influence on customer satisfaction with a contribution of 37,4%, while the rest is influenced by other factors outside the study. This finding confirms that sales service communication is the main factor in forming customer satisfaction, while price plays a supporting role.

Keywords: B2B, Customer Satisfaction PT. Raja Bearindo Aditama, Sales Service Communication, Price

1 INTRODUCTION

Indonesias's manufacturing sector remains a primary driver of national economic performance. In 2025, the manufacturing industry contributed approximately 19% to Indonesia's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and recorded annual growth of around 5.15%, reflecting strong post pandemic industry expansion (Indonesian Business & Industry Association, 2025; ANTARA News, 2025). This data confirms that manufacturing continues to be the largest contributor to Indonesia's economic structure and a key engine of industrial development. Growth in machinery, metal products, automotive, and heavy equipment industries has increased demand for mechanical components such as bearings and bushings, which are essential for maintaining production efficiency and minimizing operational downtime. As industrial production expands, competition among distributors intensifies and customer expectations toward supplier performance become higher.

This is also the case at PT. Raja Bearindo Aditama, a company engaged in the distribution of bearings, bushings, and machine components for industrial needs. The products marketed have technical characteristics, so customers need clear information, easy-to-understand explanations, and responsive assistance from the sales team. However, in practice, the company still faces challenges in maintaining the consistency of this communication quality. Some customers complain about slow responses, insufficient technical explanations, and differences in perception between sales and customers regarding product specifications. This situation indicates a need to reevaluate the effectiveness of the sales service communication that has been provided so far.

In addition to communication, price is also an important consideration for customers when making purchasing decisions. However, based on the

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characteristics of industrial customers, price is not always a determining factor for satisfaction. B2B customers generally place more emphasis on product reliability, technical support, and operational smoothness than insignificant price differences. This phenomenon warrants further research, particularly to determine whether price still influences customer satisfaction amid increasingly high demands for service quality. Research on these two factors is important because customer satisfaction is an indicator that influences loyalty, the continuity of cooperation, and a company's competitiveness.

Based on these conditions, several key issues can be identified: (1) the quality of sales service communication does not fully meet customer expectations, particularly in terms of the clarity of technical information and response speed, (2) customer perceptions of pricing vary, so it is necessary to examine whether pricing affects customer satisfaction, and (3) the company does not yet have data that explains the measurable impact of these two factors. These issues need to be studied so that the company can make data-driven decisions in improving its service strategy and pricing policy.

The objectives of this study are to: (1) Examine how customer satisfaction is influenced by the quality of sales service communication (2) Examine how product prices influence customer satisfaction and (3) Examine how service communication quality and product prices influence customer satisfaction at PT Raja Bearindo Aditama. By understanding these influences, the company can understand which factors are most dominant in shaping customer satisfaction.

2 LITERATURE REVIEW

A relevant study conducted by [1] entitled "The Influence of Service Quality and Price On Customer Satisfaction" examined the partial and simultaneous effects of service quality and price on customer satisfaction using a quantitative approach. The findings showed that both service quality and price have a positive and significant influence on customer satisfaction. Service quality measured through reliability, responsiveness, assurance, empathy and tangibles was found to be dominant factor, while price influenced satisfaction through perceived fairness and value

However, the study was conducted in a general service (B2C oriented) context and did not specifically address technical industrial environments. In a B2B technical setting, service quality extends beyond general responsiveness to include technical accuracy, clarity of product specifications, and consultative communication. Therefore, although Prastio's finding confirm the importance of service quality and price, there remains a gap in examining these variables within a technical B2B industrial distribution context. This study seeks to address that gap by focusing on sales service communication quality and product price in an industrial component distribution company.

This study refers to the main communication theory that is relevant and supports the research focus on the effect of service communication quality on customer satisfaction, namely Service Communication Theory.

2.1 Service *Communication Theory*

According to [2] Parasuraman, Valarie A. Zeitham, and Leonard L. Berry (1988) emphasizes the importance of effective communication between service providers and customers to create satisfaction and trust. Inaccurate or inconsistent communication can create a gap between customer expectations and the reality of the services received (*communication gap*). In the SERVQUAL model that they developed, there are five dimensions of service quality, all of which are closely related to communication, namely *Tangible* (physical appearance), *Reliability* (reliability in keeping promises), *Responsiveness* (responsiveness in responding to customers), *Assurance* (assurance and trust from staff), and *Empathy* (concern for customers). Good communication will strengthen the customer's perception of the quality of service. On the other hand, misleading communication such as promotional promises that do not match reality, will lower trust. Therefore, companies need to convey service information honestly, respond quickly to customers, and train employees to be able to interact politely, empathetically, and professionally. Communication in service is at the heart of the customer experience. The quality-of-service communication is a measure of the extent to which the communication process between a company and customers takes place clearly, quickly, accurately, politely, consistently and empathic. Poor communication can lead to misunderstandings. Distrust, to failure to retain customers.

According to Parasuraman, Valarie A. Zeithaml, and Leonard L. Berry (1988), there are signs of customer satisfaction that can be found in five dimensions of service quality, namely:

1.1.1 Tangibles : Includes buildings, machinery, personnel and communication devices. Consists of the following indicator indicators:

a) How an employee or service provider presents themselves to clients.
b) Comfort of the service area
c) Employee self-control when providing services
d) Public accessibility and ease of use.

e) Use of assistive technology when receiving services

2 *Reliability* : The capacity of employees to provide the promised services in a timely, satisfactory and reliable manner:
   a) Thoroughness and precision of employees when serving clients
   b) Setting the right terms of service
   c) Employee proficiency in using tools during the service process

3 *Responsiveness* : An employee's capacity to assist and provide services quickly, accurately and in response to client requests This indicator includes:
   a) Respond to any customer service requests
   b) Provide fast and accurate service
   c) Provide meticulous service and
   d) Responding to every customer complaint

4 *Assurance* : the ability, friendliness and courtesy of employees to foster client trust, which includes the following signs:
   a) Employees can ensure prompt service
   b) Employees can ensure that their work is legal
   c) Employees can ensure the certainty of service costs

5 *Empathy* : when employees treat clients firmly but empathetically, they show the following signs:
   a) Putting the client's needs first
   b) When helping clients, employees are friendly
   c) Employees provide courteous service
   d) Employees don't treat clients unfairly
   e) Employees treat clients with respect and full of service

The first step in providing high-quality services is to hire qualified employees. The quality of the service is an important need, which can be used as a benchmark, comparison, or reference to the extent to which the service is acceptable and the benefits are felt. In this case, the public can evaluate the level of services provided by the service provider to meet the expectations of the community. According to Sianipar, the following factors need to be considered to complete service work quickly, accurately and easily:

a) Personnel Attitude: When interacting with service consumers, the attitude or profile of the personnel consistently shows a sense of pleasure in helping, sensitivity, sincerity and honesty.
b) The following factors determine the quality of a service: (1) Accuracy and conformity with standards, models, styles and designs, (2) Accuracy of use or perceived benefit value of services received and used by the community, (3) Accuracy of capacity during operation and (4) Accuracy of all components or completeness of existing services.
c) Time shows: (1) Timely receipt, completion and transfer, (2) Ease of obtaining or obtaining, maintaining and repairing services, (3) Convenience when waiting for or using services, (4) Security, safety when waiting or using services, (5) Low costs to obtain services and in accordance with set standards and (6) Speed and accuracy in responding to customer complaints or demands (claims)

According to Susanto [3] Basically, the goal of a business is to create customers feel satisfied with the services provided. The creation of customer satisfaction can provide several benefits, including: (1) The relationship between the company and customers becomes harmonious, (2) It provides a good basis for repurchases, (3) It can encourage the creation of customer loyalty, (4) It forms a word-of-mouth recommendation that is beneficial for the company, (5) The company's reputation becomes good in the eyes of customers, (6) The profit obtained can increase.

Deniaty [4] also emphasized that "empathy, speed and clarity of information are the main aspects of service quality that greatly affect customer satisfaction and loyalty.

In the study of marketing communication, communication is not only understood as the process of conveying information, but also as a strategy to create perceptions, build emotional relationships, and influence consumer behavior. Marketing communication encompasses the entire strategic process by which a company interacts with customers to create value and build long-term loyalty, both in the Business-to-Consumer (B2C) and Business-to-Business (B2B) contexts. According to Kotler and Keller (2016), "marketing communication is a company's primary means of forming a dialogue with customers and creating valuable relationships."

2.2 Quality of Sales Service Communication

The quality-of-service communication refers to how effective communication between the company and customers is in conveying information, understanding needs, and building trust and long-term relationships. In the context of industrial marketing (B2B), effective communication plays an important role in creating customer satisfaction and loyalty.

According to Raisha [5] Service communication has a very 'essential' and strategic position. All forms of service always involve communication in it, whether it is in the form of product or service services. Hardiansyah (2015: 16) in his book entitled "Public Service Communication", emphasizes that: The ability of an

organization to establish good communication in the service process, will certainly be able to improve the quality of services owned by the company itself. On the other hand, the company's inability to establish good communication in the service process will lead to poor service (service does not have good quality). According to this statement, whether or not a company's services are considered high-quality depends on how well the company communicates with its clients and audience.

Furthermore according to [6] explain that sales or marketing is a social process in which people and organizations create, market, and trade valuable goods freely with others to achieve what they need and want"sales are not just as sales executors, but they are direct representations of the company, which forms the customer's initial and ongoing perception of the service. The strategic role of sales according to [7] includes:

a) The main communicator between the company and the client
b) Solution consultants for customers are not just product sellers
c) Collector of market information and customer feedback
d) Long-term relationship builder.

Effective sales must have the following skills:

a) Interpersonal communication and high empathy
b) In-depth understanding of products and industries
c) Problem-solving and negotiation
d) Speed in responding to client needs.

2.3 Product Pricing

According to Gofur [8] Price is often used by customers as a benchmark for the perceived value of a product or service in relation to cost. The level of customer satisfaction can decrease if a company sets a price that does not match the product's advantages and vice versa. Increased consumer satisfaction will result from better perceived value. Then according to Ariella [9] price is a number of values that consumers exchange for a product or service that has benefits when consumers own or use products or services.

2.4 Customer Satisfaction

According to Christono [10] Kotler and Keller (2016), customer satisfaction is "a person's feeling of pleasure or disappointment resulting from comparing a product's perceived performance (or outcome) in relation to his or her expectations." This means that satisfaction is a direct result of the perception of performance against initial expectations. Then according to Azhari et al. [11] satisfaction is when the performance of a product is compared to its expectations, a person can feel satisfied or disappointed. Customers will be satisfied if the product performs as expected or better. The first step a business takes to build a good relationship with its clients is to create customer satisfaction. Companies can benefit from customer satisfaction because happy customers tend to be more loyal.

According to Andrian [12] in the consumer behavior approach, satisfaction can be influenced by:

a) Quality of the product or service
b) Perceived value
c) Customer interaction and experience during the purchase process
d) Emotions and perceptions of the brand or service provider

Furthermore, according to [13], satisfaction has a long-term impact on business:

a) Increase customer loyalty
b) Trigger repeat purchase
c) Reduce marketing costs through (word of mouth)
d) Increase customer retention
e) Build the company's image and reputation

Customer satisfaction is a central concept in marketing and service management. Conceptually, customer satisfaction is the evaluative outcome of consumers after they compare their expectations of a product or service with the reality they receive. If reality meets or exceeds expectations, then a sense of satisfaction arises. On the other hand, if reality is below expectations, then customers will feel dissatisfied.

How to achieve customer satisfaction according to Subawa [14] Service quality measured based on indicators: physical evidence, reliability, responsiveness, assurance and empathy, proven to be able to increase customer satisfaction. This finding can be interpreted that if the intensity of service quality is increased, it will be able to make a significant contribution to increasing customer loyalty.

Then according to Lestari [15] increase customer satisfaction and loyalty through strategies that focus on understanding customer needs and desires by providing valuable products and services.

To achieve and maintain customer satisfaction, companies need to build an integrated service system that focuses on the overall customer experience (customer journey). Strategies to achieve customer satisfaction include:

2.4.1 Provide effective communication

a) Use diverse communication channels (email, whatsapp, phone, direct visit)
b) Train the service and sales team to convey clear, accurate and polite information

c) Provide standard procedures (SOPs) for responding to requests and complaints

2.4.2 Personalization and understanding of customer needs

a) Actively listen to customer needs
b) Offer a suitable solution, not just the available product
c) Build long-term relationships, not short-term transactions

2.4.3 Responsive after-sales service

a) Make sure technical complaints are responded to quickly and professionally
b) Provide guarantees (warranty, service, visit) to increase a sense of security.

Customer satisfaction is the result of a complex process between expectations, product performance, and service interactions, in which communication plays a critical role.

3 RESEARCH METHODS

This study uses a quantitative approach with a positivistic paradigm, which views social phenomena as objectively measurable through numerical data. This approach allows researchers to test the relationship between variables in a structured and empirical manner. The type of research used is causal associative research, which aims to analyze and test the influence of independent variables on dependent variables, in this case, the quality of sales service communication and product prices as independent variables, and customer satisfaction as a dependent variable. The research method used is the survey method, where primary data is collected through a closed questionnaire compiled using a four-point Likert scale (1-4) ranging from 1 (strongly disagree), 2 (disagree), 3 (agree), and 4 (strongly agree) to facilitate respondents in providing proportional assessments and avoiding neutral or uncertain answers. The research instrument was developed based on indicators from each variable that had been formulated in the operationalization of variables. In addition to primary data, this study also utilizes secondary data from company documents, regular customer profiles, and relevant scientific literature. All data obtained was then analyzed through validity tests, reliability tests, descriptive statistical analysis, and multiple linear regression analysis to test the influence of each variable partially and simultaneously.

The population in this study consists of all regular customers of PT Raja Bearindo Aditama who reside or operate in the Jakarta area, have made at least two transactions, and have direct experience interacting with the company's sales force. This population was selected because it was considered representative for evaluating the quality of the company's service communication and pricing strategy in the context of Business-to-Business (B2B). Each company unit was represented by one respondent who had a strategic role in the purchasing process, such as purchasing staff, chief technicians, maintenance supervisors, or operations managers. The sampling technique used was a saturated sampling method (census), which is a technique that uses all members of the population as research samples because the population size is small and all members meet the research criteria. Based on the company's internal data, the population used as the sample consisted of 43 respondents. The use of a saturated sample provides a higher level of accuracy and reduces bias in the generalization of research results in the context of PT. Raja Bearindo Aditama's customers in the Jakarta area.

4 RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Research Subject

The research data was obtained through primary information in the form of questionnaires distributed to 43 respondents who were customers of PT Raja Bearindo Aditama in the Jakarta area. Respondents were selected using purposive sampling with the criteria of active customers who had made at least two purchases in the past year. In this case, each organizational unit of analysis is represented by one respondent, namely an individual who plays a key role in the purchasing or decision making process, such as the purchasing department, chief engineer, or operations manager.

Table 1. Research Subject

Component	Detail Description	Description & Justification of Methodology
Population Size (N)	43 Customers	The identified population that met all research criteria was relatively small.
Respondent Criteria (Must Be Met)	1. Customer Status: A regular customer of PT Raja Bearindo Aditama. 2. Direct Involvement: Has interacted directly with	1. Ensure that respondents have an ongoing business relationship, not just incidental customers. 2. It is crucial to measure X1 (Quality of Service Communication).

	the company's sales team. 3. Transaction Experience: Has made at least two transactions.	Respondents have real experience in assessing professionalism, responsiveness, and sales consulting capabilities. 3. It is crucial to measure X2 (Product Price) and Y (Satisfaction). Repeat transactions indicate value comparison, satisfaction evaluation, and repeat buying, making the assessment more valid and reliable.
Research Sample (n)	43 Respondents	The sample size is equal to the population size because it uses a census technique.
Sampling Techniques	Census or Saturated Sample	A method in which the entire population is sampled.
Methodological Justification	This method was chosen because the population size (N=43) was relatively small (≤100).	The use of a census ensures that the research results are 100% representative of the views of all customers. This strengthens the external validity and accuracy of the research conclusions.

Data collection was conducted using a questionnaire consisting of:

Table 2. Number of Questionnaire Statements

Description	Variable	Number of Statements
Quality of Sales Service Communication	X_1	16 Statements
Product Price	X_2	11 Statements
Customer Satisfaction	Y	14 Statements
Total Statements		41 Statements

4.2 Research Result

Table 3. Validity Test

Variable	Number of Items	r Table (N=43)	Ranger Count	Sig. (p)	Description
X_1-Quality Communication Sales Service	16	0,301	0,295-0,817	0,000 – 0,055	Valid
X_2-Product Price	11	0,301	0,165-0,868	0,000 - 0,046	Valid
Y-Customer Satisfaction	14	0,301	0,186-0,868	0,000 - 0,044	Valid

Criteria used :

1. The item is declared valid if the value r is calculated > r of the table (0.301 at N=43, α=0.05). Items that are significant at the level of 5% ($p < 0.05$) are considered valid.
2. The results of the validity test show that all items in the variables X_1 (Quality of Communication of Sales Service), X_2 (Product Price), and Y (Customer Satisfaction) have correlation values above the r table and are significant. Thus, all question items are declared valid and suitable for research.

All questions on variables X_1, X_2, and Y are proven to be valid because the item-total correlation value is above the minimum and significant limit. This shows that the questionnaire instrument used has been able to measure the concept of research variables precisely

Table 4. Uji Reliabilitas

Variable	Number of Items	Cronbach's Alpha	Criteria	Description
X_1-Quality Communication Sales Service	16	0,942	> 0,6	Reliable
X_2-Product Price	11	0,843	> 0,6	Reliable
Y- Customer Satisfaction	14	0,925	> 0,6	Reliable

The method used is **Cronbach's Alpha**, with a criterion of > 0.6. (considered sufficient)

The results showed that all variables had *a Cronbach's Alpha* value > 0.60. Variables X1, X2 and Y are declared **Reliable**. Thus, these questionnaires can be used consistently in research.

Table 5. Variables Entered/Removed[a]

Model	Variables Entered	Variables Removed	Method
1	Harga Produk, Kualitas Komunikasi Pelayanan Sales[b]	-	Enter

a. Dependent Variable : Kepuasan Pelanggan
b. All requested variables entered.

Table 6. Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the estimate
1	.612[a]	.374	.343	3.67192

a. Predicators: (Constant), Harga Produk, Kualitas Komunikasi Pelayanan Sales

Table 7. ANOVA[a]

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig
1	Regression	322.122	2	161.061	11.945	.000[b]
	Residual	539.320	40	13.483		
	Total	861.442	42			

a. Dependent Variable: Kepuasan Pelanggan
b. Predicator: (Constant), Harga produk, Kualitas Komunikasi pelayanan Sales

Table 8. Coefficients[a]

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients Beta	t	Sig
		B	Std error			
1	(Constant)	17.809	7.496		2.376	.022
	Kualitas Komunikasi Pelayanan Sales	.324	.118	.414	2.749	.009
	Harga Produk	.391	.215	.275	1.822	.076

a. Dependent Variable : Kepuasan Pelanggan

Based on the results of multiple linear regression analysis, regression equations were obtained:

$$Y=17.809+0.324X_1+0.391X_2+e$$

Where Y is customer satisfaction, X_1 is the quality of sales service, and X_2 is the price of the product. The equation shows that the variables X_1 and X_2 are positively related to Y.

Table 9. Partial Test (t-test)

Variable	Coefici n B	t count	Sig	Conclusion
Konstanta	17,809	2,376	0,022	-
X_1-Quality Communication on Sales Service	0,324	2,749	0,009	Significant (H_{11} accepted)
X_2-Product Price	0,391	1,822	0,076	Insignificant (H_{12} rejected)

The results of the partial test showed that the variable of sales service communication quality (X_1) had a t-value of 2.749 with a significance of 0.009 < 0.05. Thus, H_{01} is rejected and H_{11} is accepted, which means that there is a significant influence of the quality-of-service communication on customer satisfaction. This confirms that the better the communication carried out by sales, the customer satisfaction will increase.

Meanwhile, the product price variable (X_2) has a calculated t-value of 1.822 with a significance of 0.076 > 0.05. Thus, H_{02} is accepted and H_{12} is rejected, so that the price of the product has no significant effect on customer satisfaction. Although the regression coefficient is positive (0.391), these results show that at a significance level of 5%, the price of the product cannot yet be considered as the dominant factor affecting customer satisfaction.

Interpretation:
X_1 has a significant positive effect on Y. This means that the better the sales service communication, the higher the customer satisfaction.
X_2 has no significant effect on Y at the level of 5%.

Table 10. Simultaneous Test (F Test)

Model	F count	Sig.	Conclusion
X_1 & X_2 → Y	11,945	0,000	Significant (H_{13} accepted)

The results of the simultaneous test showed that the F value was calculated as 11.945 with a significance of 0.000 < 0.05. Thus, H_{03} is rejected and H_{13} is accepted, which means that the quality-of-sales service communication (X_1) and product price (X2) simultaneously have a significant effect on customer satisfaction (Y). This shows that although only X_1 is partially significant, together the two independent variables can explain variations in customer satisfaction.

The value of the determination coefficient (R^2) of 0.374 shows that 37.4% of the variation in customer satisfaction can be explained by the variables of communication quality of sales service and product price, while the remaining 62.6% is influenced by other

factors outside this research model, such as product quality, after-sales service, and external factors of the company.

Thus, it can be concluded that the partial hypothesis of H_{11} is accepted (X_1 has a significant effect on Y), H_{12} is rejected (X_2 has no significant effect on Y), and the simultaneous hypothesis of H_{13} is accepted (X_1 and X_2 have a significant effect on Y together)

The results of the above study show that the quality-of-sales service communication has a positive and significant influence on customer satisfaction, which is evidenced by a t-value of 2.749 and a significance of 0.009 (<0.05). These findings show that sales' ability to provide clear information, respond quickly to questions, and show a polite and professional attitude greatly determines the level of customer comfort and trust. In the context of B2B such as PT Raja Bearindo Aditama, communication is not only the process of delivering technical information, but also the foundation for building *trust* and long-term relationships. Although in general communication is considered quite good, customers consider that *the follow-up* and clarity aspects related to warranty and delivery can still be improved.

In contrast to the communication variable, the study found that product price had no significant influence on customer satisfaction (significance >0.05). This indicates that industrial customers tend to consider technical factors, service and product reliability more than price alone. With product characteristics such as bearings and bushings oriented to technical needs and operational reliability, customers prioritize the right solution over the lowest price.

Although the price is partially unaffected, simultaneously the quality-of-service communication and product prices still have a significant effect on customer satisfaction. Based on the results of the F test which showed a significant joint effect. These findings confirm that customer satisfaction is the result of a combination of several factors, not just one specific variable. However, based on the determination coefficient value (R^2 = 37.4%), it is known that there are still 62.6% other variables such as product quality, delivery speed, after-sales service and brand trust that have not been studied in this model.

When compared with previous research, particularly [1], this study shows both similarities and contextual differences. Prasetio found that service quality and price simultaneously and partially had significant effects on customer satisfaction, with service quality significantly influences customer satisfaction. However, unlike Prasetio`s findings, product price in this research does not have a significant partial effect (Sig. 0.076 > 0.05). This difference may be explained by contextual factors. Prasetio's research was conducted in a general service (B2C) environment, where as this study is situated in technical B2B industrial context where operational reliability and technical consultation are more critical than price differences. Therefore, the role of price becomes relatively supportive rather than decisive.

The coefficient of determination (R^2) value of 0.374 indicates that 37.4% of customer satisfaction variation can be explained by sales service communication quality and product price. While this value shows that the model has explanatory power, it also reveals that 62.6% of satisfaction is influenced by other variables not included in this model, such as product quality, delivery accuracy, after sales service, brand trust, and long term relationship quality. This suggests that customer satisfaction in the B2B technical industry is multidimensional and cannot be fully explained by communication and price alone. Therefore, future research should incorporate additional strategic variables to improve the explanatory strength of the model.

From the regression results, sales service communication quality (X_1) is the most dominant variable influencing customer satisfaction, as indicated by its significant t value (2.749) and positive regression coefficient (0.324). Among its indicators, responsiveness and clarity of technical information showed the strongest contribution based on higher mean scores and customer feedback. This indicates that customers highly value fast responses and accurate explanations of product specifications, especially in preventing technical errors and operational downtime.

On the other hand, the indicator with the lowest contribution was related to technical assurance and follow up clarity (such as warranty and delivery confirmation). This reflects a service gap in the assurance dimension, where customers still perceive room for improvement in consistency and certainty of information. Meanwhile, although product price (X_2) has a positive coefficient (0.391), its insignificance suggests that customers perceive price as secondary to service communication quality. This confirms that in a technical B2B environment, value perception is strongly shaped by communication effectiveness and solution reliability rather than price competition alone.

Overall. The findings reinforce Service Communication Theory (Parasuraman et al., 1988), which emphasizes that satisfaction is strongly influenced by the quality of interaction and communication between service providers and customers. In this study, communication functions not only as information delivery but also as a strategic mechanism for building trust and long term business relaltionships.

Overall, this research corroborates the literature that in the B2B industry, effective service communication is the main key to determining customer satisfaction, while the price factor tends to be supportive and not the main determinant of customer decisions.

5 CONCLUSION

The quality-of-sales service communication has been proven to have a positive and significant effect on customer satisfaction. Customers feel more satisfied when salespeople can provide clear information, respond quickly, and demonstrate a professional and empathetic attitude. Product price does not have a significant effect on customer satisfaction. This shows that in the B2B industry, customers prioritize service quality and technical solution guarantees over price differences.

Simultaneously, the quality-of-service communication and product price have a significant effect on customer satisfaction. Although price is not significant individually, the combination of both variables still contributes to customer satisfaction. The research model can only explain 37.4% of the variation in customer satisfaction. Therefore, there are still other factors that have an effect and need to be studied in future research.

Research Recommendations (for PT. Raja Bearindo Aditama):

a. Improve sales communication skills through regular training on communication techniques, negotiation, and technical understanding of products so that interactions with customers are more professional and accurate.
b. Improve the clarity of shipping and warranty information. This aspect is often a consideration for customers and the purchasing process.
c. Maintain competitive pricing, even though price is not the main factor in customer satisfaction, it is still important to maintain competitiveness in the market.

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The Relationship Between the Use of Digital and Conventional Marketing Communication on the Loyalty of Bariatric Patients at EMC Alam Sutera Hospital

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Abstract

The development of digital technology has changed marketing communication strategies in the healthcare sector. EMC Alam Sutera Hospital integrates digital and conventional marketing communications to increase bariatric patient loyalty. This study uses a quantitative approach with questionnaire instruments, validity, reliability, and multiple linear regression analysis. The use of Digital Marketing Communication turned out to have a great influence on the loyalty of bariatric patients with the highest Mean at point 4.18 with the statement "Patients feel comfortable using EMC Alam Sutera digital services to make control appointments" then the Utilization of Conventional Marketing Communication also has a great influence on the loyalty of bariatric patients with the highest Mean at point 4.30 with the statement "Direct communication with EMC Alam Sutera doctors makes patients are more confident in the bariatric procedure that the patient will undergo" when combined, the relationship between the use of Digital Marketing Communication and the use of conventional communication has a determination coefficient value relationship of 73.1%. which means that Digital Marketing Communication and Conventional Marketing Communication have a relationship in increasing patient loyalty so that the Integrated *Marketing Communication Theory* is proven to be relevant.

Keywords: Bariatrics, Digital Marketing Communication, Integrated Marketing Communication, Patient Loyalty, Conventional Communication.

1 INTRODUCTION

The prevalence of obesity in Indonesia is rising sharply, projected to reach 38% by 2025. Bariatric surgery is one medical solution that requires long-term patient involvement.

EMC Alam Sutera Hospital implements digital and conventional marketing communication strategies to build trust and increase patient retention. Kotler and Keller emphasize that digital and traditional marketing must be integrated through Integrated Marketing Communication [1]. Digital marketing provides accessibility and segmentation, while conventional methods build credibility and emotional closeness [2].

Advantages of this research compared to previous research. Here are 5 points of advantage of the research entitled "The Relationship between the Utilization of Digital and Conventional Marketing Communication on Bariatric Patient Loyalty at EMC Alam Sutera" using quantitative methods, compared to other studies:

1. A comprehensive *dual-channel* (digital and conventional) approach. The study not only focused on one form of marketing communication, but combined two main approaches — digital and conventional — to see synergies and their combined effectiveness on patient loyalty. Many previous studies have only addressed one channel separately.
2. Focus on the context of specific healthcare (bariatric patients). The specific object of the study, namely bariatric patients, makes this research more in-depth and contextual. This segmentation is rarely studied, even though bariatric patients have different characteristics of loyalty and communication needs than general patients.
3. Practical relevance to hospital management. The results of the study provide *evidence-based* recommendations for hospital marketing communication strategies, particularly in attracting and retaining postoperative patients. This practical

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value is higher than general research on health marketing.

4. Using a quantitative approach with structured measurements. Quantitative methods allow for objective and measurable testing of relationships between variables, such as *correlations* or *regressions* between communication utilization and patient loyalty. It provides results that can be generalized and retested, in contrast to the more subjective qualitative approach.
5. Contribution to the development of hospital marketing strategies in the era of digital transition. This research offers an academic and practical contribution in understanding how a combination of digital communication (social media, websites, email marketing) and conventional communication (brochures, events, *word of mouth*) can increase loyalty in the healthcare sector that is undergoing digital transformation.

2 LITERATURE REVIEW

Data from the Ministry of Health shows that the prevalence of obesity in Indonesia has reached 38%, resulting in an increasing need for bariatric services. This data is also supported by the 2022 Basic Health Research (Riskesdas), The prevalence of obesity among Indonesian adults has nearly doubled from 19.1% in 2022 to 35.4% in 2023. The estimated prevalence of obesity in 2025 is projected to reach 38%. The World Health Organization (WHO) defines obesity as an abnormal accumulation of fat that can interfere with health. This condition increases the need for medical solutions, including bariatric surgery. Interest in bariatric surgery is reported in a study by Guangzhou Hospital, which shows a 15% increase in patient interest in bariatric surgery in Asia over the past five years.



Figure 1. Bariatric flyer

Bariatric surgery is a surgical procedure performed at EMC Alam Sutera Hospital in South Tangerang to help obese patients avoid complications from obesity and other metabolic diseases through weight loss. In general, bariatric surgery is recommended for patients with morbid obesity, especially those who have failed to lose weight despite undergoing diet programs, healthy eating habits, and physical activity within a certain period of time *bit. Iy/EMC AS-video_bariatrik*.

Excess weight refers to morbid obesity or class 3 obesity, which is defined as a person with a body mass index (BMI) above 40 or a BMI above 35 with complications due to obesity. With bariatric surgery, obese patients can reduce the risk of life-threatening metabolic diseases. With bariatric surgery, the diseases that can be anticipated include:

1. Heart disease and stroke
2. Hypertension
3. Non-alcoholic fatty liver disease (NAFLD) or non-alcoholic steatohepatitis (NASH).
4. Sleep apnea
5. Type 2 diabetes

In principle, bariatric surgery is performed by cutting part of the stomach to reduce its capacity. This reduces the stomach's ability to hold food and absorb nutrients.

EMC Alam Sutera Hospital, as one of the leading healthcare providers in South Tangerang, faces challenges in increasing patient loyalty, especially among bariatric patients. Bariatric patients, who often require ongoing care and a personalized approach, are a group that deserves special attention. Bariatric patients, who often require ongoing care and a personalized approach, are a group that deserves special attention. Bariatric patients were selected because they undergo very intensive and long-term procedures.

The loyalty of bariatric patients is important because they require ongoing monitoring, continuous education, and consistent communication from EMC Alam Sutera Hospital due to the high cost and intensity of services. EMC hospitals need to understand the factors that influence patient loyalty *www.emc.co.id*.

2.1 Marketing Communication Concepts

Marketing Communication, in the book Integrated Marketing Communication states that: "Marketing communication is a multidisciplinary approach that combines theories and concepts from communication science and marketing science [2]. This study resulted in a "new" study called marketing communication or marketing communication.

Marketing communication is a marketing activity that combines communication techniques aimed at

providing information about a company or brand to its target market. Marketing communication strategy is a tool for achieving the objectives of providing information, influencing, and promoting marketing activities in order to maximize the success of product or service sales.

In general, the first objective of marketing communication is to raise awareness of certain information, then to influence people to do something, hopefully to make a purchase, and finally to shape the audience's pattern into subsequent behavior, the desired behavior being repeat purchases.

2.2 Digital Marketing Communication Concepts

Digital marketing communications encompass the use of digital platforms such as social media, email marketing, websites, and health applications to reach audiences directly and according to Afif digital marketing communication is a form of marketing strategy that uses digital-based platforms such as social media, search engines, email, and websites to convey marketing messages to consumers directly and interactively [2], [3]. Innovations in digital communication technology enable companies to reach audiences in a more personalized, real-time, and measurable manner.

The digital marketing communication application at EMC Alam Sutera to increase patient loyalty is carried out using WhatsApp Business & integrated API, where EMC Alam Sutera Hospital has implemented digital appointments & registration so that patients can make appointments via WhatsApp, which is directly integrated with the EMR (InterSystems TrakCare) system to check doctor availability and obtain a digital registration barcode (www.emc.id).

Everything is automatically connected to the hospital system, and there are WhatsApp reminders used to send appointment reminders and service information (e.g., pharmacy), increasing patient satisfaction and engagement. EMC Alam Sutera has also developed a mobile app – EMCare, launched in early 2024, based on the TrakCare API. (www.emc.id) This application allows patients to view lab test results/medical records, schedule appointments, and register digitally. There are plans to develop additional features such as ambulance call services and real-time arrival tracking (www.emc.id).

2.3 Conventional Marketing Communication Concept

Although the growth of digital media continues to increase, conventional communication has strength in terms of credibility, tangibility, and penetration of the local market. These channels remain effective for large campaigns that require reach and strengthening brand awareness in a short period of time and according to traditional media, such as television, radio, and print advertising, it is effective in increasing brand recall [4], [5].

Real examples: Hospital marketing department places radio ads, billboards to promote heart health early detection services, circumcision during school holidays, also emphasized by experts Marketing communication explains that local events and direct interaction through traditional channels provide added value in building long-term relationships with customers. Real example: EMC Alam Sutera hospital sales held a health seminar at a local community center to build relationships with the surrounding community [1].

2.4 Patient Loyalty

Lemon and Verhoef stating that loyalty is not only seen from repurchases, but also customer *advocacy* (*willingness to recommend*) as well as customer emotional and social engagement on *digital platforms* and in the health care sector is greatly influenced by the quality of digital interactions, the speed of information response, and the transparency of services, especially since the post-pandemic era [6].

They told about how customer loyalty is influenced by a positive experience through consistent communication across multiple channels. EMC Alam Sutera hospital marketing example implemented a patient satisfaction survey after Bariatric services were completed and gave discount vouchers to customers who provided feedback. Informing the combination of online and offline interactions provide deeper relationship value, which ultimately influences customer repurchase decisions [1]. Example of a hospital sales offering a free basic MCU to the family of Bariatric patients who previously received premium services at the hospital so that the patient's family can experience a new experience from the hospital.

Kotler et al. explained Digital marketing communication and conventional marketing communication work synergistically to create an integrated patient experience that strengthens patient loyalty [1]. Digital channels such as social media, websites, email reminders, and mobile applications provide accessibility, personalization, and continuous interaction, enabling patients to receive timely information and maintain ongoing engagement with healthcare services.

Meanwhile, conventional channels such as face-to-face consultations, printed materials, call centers, and on-site service encounters—build emotional trust, credibility, and human connection that patients still highly value in healthcare contexts. When both forms are aligned in message consistency, visual identity, and

service quality, patients perceive a seamless journey across touchpoints, from information search to post-treatment follow-up.

This continuity reduces uncertainty, increases satisfaction, and reinforces confidence in the healthcare provider, ultimately fostering a connected experience that encourages repeat visits and long-term patient loyalty. Digital marketing communication through social media, websites, emails, and health applications allows hospitals to reach patients more widely and efficiently.

Meanwhile, conventional marketing communications such as health seminars, brochures, and face-to-face consultations remain relevant in building emotional trust. The integration of these two approaches is believed to be able to create a more holistic patient experience and increase patient loyalty.

Similarities and differences of this study with previous research:

1. Febrini Damayanti, Ascobat Gani & Wahyu Silistiadi
   The similarity of this study lies in the variable Y = Patient Loyalty while the difference in the X variable is because this study emphasizes the use of Telemedicine [7].

2. Rini Handayani et al.
   There are similarities in this study because it examines the effectiveness of doctor-patient communication aspects that are conventional communication and on variable Y, namely Patient Loyalty, the difference is in factor X where this research does not discuss digital marketing communication in depth and its relationship to digital marketing communication or patient loyalty [8].

3. Sabrina Aulia Rahma et al.
   The similarity of this study lies in the variable Y = Patient Loyalty while the difference in the variable X where this study is about the application of E-CRM [9].

4. Nia Murniati
   There are similarities in this study because it researches about hospital digital *advertising and* on variable Y, namely Patient Loyalty, the difference is in factor X where this research does not discuss in depth conventional marketing communication or its relationship to conventional marketing communication or patient loyalty [10].

5. Patria Asda & Yessi Audina
   The similarity of this study lies in the variable Y = Patient Loyalty while the difference in the X variable where the research lies in the application of therapeutic communication by nurses [11].

6. Yashinta Octavian Setyanda et al.
   The similarity of this study lies in the variable Y = Patient Loyalty While the difference in variable X in this study is about the quality of doctor/dentist communication where this is more towards conventional communication only [12].

3 RESEARCH METHODS

This study uses a quantitative survey method, namely data collection through the dissemination of closed questionnaires at the Bariatric Patient Gathering event (April-June 2025) to the entire population with closed questionnaire instruments based on google form, event flyers and questionnaires.



Figure 2. Baritrik patient questionnaire invitation flyer

This quantitative survey was chosen because it is able to generate systematic data and allows statistical analysis to identify relationships between variables. According to quantitative surveys are effective for health research that requires measurements of patient behavior, such as loyalty, which can be operationalized into

measurable indicators, with this method, the authors can also control for external variables that may affect outcomes [5]. The purpose of using this method is:

1. Kurniawan describe the level of utilization of digital marketing communications (e.g. social media, hospital websites) and conventional (e.g. brochures, health seminars) [5].
2. To find out the relationship between these two variables on the loyalty of bariatric patients [1].

3.1 Population

The population in this study is all bariatric patients who underwent treatment at EMC Alam Sutera Hospital during the last 3 months (April-June 2025). Based on secondary data from hospitals, the number of patients in April was 25 people, May 24 people, and June 31 people, with a total population of 80 patients. According to Population, this is a generalized area consisting of objects or subjects that have certain qualities and characteristics that are determined by the researcher to be analyzed and then conclusions are drawn[13].

3.2 Sample

Since the population is relatively small (<100), the technique used is total sampling. According to Kotler and Keller Sampling and sampling methods, Biometrics & Biostatistics International Journal, total sampling is a sampling technique in which all members of the population are made as research respondents [1]. Thus, all 80 bariatric patients will be made respondents to obtain more representative results.

3.3 Primary Data

Primary data were collected through a closed-ended questionnaire based on a 5-point Likert scale. The questionnaire consists of four sections:

- Part I: Respondents' identities (age, gender, frequency of visits).
- Part II (Variable X1): Questions about digital marketing communication (for example, the intensity of the hospital's social media exposure, ease of access to information through the website).
- Part III (Variable X2): Questions about conventional marketing communication (e.g.the effectiveness of brochures, health seminars).
- Part IV (Variable Y): Questions about patient loyalty (intention to return with another specialist, recommendation of Bariatric services to others, trust in hospital services).

Widely Used in Social Sciences & Health Modern scientific research in the fields of social, health, marketing, and psychology uses a lot of Likert-type scale 5 points because it can capture the level of opinion or attitude of respondents towards the phenomenon being studied. This method has been discussed in scientific publications as a powerful measuring tool for latent constructs such as perception and loyalty [1]. The 5-point scale provides a balance of positive-negative answer options with neutral points, thus better capturing the variation in respondent's perceptions without imposing extreme choices [1].

3.4 Secondary Data

Secondary data is obtained from internal hospital documents, which are data on the number of bariatric patients per month. According to Kotler and Keller Research Methods for Business: A Skill-Building Approach (8th ed.), Wiley Data is collected from all data on marketing communication programs carried out by hospitals, both digital and conventional [1].

3.5 Data Validity (Validity and Reliability)

The validity test is carried out to determine the extent to which the research instrument is able to measure the variable in question precisely. In other words, validity shows the level of accuracy and precision of a measuring instrument in measuring the concept that should be measured. In this study, a validity test was carried out on each statement item in the questionnaire using Pearson Product Moment Correlations**.** This test is used to measure the relationship between each item's score and its variable's total score. If an item has a high correlation to the total score, then it is considered valid on the questionnaire. Here's the Pearson Product Moment formula.

$$r_{xy} = \frac{N\Sigma XY - (\Sigma X)(\Sigma Y)}{\sqrt{(N\Sigma X^2 - (\Sigma X)^2)}(N\Sigma Y^2 - (\Sigma Y)^2)}$$

Description:

- r_{xy} = Correlation coefficient between items and total score
- x = Item Score
- y = Total Score
- N = Number of respondents

The results of the validity test were then compared with the r table value based on the number of samples (n) and the level of significance (a= 0.05).

The statement item is declared valid If the calculation>rtabelr_{calculation}>r_{table}rcalcul>tab le, the Validity Test in this study is carried out using SPSS software version 27 or similar. Each item in the variables X1 (Digital Marketing Communication), X2 (Conventional Marketing Communication) and Y

(Patient Loyalty) were tested individually. All items in the questionnaire will be tested to ensure that each statement matches the indicators and can be used to accurately measure the research variables.

The results of the data processing show that all statement items have a larger r-count value of the table r-count (r-count > 0.456). Therefore, this validity test proves that all items are valid and acceptable to be used as a measuring tool in this study.

3.6 Validity of Reliability Test Data

The reliability test aims to find out the extent to which research instruments can provide results that are consistent and stable when used in repetitive measurements. In other words, reliability refers to confidence level instruments in producing reliable data. In this study, the reliability test was carried out using Coefisien Cronbach's Alpha. According to Kotler and Keller Making sense of Cronbach's alpha, International Journal of Medical Education Cronbach's alpha measures the extent to which items in a variable have internal consistency, i.e. whether all items in a single construct measure the same thing.

$$r = \left(\frac{k}{k-1}\right)\left(1 - \frac{\Sigma\sigma_s^2}{\sigma_t^2}\right)$$

Description:
r = Coefficient reliability
k = Question amount
$\Sigma\sigma_s^2$ = Total variance amount
σ_t^2 = Total variance

1. If Cronbach's Alpha value is greater than or equal to 0.90, the instrument is categorized as very reliable, meaning it has a very high level of consistency.
2. Values between 0.80 and 0.89 indicate that the instrument is reliable and good enough to be used in research.
3. If the value is in the range of 0.70 to 0.79, then the instrument is classified as quite reliable, which means it is still acceptable for exploratory research.
4. Values between 0.60 and 0.69 indicate that the reliability of the instrument is lacking, so it is necessary to evaluate or revise some items.
5. Meanwhile, if Cronbach's Alpha value is less than 0.60, then the instrument is considered unreliable, because it does not show adequate consistency i measurements.
6. If Cronbach's Alpha ≥ 0.7, then the instrument is declared to have good reliability and can be used for data collection.

3.7 Reliability Test Results

The following are the results of the reliability test conducted based on the data that has been collected on the existing variables:

Table 1. Reliability Test

Variabel	Cronbach Alpha	Remarks
Digital Marketing Communication X1	0,986	Highly Reliable
Conventional Marketing Communication X2	0,949	Highly Reliable
Patient Loyalty and	0,988	Highly Reliable

Based on the data obtained and processed using IBM SPSS Statistic 27 software, a realism test was carried out on three variables in this study, namely Digital Marketing Communication X1, Conventional Marketing Communication X2 and Patient Loyalty Y.

The method used is Cronbach's Alpha with the provision that a variable is said to be reliable if it has a Cronbach's Alpha value of ≥0.60. The test results showed that the Digital Marketing Communication (X1) variable had a Cronbach's Alpha value of 0.986, the Conventional Marketing Communication (X2) variable of 0.949 and the Patient Loyalty (Y) variable of 0.988.

All of these values are far above the minimum limit set, so it can be concluded that all items in the three variables are declared reliable and suitable for use as a measuring tool in this study.

3.8 Data Analysis Techniques

According to this study, using a quantitative descriptive technique that explains the relationship between variables through hypothesis testing that has been formulated in this study, Descriptive Analysis is a type of data analysis that aims to present the conditions of sample data, individually for each research variable.

Present frequency distribution and presentation to illustrate respondent characteristics and data trends. This technique provides an overview of the characteristics of the data through the Percentage Explanatory Analysis Formula table [1].

$$P = F/N \; x \; 100$$

a. P = Percentage of Answers
b. F = Frequency Responders
c. N = Number of data sample

Table 2. Descriptive analysis criteria

Presentase	Criteria
83% - 100%	Excellent
65% - 82%	Good
56% - 64%	Pretty Good
35% - 54%	Less
19% - 34%	Very Less

4 RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Descriptive Analysis of the Utilization of Digital Marketing Communication (X1)

Highest Score X Statement Item X Population/ Percentage

= 3279 X 100%
  4000

= 81,9%

Based on the results above, it shows that the X1 variable, namely the Utilization of Digital Marketing Communication, is categorized as good.

4.2 Descriptive Analysis of the Utilization of Conventional Marketing Communication (X2)

Highest Score X Statement Item X Population/ Percentage

= 3220 X 100%
  4000

= 80,5%

Based on the above results, it shows that the X2 variable, namely the Utilization of Conventional Marketing Communication, is categorized as good.

4.3 Descriptive Analysis of Loyalty (Y)

Highest Score X Statement Item X Population/ Percentage

= 3290 X 100%
  4000

= 82,2%

Based on the above results, it shows that variable Y, namely the Utilization of Conventional Marketing Communication, is categorized as good.

The mean test in quantitative research is a statistical test to find out the difference or similarity in the mean value between one or more data groups. The goal is to see if the differences that emerge are statistically significant.

Kotler and Keller in Quantitative Research Methods, Qualitative, and R&D, statistical tests such as the t-test (mean test) are used to find out if there is an average difference between two data groups or between the sample average and a specific value in the population [1].

Table 3. Mean test variable X1

Statement Variables	N	Min	Max	Mean	Std. Dev
X1	**80**	**1**	**5**	**4,00**	**0,917**
X2	80	1	5	4,14	0,951
X3	80	1	5	4,05	0,923
X4	80	1	5	4,14	0,911
X5	80	1	5	4,08	0,939
X6	80	2	5	4,08	0,931
X7	80	2	5	4,13	0,964
X8	**80**	**1**	**5**	**4,18**	**0,972**
X9	80	1	5	4,13	0,959
X10	80	1	5	4,09	0,959

The table above can be concluded from the results of the mean variable communication to 80 respondents with 10 questions with a minimum score of 1 and a maximum of 5.

The highest mean on the digital marketing communication utilization variable at EMC Alam Sutera is item X8 with the statement "I feel comfortable using EMC Alam Sutera's digital services to make control appointments" while the lowest mean is item X1 with the statement "I often see information about EMC Alam Sutera Hospital bariatric services on social media (IG, EMC official website, TikTok).

Table 4. Variable mean test X2

Statement Variables	N	Min	Max	Mean	Hours of deviation
X1	80	1	5	4,05	0,890
X2	80	1	5	3,98	0,897
X3	**80**	**1**	**5**	**3,48**	**0,604**
X4	80	1	5	3,91	0,795
X5	80	1	5	3,98	0,829
X6	80	2	5	4,16	0,893
X7	80	2	5	4,03	0,856
X8	**80**	**2**	**5**	**4,30**	**0,899**
X9	80	1	5	4,16	0,915
X10	80	1	5	4,21	0,841

The table above can be concluded from the results of the mean variable communication to 80 respondents with 10 questions with a minimum score of 1 and a maximum of 5.

The highest mean in the variable the use of conventional marketing communication at EMC Alam Sutera was item X08 with the statement "Direct communication with EMC Alam Sutera doctors made me more confident in the bariatric procedures I underwent" while the lowest mean was item X3 with the statement "I have attended a health seminar on bariatrics at EMC Alam Sutera Hospital/ outside the hospital.

Table 5. Variable Mean Test Y

Statement Variables	N	Min	Max	Mean	Hours of deviation
Y1	80	1	5	4,00	0,926
Y2	80	1	5	4,11	0,978
Y3	**80**	**1**	**5**	**3,99**	**0,875**
Y4	80	1	5	4,19	0,949
Y5	80	1	5	4,16	0,963
Y6	80	2	5	4,14	0,968
Y7	80	2	5	4,14	0,965
Y8	80	2	5	4,14	0,962
Y9	80	1	5	4,13	0,952
Y10	**80**	**1**	**5**	**4,24**	**0,970**

The table above can be concluded from the results of the mean variable communication to 80 respondents with 10 questions with a minimum score of 1 and a maximum of 5.

The highest mean in the Bariatric Patient Loyalty variable at EMC Alam Sutera was item Y10 with the statement "I am proud to have undergone bariatric treatment at EMC Alam Sutera" while the lowest mean was item Y3 with the statement "I am not interested in seeking bariatric services at other hospitals

4.4 Normality Test

The normality test is used to measure whether the data is distributed normally or not, Basic decision hypothesis:

- If the value of Asymp.sig. (2-tailed) >0.05, then it can be concluded that the data is normally distributed.
- If the value of Asymp. Sig.(2-tailed) <0.05, it can be concluded that the data is not normally distributed.

4.5 Multicollegiate Test

According, to find out whether the independent variables in the regression model are strongly correlated with each other or not, a multicollinearity test is needed. This test is important to ensure that the regression model is not disrupted due to the high relationship between its independent variables. In the test using SPSS statistics, mutilinearity was through two indicators, namely the Tolerance value and the Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) [1]. The criteria for decision-making are:

- If the Tolerance value is more than 0.10, then multicollinearity does not occur.
- If the VIF value is less than 10, then it can also be concluded that there is no multicollinearity in the regression model.

Table 6. Results of the Mutilinearity Test

Model	UB	Std.error	SCB	i	Sig	CT	VF
Contant	2,536	2,741		925	358		
VAR0012	222	094	239	2359	021	340	2,943
VAR0013	732	115	649	6394	000	340	2,943

Based on the findings of the multicollinearity test in the image, it can be observed *that the tolerance* variable score VAR00012 is X1 and VAR00013 is X2 and VAR00014 is Y.

The Tolerance Variable score of digital marketing communication is 0.340 which means >0.10 and the tolerance score of conventional marketing communication is 0.340 which means >0.10. While the VIF value of the digital marketing communication variable is 2.943 which means <10.00 and the VIF value of the conventional marketing communication variable is 2.943 which means <10.00, then it can be described that all variables in this study have no multicollinearity issue.

4.6 Hypothesis Test Results Coefficient of Determination

Table 7. Determination Coefficient Results

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std Error of the Estimate
1	855a	,731	,724	4,71447

In the table above, the calculation results obtained a determination coefficient value of 0.731 or 73.1%. This means that the variables of Digital Marketing Communication (X1) and Conventional Marketing Communication (X2) explain that they have a good relationship with the patient loyalty variable (Y) of 73.1%, the rest are explained by other variables.

Table 8. Results of Multiple Linear Regression Analysis Confficients

Model		Unstandardized B	Coefficients Std Error	Standardized Coefficients Beta	t	Sig
1	(Constant)	2,536	2,741	-	.925	.358
	Komunikasi Pemasran Digital	.222	.094	.239	.2,359	.021

	Komunikasi Pemasaran Konvesional	.732	.115	.649	6,394	.000

From these results, it can be explained that:

a. Constant (a) = 0.2536 means that if the variables X1 and X2 = 0, then the Y score is 0.2536
b. The coefficient X1 = 0.222 indicates that every increase of 1 unit on X1 increases Y, which is by 0.222 through the assumption of fixed X2.
c. The coefficient X2 = 0.732 indicates that every increase of 1 unit on X2 increases Y, which is by 0.732 through the assumption of a fixed X1.

4.7 T Test

In this study, T testing was carried out to see the relationship between the influence of Digital Marketing Communication (X1) and conventional (X2) on the loyalty of Bariatric Patients at EMC Alam Sutera (Y)

- If the value of Asymp. Sig(2-tailed) <0.05, then it can be concluded that there is an influence of variable X on variable Y.
- If the value of Asymp.sig(2-tailed) is >0.05, then it can be concluded that there is no influence of variable X on variable Y

Table 9. Multiple linear regression results coefficients

Model		Unstandarized B	Coefficienets Std Error	Standarlized Coefficients Beta	t	Sig.
1	(Constant)	2,536	2,741	0	,925	,358
	Komunikasi Pemasaran Digital	.222	.0,94	.239	2,539	.o21
	Komunikasi Pemasaran Konvesional	.732	.115	.659	6,394	100

The value of Asymp. sig. (2-tailed) = 0.021 < 0.05, then it can be concluded that there is an connection of digital marketing communication (X1) on Patient Loyalty (Y) and the value of X2 0.000 < 0.05, then it can be concluded that there is an connection of conventional turned out to have a great connection marketing communication (X2) on Patient Loyalty (Y).

Referring to the figure above, in evaluating the T score of the table, it can be carried out through the formula df=n-k. (n = total respondents and k = total research variables. In this study, n=80 and k = 3 so that df=80-3=77.

So t can be obtained from a 2-way test with a = 0.05 meaning that 5% of the area is on the right and left tails of the normal curve so the value Z = 1.96 and df 77 So the T score is obtained 1.991.

Namely a total of 1.991. so it can be seen that the T test findings are as follows:

a) Digital Marketing Communication (X1)
In variable X1, a calculated T score can be obtained which is 2.359 and a significant score of 0.021 where the T score is calculated 2.359 > the T value of the table is 1.991 and a significant score of 0.021 < 0.05, then "H0 is rejected and H1 is accepted". Therefore, it can be concluded that "the Digital Marketing Communication variable is partially related and has a positive and significant effect on the Loyalty of Bariatric Patients at EMC Alam Sutera Hospital.

b) Conventional Marketing Communication (X2)
In Conventional Marketing Communication, a T score is obtained which is 6.394 and a significant value of 0.000 where the T score is calculated as 6.394 > the T value of the table is 1.991 and a significant score of 0.000 <0.05, then "H0 is rejected and H1 is accepted". Therefore, it can be concluded that "the variable of Conventional Marketing Communication is partially related and has a positive and significant effect on the loyalty of Bariatric Patients at EMC Alam Sutera Hospital.

c) Digital Marketing Communication (X1) and Conventional Marketing Communication (X2) on Bariatric Patient Loyalty at EMC Alam Sutera (Y)
In variables X1 and X2 get good scores and scores and meet significant criteria less than 0.05 and have a value greater than R table 1.991, then it can be concluded "H0 is rejected and H1 is accepted".

Therefore, it can be concluded that "the variables of Digital and Conventional Marketing Communication are partially related and have a positive and significant effect on the Loyalty of Bariatric Patients at EMC Alam Sutera Hospital.

Table 10. ANOVA

		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig
1	Regression	4641.333	2	2320.666	104.411	.000
	Residual	1711.417	77	22.226		
	Total	6352.750	79			

a. Dependent Variable: Loyalitas Pasien
b. Predictors: (constanti), KOmunikasi Pemasaran Konvesional, Komunikasi Pemasaran Digital.

From the results of the image to find out the F score of the table can be done through the formulas df1 =k-1 and df2= n-k. K = total research variables and n = total respondents. In this study, k=3 and n=80. Which makes df1 = 3-1= 2 and df2 = 80-3 = 77. So the value of the F table is 3.12.

Based on the results of the F test in the image, it can be observed that the F score is calculated as 104.411 through a significant level of 0.000. Where the value of F is calculated as 104.411 > table 3.12 and the significant score is 0.000 <0.05, then "H0 is rejected and Ha is accepted".

Therefore, it can be concluded that Digital and Conventional Marketing Communication are partially related and have a positive and significant effect on Bariatric Patient Loyalty at EMC Alam Sutera Hospital.

5 CONCLUSION

After conducting a series of analyses on the data obtained from the respondents, as well as looking back at the theory used in this study. Especially *Integrated Marketing Communication*, the author concludes that the Research Objectives are all achieved

1. The Utilization of Digital Marketing Communication in Bariatric Patients at EMC Alam Sutera
2. The Utilization of Conventional Marketing Communication in Bariatric patients at EMC Alam Sutera
3. The Loyalty of Bariatric patients at EMC Alam Sutera
4. The Relationship between the Utilization of Digital Marketing Communication and the Loyalty of Bariatric Patients at EMC Alam Sutera
5. The Relationship between the Utilization of Conventional Marketing and the Loyalty of Bariatric Patients at EMC Alam Sutera
6. The relationship between the use of Digital Marketing Communication and the use of conventional marketing on the loyalty of Bariatric patients at EMC Alam Sutera.

The author also obtained several important points from the formulation of the problem "The Relationship between the Utilization of Digital Marketing Communication and the Utilization of Conventional Communication on the Loyalty of Bariatric Patients at EMC Alam Sutera Hospital"

1. The Utilization of Digital Marketing Communication turned out to have a great connection on Bariatric Patient Loyalty at EMC Alam Sutera with the highest Mean at point 4.18 from the standard point at 0.972 on the variable The use of digital marketing communication at EMC Alam Sutera is item X8 with the statement "Patients feel comfortable using EMC Alam Sutera digital services to make control appointments"
2. The use of conventional marketing communication also has a great influence on the loyalty of Bariatric Patients at EMC Alam Sutera with the highest mean at point 4.30 from the standard point at 0.899 on the variable The use of conventional marketing communication is item X08 with the statement "Direct communication with EMC Alam Sutera doctors makes me more confident in the bariatric procedure that I will undergo"
3. If combined, the relationship between the use of Digital Marketing Communication and the use of conventional communication has a determination coefficient value relationship of 0.731 or 73.1%. which means that the variables of Digital Marketing Communication (X1) and Conventional Marketing Communication (X2) have a good relationship with the patient loyalty variable (Y) and the rest are explained by other variables (health services, costs and hospital facilities).
4. The theory *of Integrated Marketing Communication* really proves to be relevant in this context. Patients are better at using features in digital marketing communication so that the higher the conventional marketing communication needed, the higher the Bariatric Patient Loyalty at EMC Alam Sutera. These findings are in line with interactive communication, where engagement, a two-way relationship between digital and conventional marketing communications will create stronger relationships and higher patient loyalty. Patients want to be involved in digital and conventional marketing communication activities because they have *expectations* for something positive in live content and feel that the value is worth it so that patients will become *loyal customers* who have *brand equity* according to the goals of *Integrated Marketing Communication*.

6 SUGGESTIONS

From the results that have been obtained, the author has several suggestions that hopefully can be considered for hospitals and other writers:

1. For EMC Alam Sutera
   Keep continuing and improve the quality and routine *of Digital Marketing*, make sure that the material and content as well as registration links are made or referenced again in a short, concise and appropriate manner so that it becomes more attractive and helps prospective patients to get good and concise health education so that prospective

patients are confident in registering to get health services at EMC Alam Sutera.

2. For Digital Marketing and Conventional Practitioners.
   Don't assume that the use of digital marketing communication can run on its own, precisely after the use of digital communication has been running, we need to align with conventional marketing communication, because with the combination of these methods, the results achieved will be more popular where conventional marketing and the use of social or digital media as part of the marketing communication strategy, saying "Digital Marketing and traditional marketing now inseparable. Companies need to integrate the two through an [13]*Integrated Marketing Communication strategy."* So that it can increase customer loyalty.

3. For further research
   It would be very interesting if similar research was conducted on different patient segments, further research can expand the focus on non-bariatric patients or patients with other types of services at EMC Alam Sutera Hospital, to see if the pattern of relationship between digital marketing communication and conventional marketing communication on patient loyalty with different patient segments.

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Interpretation of Social and Cultural Conflicts in Marjan Putri Hijau and Desa Kehidupan 2024 Advertisement Using Roland Barthes' Semiotic Analysis

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Abstract

This study is based on the understanding that advertisements serve not only as promotional media but also as interpretations of social and cultural values. The Marjan Putri Hijau and Desa Kehidupan Ramadan 2024 advertisement utilizes local mythological narratives to convey moral messages through visual and narrative symbols. This research aims to interpret the representation of social and cultural conflicts in the advertisement using Roland Barthes' semiotics, supported by Geert Hofstede's cultural dimensions theory. The method employed is a descriptive qualitative approach through observation and documentation of visual and verbal elements. The results indicate that at the denotative level, the advertisement depicts a conflict over the life energy; at the connotative level, it represents the struggle between care and greed; and at the mythic level, it naturalizes values of togetherness, the sanctity of nature, and the role of women as protectors of balance. Cultural analysis demonstrates a long-term orientation and social harmony consistent with Indonesian societal characteristics, showing that the advertisement functions as a meaningful medium of cultural communication.

Keywords: Interpretation, social and cultural conflict, Marjan advertisement, Putri Hijau, Roland Barthes' semiotic

1 INTRODUCTION

In contemporary marketing communication, advertisements do not only function as promotional tools but also as media that represent the social and cultural values of society. Indonesia's rich local culture is often utilized in advertisements to convey moral, social, and ideological messages that resonate with audiences. The success of an advertisement is determined by its ability to creatively organize messages through verbal and non-verbal elements, fostering emotional closeness and persuasive power.

Utilizing folklore and myths in advertisements is an effective strategy because they contain universal messages easily recognized by the public. However, meanings within advertisements are not always explicit and require interpretation of visual, verbal, and audio signs. Therefore, a semiotic approach is relevant to examine how meaning is constructed and communicated within advertisements. Roland Barthes' semiotic theory enables the analysis of advertisements through three levels of meaning: denotation, connotation, and myth, revealing underlying ideologies and cultural values.

Previous studies on semiotic analysis of advertising have explored how visual and verbal elements construct meaning and ideology in various contexts. For instance, studies on beauty product advertisements focus on the construction of ideal beauty standards, while research on beverage advertisements emphasizes themes such as freshness, lifestyle, and youth identity. Other studies have examined themes of success, family values, and environmental awareness through semiotic approaches. However, most of these studies tend to focus on general symbolic meanings or specific thematic representations, and rarely examine the representation of social and cultural conflict within advertisements, particularly those rooted in local mythology. Furthermore, limited studies apply Roland Barthes' semiotic framework to explore layered meanings of denotation, connotation, and myth within the cultural context of Indonesian advertisements.

Therefore, this study aims to fill this gap by analyzing the Marjan advertisement "Putri Hijau dan Desa Kehidupan", focusing on the interpretation of social and cultural conflict through Roland Barthes' semiotic approach [1]. One advertisement demonstrating strong symbolic messaging is the Marjan syrup

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advertisement. Marjan has successfully associated its brand with the Ramadan period in the minds of Indonesians, making its advertisement a marker of the holy month. The 2024 Ramadan edition titled "Putri Hijau and Desa Kehidupan" features a fantasy theme inspired by local mythology.

The advertisement depicts a conflict between Putri Hijau, symbolizing the protector of nature, and Tuan Jungkat, representing greed that disrupts environmental balance. The struggle over life energy serves as a metaphor for social and cultural conflicts between collective interest and individual ambition. Through Roland Barthes' semiotics, this study aims to interpret symbolic meaning, cultural representation, and myths constructed in the Marjan "Putri Hijau and Desa Kehidupan" advertisement as a form of communication of moral and social care during Ramadan.

2 LITERATURE REVIEW

This study is grounded in the understanding that communication is a social process crucial in shaping meaning, perception, and cultural values in society. The term "communication" derives from *communicare*, meaning "to share" or "to make something common," implying that communication is essentially a process of building mutual understanding through verbal and non-verbal symbols [2] In media and advertising, communication functions not only as information delivery but also as a tool for constructing social reality and representing ideology. Effective communication engages both verbal and non-verbal elements simultaneously to create coherent and meaningful messages.

Advertisements serve informative, persuasive, and reminder functions, while also adding value to products by building specific imagery and meanings in the audience's mind [3]. Thus, advertisements cannot be separated from the cultural context in which they are produced and consumed, as they convey values, norms, and prevailing ideologies.

To understand how meanings and ideologies operate in advertisements, this study employs Roland Barthes' semiotic approach. Barthes expanded Ferdinand de Saussure's sign theory by introducing the *two orders of signification*, namely denotation and connotation, later evolving into the concept of myth. According to Barthes, a sign results from the relation between the signifier and the signified, which is arbitrary and determined by social and cultural context; meaning is never neutral or natural [4]. Denotation is understood as the literal or "what-it-is" meaning, objective and socially agreed upon [5]. Whereas connotation refers to additional meanings arising from cultural associations, social experiences, and interpreters' backgrounds, making it subjective and contextual.

At a deeper level, Barthes introduced the concept of myth as the third-order system of meaning, representing the naturalization of ideology through signs, making it appear self-evident and collectively accepted [6]. In advertising, myth functions to obscure underlying ideological and cultural needs behind seemingly simple visual narratives. Barthes' semiotic analysis is particularly relevant for examining advertisements because it extends beyond linguistic elements to include visuals, gestures, colors, and cultural symbols used in constructing meaning. This approach enables researchers to reveal how social and cultural conflicts are represented, as well as how moral values are conveyed in advertisements.

In addition to Barthes' semiotics, this study employs Geert Hofstede's cultural dimensions theory to understand the cultural values represented in the advertisement. Hofstede emphasizes that culture influences individuals' thinking, behavior, and communication [7]. He categorizes national culture into six dimensions, including power distance, uncertainty avoidance, individualism versus collectivism, masculinity versus femininity, long-term versus short-term orientation, and indulgence versus restraint [8]. In Indonesia, collectivism, social harmony, mutual cooperation (*gotong royong*), and long-term orientation are dominant cultural characteristics.

Hofstede's theory is used to observe how these cultural values are built and represented through symbols, characters, and narrative in the advertisement. Long-term orientation is evident in messages about sustainability and environmental protection. Masculinity versus femininity enables analysis of gender representation, particularly the presence of strong yet empathetic female figures.

This study does not use Roland Barthes' semiotic theory and Hofstede's cultural dimensions separately, but rather integrates both frameworks to provide a more comprehensive analysis. Barthes' semiotic theory is first employed to identify and interpret the meanings of signs in the advertisement at three levels: denotation, connotation, and myth. Through this process, the study reveals how visual and narrative elements construct symbolic meanings and ideological messages.

Subsequently, Hofstede's cultural dimensions are used to interpret these meanings within a broader cultural context. The cultural values identified through Barthes' semiotic analysis—such as collectivism, social harmony, and long-term orientation—are further examined using Hofstede's framework to understand how these values are represented, reinforced, and naturalized in the advertisement.

Thus, Barthes' semiotics functions as a tool to decode meaning, while Hofstede's cultural dimensions provide a framework to interpret the cultural significance behind those meanings. This integration allows the study

to not only analyze how meaning is constructed, but also explain why certain cultural values are emphasized in the Marjan advertisement.

Based on this theoretical foundation, the research framework considers advertisements as mass communication forms containing visual and narrative signs. These signs are analyzed using Roland Barthes' semiotics to explain denotative, connotative, and mythic meanings, which are then interpreted through Hofstede's cultural dimensions to understand naturalized cultural values. This framework positions advertisements as an intersection of commercial interest, cultural representation, and social ideology, allowing comprehensive understanding of how the Marjan Putri Hijau and Desa Kehidupan 2024 advertisement represents conflicts, values, and cultural identity in Indonesian society.

3 RESEARCH METHODS

This study uses an interpretive paradigm with a qualitative approach, viewing social and cultural reality as constructed through meaning, symbols, and representation. This paradigm is appropriate because the research focuses on interpreting meanings behind visual, verbal, and audio signs in the Marjan Putri Hijau and Desa Kehidupan Ramadan 2024 advertisement. The method applied is descriptive qualitative, aiming to describe and interpret phenomena in depth based on social and cultural contexts without emphasizing variable relationships [9].

Unit of analysis in this study is defined as individual scenes and visual sequences within the Marjan Putri Hijau and Desa Kehidupan 2024 advertisement. Each scene is treated as a unit of meaning that contains visual elements (such as characters, colors, setting, and gestures), verbal elements (dialogues and narration), and audio elements (background music and sound effects). These units are selected based on their relevance to the representation of social and cultural conflict, environmental themes, and symbolic interactions between characters. By focusing on specific scenes, the analysis becomes more structured and allows for in-depth interpretation of signs within their narrative context.

The research type is descriptive qualitative, with data in the form of visual texts, dialogues, narratives, symbols, colors, gestures, and audio elements present in the advertisement. Data are analyzed using Roland Barthes' semiotic theory, emphasizing three layers of meaning denotation, connotation, and myth to uncover ideology and social-cultural messages in the advertisement [10]. Thus, the advertisement is understood not only as a promotional medium for Marjan syrup but also as a symbolic representation containing cultural values, social conflicts, and ideological narratives about goodness, greed, and social harmony.

The research material consists of the Marjan Putri Hijau and Desa Kehidupan Ramadan 2024 advertisement, comprising two episodes. The advertisement features strong narrative and cultural elements, set in the Desa Kehidupan as a symbolic space representing an ideal, harmonious society rooted in local values and aligned with nature. The character Putri Hijau symbolizes feminine strength, local wisdom, and guardian of cultural values, inspired by Malay folklore from North Sumatra.

Data sources are categorized into primary and secondary data. Primary data is directly obtained from the advertisement video accessed via Marjan Boudoin's official YouTube channel, serving as the main informant because it contains the primary signs, symbols, and narratives to be analyzed. Secondary data is collected from Roland Barthes' semiotic literature, academic journals on visual communication and advertising, previous related studies, and online media articles discussing Marjan advertisements and the Putri Hijau cultural context.

Data collection techniques include observation and documentation. Observation examines visual, verbal, and audio elements in the advertisement as a system of signs, which are then analyzed based on Barthes' denotation, connotation, and myth. Documentation involves recording, noting, and classifying scenes, dialogues, colors, symbols, and storylines in text, images, and visual captures to support systematic and structured analysis.

The data collection process is conducted through several systematic steps. First, the researcher repeatedly watches the advertisement to gain a comprehensive understanding of its narrative and visual structure. Second, the advertisement is segmented into key scenes based on changes in storyline, setting, and character interaction. Third, important elements such as dialogues, visual symbols, colors, gestures, and audio cues are identified and documented. Fourth, screenshots and written notes are taken to capture significant moments that represent social and cultural meanings. Finally, all collected data are classified and organized into categories to facilitate semiotic analysis.

Data validity and reliability are ensured through triangulation. Source triangulation compares advertisement analysis with literature, academic journals, semiotic studies, and cultural references such as the Putri Hijau legend and North Sumatran social context. Method triangulation combines visual observation and literature review, including potential audience interviews to strengthen symbolic interpretation. Reliability is maintained by consistently applying Barthes' semiotic framework to every scene, ensuring denotation, connotation, and myth

interpretations are evidence-based and culturally contextualized, resulting in scientifically accountable outcomes.

Data analysis employs qualitative analysis concurrently with data collection to facilitate in-depth interpretation of signs [11]. The Marjan Putri Hijau and Desa Kehidupan 2024 advertisement is analyzed using Barthes' semiotics through denotative, connotative, and mythic layers. Denotation examines literal meanings of visual and narrative signs such as Putri Hijau, Tuan Jungkat, environmental changes, and iftar scenes. Connotation reveals cultural meanings related to care, greed, and togetherness. Myth interprets ideology about the struggle between good and evil, the sanctity of nature, women's roles as life guardians, and Ramadan rituals as social and spiritual restoration.

The stages of semiotic analysis in this study are conducted systematically in three main steps. First, denotative analysis is performed to describe the literal meaning of each selected scene, focusing on what is visually and explicitly presented. Second, connotative analysis is carried out to interpret the deeper cultural and emotional meanings associated with the signs, considering social context and audience interpretation. Third, myth analysis is applied to reveal underlying ideologies and cultural beliefs that are naturalized within the advertisement. These stages are applied consistently to each unit of analysis to ensure a structured and comprehensive interpretation of meaning.

4 RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The Marjan Ramadan 2024 advertisement was produced by PT Lasallefood Indonesia, a food and beverage company established in 2002 that manages several prominent brands such as Sunquick, Del Monte, Maestro, and Marjan. As one of Indonesia's leading syrup brands, Marjan consistently presents advertisements with narrative and cultural nuances. In 2024, Marjan featured a fantasy story inspired by the local legend of Putri Hijau from North Sumatra through two series of advertisements titled "Putri Hijau and the Village of Life" and "Putri Hijau and the Greed of Tuan Jungkat", each with a duration of 60 seconds. The ads starred Josevanie Looraine Allestra and were broadcast on television and digital media during the Ramadan period leading up to Eid al-Fitr 2024.

Narratively, the advertisement depicts a village living in peace thanks to the life energy guarded by a true protector. This tranquility is disrupted by the arrival of Tuan Jungkat, an antagonist who steals life energy to maintain power and youth. His actions result in environmental damage and the loss of social harmony. Putri Hijau emerges as the savior striving to restore balance to nature and the community's life. The conflict continues in the second episode, where Tuan Jungkat's greed ultimately leads to his own downfall, while Putri Hijau successfully restores life energy, concluding the story with a message of victory and hope, reinforced by Marjan's Ramadan slogan.

The character of Putri Hijau in this advertisement is inspired by the Malay legend from North Sumatra, which has been passed down since the 15th–16th centuries in the regions of Aceh, East Sumatra, and the Malay Peninsula. In the legend, Putri Hijau is known as a beautiful woman with a greenish glow symbolizing power, protection, and life [1]. In the advertisement, Putri Hijau is visualized as a graceful yet resilient young warrior, representing courage, sincerity, and care for both nature and society. The dominance of the color green not only reinforces the symbolism of life protection but also subtly connects the values of freshness, authenticity, and hope with Marjan syrup's brand identity. The cinematic visual presentation, choreography incorporating local cultural elements, and Josevanie Looraine Allestra's performance make Putri Hijau emotionally and symbolically impactful.

Using Roland Barthes' semiotic analysis, the meaning in the Marjan Putri Hijau and the Village of Life (2024) advertisement is constructed through two primary layers: denotation and connotation, which further develop into myth as a form of ideological naturalization. This hierarchical structure of meaning is consistently employed to convey cultural, moral, and ideological messages relevant to Indonesian society, particularly during the Ramadan period. Through this approach, the advertisement is not only viewed as a medium to promote products but also as a platform for representing social values functioning through a system of visual and narrative signs.

At the denotative level, the advertisement presents visual sequences depicting a harmonious village, a glowing tree as the source of life energy, villagers, environmental conflicts, the antagonist Tuan Jungkat, and Putri Hijau as the savior. Literally, the scenes depict the village's transition from peace to destruction caused by the theft of life energy, which is subsequently restored through the protagonist's struggle. This denotative meaning serves as a recognizable visual foundation for the audience and as the starting point for constructing deeper meanings.

The visual meaning then develops at the connotative level through cultural and emotional associations. The glowing tree and the dominance of green connotate life, fertility, hope, and blessings aligned with Ramadan values. Conversely, red, fire, and destruction represent greed, moral crisis, and environmental degradation caused by excessive exploitation. Putri Hijau is interpreted as a symbol of courage, care, and moral responsibility, particularly representing women as agents of change. Thus, the

visual conflict becomes a metaphorical struggle between care and greed.

At the myth level, the advertisement constructs an ideological narrative naturalized as a collective truth. Putri Hijau is mythologized as a female hero restoring ecological and social balance, in line with Nusantara folk traditions of a savior figure appearing when harmony is disrupted. Conversely, Tuan Jungkat is mythologized as the personification of greedy power destroying ecological and social order. Through this myth construction, the advertisement instills the ideology that greed leads to destruction, while care and sacrifice are pathways to restoration. This mechanism makes cultural values appear natural and easily accepted.

This naturalization strategy is reinforced by associating the product as a symbol of freshness, togetherness, and life restoration. Scenes of multi-generational iftar gatherings and the restored natural harmony create the myth that happiness and Ramadan blessings are realized through simple moments of togetherness. Hence, the advertisement not only serves commercial purposes but also reproduces cultural ideologies about social solidarity, environmental balance, and spiritual values naturally embedded in everyday life.

Hofstede's cultural dimension of uncertainty avoidance is related to societies with a tendency toward high uncertainty avoidance. This is evident in the advertisement's narrative trajectory, moving from ideal conditions to chaos, and then returning to order. Initially, the harmonious village with a glowing tree and peaceful villagers represents stability and order, reflecting the community's need for certainty, security, and life balance. When the sky turns red, nature is damaged, and life energy is stolen by Tuan Jungkat, the villagers are depicted as anxious, powerless, and threatened. This condition illustrates uncertainty that triggers social and emotional tension.

Through Barthes' semiotic perspective, this destruction connotatively represents a moral crisis caused by greed. At the myth level, the conflict emphasizes the cultural belief that restoring stability requires resolving imbalance. Putri Hijau's emergence as a hero functions as a symbol controlling uncertainty and restoring harmony. Interestingly, the presence of Marjan products at the end of each episode acts as a "symbol of resolution" or a crucial turning point. Within the Indonesian cultural context, the product's presence in the peaceful closing scenes assures the audience that after tension and uncertainty, moments of togetherness accompanied by Marjan signify the return to an ideal and calm life order. Therefore, the advertisement not only conveys moral messages but also represents Indonesian society's value of uncertainty avoidance, which prioritizes stability and order.

Visually, this uncertainty avoidance is represented through sequences forming a narrative structure: stability, crisis, and recovery. The harmonious village with a glowing tree symbolizes order and security, reflecting the psychological needs of the community. The transition to a red sky, environmental destruction, and Tuan Jungkat's theft of life energy marks uncertainty triggering collective anxiety. Putri Hijau's arrival restores social and ecological balance, emphasized through communal togetherness. These visual sequences show how the advertisement symbolically constructs the journey from uncertainty to stability as the ideal state. Therefore, the visual structure functions not only as an aesthetic element but also as a cultural representation affirming the Indonesian tendency to seek resolution, certainty, and order during crises.

In Hofstede's Masculinity versus Femininity dimension, the value conflict is reflected in the interplay between competition, courage, and achievement with harmony, care, and quality of life. The Marjan Putri Hijau advertisement (2024) effectively represents both dimensions simultaneously through symbolic visual narratives.

Denotatively, the visuals start with a harmonious village, a glowing tree as the life source, and villagers coexisting peacefully. Connotatively, this reflects femininity values, where the glowing tree and green hues symbolize balance, care, and strong social unity. However, the atmosphere changes when the sky turns red, signaling the onset of destruction. At this point, masculinity values appear, requiring courage, decisiveness, and opposition to evil.

Putri Hijau becomes the focal figure integrating both dimensions. As a female hero, she demonstrates strength and bravery, yet her power is not for personal domination or victory. Her courage stems from protecting, restoring nature, and ensuring communal well-being. She represents a fusion of assertiveness (masculinity) and nurturing instinct (femininity).

At the myth level, the narrative emphasizes the ideology that in Indonesian culture, an ideal hero is not measured solely by physical strength but by the strength derived from care. This alignment portrays masculinity and femininity not as opposing poles but as a unified value system. The advertisement conveys that true courage arises from safeguarding life and maintaining communal harmony.

A concrete visual representation is when Putri Hijau stands in the desert, holding a sword with one hand extended forward. Denotatively, this shows readiness to confront threats. Connotatively, the sword symbolizes bravery and strength associated with masculinity, while the extended hand represents protection and care reflecting femininity. Her objective is not domination but village preservation and balance restoration. This

visual demonstrates the integration of struggle and social care within a single female hero.

This meaning is reinforced during Putri Hijau's confrontation with Tuan Jungkat. The fight highlights courage and decisiveness as masculine values but is directed toward a collective goal: community protection and harmony restoration. At the myth level, these scenes affirm the ideology that ideal strength in Indonesian culture is used to care for communal life, positioning masculinity and femininity as complementary rather than contradictory in forming a holistic hero figure.

In Hofstede's long-term versus short-term orientation, long-term adaptation emphasizes dedication, struggle, sacrifice, and efforts that endure for future success. The denotation, connotation, and myth in the Marjan Putri Hijau advertisement represent a long-term orientation. The village with a glowing tree symbolizes a life source protected over generations, reflecting sustainability and respect for future outcomes. When threats arise, represented by the red sky and environmental destruction, villagers do not seek immediate solutions solely for short-term security but await a figure capable of restoring long-term balance.

Putri Hijau's struggle, from the beginning of the battle until the green light reappears, illustrates that collective success requires dedication, sacrifice, and patience through a prolonged process. This long-term orientation is further reinforced by the fact that Marjan advertisements are an annual Ramadan tradition. The consistent airing of narrative-rich ads is not merely a marketing strategy but has become part of a cultural ritual, encouraging audiences to continually preserve spiritual and social values year after year.

At the myth level, the narrative emphasizes the cultural belief that preserving nature, moral values, and social harmony is a long-term investment for future generations. Therefore, the advertisement aligns Marjan's product identity with the cultural resilience of Indonesian society, which prioritizes the sustainability of noble values over short-term gratification.

A visual representation of long-term orientation is seen when the village is restored, and villagers gather to celebrate around the glowing tree. Denotatively, this depicts environmental recovery and social togetherness post-conflict. Connotatively, the revived glowing tree symbolizes the continuity of life and ecological balance, while collective celebration signals hope for the shared future. At the myth level, this visual reinforces the cultural belief that maintaining environmental and social harmony is a long-term investment ensuring generational stability.

Beyond descriptive explanation, this study provides a deeper interpretation by positioning the Marjan advertisement as a cultural text that reflects and reinforces Indonesian social values. The representation of Putri Hijau as a protector of nature does not merely function as a narrative element, but also signifies the ideological construction of women as agents of care, morality, and balance within society. This finding indicates that the advertisement reproduces cultural expectations where strength is legitimized through nurturing and collective responsibility, rather than domination.

Furthermore, the integration of Barthes' semiotic analysis with Hofstede's cultural dimensions reveals that the meanings constructed in the advertisement are not neutral, but are closely tied to dominant cultural values such as collectivism, harmony, and long-term orientation. This supports Barthes' argument that myth functions to naturalize ideology, making cultural values appear unquestionable and universally accepted.

These findings are consistent with previous studies on semiotic analysis of advertisements, which show that advertisements function not only as promotional tools but also as carriers of social meaning and cultural ideology. However, this study contributes by specifically highlighting the integration of environmental issues, gender representation, and cultural mythology within a single narrative framework, which has not been extensively explored in previous research. In addition, the use of Hofstede's cultural dimensions provides a broader cultural interpretation that complements semiotic analysis, offering a more comprehensive understanding of how meaning and cultural values are constructed in Indonesian advertising.

5 CONCLUSION

Based on the semiotic analysis of Roland Barthes on the Marjan Putri Hijau and the Village of Life Ramadan 2024 advertisement, it can be concluded that the advertisement constructs layered meanings through a strong system of visual and narrative signs. At the denotative level, the advertisement depicts the conflict between Putri Hijau and Tuan Jungkat over the village's life energy. At the connotative level, this conflict represents the struggle between care and greed, harmony and exploitation, as well as environmental protection and individual ambition. Meanwhile, at the myth level, the advertisement naturalizes Indonesian cultural ideology regarding the sanctity of nature, the importance of togetherness, the role of women as guardians of life, and the Ramadan ritual as a means of social and spiritual restoration. Consequently, the Marjan advertisement functions not only as a product promotion medium but also as a platform for communicating moral, cultural, and ideological values relevant to Indonesian society.

From the perspective of Geert Hofstede's cultural dimension theory, the advertisement represents the values of uncertainty avoidance, masculinity versus femininity, and long-term orientation, which align with the characteristics of Indonesian culture. The presence of

Putri Hijau as a female hero emphasizes that courage and decisiveness can coexist with care and social harmony. The significance of this study lies in its contribution to enriching semiotic analyses of advertisements based on local culture, while also demonstrating that mythological narratives can be effectively employed in marketing communication. This study recommends that advertising practitioners pay greater attention to the potential of cultural symbols and local values as a communication strategy that is not only persuasive but also socially and culturally meaningful. Furthermore, future research may expand the study by comparing the representation of local culture in advertisements across different brands or time periods.

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Public Relations Communication Strategy in the Development of Culinary Tourism of the Old Port of Fencing at the Sibolga City Tourism Office

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Abstract

This study analyzes the public relations communication strategy of the Sibolga City Tourism Office in developing culinary tourism at the Old Port of Fencing. This research is motivated by suboptimal tourism communication, weak destination branding, and an unintegrated communication strategy. The research objective is to examine the planning, implementation, and evaluation of communication strategies and relationships with stakeholders. The study used a qualitative approach with a phenomenological design. Data were collected through in-depth interviews, observation, and documentation with eight informants consisting of public relations officers, culinary MSMEs, and the community. Data analysis was conducted interactively through data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing. The results show that the communication strategy is implemented through event-based promotions and the use of digital media, but is not optimal because the planning is not specific, implementation is not consistent, and evaluation is not measurable. In addition, stakeholder collaboration is not participatory and destination branding is still weak.

Keywords: Destination Branding, Public Relations, Tourism, Communication Strategy, Culinary Tourism.

1 INTRODUCTION

The development of the tourism sector is one of the important strategies in increasing regional economic growth, especially through optimizing the potential of locally-based tourism such as culinary tourism. From the perspective of development communication, the success of tourism development is not only determined by the availability of destinations, but also by effective communication strategies in building an image, attracting tourists, and engaging local communities. The role of public relations (PR) is crucial in bridging the interests of the government, business actors, and the community in developing tourism potential in a sustainable manner [1].

Nationally, Indonesia's tourism sector shows a post-pandemic recovery trend. The Ministry of Tourism and Creative Economy of the Republic of Indonesia noted that in 2023 the tourism sector's contribution to the national Gross Domestic Product (GDP) reached 4.1%, with the culinary subsector accounting for more than 40% of the total national creative economy (Kemenparekraf RI, 2023). The data shows that culinary tourism has a strategic role as the main attraction of tourism destinations as well as a regional identity that is able to strengthen regional competitiveness.

Sibolga City as a coastal city has great tourism potential, especially in the culinary sector based on marine products and coastal culture. One of the areas that has strategic value is the Old Port of Fencing, which not only serves as a center for fishermen's activities, but also develops into a public space and a traditional culinary center. This area serves a variety of typical foods such as paccak grilled fish, geleng grilled fish, fish head curry, seafood fried dumpling noodles, sago lompong, to tue rice which has a unique local flavor. This potential shows that the area has great opportunities to be developed as a leading culinary tourism destination. However, until now this potential has not been managed optimally and does not have a strong positioning as a culinary tourism destination [2].

Based on data from the Central Statistics Agency of Sibolga City (2023), the number of tourist visits has fluctuated in recent years. One of the factors that affect this condition is the tourism promotion and communication strategy that has not been optimally integrated. Destination promotion is still dominated by conventional approaches and has not fully utilized digital media strategically, even though changes in tourist behavior in the digital era require an adaptive, interactive, and experience-based communication approach.

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In this context, the Public Relations of the Tourism Office has a strategic role as a destination communication manager. Public Relations is not only tasked with conveying information, but also building an image, managing public perception, and facilitating dialogue between local governments, culinary MSME actors, local communities, and tourists. Poorly planned public relations communication strategies can have an impact on low public participation, lack of media exposure, and weak branding of culinary tourism destinations [3].

Theoretically, a public relations communication strategy is a systematic process that includes research, planning, implementation, and evaluation of communication to build public image and trust. Cutlip, Center, and Broom (2021) emphasized that public relations communication strategies do not only function as information delivery, but also as an effort to form a positive public perception of an organization or destination. In the context of tourism, this strategy is key in building attraction and destination differentiation in the midst of increasingly fierce competition.

Approach *relationship-based public relations* emphasizing the importance of quality relationships between local governments and stakeholders, such as local communities, MSME actors, and tourists. This approach places two-way dialogue, trust, and public participation as key elements in the success of public relations communication. Thus, public relations not only plays a role as a communicator, but also as a facilitator who is able to build collaboration in the development of culinary tourism in a sustainable manner. The development of culinary tourism is also closely related to experiential tourism communication (*Experience-based tourism communication*). Richards, (2021) explains that modern tourism emphasizes authentic experiences as the main attraction of destinations. In the context of culinary tourism, the experience of enjoying local food, environmental atmosphere, and cultural stories is an important part of shaping the image of the destination.

Therefore, an effective communication strategy must be able to package the experience through persuasive narratives, visuals, and storytelling [5]. Concept *Location Branding* is also an important foundation in this research [6] states that the image and identity of a place are built through consistent, integrated, and sustainable communication. In the context of culinary tourism, destination branding not only showcases food products, but also cultural values, local identity, and tourist experiences. Therefore, the public relations of the Tourism Office has a central role in communicating this identity so that the Old Port of Anggar is not only perceived as an economic activity area, but also as a culinary tourism destination that has a distinctive attraction. In the perspective of work ethics values, Islam also emphasizes the importance of responsibility and professionalism in every activity. This is as reflected in the Qur'an which states: *"And say: Work for yourselves, and Allah and His Messenger and the believers will see your work."* (QS. At-Taubah: 105). This verse contains the meaning that every work must be done seriously, responsibly, and professionally. This value is in line with the concept *Courtesy*, which is to work optimally in every role, including in public relations practices in the tourism sector.

Previous research has shown that public relations communication strategies that utilize digital media, culinary storytelling, and collaboration with local communities can increase the visibility and competitiveness of culinary tourism [7]. However, the implementation of the strategy at the regional level still faces various obstacles, such as limited human resources, budgets, and inter-agency coordination [8]. Based on these conditions, this research is important to study and analyze in depth the public relations communication strategy of the Sibolga City Tourism Office in the development of culinary tourism of the Old Port of Anggar. This research is expected to make an academic contribution to the study of public relations and tourism communication, as well as provide practical recommendations for local governments in formulating effective, participatory, and sustainable communication strategies.

2 LITERATURE REVIEW

The study of public relations communication strategies in tourism development is grounded in the understanding that public relations plays a strategic role in building relationships between organizations and the public. According to [9] public relations communication strategy is a systematic process that includes research, planning, implementation, and evaluation to build public image and trust. In the tourism context, this strategy extends beyond information dissemination to shaping positive perceptions of destinations.

Previous studies have highlighted the importance of a relationship-based public relations approach, emphasizing two-way communication, trust, and stakeholder engagement. Research in the tourism sector consistently shows that relationship-oriented communication can enhance community participation and strengthen destination image. However, most of these studies focus primarily on stakeholder engagement outcomes without sufficiently explaining how such relationships are strategically constructed and sustained, particularly in the context of culinary tourism development involving local governments, MSMEs, and communities. In parallel, the shift toward experiential tourism communication has become increasingly prominent.

Richards, (2021) argues that modern tourism prioritizes authentic experiences as the core attraction of destinations. In culinary tourism, experiences such as local food consumption, cultural atmosphere, and storytelling significantly contribute to destination image formation. Supporting this view, [5] emphasize that effective culinary tourism communication must package experiences through persuasive narratives, visuals, and storytelling. Nevertheless, prior studies tend to examine experiential communication mainly from a marketing or promotional perspective, with limited integration into broader public relations strategies led by government institutions.

Furthermore, the concept of location branding provides another critical perspective. [6] explains that place identity and image are constructed through consistent and continuous communication. In culinary tourism, branding involves not only showcasing products but also communicating cultural values, local identity, and tourist experiences. While existing research acknowledges the importance of destination branding, it often treats branding as a promotional tool rather than as part of an integrated public relations strategy that simultaneously manages relationships and experiences.

Based on the synthesis of these studies, several research gaps can be identified. First, prior research tends to examine public relations communication, experiential tourism, and location branding in isolation, without integrating these perspectives into a comprehensive analytical framework. Second, there is limited research that specifically explores how public relations strategies of local governments operationalize these concepts simultaneously in the development of culinary tourism. Third, empirical studies focusing on smaller or emerging destinations, such as Sibolga, remain underrepresented in the literature.

Positioned within these gaps, this study offers a more integrative approach by combining public relations communication strategies, relationship-based public relations, and experiential tourism communication to analyze the development of culinary tourism at the Old Port of Anggar in Sibolga. This research contributes to the literature by demonstrating how public relations functions not only as a communication tool but also as a strategic mechanism that simultaneously builds relationships, constructs experiences, and shapes destination identity in a cohesive manner.

3 RESEARCH METHODS

This study uses a qualitative approach with the aim of understanding in depth the Public Relations Communication Strategy of the Sibolga City Tourism Office in the Development of Culinary Tourism of the Old Port Fencing was chosen because it is able to explore the meaning, process, and dynamics of communication that takes place in public relations practice, especially in the context of regional tourism development [10]. The research design used is phenomenological, which focuses on the subjective experiences of actors involved in the development of culinary tourism.

Through this approach, the researcher seeks to understand how the Public Relations of the Tourism Office, culinary MSME actors, and the surrounding community interpret the communication strategy carried out and its impact on the image and attraction of the Anggar Old Port of Banggar. The source of research data consists of primary data and secondary data. Primary data was obtained through in-depth interviews with purposively selected informants, namely officials or public relations staff of the Sibolga City Tourism Office, culinary business actors in the Old Port Area, and other related parties. The research informants amounted to 8 people who were selected purposively, consisting of 2 public relations staff of the Sibolga City Tourism Office, 3 culinary MSME actors, and 3 communities around the Old Port Anggar area. Secondary data was obtained from official government report documents, data from the Central Statistics Agency, and scientific literature relevant to the topic of public relations communication strategies and tourism offices.

Data collection techniques are carried out through in-depth interviews, observations, and documentation. Wawanacara is used to explore the views and experiences of informants related to the planning, implementation and evaluation of public relations communication strategies. Observations are carried out to directly observe communication practices and culinary tourism promotion activities in the field, while documentation is used to complete data in the form of archives, activity reports and communication materials used by the tourism office. Data analysis is carried out interactively with the stages of data reduction, and drawing conclusions as stated by [11]. The validity of the data is maintained through techniques and source triangulation, namely by comparing data from interviews, observations, and documentation to ensure the consistency and credibility of research findings. With this method, the research is expected to be able to produce a comprehensive understanding of the strategy, public relations communication of the Sibolga City Tourism Office in the development of culinary tourism in the old port of Anggar.

4 RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Results

Based on the results of in-depth interviews conducted with the Head of the Office and the Public Relations staff of the Sibolga City Tourism Office, and supported by information from MSME actors and the community around the Old Port Anggar area, a number

of findings were obtained related to public relations communication strategies in the development of culinary tourism. Public Relations Communication Strategy Planning The results of the research show that the Sibolga City Tourism Office has planned communication strategies in tourism development, including the potential for culinary tourism in the Anggar Old Port area.

The planning is carried out within the framework of general tourism promotion based on events and creative economy development. This is as conveyed by the Head of the Sibolga City Tourism Office, Wahyu Aulia Siregar, SAP, M.M. Communication strategic planning is still in the stage of promoting global tourism based on events. The communication strategy has targeted various stakeholders such as local tourists, MSME actors, the creative community, the media, and investors. The communication media used include digital platforms such as *Instagram, Facebook, TikTok, and official websites*. The use of digital media shows an adaptation to the development of modern communication. The implementation of the public relations communication strategy is carried out through a combination of event-based promotion and digital media.

The form of promotional activities carried out is to create events that gather many people, In addition, promotion is carried out by utilizing digital media such as Facebook, Instagram, TikTok and websites, a big event, namely the upcoming anniversary of Sibolga inviting all people to come to the Old Port of Anggar to enjoy events and culinary at the Old Port of Anggar, the implementation also involves collaboration with MSME Actors of the local community Creative economy actors This effort carried out to increase the attractiveness of the area through a participatory approach [12].

The Communication Strategy Evaluation is carried out through several indicators, namely an increase in the number of tourist visits, the development of the creative economy The results of visitor surveys, the evaluation is carried out by looking at the increase in visitors, creative developments, and through surveys, However, the evaluation has not been carried out in a measured and systematic manner, so it is still necessary to strengthen more specific evaluation indicators. The relationship between the Tourism Office and MSME actors and the community has been established through quite intensive communication, the Sibolga City Tourism Office has a special group with creative economy actors to share information and promote From the perspective of MSME actors stated that they have felt the benefits of promotional activities, especially during the event, the head of the Sibolga city tourism office said that if there is an event, visitors are crowded and sales increase, However, they also said that Promotion is not consistent, the branding of the area is not strong, and facility support is still limited.

Apart from that, the community and creative economy actors continue to be involved in promotional activities through a collaborative approach. The perspective of the surrounding community assesses that the Anggar Old Port area has great potential as a culinary tourism destination. *"This place is actually good for culinary tourism, but it's not very widely known yet."* The community also considers that Promotion has not been maximized The identity of the area is not clear The need for innovation in tourism development. The results of the interviews show that the communication strategy carried out still focuses on the event-based promotion approach. This indicates that communication planning has not led to a long-term strategy based on audience segmentation.

Table 1. Data Reduction

Research Focus	Field Findings	Categories
Strategy Planning	Planning is already in place, but it is still general, and has not focused on culinary tourism	Not optimal yet
Strategy Implementation	Promotion is carried out through events but is still not consistent	Simply walk
Strategy Evaluation	Evaluation is conducted in general without clear indicators	weak
Relationship PR	Relationships with the community, the creative economy and MSMEs have been established	Pretty good
Branding	Branding efforts already exist but are not yet strong and widely known	Not yet maximum

Based on the results of in-depth interviews conducted with the Head and Public Relations staff of the Sibolga City Tourism Office, as well as MSME actors and the surrounding community in the Old Port Anggar area, several findings were identified regarding public relations communication strategies in the development of culinary tourism.

4.1.1 Public Relations Communication Strategy Planning

The findings indicate that the Sibolga City Tourism Office has conducted communication strategy planning within the broader framework of tourism promotion. However, the planning remains general and has not specifically focused on culinary tourism development in the Old Port Anggar area. As stated by the Head of the Tourism Office, promotion strategies are still oriented toward event-based tourism at a macro level. From a theoretical perspective, this condition reflects an incomplete implementation of the strategic public relations model proposed by Cutlip, Center, and Broom, particularly in the research and planning stages.

Effective public relations strategy requires audience segmentation, issue identification, and goal specificity. The absence of a focused culinary tourism communication plan suggests that the strategy has not yet reached the level of targeted communication (*strategic alignment*) [13]. This limitation can be attributed to structural factors, including institutional orientation toward general tourism promotion, limited strategic planning capacity, and the absence of data-driven audience analysis. As a result, communication efforts tend to be broad and less impactful in building a distinctive culinary tourism identity.

4.1.2 Strategy Implementation

The implementation of the communication strategy is carried out through a combination of event-based promotion and digital media utilization (Instagram, Facebook, TikTok, and official websites). Major events, such as the Sibolga anniversary, are used to attract visitors to the Old Port Anggar area, while collaboration with MSME actors and creative communities reflects a participatory communication approach. From the perspective of relationship-based public relations, this implementation demonstrates the presence of stakeholder engagement and collaboration. However, the effectiveness of this approach remains limited due to inconsistency in communication intensity and lack of continuity beyond events.

Critically, the reliance on event-based promotion indicates a short-term communication orientation. According to experiential tourism communication theory Richards, (2021) destination attractiveness should be built through continuous storytelling and experience packaging, not only through episodic events. The findings show that communication efforts have not yet transformed culinary experiences into sustained narratives that can strengthen destination image. Structural constraints such as limited resources, lack of integrated media planning, and dependence on event-driven budgets contribute to this inconsistency. Consequently, the strategy tends to generate temporary visitor spikes rather than long-term engagement and loyalty.

4.1.3 Strategy Evaluation

The evaluation of communication strategies is conducted through general indicators, such as increased tourist visits, creative economy growth, and visitor surveys. However, the evaluation process lacks systematic measurement and clearly defined performance indicators. In the context of public relations theory, this indicates a weakness in the evaluation stage, where communication outcomes should be measured using specific, measurable, and outcome-based indicators. The absence of structured evaluation tools (e.g., engagement metrics, brand awareness indicators, or audience perception analysis) limits the ability to assess the real impact of communication strategies. This weakness is influenced by structural factors such as limited analytical capacity, lack of standardized evaluation frameworks, and minimal use of digital analytics. As a result, strategic improvements are not based on comprehensive evidence.

4.1.4 Public Relations Relationships with Stakeholders

The relationship between the Tourism Office, MSME actors, and the community has been established through relatively intensive communication, including the formation of communication groups with creative economy actors. This reflects the application of relationship-based public relations principles, particularly in fostering collaboration and information exchange. However, despite these positive relational dynamics, MSME actors highlighted several challenges, including inconsistent promotion, weak area branding, and limited supporting facilities. This indicates that while relational communication exists, it has not been fully leveraged into strategic collaboration for destination development.

4.1.5 Community and MSME Perspectives on Branding

From the perspective of MSME actors and the community, the Old Port Anggar area has strong potential as a culinary tourism destination. However, its identity remains unclear and not widely recognized. This finding highlights a gap in location branding strategy, where communication efforts have not yet succeeded in constructing a strong and distinctive destination identity. According to location branding theory [6] destination identity is built through consistent, long-term communication. The findings suggest that branding efforts are still fragmented and not integrated into a

coherent narrative. The lack of a clear brand positioning results in low public awareness and weak competitive differentiation.

4.2 Discussion

4.2.1 Communication Strategy Planning Analysis

The findings indicate that the communication strategy planning conducted by the Sibolga City Tourism Office remains general and has not been specifically oriented toward the development of culinary tourism in the Old Port Anggar area. This condition reflects a limitation in the research and planning stage as conceptualized by Cutlip, Center, and Broom, where effective public relations strategies must be grounded in systematic audience analysis, segmentation, and clearly defined objectives [13]. Empirically, the absence of audience segmentation such as distinguishing culinary tourists, local visitors, or niche markets like food enthusiasts results in generalized communication messages that fail to construct a strong destination positioning.

This finding is consistent with [14] who emphasize that unclear segmentation weakens the effectiveness of tourism communication in building a specific market identity. Furthermore, the dominance of event-based planning indicates a short-term and situational orientation, rather than a sustainable strategic framework. This aligns with previous findings showing that tourism promotion often spikes during events but lacks continuity in shaping long-term awareness. From a theoretical perspective, this contradicts the principle of strategic continuity in public relations, where communication should accumulate meaning over time to build a stable image. Thus, structurally, the weakness in planning stems from limited audience research capacity and the absence of a long-term communication roadmap.

4.2.2 Communication Strategy Implementation Analysis

The implementation of communication strategies through digital platforms such as Instagram, Facebook, and TikTok demonstrates adaptation to modern communication trends, as also highlighted by [15]. However, when analyzed through the framework of experiential tourism communication Richards, (2021) the implementation remains largely informational rather than experiential. The findings reveal that communication content focuses more on announcing events than constructing meaningful narratives about culinary experiences. This supports the argument of [16].**)** that tourism communication often remains at the informational level and fails to create persuasive and emotional engagement. In contrast, experiential communication theory emphasizes storytelling, symbolic meaning, and emotional resonance as key drivers of tourist attraction.

Additionally, reliance on event-based promotion reflects what [17] identify as episodic communication, where visitor increases are temporary and not sustained. This indicates that communication strategies have not yet succeeded in building destination attachment, a key concept in tourism communication theory. Although the Old Port Anggar has strong experiential potential (e.g., sea views, night culinary atmosphere, and community interaction), these elements have not been effectively packaged into a coherent narrative, as also noted by [12].

4.2.3 Communication Strategy Evaluation Analysis

The evaluation of communication strategies is still based on general indicators such as visitor numbers and basic surveys, reflecting a limited application of strategic public relations evaluation principles. According to communication evaluation theory, effectiveness should be measured through multidimensional indicators, including awareness, engagement, attitude change, and behavioral outcomes. The findings are consistent with [18] who argue that relying solely on visitor numbers does not adequately capture communication effectiveness, as increases may be influenced by external factors rather than communication strategies.

Moreover, the absence of digital metrics (e.g., engagement rate, reach, interaction) indicates that evaluation practices are not aligned with contemporary digital communication standards. This suggests that the Tourism Office operates within an output-oriented evaluation model, focusing on visible outcomes rather than deeper communication impacts. Structurally, this limitation may stem from inadequate technological utilization and lack of analytical capacity in communication management. Consequently, strategies tend to be repeated without data-driven refinement.

4.2.4 Relationship-Based Public Relations Analysis

The relationship between the Tourism Office, MSME actors, and the community reflects elements of relationship-based public relations, particularly in terms of communication intensity and stakeholder involvement. However, deeper analysis shows that the relationship remains instrumental rather than collaborative.

This finding aligns with [19]. who highlight that stakeholder involvement in tourism development often remains limited to implementation rather than strategic participation. In the context of relational public relations theory, effective relationships should be two-way, participatory, and based on shared decision-making. In this study, MSME actors and communities are primarily

positioned as participants in events rather than co-creators of tourism strategies. As a result, while short-term economic benefits are achieved (e.g., increased sales during events), long-term empowerment and capacity building remain limited. This indicates a structural imbalance in stakeholder engagement, where communication is still dominated by a top-down approach.

4.2.5 Place Branding Analysis

The findings reveal that the Old Port Anggar area lacks a clear and consistent identity as a culinary tourism destination. From the perspective of place branding theory (Kavaratzis), this indicates a failure to integrate identity, communication, and experience into a coherent branding strategy. This condition is consistent with findings from [20] and [17] which show that weak branding often results from inconsistent communication and the absence of a distinctive narrative. The lack of slogans, branding concepts, or symbolic representations leads to low brand recall, causing the destination to be perceived as an ordinary space.

Furthermore, as emphasized by [21] effective destination branding requires not only visual promotion but also the construction of meaning through storytelling and cultural representation. In this study, the absence of experiential storytelling further weakens branding effectiveness. Although the Old Port Anggar possesses strong cultural and culinary potential, these elements have not yet been transformed into a unified and memorable destination identity.

5 CONCLUSION

The public relations communication strategy of the Sibolga City Tourism Office in the development of culinary tourism of the Old Port of Anggar has been carried out, but it is not optimal because it is still general, not focused, and not yet consistent and sustainable, with unmeasured evaluation and weak regional branding. Therefore, it is necessary to develop a more specific and targeted communication strategy for culinary tourism, optimize digital media consistently with attractive content, implement clear indicator-based evaluations, and strengthen collaboration with MSME actors and the community to build a strong and sustainable branding as a leading culinary tourism destination.

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Social Criticism of Gender Violence in the Film Marlina the Killer in Four Acts

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Abstract

This study examines social criticism of gender-based violence represented in the film Marlina the Murderer in Four Acts by Mouly Surya. The background of this research departs from the fact that violence against women still often occurs in societies influenced by patriarchal social structures. This film shows the experiences of a woman who faces bullying, sexual violence, and social injustice. Based on this, this study aims to identify the forms of gender-based violence that appear in films and analyze how they represent social criticism of patriarchal domination. This study uses a qualitative approach with a critical discourse analysis method. Data was collected through observation of scenes, dialogues, characters, as well as visual and narrative elements in the film, then analyzed to reveal the meaning and social messages contained in it. The results of the study show that this film depicts various forms of gender violence, such as bullying, sexual violence, and the marginalization of women. Through the character of Marlina, the film depicts the transformation from the position of the victim to an agent of resistance to injustice. Visual symbols, storylines, and character constructions reinforce criticism of patriarchal structures that oppress women. Thus, this film is not only a cinematic work, but also a social critical media that highlights the importance of justice and women's empowerment in society.

Keywords: Gender Violence, Social Criticism, Film Analysis, Patriarchy, Women's Resistance

1 INTRODUCTION

Gender-based violence remains a persistent social problem deeply embedded in societal structures. This form of violence is predominantly experienced by women and frequently occurs within domestic spaces that are ideally expected to provide safety and protection. However, unequal power relations between men and women, reinforced by entrenched patriarchal norms, often normalize such violence and frame it as a private or less significant issue. Consequently, many cases of violence against women remain underreported and receive limited institutional attention [1]. This condition indicates that gender-based violence is not merely an individual issue, but is structurally rooted in broader socio-cultural systems.

Within the context of mass communication, media plays a crucial role in representing and critically engaging with social realities. Film, as an audio-visual medium, possesses strong representational power in conveying social messages through narrative structures, visual imagery, dialogue, and symbolic elements. Beyond its function as entertainment, film operates as a cultural text that reflects, constructs, and critiques social realities and ideologies [2]. Through this perspective, film becomes an important medium for articulating social criticism, including issues related to gender inequality and violence.

One Indonesian film that prominently raises the issue of gender-based violence is Marlina the Killer in Four Acts, directed by Mouly Surya. The film narrates the story of Marlina, a woman living in a remote area who experiences threats and violence from a group of men. Structured into four acts, the film portrays both the traumatic experiences of the protagonist and her forms of resistance against oppression. Previous studies have shown that this film represents women's struggles against patriarchal domination and unequal power relations [3] while also functioning as a critique of social structures that marginalize women [2], [4].

However, the representation of gender-based violence in film is not only conveyed through explicit narratives but also through systems of signs embedded in visual and symbolic elements. Scenes, dialogues, and cinematic compositions often carry layered meanings that reflect deeper ideological constructs. In this regard, semiotic analysis becomes a relevant approach to

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uncover how meanings are constructed and communicated through film. Previous research has demonstrated that semiotics can be used to analyze visual texts and reveal implicit meanings in media representations [5], [6].

Despite these contributions, there are still several limitations in existing studies. Most previous research has focused on identifying representations of women's resistance and patriarchal domination in the film, or on general interpretations of gender inequality. However, these studies tend to emphasize narrative interpretation without systematically analyzing how meaning is constructed through multi-layered signification processes. In particular, there is still limited research that applies Roland Barthes' semiotic framework to examine the interplay between denotative, connotative, and mythological meanings in representing gender-based violence. As a result, the deeper ideological mechanisms through which patriarchal norms are normalized and challenged in the film remain underexplored.

Therefore, this study aims to fill this gap by employing the semiotic approach of Roland Barthes to analyze the representation of gender-based violence in *Marlina the Killer in Four Acts*. Barthes' framework allows for a multi-level analysis of meaning, including denotation (literal meaning), connotation (cultural and associative meaning), and myth (ideological meaning that naturalizes certain values) [7]. By applying this approach, this study seeks to uncover how gender-based violence is not only represented but also constructed as a form of social critique toward patriarchal culture.

Based on this framework, the study focuses on identifying denotative, connotative, and mythological meanings in selected scenes that depict gender-based violence. The research contributes to the literature by providing a deeper semiotic analysis of film as a medium of social criticism, particularly in revealing how visual and narrative signs operate to challenge patriarchal ideology. In doing so, this study positions itself as an extension of previous research by offering a more systematic and theoretically grounded interpretation of meaning construction in film representations of gender-based violence.

2 LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Roland Barthes' Semiotic Theory

Semiotics is the study of signs and meaning-making processes in communication. Within media and cultural studies, semiotics is widely used to analyze how meaning is constructed through symbols, images, and narratives. One of the most influential figures in semiotic theory is Roland Barthes, who developed a framework for analyzing signs through three levels of meaning: denotation, connotation, and myth [8].

Denotative meaning refers to the literal or explicit meaning of a sign, which can be directly observed and generally agreed upon by audiences. It represents the first level of interpretation, where meaning appears objective and descriptive. In contrast, connotative meaning refers to the secondary level of meaning that is shaped by cultural values, emotions, and social associations attached to the sign [6]. At this level, meaning becomes more interpretative and context-dependent.

Barthes further introduced the concept of myth, which represents a deeper level of signification. Myth functions as an ideological system that naturalizes certain cultural values and beliefs, making them appear normal and unquestionable within society. In media texts, myths often operate to reinforce dominant ideologies, including gender norms and patriarchal values. Through this framework, semiotic analysis enables researchers to uncover not only what is represented in a text, but also how meaning is constructed and how ideology is embedded within representation. In the context of film analysis, Barthes' semiotic approach is particularly relevant because films communicate meaning through complex systems of visual, narrative, and symbolic signs. Therefore, this study adopts Barthesian semiotics as the primary analytical framework to examine how gender-based violence is represented and how it functions as a form of social critique.

2.2 Gender-Based Violence Theory

Gender-based violence refers to any form of violence directed at individuals based on gender differences, resulting in physical, sexual, psychological, or economic harm [9]. This form of violence is predominantly experienced by women due to unequal power relations embedded in social structures. From a gender perspective, violence against women is not merely an individual act but a structural phenomenon rooted in patriarchal systems that position women in subordinate roles [10].

Gender-based violence manifests in various forms, including physical violence, sexual violence, psychological abuse, and economic control. These forms of violence often occur within domestic spaces, which are socially constructed as safe environments. However, the persistence of patriarchal norms contributes to the normalization of such violence, leading to its minimization and underreporting. From a semiotic perspective, the representation of gender-based violence in media is not neutral but constructed through systems of signs that reflect and reproduce certain ideologies. Films, as cultural texts, play a significant role in representing and potentially challenging these norms. By analyzing visual and narrative signs through Barthes'

framework, it is possible to reveal how gender-based violence is depicted, how patriarchal ideology is reinforced or contested, and how meaning is communicated to audiences.

3 RESEARCH METHODS

This research uses a qualitative approach with a critical paradigm to understand the meaning contained in the representation of gender-based violence in the film Marlina the Killer in Four Acts. The qualitative approach was chosen because this study does not aim to measure phenomena statistically, but rather to interpret the meanings, messages, and ideologies that appear in the text of the film [11]. The critical paradigm is used to see films as cultural products that are not neutral, but contain certain power relations and ideological values in society.

This research is qualitative descriptive using the semiotic approach proposed by Roland Barthes [7]. The object of the research is the scenes, dialogues, character expressions, and visual elements contained in the film that represent gender-based violence and power relations in patriarchal culture. The research was carried out through media text analysis so that it did not require a field research location. The research process lasted for three months, from January to March 2026, starting from the stage of data collection, film analysis, to writing a research report. In this qualitative research, the researcher plays the role of the main instrument that observes, records, and interprets the signs that appear in the film [11].

The data collection technique in this study was carried out through observation and documentation of the film being studied. Observation is carried out by watching films repeatedly to gain a deep understanding of the storyline, characters, and relationships between characters related to the issue of gender violence. Meanwhile, documentation is carried out by recording dialogues, scenes, character expressions, and visual symbols that are relevant to the focus of the research. The data obtained was then analyzed using Roland Barthes' semiotics method which includes three stages of meaning, namely denotation, connotation, and myth [6], [7].

The denotation stage is used to identify the literal meaning of the signs that appear in the film, such as the actions of the characters, dialogue, and visual settings. The connotation level is used to interpret the deeper meaning by associating the sign with the social and cultural context behind it. Furthermore, the mythical stage is used to uncover normalized social ideologies or values through representation in film. To maintain the validity of the data, this study uses theoretical triangulation by comparing the results of semiotic analysis with the perspective of patriarchal theory and the study of media representation [12], [13]. In addition, the analysis process is also systematically documented through trail audits so that each stage of research can be retraced transparently and academically [14].

4 RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Results



Figure 1. Description of Scene 5

Scene 5 begins when Markus enters Marlina's house. The house is described as simple with natural lighting coming in through the window, so that the atmosphere of the room looks quiet and quiet. Marlina was in the house alone when Markus came. After entering, Markus spoke to Marlina in a confident and arrogant tone. He told Marlina that that night Marlina would be the luckiest woman. Hearing these words, Marlina actually rejected Markus' statement and said that she was the unluckiest woman that night. The conversation between the two then further shows tension. Markus openly conveyed his intention to come with his friends, which was to Marlina. He also stated that women like Marlina often pretend to be victims. Markus' words showed a condescending attitude and did not appreciate Marlina as a woman. Throughout the scene, Marlina is seen holding back her emotions and still trying to be calm despite facing a threatening situation. Meanwhile, Markus shows a dominant attitude and feels that he has power over Marlina through the way he speaks and his facial expressions.

4.2 Analysis of Denotations, Connotations, and Myths of Scene 5

4.2.1 The Meaning of Denotation

At the denotative level, this scene depicts a conversation between Markus and Marlina inside Marlina's house. Markus arrives uninvited and declares that Marlina will be the "luckiest woman" that night.

Marlina rejects this statement and states that she is the unluckiest woman. In the dialogue, Markus explicitly reveals that he and his friends came with a goal against Marlina, and states that women often see themselves as victims. Throughout the conversation, Markus speaks condescendingly, while Marlina tries to remain calm despite the threatening situation. However, this denotative meaning is only the initial layer of the construction of a deeper meaning.

4.2.2 Meaning of Connotations

On a connotative level, this scene represents the unequal power relations between men and women. Markus's statement that Marlina is the "luckiest woman" reflects a masculine perspective that views men's sexual attention as something women should accept and be grateful for. When Marlina rejects him, claiming she is "unlucky," this demonstrates her awareness of the threat of violence she faces. Furthermore, Markus's statement that women "like to feel like victims" is a form of gaslighting and symbolic violence, where language is used as a tool of domination to distort reality. In this context, Markus not only demeans Marlina but also attempts to construct a narrative that women are the ones who "exaggerate" the violence they experience. Thus, the language in this scene functions as an instrument of power that normalizes the objectification of women's bodies, weakens the victim's position, and reinforces male dominance. This demonstrates that violence is not only physical but also exists discursively (through language and meaning).

4.2.3 Myth Meaning

At the mythical level, this scene represents patriarchal ideology at work through social discourse. Markus's statement reflects the prevailing societal myth that women often "exaggerate" or even "make up" their experiences of sexual violence.

This myth ideologically functions to legitimize the perpetrator's actions, as if violence were normal. It obscures the victim's position, thus deeming their suffering less serious. It shifts responsibility onto the victim through the practice of victim blaming. In this context, women are not viewed as individuals with rights and autonomy, but rather as objects to be controlled by men. This patriarchal myth is then normalized in social life, making it appear "natural."

4.2.4 Scene 5 Representation

Overall, Scene 5 depicts psychological and symbolic violence against women through the use of demeaning and manipulative language. Markus's dialogue not only demonstrates interpersonal dominance but also reflects a broader social structure, namely patriarchy. This scene demonstrates that violence against women can occur in both verbal and symbolic forms. Language can be a tool to maintain power relations. Women are often positioned as objects and simultaneously blamed for the violence they experience. Thus, this scene is not simply an interaction between two individuals, but rather a representation of how patriarchal discourse is reproduced through language in everyday life.

Table 1. Analysis of Denotations, Connotations, and Myths of Scene 5

Signified (Marker)	**Signifier**
Visualization and dialogue when Markus says Marlina will be the luckiest woman, while Marlina says she is the unluckiest woman. Markus also stated that they came to Marlina and said women like to be victims.	The conversation between Markus and Marlina inside Marlina's house shows Marlina's dominant attitude towards Marlina.
Signified (Connotative Marker)	**Signifier (Connotative Sign)**
Markus demeans Marlina and states that women like to be victims	Showing the existence of a patriarchal view that places women as sexual objects and blames the victim

4.2.5 Denotative Sign

Signifier: Markus' dialogue, which refers to Marlina as a lucky woman and states that women tend to be victims.

Signified: Conversation demonstrating Markus' dominant attitude towards Marlina.

4.2.6 Connotative Sign

Signifier: Markus' remarks that belittle and blame women.

Signified: Patriarchal views that position women as sexual objects and blamed victims.

4.2.7 Social Criticism of Gender Violence in Scene 5

Scene 5 presents a powerful social critique of the practice of gender-based violence rooted in patriarchal culture. Through the dialogue between Markus and Marlina, this film shows how women are often positioned as weak parties and become objects of male domination. Markus' statement that Marlina is *the "luckiest woman*" because she will be slept with by several men shows a view that degrades women and

views women's bodies as objects of male sexual satisfaction. The remarks indirectly criticized the patriarchal mindset that considers women to have no authority over their own bodies. In addition, when Marlina rejects Markus' statement by saying that she is the unluckiest woman, this scene confirms Marlina's awareness of the threat of violence she is facing. However, Markus later responded by saying that women love to be victims. This statement represents a form of victim blaming, which is the tendency to blame the victim for the violence he experienced. In social life, this phenomenon often occurs when women who experience sexual violence are questioned about their behavior, attitudes, or decisions, so that the perpetrator seems to be free from moral and social responsibility.

The film through this scene serves as a medium of social criticism that shows the reality of gender injustice in society. Mark's dialogue reflects how male power is often used to control and oppress women, both verbally and psychologically. Markus' attitude of feeling entitled to Marlina without her consent illustrates a form of sexual violence that originates from a perspective that normalizes male dominance over women. By presenting these conversations openly and confrontationally, this film not only shows acts of gender-based violence, but also invites the audience to reflect on the social structures that allow such violence to occur. This scene is a criticism of a society that still maintains patriarchal values that place women in subordinate positions. Through the character Marlina who still dares to voice her rejection, the film also conveys the message that women have the right to reject, resist, and defend their dignity in the midst of the pressure of male power.

4.3 Analysis of Denotations, Connotations, and Myths of Scene 6



Figure 2. Description of Scene 6

Scene 6 shows the act of sexual violence committed by Markus against Marlina in his house. This scene takes place after a previous conversation that shows the dominant attitude and threats thrown by Markus at Marlina. The situation inside the house is depicted as quiet with minimal lighting, creating a tense and tense atmosphere. In this scene, Markus imposes his will on Marlina without her consent. Markus acts aggressively and shows a powerful attitude, while Marlina is in a depressed and helpless position. Although Marlina tried to resist, the unbalanced conditions made it difficult to resist Markus' actions. Marlina's facial expression showed fear, compulsion, and emotional pressure she was experiencing. Meanwhile, Markus does not seem to show empathy for Marlina's condition and continues to impose her wishes. This scene depicts a situation where women are victims of sexual violence committed by men who exploit power and an unbalanced situation. Visually, the shooting in this scene shows a gloomy and lonely atmosphere, thus reinforcing the impression that Marlina is in an isolated condition and has no protection from the violence she experienced. This scene is an important part of the storyline because it shows the form of gender violence experienced by the main character and becomes the starting point for a larger conflict in the film.

4.3.1 The Meaning of Denotation

At the denotation level, scene 6 shows the act of rape committed by Markus against Marlina in his house. Markus forced sexual relations on Marlina without Marlina's consent. This scene shows a situation where Marlina is in a depressed state and does not have the strength to resist Markus' actions. Visually, this scene shows Markus acting aggressively and dominating the situation, while Marlina looks frightened and in a helpless position. Marlina's facial expression depicts fear and compulsion, while Markus does not seem to show any guilt or empathy for the victim. This scene directly shows the form of sexual violence experienced by Marlina.

4.3.2 Meaning of Connotations

At the level of connotation, this scene depicts the inequality of power relations between men and women. Mark's act of imposing his will shows how men in patriarchal cultures often feel they have authority over women's bodies. Marlina is placed in a subordinate position, namely as a weak party and has no control over the situation she faces.

In addition, this scene also gives meaning that sexual violence is not only a physical act, but also a form of male domination and control over women. Markus uses his power and position to oppress Marlina, which reflects the social reality where women are often victims of violence due to gender inequality. The quiet atmosphere of the house and lack of lighting can also be interpreted as a symbol of Marlina's isolation and helplessness. The quiet environment illustrates the condition of the victim who has no protection or assistance when experiencing violence.

4.3.3 Myth Meaning

At the mythical level, this scene represents a social construct in a patriarchal society that often places women as sexual objects for men. In patriarchal myths, women's bodies are often seen as something that can be controlled or owned by men. This is reflected in Markus' actions who feel entitled to impose his will on Marlina. In addition, this scene also reveals social myths that often normalize violence against women. In some cultural contexts, sexual violence against women is often not seen as a serious crime or even considered understandable. This film actually presents the scene as a form of criticism of the myth by showing the suffering experienced by the victims. Thus, this scene not only portrays sexual violence as an individual event, but also as a reflection of a social structure that is still fraught with gender injustice. The film through this scene tries to dismantle the myth of patriarchy that has placed women in a position that has been vulnerable to violence.

Table 2. Analysis of Denotations, Connotations, and Myths of Scene 6

Signified (Marker)	Signifier
The visualization of the scene of Markus forcing sexual relations on Marlina inside his house	Markus committed an act of rape against Marlina who was in a helpless condition.
Signified (Connotative Marker)	**Signifier (Connotative Sign)**
Markus imposes his will on Marlina	Showing male dominance over women's bodies

4.3.4 Social Criticism of Scene 6

Scene 6 presents a sharp social critique of the reality of sexual violence that women often experience in patriarchal societies. The act of rape committed by Markus against Marlina shows how women are often positioned as weak parties and easily targeted by violence by men who feel they have power. Through these scenes, the film highlights that sexual violence does not only occur due to individual impulses, but is also influenced by social structures that place men in a dominant position. Markus is described as a figure who feels he has the right to control a woman's body without considering the consent of the victim. This attitude represents a patriarchal mindset that is still developing in society, where women are often seen as objects that can be controlled by men. The film through this scene indirectly criticizes a culture that still tolerates or normalizes violence against women. By showing the suffering experienced by Marlina, the film invites the audience to realize that sexual violence is a serious form of human rights violation.

In addition, this scene also contains criticism of the lack of social protection for women who are victims of violence. Marlina was described as being alone with no one who could protect or help her when the violence occurred. This condition reflects the social reality where many victims of sexual violence experience isolation and difficulty in getting protection or justice. The film shows how violence can occur in a private space that is supposed to be a safe place for women. This is a criticism of society that is often insensitive to the situation experienced by victims of violence. Through this depiction, the film tries to show that sexual violence is a social problem that requires mutual attention and awareness. Thus, this scene not only serves as part of the storyline, but also as a means of reflection for the community on the importance of respecting women's dignity and rights.

4.4 Analysis of Denotations, Connotations, and Myths of Scene 7



Figure 3. Description of Scene 7

Scene 7 shows the arrival of Markus and some of his colleagues at Marlina's house. The robbers entered Marlina's house with a rude and confident attitude, as if they had control over the situation in the place. The atmosphere of the house is still described as simple with minimal lighting, thus presenting a quiet and tense impression. The presence of the robbers in the house further strengthened the sense of threat experienced by Marlina. In this scene, Marlina is seen trying to stay calm despite being in a dangerous situation. He then prepared food and drink for Mark and his companions according to their requests. The robbers are seen sitting relaxed while eating and drinking without realizing that Marlina has poisoned the food they consume. While the men enjoyed the dishes served, Marlina still showed a calm but alert expression. As time went by, the robbers began to feel the impact of the poison contained in the food.

Their bodies slowly weakened and were unable to maintain consciousness. This scene shows a change in the situation that was previously controlled by the robbers to be reversed when Marlina manages to take control of the situation. This scene is an important point in the story because it shows Marlina's efforts to fight the violence she experienced in her own way.

4.4.1 The Meaning of Denotation

At the denotation level, scene 7 shows Markus and some of his colleagues coming and entering Marlina's house. The robbers were inside the house talking, eating, and drinking the food that Marlina had prepared. Marlina was seen serving them by preparing dishes according to their requests. But unbeknownst to Markus and his friends, Marlina has mixed poison into the food they consume. After some time, the robbers began to feel the effects of the poison. Their bodies slowly weakened and they were no longer able to maintain their physical condition. This scene shows a change in the situation where Markus and his friends were previously in a dominant position, but then things start to turn around when the poison given by Marlina starts working.

4.4.2 Meaning of Connotation

At a connotation level, this scene depicts a form of women's resistance to the violence and oppression they experience. Marlina, who was previously described as a victim of sexual violence and intimidation, has now begun to take action to protect herself. The poison given to robbers can be interpreted as a symbol of resistance to male domination who has degraded and hurt him. In addition, Marlina's calm demeanor when serving food shows strategy and ingenuity in dealing with dangerous situations. He did not resist directly, but used more covert means to change the position of power in the situation. This scene also depicts a change in power relations where women who were previously in a threatened position are now able to take control of the situation.

4.4.3 Myth Meaning

At the mythical level, this scene represents a critique of the social construct that has placed women as weak and unable to resist. In many patriarchal cultures, women are often seen as passive individuals and do not have the power to resist male domination. But through these scenes, the film seeks to dismantle the myth by showing that women also have the ability to protect themselves and fight injustice. Marlina's act of poisoning the robbers can be interpreted as a symbol of the reversal of power against the patriarchal system that oppresses women. The film through this scene confirms that women are not always in the position of the victim, but can also be subjects who have control over their own fate. Thus, this scene presents a message that gender injustice can be fought through courage and awareness of rights and dignity.

Table 3. Analysis of Denotations, Connotations, and Myths of Scene 7

Signified (Marker)	**Signifier**
Visualization of Markus and the robbers coming to Marlina's house and eating the food prepared by Marlina	Marlina serves poisoned food to Markus and his friends
Signified (Connotative Marker)	**Signifier (Connotative Sign)**
Marlina poisons the robbers	Showing Marlina's form of resistance to the violence she experienced

4.4.4 Social Criticism Scene 7

Scene 7 presents a social critique of gender injustice and violence experienced by women in society. The arrival of Markus and the robbers to Marlina's house shows how a group of men feel they have the power to intimidate and dominate women who are considered weaker. The attitude of the robbers who entered Marlina's house with confidence and without fear showed that there was a presumption that their actions were something natural. This reflects the social reality where women are often subjected to violence and harassment because they are considered powerless to resist. The film through this scene indirectly criticizes the patriarchal culture that puts women in a position vulnerable to oppression. By showing this situation, the film invites the audience to realize that violence against women is a serious social problem and should not be considered as a normal thing.

In addition, Marlina's act of poisoning the robbers is also a form of social criticism of the condition where women are often forced to find their own way to protect themselves. When social systems are unable to provide adequate protection, victims of violence often have to take action to maintain their safety. This scene shows Marlina's change in position from a threatened victim to an individual who is trying to fight against the injustice she experienced. The film shows that women are not always in a passive position, but also have the courage and ability to face situations that oppress them. Through this depiction, the film conveys the message that gender inequality and violence against women need serious attention from society so that women are no longer in vulnerable and unprotected situations.

4.5 Analysis of Denotations, Connotations, and Myths of Scene 8



Figure 4. Description of Scene 8

Scene 8 shows Marlina coming to the police station to report the violent incident she experienced. Marlina told the police officer that she had been a victim of rape committed by Markus. This scene takes place in a police station room which is described as simple with a calm atmosphere. Marlina seemed to be trying to explain the incident that happened to her seriously, but the response given by the police officer actually seemed to lack empathy for the condition experienced by the victim.

Instead of responding to Marlina's report seriously, the police actually asked questions with a dubious tone. He said that Markus was an old and thin man, and then questioned why Marlina allowed herself to be raped by him. The statement shows an attitude that blames the victim and underestimates the experience of violence experienced by Marlina. Marlina looked confused and disappointed with the response because her hopes to get protection and justice from the authorities were not fulfilled. This scene illustrates a situation where victims of sexual violence do not always get the support of the institutions that are supposed to protect them.

4.5.1 The Meaning of Denotation

Denotatively, this scene shows Marlina coming to the police station to report the act of rape committed by Markus. Marlina explained the incident she experienced to a police officer. However, the officer did not take Marlina's report seriously. Instead, he questioned the reason why Marlina allowed herself to be raped by Markus, who according to him was old and thin. This scene shows a conversation between the victim and the law enforcement officers who were supposed to receive the report.

4.5.2 Meaning of Connotations

At a connotation level, this scene depicts the existence of ***victim blaming*** attitude towards victims of sexual violence. The questions asked by the police showed doubts about the truth of Marlina's story and indirectly blamed the victim for the incident that happened to her. This shows how victims of violence are often distrusted or even blamed when trying to seek justice. In addition, this scene also shows that there is an inequality in the law enforcement system for cases of sexual violence. The officers who are supposed to provide protection actually show an attitude that lacks empathy and underestimates the victim's experience. This reflects the social reality where victims of sexual violence often face obstacles when reporting their cases to the authorities.

4.5.3 Myth Meaning

On a mythical level, this scene represents a social construct that often blames women for sexual violence. In some social views, women are often held responsible for the violence they experience, for example through the question of why they do not fight back or avoid the perpetrator. This view shows how patriarchal society tends to place women as parties who must be held accountable for incidents that are actually crimes committed by the perpetrators. The film through this scene tries to criticize the myth by showing Marlina's experience of not getting support from the institutions that are supposed to protect her. Thus, this scene shows that the problem of violence against women is not only related to the actions of the perpetrators, but also to the social system that is often not on the side of the victim.

Table 4. Analysis of Denotations, Connotations, and Myths of Scene 8

Signified (Marker)	**Signifier**
Visualization of Marlina reporting to the police about the rape she experienced. The police responded by being dubious and blaming Marlina	The police said that Markus was old and thin and questioned why Marlina allowed herself to be raped
Signified (Connotative Marker)	**Signifier (Connotative Sign)**
Police blame Marlina for the rape incident	Showing victim blaming against victims of sexual violence

4.5.4 Social Criticism Scene 8

Scene 8 presents a social critique of the way legal institutions handle cases of sexual violence against women. The attitude of the police who did not take Marlina's report seriously showed a lack of empathy and sensitivity to the victim. The questions asked by the police actually blamed Marlina for the incident she experienced, as if the victim had responsibility for the violent acts committed by the perpetrator. This reflects the phenomenon of victim blaming that still often occurs in society when women report cases of sexual violence. In addition, this scene is also a criticism of the social and legal system that has not fully provided protection for victims of violence. Marlina came with the hope of getting justice and protection from the authorities, but what she received was doubt and contempt. The film through these scenes shows that the obstacles faced by victims come not only from the perpetrators of violence, but also from the social environment and institutions that are supposed to protect them. Thus, this scene invites the audience to reflect on the importance of changing attitudes in society and legal institutions so that victims of sexual violence can get justice and proper protection.

4.6 Analysis of Denotations, Connotations, and Myths of Scene 9



Figure 5. Description of Scene 9

Scene 9 shows a scene when Novi experiences domestic violence committed by her husband. In this scene, Novi is depicted as being heavily pregnant. Despite being in a vulnerable state, she received rough treatment from her husband who hit her and accused her of doing something unright. Her husband was seen speaking in an angry and emotional tone, while Novi was in a weak position and tried to resist the treatment. The atmosphere in this scene shows a strong tension between the two characters. Novi seemed unable to resist because of her large pregnancy condition, so she only tried to survive her husband's treatment. Novi's facial expression showed pain, fear, and helplessness when she accepted the violence. This scene shows a form of physical violence that occurs in a domestic relationship, where the husband uses his physical force to hurt his wife.

4.6.1 The Meaning of Denotation

At the denotative level, this scene depicts physical violence perpetrated by the husband against Novi inside the house. The pregnant Novi appears weak and unable to fight back, while her husband displays aggression through hitting and accusing her. This scene directly represents domestic violence.

Denotatively, this scene shows a husband who physically assaults his wife, Novi, in their home. In the scene, Novi's husband is seen hitting and accusing her in an angry and emotional tone. Novi is described as being heavily pregnant, so her physical condition looks weak and vulnerable when she receives the harsh treatment. She seemed unable to give any meaningful resistance to her husband's actions and only tried to endure the pain she was experiencing. This scene shows firsthand the acts of domestic violence that occur between husband and wife. Novi's husband is seen dominating the situation with an aggressive attitude, while Novi is in a depressed and helpless position. Novi's facial expression showed fear, sadness, and suffering due to the treatment she received. In addition, the condition of Novi's pregnancy is also an important part of this scene because it shows that the violence not only endangers her, but also the fetus she is conceiving. Visually, this scene emphasizes the contrast between her husband's aggressive attitude and Novi's condition that is heavily pregnant. The act of beating by the husband and the accusations he made showed that there was a conflict in their domestic relationship. Thus, at the level of denotation, this scene clearly shows the event of physical violence in the household experienced by a woman who is in a vulnerable condition.

4.6.2 Meaning of Connotations

At the connotation level, this scene depicts the existence of power inequality in domestic relationships. The husband is portrayed as having a dominant position that makes him feel entitled to control and punish his wife through violence. Novi as a woman and in a pregnant condition is a symbol of vulnerability, which shows that women are often in an unbalanced position in household relationships. In addition, this scene also illustrates that violence against women does not only occur in public spaces, but also in the family environment which is supposed to be a safe place. Novi's condition as a pregnant woman further emphasizes that the violence is an inhumane act because it not only endangers her, but also the fetus she is carrying.

4.6.3 Myth Meaning

At the mythical level, this scene represents a social view in a patriarchal culture that often places men as the head of the family who has full power in the household. In some social constructions, the husband's actions towards his wife are often considered domestic affairs that need not be interfered with by others. This view can cause domestic violence to become something that is considered normal or tolerated in society. The film through this scene tries to dismantle this myth by showing the impact of violence experienced by women. By showing the condition of Novi who is pregnant but still a victim of violence, the film shows that unbalanced power in the household can cause suffering for women.

Table 5. Analysis of Denotations, Connotations, and Myths of Scene 9

Signified (Marker)	Signifier
Visualization of Novi's husband who hit and accused Novi of being heavily pregnant	Novi received physical violence from her husband in a domestic relationship
Signified (Connotative Marker)	**Signifier (Connotative Sign)**
Husband beats Novi	Showing male dominance in domestic relationships

4.6.4 Social Criticism Scene 9

Scene 9 presents a social critique of the phenomenon of domestic violence that still often occurs in society. This scene shows how women can be victims of violence from their own partners, even when they are in a very vulnerable situation such as being pregnant. The film through these scenes shows that domestic violence is not only a personal problem, but also a social problem that needs serious attention. In addition, this scene also criticizes the patriarchal culture that gives legitimacy to male dominance in the household. Husbands are described as feeling that they have the power to control and punish their wives through violence. By showing the suffering experienced by Novi, the film tries to convey the message that violence against women in the domestic is an unjustifiable act. This scene invites the public to be more sensitive to cases of domestic violence and realize the importance of protecting women and children in the family environment.

4.7 Analysis of Denotations, Connotations, and Myths of Scene 9



Figure 6. Description of Scene 10

Scene 10 shows Marlina walking with Markus' decapitated head. This scene shows Marlina carrying the head in a bag or container while traveling to a place. Marlina's facial expression looked flat and calm even though her actions showed a very extreme event. The setting in this scene is depicted with a quiet and simple atmosphere, so that the audience's attention is more focused on Marlina's actions carrying Markus' head. This scene becomes one of the most powerful parts of the storyline because it shows the consequences of Marlina's resistance to the violence she previously experienced. Marlina's head brought by Marlina became a symbol of retaliation against the perpetrators of violence who had oppressed her. In this scene, Marlina is no longer portrayed as a helpless victim, but rather as a figure who is trying to regain control of her life after experiencing various forms of violence.

4.7.1 The Meaning of Denotation

On a denotative level, this scene shows Marlina walking while carrying Markus's decapitated head. Marlina's expression appears calm and stable, despite the extreme nature of her actions. This scene demonstrates the direct consequences of the previous conflict, namely Markus's death.

4.7.2 Meaning of Connotations

At the connotative level, this scene represents resistance to the violence experienced by Marlina. Markus' head becomes a symbolic sign of the victim's victory over the perpetrator, a reversal of power relations, and the woman's takeover of control. Marlina's calm expression demonstrates her psychological transformation from passive victim to controlling subject. Thus, this scene speaks not only of violence, but also of women's agency and courage in resisting domination.

4.7.3 Myth Meaning

At the mythical level, this scene functions as both a dismantling and a reversal of patriarchal ideology. If in

the patriarchal myth, women are positioned as weak and passive, and men as the rulers of women's bodies and lives, this scene presents a counter-myth: women as active subjects, agents of resistance, and the collapse of male domination as something "natural."

Markus's head here is not simply a symbol of revenge, but an ideological sign of the collapse of the legitimacy of male power, a rejection of the naturalization of violence, and the reconstruction of women's position as empowered subjects. Thus, this film not only represents individual resistance but also constructs an ideological critique of the social system that previously placed women in a subordinate position. However, critically, this scene can also be read as a critique of the failure of the social and legal system. When justice cannot be obtained through formal institutions, resistance emerges in extreme forms. This demonstrates that retaliatory violence is not an ideal solution, but rather a consequence of a social structure that fails to protect victims.

Table 6. Analysis of Denotations, Connotations, and Myths of Scene 10

Signified (Marker)	**Signifier**
Visualization of Marlina walking while carrying Markus' head	Marlina brought Markus' decapitated head
Signified (Connotative Marker)	**Signifier (Connotative Sign)**
Marlina carries Markus' head	Showing a symbol of resistance against the perpetrators of violence

4.7.4 Social Criticism Scene 10

Scene 10 presents a social critique of violence experienced by women in patriarchal societies. Marlina's actions in carrying Markus' head show a form of resistance to the social system that often places women as victims without protection. The film depicts that when justice cannot be obtained through social systems or laws, victims of violence can be encouraged to take action on their own in order to maintain their dignity and safety. In addition, this scene is also a criticism of social conditions that do not provide adequate protection for victims of sexual violence. Marlina's previous experience shows that women often face various forms of oppression without support from the surrounding environment. By showing Marlina's act of resistance, the film invites the audience to reflect on the importance of public awareness of the issue of violence against women and the need for a more equitable and victim-friendly social system.

Using Roland Barthes's semiotic framework, it can be asserted that: Denotation → indicates the event (what happens). Connotation → indicates the relational meaning (how power operates). Myth (Ideology) → shows how this meaning is naturalized or resisted within the social system. In these two scenes, the film not only tells a story but also operates on an ideological level by dismantling the normalization of violence against women, critiquing patriarchal structures, and offering a counter-narrative about women's agency and resistance.

4.8 Discussion

4.8.1 Social Criticism of Gender Violence in the Film Marlina the Killer in Four Acts

4.8.1.1 Representation of Gender Violence in Film

The results of the study show that the film Marlina the Killer in Four Acts represents various forms of gender-based violence experienced by female characters. The violence is not only displayed in physical form, but also through threats, intimidation, and psychological domination carried out by male characters against Marlina. In some of the film's early scenes, Marlina is depicted as being in an unfortunate situation when a group of men come to her house without permission. Their sudden presence creates tension and creates fear felt by the main character. This scene shows how women are often placed in a weak position in male-dominated social relations. This situation reflects the imbalance of power that allows violence against women to occur. This condition is in line with the view that gender-based violence often arises as a result of the unequal social structure between men and women [15].

The film's depiction of violence also shows that domestic spaces are not always safe places for women. Marlina's house, which was supposed to be a private space, turned into a threat room when the male perpetrators entered and took control of it. The scene shows how violence can occur even in the environment closest to women's lives. The change in the function of space from a safe place to a space of fear reflects the social reality that often occurs in society. This shows that violence against women does not always occur in public spaces, but also in the domestic environment. This condition illustrates how an unbalanced power relationship can put women in a vulnerable position.

These findings reinforce the view that gender-based violence is inextricably linked to social structures that place women in subordinate positions. In addition, the film also shows how women are often forced to fulfill men's wants and needs. In several scenes, Marlina is depicted as having to serve the men who come to her house, including preparing food for them. This situation shows that there is social pressure that makes women have no room to refuse. This condition shows how women are often positioned as parties who must serve and obey the will of men. These representations reflect gender stereotypes that are still growing in patriarchal

societies. In this social system, women are often associated with domestic roles and service work. This shows that the film reflects the social realities that are still found in people's lives [5].

On the other hand, this film also depicts the psychological impact of violence experienced by women. Marlina not only faced physical threats, but also mental pressure that arose from the situation she was experiencing. The facial expressions, body language, and visual atmosphere in the film show the fear and anxiety felt by the main character. This shows that gender-based violence not only has an impact on the body, but also on the emotional state of the victim. Psychological trauma is often a consequence that women victims of violence have to bear. This condition illustrates how violence can leave a lasting impact on the victim's life. Therefore, the representation of violence in this film provides a fairly realistic picture of women's experiences in dealing with violence. Furthermore, this film also shows how women try to deal with this oppressive situation. Although Marlina was initially in a helpless position, she later showed courage to fight the perpetrators. Marlina's actions can be interpreted as a form of resistance to male domination. This representation shows that women are not always portrayed as passive victims in the film's narrative. Conversely, women can also be subjects who have the ability to defend themselves.

This provides a new perspective on the position of women in the face of violence. Thus, the film not only depicts the suffering of women, but also the potential resistance they have [16]. Overall, the film's representation of gender violence shows how power relations between men and women are formed in patriarchal culture. This film shows that violence against women does not only occur due to individual actions, but is also influenced by the broader social system. Patriarchal structures often place men as the party who has more power than women. This condition puts women in a vulnerable position to various forms of violence. Through the narrative and visuals shown, this film seeks to reveal social realities that are often hidden in everyday life. This representation is also a criticism of the culture that normalizes gender inequality. This is in line with the view that patriarchy is a social system that contributes to the emergence of violence against women [17].

4.8.1.2 Semiotic Analysis of Film Scenes

Semiotic analysis is carried out to understand the meaning of the signs that appear in the movie scene. Roland Barthes' semiotic approach is used to identify meaning through three levels of meaning, namely denotation, connotation, and myth. Through this approach, researchers can uncover how visual symbols and dialogue in films shape social meanings related to gender violence [7]. At the level of denotation, the analysis is focused on the literal meaning of the scenes shown in the film. For example, the scene when a group of men forcibly enter Marlina's house depicts an act of intimidation that is directly visible to the audience. The scene shows a situation where Marlina is in a threatened condition and does not have the strength to refuse their presence. At the connotation level, the scene can be interpreted as a symbol of male dominance over women in the domestic space. The presence of a group of men who took over Marlina's house shows how male power can suppress and control women. This meaning is related to a social construct that places men as the party with greater authority in society [18]. On a mythical level, the scene reflects a patriarchal ideology that normalizes male dominance over women. The film shows how unbalanced power relations have become part of a culture that is often considered normal in society [5].

Table 7. Semiotic Analysis of Gender Violence in Film

Movie Scenes	Denotation	Connotations	Myth
A group of men come to Marlina's house	Man forcibly enters Marlina's house	Male dominance over women	Patriarchy places women as the weak side
Marlina was forced to serve the guests	Marlina prepares food for the men	Women are positioned as servants	Normalization of women's domestic roles
Marlina poisons food	Marlina gave poison to the perpetrator	Forms of female resistance	Deconstructing the myth of passive women

4.8.1.3 Social Critique of Patriarchal Culture

The film Marlina the Killer in Four Acts not only shows violence against women as part of the storyline, but also conveys criticism of the patriarchal system behind the violence. Patriarchal culture is a social system that places men as the dominant party in various aspects of life. In this system, women are often positioned as inferior and have less control over the decisions that affect their lives. This condition makes women vulnerable to various forms of discrimination and violence. This film tries to illustrate how the power imbalance can affect the lives of women in society. The representations shown show that violence against women is not only an individual act, but is also influenced by unequal social structures. This is in line with the view that patriarchy is a social system that

strengthens the dominance of men over women in various areas of life [6]. Through the character of Marlina, this film shows how women have to deal with social pressures that come from a male-dominated environment. Marlina is described as a woman who lives in a situation that doesn't give her much room to feel safe. The presence of male perpetrators who come to her home shows how power can be used to oppress and intimidate women. This situation reflects the social reality that still occurs in society, where women often do not receive adequate protection when experiencing violence.

This inequality shows how the social system can strengthen the position of men as the more dominant party. This condition also shows that women often have to face various forms of injustice in their daily lives. This phenomenon is in accordance with the view that violence against women is a consequence of a patriarchal social structure [1]. In addition to depicting the pressures experienced by women, the film also shows how patriarchal culture can affect the way society views women. In many social contexts, women are often associated with domestic roles and are considered to have a lower position than men. This representation is seen in scenes that show how Marlina is forced to serve the men who come to her house.

This situation reflects gender stereotypes that are still strong in society. This stereotype often makes women seen as parties who must obey male authority. This view indirectly strengthens the social structure that places women in subordinate positions. Therefore, this film presents a critique of the perspective of society that is still influenced by patriarchal culture [6]. On the other hand, this film also presents a narrative that shows that women have the ability to resist patriarchal domination. Marlina's character is not only portrayed as a victim of an oppressive situation, but also as an individual who has the courage to defend herself. Marlina's actions against the perpetrators of violence can be interpreted as a form of resistance against the system that oppresses women. This representation shows that women are not always in a passive position when faced with injustice. On the contrary, women also have the potential to be agents of change in the face of unjust social structures.

This narrative provides a new perspective on the position of women in patriarchal society. This view is in line with feminist theories that emphasize the importance of resistance to power structures that oppress women [3]. The social criticism conveyed through this film can also be seen from the way the film depicts the power relationship between men and women. In various scenes, men are portrayed as having greater control over the situation that occurs. This condition reflects how the social system can create power inequality that is detrimental to women. However, this film also shows that dominance is not always absolute. Through Marlina's actions, the film shows that unjust social structures can be questioned and resisted. This sends the message that gender inequality is not something that should be accepted as a permanent condition. Instead, such inequality can be criticized and changed through broader social consciousness (Hooks, 2000).

Overall, the film Marlina the Killer in Four Acts can be understood as a form of criticism of the patriarchal culture that is still developing in society. The film shows that violence against women is a problem related to the broader social structure. Through the narrative and visual symbols used, the film seeks to uncover social realities that are often not seen directly. The representation encourages the audience to reflect on the power relations that occur between men and women. The social criticism conveyed in this film also shows the importance of efforts to create more equal gender relations. Thus, the film not only serves as a work of art, but also as a medium of social reflection. This shows that films can be an effective means of conveying criticism of social injustices that occur in society [7].

4.8.1.4 Film as a Social Criticism Media

Film, as a mass communication medium, functions not only as a means of representing social reality but also as an arena for the production and reproduction of meaning, operating at the ideological level. From the perspective of cultural studies and semiotics, film can be understood as a signifying practice that not only reflects reality but also shapes society's perspective on it (Turner, 2016). Therefore, analysis of film needs to go beyond the narrative and visual levels, exploring how meaning is constructed, naturalized, and critiqued through sign systems. In this context, the film "Marlina the Killer in Four Acts" operates as a medium for social critique that operates ideologically through the representation of gender-based violence. Based on the previous semiotic analysis (scenes 5–10), the film consistently shows how violence against women is not an individual event, but rather a product of a normalized patriarchal social structure.

At the denotative level, the film depicts various forms of verbal, sexual, and domestic violence. However, at the connotative level, this violence is interpreted as a manifestation of unequal power relations between men and women. What is crucial is how, at the level of myth (ideology), the film reveals that these violent practices are actually supported by broader systems of meaning, such as the legitimacy of male domination over women's bodies, the normalization of victim-blaming, and the assumption that the domestic sphere is a private sphere free from social interference. The use of certain symbols in the film also strengthens the meaning that is intended to be conveyed to the audience. Thus, the film not only conveys the story

literally, but also builds a deeper meaning through various cinematic elements. This shows that film can be an effective communication medium to convey social messages to the public [4]. Thus, the film does not simply "narrate" violence, but also reveals how patriarchal ideology operates subtly through language, culture, and social institutions.

More specifically, "Marlina the Killer in Four Acts" uses cinematic elements as ideological devices. For example, the use of quiet and isolated spaces in several scenes serves not only as a backdrop but as a sign that constructs the victim's invisibility within the social system. Similarly, the minimal yet confrontational dialogue reinforces how language becomes an instrument of domination, as seen in the discursive violence in the interaction between Markus and Marlina. These representations can encourage audiences to be more sensitive to various forms of gender-based violence that occur in society [19].

Furthermore, the film also presents what, within Barthes's framework, could be called a counter-myth. If the dominant myth in patriarchal culture positions women as passive victims, then through the character of Marlina, this film constructs a counter-narrative that presents women as subjects with agency and the capacity to resist. However, it is important to note that the resistance displayed does not necessarily glorify violence, but rather demonstrates the failure of social and legal structures to protect victims. In other words, the social critique in this film operates on two levels simultaneously: the deconstruction of the dominant ideology (patriarchy) that normalizes violence against women. This view is in line with cultural theory that states that the media has an important role in shaping people's social consciousness [5]. In addition to raising social awareness, this film also has the potential to spark critical discussions among the audience.

The reconstruction of meaning through the representation of women as agents of resistance. This demonstrates that film is not only a medium for reflection but also an arena for the struggle for meaning between dominant ideologies and alternative narratives. Thus, “Marlina the Killer in Four Acts” can be understood not simply as a cinematic work representing social reality, but as a cultural text that actively intervenes in discourses on gender, power, and violence. Through Barthes's semiotic approach, the film's strength lies in its ability to expose, critique, and challenge ideologies that have been naturalized in society. Therefore, films can be an effective means to encourage people to think more critically about social reality [20]. This shows that media not only functions as entertainment, but also as a means of social reflection. On the other hand, this film also shows how cinematic works can be used as a tool of criticism of unjust social structures. The narrative shown in the film illustrates how the patriarchal system can create conditions that are detrimental to women.

Through the character of Marlina, this film shows that women often have to face various forms of injustice in their lives. However, the film also provides an overview of possible resistance to the system. Marlina's actions in dealing with the perpetrators of violence can be interpreted as a symbol of resistance to patriarchal domination. These representations show that film can be a medium to convey criticism of oppressive social structures. Thus, film can serve as a means to drive broader social change. Overall, the film Marlina the Killer in Four Acts can be understood as a work that is not only entertaining, but also has a strong social message. Through the narrative, visuals, and symbols used, this film seeks to reveal the social reality of violence against women. The representation shown in the film invites the audience to look back at the power relations that occur between men and women in society. The social criticism conveyed through this film shows that the media has an important role in building awareness of gender equality issues. In addition, this film also shows that artworks can be a means of reflection on existing social conditions. Thus, film can be understood as a communication medium that has great potential in conveying social messages to the public. This shows that film media can be an important tool in encouraging the creation of a more just and equal society [2].

5 CONCLUSION

This study demonstrates that Marlina the Killer in Four Acts operates not merely as a narrative representation of gender-based violence, but as a cultural text that actively constructs and contests meaning at the ideological level. Through Roland Barthes’ semiotic framework, the analysis reveals that the film’s signs manifested in scenes, dialogues, and visual compositions function across three levels of meaning: denotation, connotation, and myth. While denotation presents acts of violence as observable events, connotation exposes underlying power relations, and myth reveals how patriarchal ideology is naturalized within social structures. The key theoretical contribution of this study lies in showing that gender-based violence in film is not only representational but ideological. The findings extend Barthesian semiotics by demonstrating how myth operates as a mechanism that legitimizes male dominance, normalizes victim-blaming, and positions women within subordinate roles. At the same time, the film constructs a counter-myth through Marlina’s resistance, challenging the taken-for-granted assumptions of patriarchal culture and repositioning women as agents rather than passive victims. This highlights the dual function of film as both a site of

ideological reproduction and a space for ideological contestation.

From the perspective of gender studies, this research contributes to a deeper understanding of how media texts encode and negotiate power relations between men and women. The film does not merely depict violence as an individual act, but situates it within broader socio-cultural and institutional contexts, including the normalization of violence in private spaces and the lack of structural protection for victims. This reinforces the argument that gender-based violence must be understood as a systemic issue rather than an isolated phenomenon. In a broader social context, the study underscores the role of film as a critical medium that can challenge dominant discourses and foster public awareness. By exposing the ideological foundations of gender inequality, Marlina the Killer in Four Acts invites audiences to critically reflect on entrenched patriarchal norms and the social conditions that sustain violence against women. Therefore, this research affirms that cinematic texts have the potential not only to represent reality but also to intervene in it by reshaping social consciousness and encouraging more equitable gender relations.

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Digital Marketing Communication of Local SMEs Products: A Literature Review on Instagram Storytelling in Building Brand Image

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Abstract

This study analyzes the rising trend of Instagram storytelling in digital marketing communication in creating brand images especially as competition rises in the digital world. With digital content becoming saturated, stories have become tools of connecting with people beyond promoting their brands through meaning and identities. This study adopts a qualitative descriptive research design using the literature review method which involves reviewing journal articles, academic books, and other scholarly materials. Literature search was performed systematically and analysis conducted using qualitative descriptive methods such as categorizing and comparing of relevant data concerning digital marketing communication, storytelling, and brand image. It is found out that storytelling acts as a connecting link between promotional strategies and creation of brand images since those that are coherent, relatable, and associated with brand identity increase audience engagements, enhance memory recall and evoke emotions. It is also found out that brand images are created through an interpretive process where meanings are constructed through interaction with brand narratives. In summary, Instagram storytelling can thus be described as an integrating communication technique for creating brand images through constant meaning-making between brands and audiences.

Keywords: Instagram Storytelling, Brand Image, Digital Marketing Communication, Local MSMEs

1 INTRODUCTION

In today's digital landscape, storytelling on Instagram has become more than just a marketing trend it is a meaningful way for local SMEs to connect with their audiences on a deeper, more emotional level. Rather than simply displaying products, brands are now telling stories that reflect who they are, what they value, and why they exist. These stories help audiences see beyond the product itself, offering a richer understanding of the brand's identity. Amid the fast-paced and crowded flow of digital content, storytelling stands out because it gives context and meaning, allowing audiences to relate to the brand in a more personal way [1]. In this sense, storytelling is not just about promotion, but about building relationships and shaping how a brand is perceived.

Many studies suggest that storytelling on social media plays an important role in bringing brands closer to their audiences. Through stories, brands can share their journey, express their values, and communicate what makes them different. This creates space for interaction and encourages audiences to engage, not only as consumers but also as participants in the brand's narrative [2]. When these stories are told consistently and authentically, they add depth to the brand, making it feel more relatable and meaningful. As a result, audiences begin to see the brand not just as a product, but as something with purpose and identity.

From a psychological perspective, storytelling also touches the emotional side of consumers. People tend to respond more strongly to stories than to straightforward promotional messages because stories feel more personal and human. They invite audiences to imagine, to feel, and to connect. When done well, storytelling can build trust and emotional attachment, which are essential in shaping positive perceptions of a brand [3]. This shows that storytelling works not only by delivering information but also by shaping how audiences experience and interpret the brand.

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However, even though storytelling is widely used by SMEs, there is still a need to better understand how it actually shapes brand image in a more systematic way. Previous studies have shown that storytelling can influence engagement and even purchasing decisions, but many of them stop at describing its impact without fully explaining how the process happens [4]. This leaves an important gap, especially in understanding how stories, audience interpretation, and brand image are connected.

For local SMEs, storytelling becomes especially important as they try to establish their identity in a competitive digital space. Through storytelling, brands can communicate their uniqueness, values, and character in a consistent way. This helps audiences form clearer and more meaningful perceptions of the brand. In other words, storytelling allows a brand not only to be recognized, but also to be understood. This aligns with the idea that effective digital marketing is not only about providing information, but also about creating a strong and meaningful brand presence in the minds of consumers [1].

Based on this background, this study uses a literature review approach to bring together and reflect on previous research related to Instagram storytelling and brand image in the context of local SMEs. By looking at various studies from a holistic perspective, this research seeks to better understand how storytelling works as a communication process in shaping brand image in the digital environment.

Ultimately, this study aims to offer a more integrated way of understanding storytelling not just as a marketing tool, but as an ongoing communication process that helps build meaning and shape brand image over time. By focusing on how audiences interpret and respond to brand narratives, this research highlights the importance of meaning-making as a bridge between storytelling and brand image. In doing so, it contributes to a more comprehensive understanding of storytelling within digital marketing communication, especially in relation to how brands are perceived and remembered by their audiences.

2 LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Digital Marketing Communication

Digital marketing communication refers to the use of digital technologies as the main medium through which businesses interact with their audiences. Unlike conventional approaches that tend to be one-way, digital communication is inherently interactive, allowing audiences to respond, engage, and participate in real time. As a result, communication is no longer limited to delivering information, but also involves building relationships with audiences through messages that are relevant and consistently conveyed [5]. In this sense, marketing communication shifts from merely promoting products to shaping perceptions and maintaining long-term connections with consumers.

Conceptually, this practice evolves from the idea of integrated marketing communication, which emphasizes consistency of messages across channels in order to strengthen brand image [6]. With the advancement of technology, communication has moved beyond the use of media as tools toward a more connected digital environment, where brands and consumers engage in two-way interactions [7]. Therefore, digital marketing communication can be understood as a strategic process that positions audiences not only as message recipients but also as active participants who interpret and give meaning to brand messages in digital spaces.

2.2 Local SMEs in the Context of Digital Marketing

Local SMEs in digital marketing are not simply actors selling products; they represent brands that carry their own identity and character. Digital transformation has encouraged SMEs to adopt online marketing not only to expand their market reach but also to strengthen their contribution to the local economy. In this context, digital platforms become important spaces where brands can present themselves and enhance their competitiveness [8]. More than just making products visible, digital marketing allows SMEs to communicate meaning, helping consumers understand what the brand represents.

In practice, SME communication styles are often more simple, warm, and approachable compared to those of large corporations. Interestingly, this very characteristic makes their messages feel more relatable and authentic to audiences. The use of digital platforms, including e-commerce, shows that communication strategies aligned with consumer needs can significantly improve the competitiveness of local products while strengthening brand positioning [9]. This suggests that the success of SME digital marketing depends not only on product quality but also on how effectively brands communicate their message in a consistent and meaningful way.

2.3 Instagram as a Marketing Communication Medium

Instagram has become one of the most prominent platforms in contemporary digital marketing communication. Its strength lies in its ability to deliver messages visually, briefly, and in an engaging way, allowing brands to present their identity and product character more effectively. In practice, Instagram supports marketing communication strategies by

enabling businesses not only to promote their products but also to build relationships with audiences through direct interaction on the platform [10]. In this sense, Instagram is not just a space for publishing content, but a communication environment where brands and audiences continuously interact.

This role is further supported by Instagram's features, such as feed posts, stories, and reels, which provide flexibility in how messages are delivered. Each feature allows brands to tailor their communication based on their objectives and the characteristics of their audience. These tools enable businesses to package their messages creatively while expanding their communication reach [11]. Moreover, Instagram has proven to be effective in increasing message visibility and strengthening information delivery, as it integrates visual elements, interaction, and content distribution within a single platform [12]. For this reason, Instagram can be seen as a strategic communication medium that not only introduces products but also shapes brand perception through ongoing visual experiences and interactions.

2.4 Storytelling in Marketing Communication

Storytelling in marketing communication refers to the way brands convey messages through structured and meaningful narratives, so that information is not perceived as mere promotion, but as an experience that can be understood and felt. Through storytelling, narratives act as a bridge between brands and consumers, offering context, emotion, and reasons behind the existence of a product. In digital marketing practice, storytelling helps businesses deliver messages in a more engaging and accessible way, as narratives make information feel more alive and easier to connect with [13].

Within branding strategies, storytelling serves as a means of building closeness while clarifying brand identity. Through narratives, brands can express their values and highlight what makes them different from competitors, allowing audiences to better understand their character. This aligns with the idea that storytelling enhances communication effectiveness, as messages conveyed through stories tend to be easier to understand, remember, and accept [14]. When stories are delivered consistently, audiences begin to recognize patterns in the brand's communication, which gradually strengthens their perception of the brand.

Furthermore, storytelling also contributes to brand competitiveness, as narratives allow messages to resonate more closely with audience experiences. Compared to direct and purely factual communication, stories create space for emotional engagement, making communication feel more personal and memorable. Research shows that storytelling in digital advertising can enhance the appeal of marketing communication for SMEs while strengthening their position in a competitive market [15]. Thus, storytelling can be understood as a communication strategy that not only attracts attention but also continuously builds brand meaning through messages that feel vivid and memorable.

2.5 Storytelling and Brand Image

Storytelling and brand image are closely connected, as both relate to how a brand is understood by its audience. Storytelling can be seen as a process of delivering messages through meaningful narratives, where information is not simply presented as facts but as stories that provide context and understanding. On the other hand, brand image refers to the impressions and perceptions formed in the minds of consumers. In this relationship, storytelling operates at the level of message delivery, while brand image exists at the level of perception. The two are linked through an ongoing communication process [16].

This connection becomes visible in how stories help audiences interpret brand identity. Narratives allow brands to express their values, character, and uniqueness more clearly than direct informational messages. When these narratives are communicated consistently, audiences begin to recognize patterns and form a particular impression of the brand. Over time, this impression develops into a brand image. This perspective is supported by findings that storytelling marketing can influence brand identity and increase consumer engagement, as stories provide space for both cognitive and emotional connections with the brand message [17].

From a marketing communication perspective, storytelling can also be understood as a process of meaning construction that helps audiences interpret brands more holistically. Stories offer structure, emotion, and context, making messages easier to understand and remember. As a result, the brand image that emerges is not formed randomly, but develops in line with the direction of communication created by the brand. This is reinforced by studies showing that storytelling marketing influences brand image and consumer attitudes, as narratives strengthen associations and impressions attached to a brand [18]. Therefore, the relationship between storytelling and brand image can be seen as a connection between how brands communicate and how audiences interpret those messages the clearer and more consistent the narrative, the stronger the brand image that is formed.

3 RESEARCH METHODS

This study using a qualitative descriptive methods, using a literature review method to

conceptually explore storytelling in digital marketing communication, particularly in relation to building the brand image of local SMEs on Instagram. A qualitative approach is employed as the study focuses on gaining an in-depth understanding of the phenomenon and the meanings embedded within it, rather than relying on numerical measuremen. At the same time, the descriptive orientation aims to present a systematic account of facts, concepts, and relationships between variables as they emerge from the data. Through this approach, the analysis is directed toward examining ideas, findings, and theoretical arguments drawn from various scholarly works related to digital marketing communication, storytelling, and brand image.

Data were collected through a review of relevant literature, including journal articles, academic books, and other scientific publications aligned with the focus of the study. A literature-based approach is considered appropriate, as the research relies on the analysis of existing scholarly sources to understand concepts and prior findings. As noted by Hisyam, literature studies play an important role in establishing a theoretical foundation, tracing the development of a field, and positioning a study within the broader academic landscape [1].

The data were then analyzed using a qualitative descriptive technique by organizing key findings, comparing concepts, and synthesizing ideas across sources. This process allows for a more structured understanding of how storytelling functions as part of digital marketing communication, particularly in shaping brand image on Instagram.

4 RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Instagram Storytelling in Digital Marketing Communication for Local SMEs

In digital marketing practice, Instagram has taken on an important role as a communication space where local SMEs can both reach wider audiences and gradually build their brand image. The platform is not merely a channel for posting content, but a dynamic environment where visuals, text, video, and audience responses come together in an ongoing flow of communication. Its use in marketing strategies allows businesses not only to deliver brand messages but also to engage directly with consumers [10]. For local SMEs, digital platforms like Instagram offer strategic opportunities to expand market reach while strengthening competitiveness, as they enable brands to present their identity in a more open and communicative way [8]. This suggests that Instagram functions not simply as a promotional tool, but as a space where brand identity is built progressively through consistent content.

The communication style of SMEs on Instagram is typically simple, direct, and oriented toward creating a sense of closeness with the audience. This reflects how SMEs use digital platforms to strengthen the competitiveness of local products through communication that feels accessible and relatable [9]. At the same time, Instagram features such as feeds, stories, and reels provide flexibility, allowing businesses to present their messages in creative and varied ways that can be tailored to different audience segments [11]. The combination of visual elements, interaction, and content distribution within a single platform also enhances message visibility and strengthens how information is delivered to the public [12]. In this sense, SME marketing on Instagram can be understood as a participatory communication process, where brand perception emerges through repeated interactions between businesses and their audiences.

From a conceptual perspective, storytelling within digital marketing communication can be seen as a strategy that uses narrative structures to convey brand messages in a more meaningful way. Stories provide a framework that helps audiences understand the context, values, and character of a brand more holistically. In practice, storytelling enables businesses to communicate in ways that feel more engaging and easier to absorb, as narratives bring information to life and make it more relatable [13]. Unlike conventional promotional messages that focus directly on product information, storytelling offers a flow of meaning that makes messages easier to understand and remember [14]. In this sense, storytelling does more than decorate communication it shapes how audiences interpret and experience the brand.

On Instagram, storytelling appears in various forms depending on how brands choose to present themselves. Product stories, for example, often highlight the origin, uniqueness, or philosophy behind an item. Some businesses share production processes to emphasize transparency and product quality. Others focus on the personal stories of the founders, allowing audiences to connect with the human side of the brand. Narratives rooted in local culture are also frequently used to strengthen product differentiation, especially for SMEs that emphasize regional identity. These variations show that storytelling on Instagram does not follow a single pattern, but evolves in line with the character of the brand and the message it seeks to convey.

The effectiveness of storytelling, however, depends greatly on how well the narrative is delivered. Consistency is key, as it allows audiences to recognize and understand the brand's identity over time. When stories align with the brand's character, they not only clarify identity but also encourage stronger engagement, as narratives open space for emotional connection [17]. Relevance to the audience's experience makes messages easier to accept and remember, while clear brand character strengthens positive associations in the minds

of consumers. This supports the view that storytelling plays an important role in shaping brand image, as narratives reinforce the impressions attached to a brand [16]. Ultimately, successful storytelling is not just about creativity, but about aligning message, identity, and audience expectations.

Across the literature, a consistent pattern emerges regarding the role of storytelling in digital marketing. Most studies position storytelling as a communication strategy that enhances audience engagement while clarifying brand identity. This recurring pattern highlights that storytelling is not simply a technique for delivering messages, but a mechanism through which meaning is constructed and interpreted. It often emphasizes narrative consistency, emotional connection, and alignment between story values and brand identity. These shared findings suggest that storytelling holds a stable and important position within digital marketing communication, particularly as an approach that connects message, meaning, and audience perception in an integrated way.

In this context, Instagram storytelling can be understood as a communication mechanism that bridges marketing practices with the construction of brand meaning. It is not merely a creative technique, but a strategic process that helps audiences interpret brand identity through narrative. Instagram, as a platform, supports this process by bringing together interaction, visual elements, and storytelling within a single integrated communication space. As such, storytelling on Instagram becomes more than a tool for delivering marketing messages it becomes a means of shaping how audiences understand and make sense of a brand.

4.2 Instagram Storytelling in Building Brand Image of Local SMEs

In digital marketing communication, storytelling on Instagram increasingly plays a significant role in shaping how consumers perceive and evaluate a brand. When SMEs share stories about their products, production processes, or business background, audiences are not simply receiving information they are forming emotional impressions about the brand. This process shows that consumer perception develops gradually through repeated communication experiences, rather than from a single message. Digital technology further supports this process by enabling direct interaction, allowing audiences to actively interpret brand messages rather than passively receive them [5]. In this way, storytelling becomes a pathway through which audiences move from simply recognizing a brand to understanding its deeper meaning and character.

Overall, the findings point to a clear conceptual link between storytelling and brand image. Storytelling acts as a narrative stimulus that shapes how audiences interpret brand messages, while meaning serves as the mediating process that connects these narratives to the formation of brand perception. This suggests that the influence of storytelling on brand image is not immediate, but occurs through an interpretive process. The clearer, more consistent, and more relevant the narrative, the stronger the meaning that is formed and the more stable the resulting brand image becomes. In this sense, storytelling functions as a mechanism of meaning-making that bridges brand messages and audience perception.

Conceptually, this relationship unfolds through interconnected stages. Brand narratives act as interpretive stimuli that shape consumer perception, which then develops into a relatively stable brand image. Within the framework of integrated marketing communication, message consistency across channels plays an important role in strengthening brand identity and helping audiences recognize its character [6]. The rise of digital media further expands this process, as connectivity enables ongoing two-way interactions between brands and consumers that continuously shape brand meaning [7]. Thus, storytelling is not only a way of delivering messages, but also a structure through which audiences organize and understand brand-related information.

The role of storytelling becomes even clearer when examined through its key elements. The value embedded in a story forms its foundation, as meaningful narratives help audiences interpret the symbolic position of a brand. The presence of a clear brand character within the story makes it easier to recognize, while narrative consistency helps maintain stable audience perceptions over time. On Instagram, the integration of visuals, text, and context creates a unified message that strengthens brand representation. The platform's ability to combine visual communication and interaction enhances both message delivery and brand visibility [12]. This shows that the strength of storytelling lies in how well all communication elements work together to create a cohesive experience.

The literature also reveals a consistent pattern regarding the effects of storytelling on audience responses. Storytelling encourages engagement because it connects with audiences on a more personal level. Studies show that storytelling marketing is effective in increasing engagement and influencing consumer decisions, as narratives make messages more relevant and easier to understand [4]. It is also associated with brand loyalty, as stories foster emotional bonds between consumers and brands [3]. In addition, storytelling improves brand recall, since information delivered through stories tends to be more memorable than direct promotional messages [2]. Together, these findings suggest that storytelling generates cognitive, emotional,

and symbolic effects that interact in shaping brand image.

These insights also reflect the broader context of digital transformation among SMEs. Digitalization allows businesses to expand their reach and strengthen the competitiveness of local products in an increasingly open market [8]. The use of social media and other digital platforms shows that communication strategies aligned with consumer needs can enhance product positioning while clarifying brand representation [9]. In this context, storytelling serves as a bridge between promotional efforts and the formation of brand identity, shifting marketing activities beyond sales toward the construction of brand meaning.

In synthesis, the literature suggests that the influence of storytelling on brand image operates through a process of mediated meaning. Storytelling acts as the narrative stimulus, meaning functions as the mediator, and brand image emerges as the outcome of perception. The consistent pattern indicates that stronger storytelling leads to clearer brand meaning and, ultimately, to a more stable brand image. This reinforces the idea that the relationship between storytelling and brand image is not direct, but unfolds through the audience's interpretation of brand narratives.

From a more analytical perspective, these findings point to an understanding of Instagram storytelling as a mechanism for constructing brand meaning. Storytelling frames meaning by helping audiences interpret brand identity through symbols, narratives, and visual experiences. It enables businesses to communicate messages in ways that are more engaging and easier to understand [13]. While also making messages more accessible through structured narratives [14]. From a communication theory perspective, this process highlights that brand image is formed through ongoing interpretation shaped by repeated interactions between brand messages and audience responses.

In conclusion, the conceptual contribution of this study lies in emphasizing that Instagram storytelling can be understood as a communication strategy that shapes brand image through continuous meaning-making processes. Storytelling is not merely a creative content approach, but a strategic communication mechanism that connects marketing messages with the formation of brand perception. This perspective reinforces the position of storytelling within digital marketing communication as a strategy that integrates message, meaning, and audience experience in shaping the brand image of local SMEs.

5 CONCLUSION

Based on the discussion presented, it can be concluded that Instagram storytelling in the context of digital marketing communication for local SMEs can be understood as a communication strategy that goes beyond delivering product information. It plays a role in gradually building brand meaning through a process of symbolic interaction between the brand and its audience. Instagram functions as an interactive visual communication space where narratives, visuals, and audience responses come together within a dynamic communication ecosystem. In this space, marketing communication is no longer one-way, but participatory, allowing brand perception to develop through repeated communication experiences.

The findings show that storytelling acts as a bridge between promotional messages and the formation of brand image. Narratives that are consistent, relatable to audience experiences, and aligned with brand identity can enhance engagement, strengthen brand recall, and foster emotional connections with consumers. This highlights that the effectiveness of storytelling does not rely solely on creativity, but on how well the message, brand character, and audience expectations are aligned.

From a conceptual perspective, the process of building brand image through storytelling unfolds in several stages, beginning with narrative stimuli, followed by audience interpretation, and eventually leading to more stable perceptions. Stories serve as a framework of meaning that helps consumers organize and make sense of brand-related information. Therefore, brand image should not be seen as the result of a single promotional message, but rather as the outcome of an ongoing process of meaning construction shaped by continuous interaction between brand narratives and audience experiences.

In the context of SME digital transformation, Instagram storytelling also carries strategic value as it connects promotional efforts with the formation of brand identity. This approach strengthens the position of local products in digital markets by creating symbolic differentiation that cannot be achieved through purely informational promotion. In this sense, storytelling can be positioned as an integrative digital marketing communication strategy that brings together message, meaning, emotion, and audience experience in shaping brand image.

From a theoretical standpoint, this study affirms that Instagram storytelling functions as a mechanism of brand meaning construction within digital marketing communication. Practically, the findings suggest that the success of SME marketing communication is determined not merely by the intensity of promotion, but by the brand's ability to craft narratives that are consistent, authentic, and relevant to its audience.

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Urban Tourism: The Mapping and Analysis of the Visual Characteristics of Murals in the Prawirotaman Area of Yogyakarta

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Abstract

Mural as a form of public visual art has developed significantly in urban spaces and plays a role in shaping the visual character of city environments. Murals are frequently linked to the development of place identity and aesthetic appeal in tourist destinations. The purpose of this study is to map and examine the visual features of murals in Yogyakarta's Prawirotaman neighborhood as part of a visual depiction of an urban tourism region. The study uses a qualitative descriptive methodology that is bolstered by straightforward quantitative mapping. Direct observation and photographic documentation were used to gather data, which led to the identification of 66 murals with distinct visual presence. Independent graffiti expressions, socially focused murals, and commercially oriented murals were the three main categories into which the murals were divided. Formal components like color, composition, illustration style, and typography were used in visual analysis along with a semiotic method to decipher visual meaning. The results show that the majority of murals are dominated by non-commercial expressions, indicating an organic visual landscape shaped by informal artistic practices. Meanwhile, commercial murals appear in limited numbers and are mainly associated with business identities. The coexistence of these categories creates a layered visual environment that reflects both artistic freedom and functional communication. This study concludes that murals in Prawirotaman contribute to the visual complexity of the area and serve as an indicative element in representing the character of a tourism district. The findings provide an initial framework for understanding mural-based visual mapping in urban design and communication studies.

Keywords: Mural, Visual Mapping, Mural Typology, Tourist Area, Visual Communication.

1 INTRODUCTION

The development of visual art in urban spaces demonstrates that visual elements no longer serve merely as decoration, but also as a medium of communication that shapes the meaning and character of urban spaces. One form of public art that has flourished in this context is the mural, which appears directly on architectural surfaces and forms part of the public's visual experience [1], [2]. In the field of visual communication design, murals are understood as a system of signs that convey messages through visual elements such as colour, form, symbols and composition, which are then interpreted within the context of a specific social space [3].

In recent decades, murals have also become increasingly associated with the development of urban tourist areas. The presence of murals is considered capable of enriching the visual quality of a space and creating a distinctive aesthetic experience for visitors [4]. Studies on street art in the context of tourism indicate that visual elements such as murals can function as visual attractors that enhance a destination's appeal and strengthen the area's image [5]. Furthermore, murals are often linked to the process of place-making—the formation of a space's identity and meaning through the interaction between visual elements, social activities, and cultural context [6].

In Indonesia, the practice of murals as part of the urban visual landscape can be found in various cities, one of which is Yogyakarta. The city is known for its strong arts ecosystem, with artists actively engaging in the use of public spaces as a medium for visual expression. One area that exemplifies this phenomenon is Prawirotaman, which has developed into a tourist district with a distinctive visual character.

In the Prawirotaman area, murals are present on various elements of the space, ranging from the façades

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of commercial buildings to the alleys connecting the streets. The presence of a significant number of murals creates a layered visual landscape and has the potential to shape the visual representation of the tourist area. However, to date, systematic studies mapping the distribution and visual character of murals in this area remain relatively limited. Most research on murals in Indonesia focuses more on aspects of social expression, political criticism, or symbolic meaning, whilst approaches that position murals as part of a tourist area's visual system have not yet been widely developed [7], [8].

Given these circumstances, this study stems from the need to understand murals not merely as individual works, but as part of the area's visual fabric. This study specifically aims to map and analyse the visual characteristics of murals in the Prawirotaman area. Through field observations, the study identified 66 murals with high visibility and a significant contribution to the area's visual landscape. These murals were then classified into several categories based on their dominant function: independent expression (graffiti), socially themed murals, and commercially driven murals.

Using this approach, the study seeks to answer questions regarding the visual character of murals in the Prawirotaman area and how the distribution of these mural typologies shapes the visual representation of the tourist area. This study does not directly measure public perception or the economic impact of murals, but rather focuses on visual analysis as a foundation for an initial understanding of the role of murals in urban visual communication.

The contribution of this study lies in the development of a structured visual mapping of murals and the development of a typological analysis of murals within the context of an urban tourist area. It is hoped that the findings of this study will serve as a foundation for further research examining the relationship between murals, area identity, and social dynamics within urban spaces.

2 LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Murals as a Medium of Visual Communication

Murals are a form of public art with distinctive characteristics, as they are integrated into architectural spaces and directly accessible to the public. From a visual communication design perspective, murals serve not only as aesthetic elements but also as a medium of communication that conveys messages through visual elements such as colour, form, symbols and composition [9], [10]. These elements form a system of signs that can be interpreted by the audience based on the social and cultural context in which the mural is situated [11].

Murals have a significant spatial dimension since they are inextricably linked to their physical surroundings, unlike traditional visual media. This implies that a mural's meaning is influenced by its link to the area, the building's purpose, and the social activities that take place there in addition to its visual content [10]. Murals can therefore be viewed as a component of spatial visual communication that influences how the general public perceives a certain location.

2.2 Street Art and the Representation of Urban Identity

Street art, which includes graffiti and murals, is frequently linked to the portrayal of urban identity in the study of urban visual culture. Street art is seen as a form of expression that captures the ideals and social and cultural processes that are emerging within a community [12]. Murals can depict both local identities and global challenges tailored to a local setting through the symbols, visual motifs, and narratives they convey [7].

However, the relationship between murals and urban identity is not linear. The identity of an area is a complex construction influenced by various factors, including history, economic activity, and social interactions within the community [4]. Therefore, murals are more appropriately positioned as one element of visual representation that contributes to shaping the image of an area, rather than as the sole factor determining that identity [12].

Furthermore, research indicates that street art can fall anywhere on a spectrum ranging from independent expression to institutionalised or commodified practices [13]. In some cases, murals that were originally expressive in nature may undergo a transformation into visual elements that support the image of a tourist area or specific commercial interests [5]. This highlights the interplay between artistic freedom and economic function in the practice of mural art in urban spaces.

2.3 Murals in the Context of Tourism and Place-Making

In the context of urban tourism, murals are often understood as part of a visual strategy to enhance the appeal of an area. The presence of murals can create a unique spatial experience and strengthen the visual appeal of a destination [5]. Studies show that tourists tend to be attracted to areas with distinctive visual elements, including street art, as these offer a different experience compared to homogeneous urban spaces [6].

The concept of place-making explains how physical spaces acquire meaning through the interaction between visual elements, human activities, and cultural

contexts [2]. In this context, murals serve as visual elements that help construct a spatial narrative and reinforce the area's identity through symbolic representation [6]. However, some research also cautions that the aestheticisation of space through murals does not always reflect actual social conditions; therefore, a critical analysis is necessary to understand the role of murals in shaping the area's image [4].

2.4 Typology of Murals in Urban Spaces

To understand the role of murals more systematically, several studies have proposed a typological approach to classifying murals based on their function and visual characteristics. This typology generally encompasses murals as independent expressions (graffiti), murals with social or cultural themes, and murals with commercial or decorative functions [13], [14].

A typological approach enables researchers to identify patterns of visual distribution within a given area and to understand how different types of murals contribute to the city's visual landscape [14]. Furthermore, function-based classification also helps to distinguish between murals that emerge organically and those designed as part of a specific visual strategy.

In the context of this study, the typological approach is used to categorise murals in the Prawirotaman area based on their dominant visually apparent function. This approach is expected to provide a more structured understanding of the visual character of murals and their contribution to the representation of the tourist area.

3 RESEARCH METHODS

This study employs a descriptive qualitative approach combined with simple quantification through the visual mapping of murals. This approach was chosen to understand the visual character of murals in a contextual manner whilst identifying the distribution of mural typologies within a given area [15], [16]. In the context of visual communication design, this approach is relevant as it enables the analysis of both the visual form and the meaning contained within visual works in public spaces [11].

3.1 Research Subject and Location

The subject of this research is the murals found in the Prawirotaman area of Yogyakarta. This area was chosen because it is known as a tourist destination with a high concentration of murals and a distinctive visual character.

The units of analysis in this study are murals that are clearly visible and make a significant contribution to the area's visual landscape. Based on the results of the observation, 66 murals were identified that met these criteria.

3.2 Data Collection Techniques

Data collection was carried out through direct observation and photographic documentation. Observations were conducted to identify the location, spatial context, and the relationship between the murals and the surrounding architectural elements. Photographic documentation was used to record the visual details of the murals as the primary data for the analysis process [13].

The inclusion criteria for selecting mural objects include:

1. The mural has high visibility and is easily observable in public spaces.
2. The mural is not an additional layer on top of an existing mural.
3. The mural has significant visual dominance within the space it occupies.

This approach was used to ensure that the data analysed constitutes the primary visual elements contributing to the character of the area.

3.3 Classification and Mapping of Data

The mural data collected was then classified according to the dominant function identified visually. This classification is not absolute, but rather interpretative, based on visual characteristics and the context of the mural's location.

Murals are categorised into three main typologies:

1. Independent expression (graffiti), namely murals that visually display a spontaneous character, are not tied to commercial interests, and tend to reflect the artist's personal expression.
2. Socially themed murals, namely murals that contain representations of social, cultural, political, or environmental issues.
3. Commercial murals, i.e. murals that have a direct link to a business's identity or a specific promotional function

The results of the classification show the following distribution:

Table 1. Murals Mapping

Mural Category	Number of murals	Percentage
Independent Expression	45	67.2%
Social Expression	16	23.9%
Commercial	5	9%

There are a total of 66 murals divided into three categories: 45 murals in the independent expression category, 16 murals in the social category, and 5 murals in the commercial category; this classification serves as the basis for understanding the patterns of visual distribution within the study area.

3.4 Data Analysis Techniques

1. Formal Visual Analysis
   This stage aims to identify the visual elements of the mural, including: colour, composition, typography, illustration style. Formal visual analysis is used to understand the aesthetic character of the mural as a work of visual design [10].

2. Visual Semiotic Analysis
   This stage is used to interpret the symbolic meanings contained within the murals. The analysis is carried out by distinguishing between denotative meaning (what is seen) and connotative meaning (the interpreted meaning) [16]. This approach enables an understanding of the social, cultural, and ideological messages represented in the murals.

3.5 Validity and Limitations of the Study

The validity of the study is ensured through consistency in the documentation and visual classification processes. However, this study has limitations because:

1. The classification of murals is based on visual interpretation, rather than on contractual data or in-depth interviews with the mural artists.
2. The study does not include an analysis of public perception or the socio-economic impact of the murals.

Consequently, the findings of this study are best understood as a visual mapping and interpretation, rather than as a generalisation regarding broader social conditions.

4 RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Distribution of Mural Types in the Prawirotaman Area

Based on the results of observation and visual documentation, 66 murals were identified as having high visibility and making a significant contribution to the visual landscape of the Prawirotaman area, Yogyakarta. These murals were then classified into three typologies based on their dominant function as interpreted visually, namely independent expression (graffiti), socially themed murals, and commercial murals.

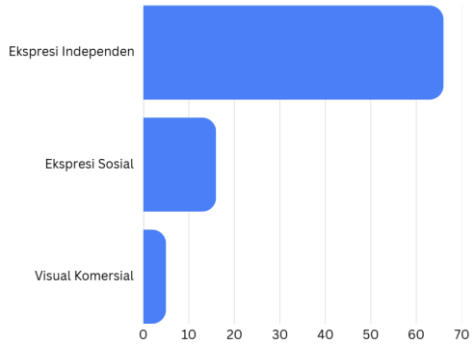


Figure 1. Numbers of Prawirotaman's Murals

The classification results show that 45 murals (±68%) fall into the independent expression category, 16 murals (±24%) into the social mural category, and 5 murals (±8%) into the commercial mural category. This distribution indicates that the visual landscape of the Prawirotaman area is dominated by visual practices that are non-commercial and relatively independent.

The dominance of independent expression murals indicates that visual production in this area has developed organically through the informal practices of artists. This finding is consistent with studies stating that street art often emerges as a form of spontaneous expression not bound by formal institutional structures [12], [17]. Meanwhile, the limited presence of commercial murals suggests that economic function is not a dominant factor in the formation of the area's visual landscape.

4.2 Visual Characteristics and Variations in Mural Expression

A formal visual analysis reveals that murals in the Prawirotaman area exhibit a wide variety of styles, in terms of colour, composition and visual technique. In the 'independent expression' category, murals tend to display a graffiti style characterised by strong

typography, the use of contrasting colours, and dynamic compositions. Visually, murals in this category demonstrate a high degree of aesthetic exploration and are not bound by specific visual standards.



Figure 2. Murals as Independent Expression at Prawirotaman Street

In the social mural category, the visual character tends to be more illustrative and narrative. Murals in this category often feature human figures, cultural symbols, and representations of social and environmental issues. The use of colour in social murals tends to be more harmonious, with a more structured compositional approach, making the visual messages conveyed easier to interpret.



Figure 3. Murals as Social Expression at Prawirotaman Street

Meanwhile, commercial murals exhibit a more focused and communicative visual character. Visual elements such as typography and illustration are used to reinforce a business's identity, with compositions designed to attract visitors' attention. This indicates that murals in this category function as part of an integrated visual communication strategy linked to the area's economic activities [5], [18].



Figure 4. Murals as Visual Comercial at Prawirotaman Street

4.3 The Spatial Relationship Between Murals and the Function of Space

The distribution of murals in the Prawirotaman area also reveals a close relationship between visual character and spatial context. Commercial murals are generally found on the façades of main buildings directly facing the main road, thus enjoying high visibility and serving as visual markers for specific businesses.

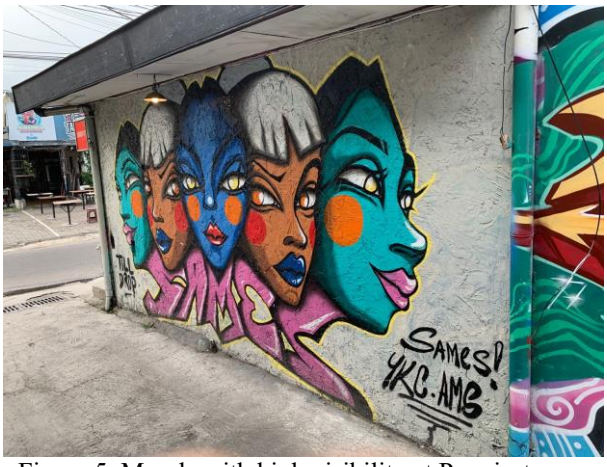


Figure 5. Murals with high visibility at Prawirotaman Street

Conversely, independent expression murals and social murals are more commonly found in transitional spaces such as narrow alleys, the side walls of buildings, and residential areas. These spaces tend to offer artists greater freedom to express themselves without the constraints of commercial function. This phenomenon indicates a differentiation of visual function based on the spatial hierarchy within the urban area [4].



Figure 6. Murals in the connecting alley at Prawirotaman Street

Furthermore, in some cases, murals are found on limited spatial surfaces, such as narrow walls between doors and windows. Despite the spatial constraints, murals in these areas are still utilised as a medium for visual expression, particularly to convey brief messages or specific opinions. This demonstrates that every visual

space within an area has the potential to serve as a medium of communication.

4.4 The Dynamics Between Aesthetics and Vandalism

Although the Prawirotaman area is dominated by murals of high visual quality, instances of vandalistic graffiti are still to be found, albeit in relatively limited numbers. Interestingly, some of this vandalism is not removed, but is left in place and even builds up over time.



Figure 7. Preserved vandalism on commercial buildings at Prawirotaman Street

Visually, these layered layers of vandalism form a composition that indirectly creates an aesthetic balance. This phenomenon demonstrates that the boundary between art and vandalism in urban spaces is not always rigid, but exists within a dynamic spectrum [17].

In this context, tolerance of certain forms of vandalism can be interpreted as a form of acceptance of the visual dynamics of public space. This is consistent with research showing that street art practices can undergo a process of legitimisation when they become part of a visual landscape accepted by the community [12].

4.5 Implications for the Visual Representation of Tourist Areas

Based on the results of the analysis, the murals in the Prawirotaman area can be understood as visual elements that contribute to the formation of the visual character of the tourist area. The predominance of non-commercial murals indicates that the area's visual identity is not entirely constructed in a planned manner, but rather develops through interactions between artists, space owners, and the local social context.

The diversity of mural typologies creates a layered visual experience for visitors, where aesthetic elements, social expression, and commercial communication coexist. This reinforces the view that murals are part of a dynamic and contextual place-making process [6].

However, it should be emphasised that this study does not directly measure tourists' perceptions or the impact of murals on the area's image. Therefore, the findings of this study are best understood as an indication of visual representation, rather than as a causal relationship regarding the formation of a tourist area's identity.

5 CONCLUSION

This study shows that murals in the Prawirotaman area of Yogyakarta possess diverse visual characteristics and can be understood through a typological approach based on dominant function. Of the total 66 identified murals, the majority are dominated by independent expression (graffiti), followed by socially themed murals, and a small proportion of commercial murals. This distribution indicates that the area's visual landscape has formed relatively organically through non-commercial visual practices that have developed in public spaces.

Visual analysis reveals that each mural typology possesses distinct aesthetic characteristics and communicative functions. Independent expression murals tend to display free and spontaneous visual exploration, whilst social murals present narratives that are more reflective of cultural, environmental, and political issues. Conversely, commercial murals exhibit a more structured and communicative visual approach in supporting business identity.

The relationship between murals and their spatial context also reveals distribution patterns linked to the function of the area. Commercial murals are generally located on the façades of main buildings with high visibility, whilst expressive murals are more commonly found in transitional spaces and residential areas, which offer artists greater freedom. This suggests that urban space functions not only as a physical container, but also as a medium for visual negotiation between various interests.

Overall, murals in the Prawirotaman area can be understood as part of a visual representation system that contributes to the character of the tourist area. However, this study is limited to visual analysis and does not yet cover aspects of public perception or socio-economic impacts. Therefore, further research is recommended to integrate visual approaches with social approaches in order to gain a more comprehensive understanding of the role of murals in an urban context.

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Heritage Tourism Logo Design of Kampung Kemasan Gresik

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Abstract

This study aims to design a logo for the Heritage Tourism of Kampung Kemasan, Gresik, as an effort to establish a visual identity that can communicatively and sustainably represent the area's historical, cultural, and multiethnic architectural values. This research is motivated by the absence of a standardized visual identity, particularly a regional logo. This deficiency has resulted in a weak and inconsistent image of Kampung Kemasan as a heritage tourism destination among the public and visitors. The study employs a mixed-method approach, combining qualitative and quantitative techniques through observation, interviews, and questionnaires. Data analysis was conducted using the TOWS Matrix method to formulate logo design strategies based on the internal and external factors of the area. The results indicate that Kampung Kemasan possesses strong visual potential, especially in its multiethnic architectural character that integrates European, Chinese, Arab, and Javanese elements, as well as its historical value as a former gold trading area. Based on these findings, a logo concept titled "Harmony of Multiethnic Architecture" is developed by integrating logogram and logotype elements, supported by the selection of colors and typography that reflect a heritage nuance. The resulting logo is expected to strengthen the area's image, enhance visitors' recall, and serve as a foundation for developing a consistent and sustainable visual identity system across various visual communication media.

Keywords: Multiethnic Architecture, Visual Identity, Logo, Heritage Tourism, Kampung Kemasan.

1 INTRODUCTION

Tourism plays an important role in national development. As a major source of foreign exchange, tourism helps drive economic growth and reduce social inequality. In addition, tourism contributes to promoting national identity and preserving the nation's cultural heritage. Indonesia's rich diversity of natural and cultural resources makes it an invaluable asset for tourism development [1]. With its abundant natural wealth and cultural diversity, Indonesia has great potential to develop various types of tourism, including cultural and heritage tourism [2]. Cultural heritage is an essential part of national identity and serves as one of the main attractions in the tourism industry [3]. Heritage tourism is a form of preservation-based tourism that emphasizes historical, cultural, and local identity values as its primary attractions.

Indonesia has many heritage areas shaped by the dynamics of trade history and cultural acculturation. Gresik is one of the oldest port cities in East Java, which developed through the interaction of Javanese, Arab, Chinese, and European ethnic groups. The historical development of Gresik is described in detail by Nuruddin in his book, 'Fragments of Gresik's Local History – From a Port City to a Tourism Destination during the Dutch Colonial Period' [4]. Traces of this acculturation can still be found in Kampung Kemasan, a historic residential area that has developed since the mid-19th century and is known as a settlement of gold merchants. Kampung Kemasan features distinctive multiethnic architecture, incorporating Indische Empire, Chinese, Arab, and Javanese styles that remain relatively well preserved, making it a strong potential heritage tourism destination based on historical education [4].



Figure 1. Kampung Kemasan
(Source: Personal Documentation, 2025)

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Despite its designation as a cultural heritage area and its positioning as a heritage tourism destination, Kampung Kemasan still lacks a standardized and easily recognizable visual identity. One key element that is still lacking is a tourism logo as the primary symbol of the area's identity. In visual communication design, a logo functions as a visual representation that encapsulates the character, values, and image of a destination. It also serves as a fundamental element in establishing consistent and sustainable destination branding.



Figure 2. Facilities in Kampung Kemasan
(Source: Personal Documentation, 2025)

The facilities in the Kampung Kemasan area of Gresik reflect a combination of social, cultural, and economic functions while preserving its historical values. One of the key facilities is Masjid Taqwa Kemasan, which represents the religious identity of the community, along with Sualoka Hub, a creative space that serves as a venue for exhibitions and the promotion of local SMEs. The presence of Sualoka Hub demonstrates efforts to develop the heritage area in a way that remains relevant to younger generations without losing its historical essence.



Figure 3. Kopi Kampoeng Kemasan
(Source: Personal Documentation, 2025)

There is also Kopi Kampoeng Kemasan, a classic-style café that serves as a tourist attraction, supported by facilities such as pedestrian pathways, thematic street lighting, and informational signage. The area is managed by the descendants of H. Oemar in collaboration with the Gresik Heritage community, with residents continuing to inhabit ancestral homes and engage in diverse livelihoods, thereby reinforcing Kampung Kemasan as a living and sustainable heritage tourism destination.

Recent studies show that destination logos have a significant influence on shaping destination image and brand awareness, and can enhance tourist attraction and visitation interest. In the context of heritage tourism, a logo is not only required to be visually appealing but also to be contextual and rooted in historical and local cultural values. A logo designed without considering the character of the area risks producing a generic image that fails to represent the destination's uniqueness.

Several previous studies have examined Kampung Kemasan from various perspectives. Mariami et al., (2021) discussed the place identity of Kampung Kemasan and found that the area's identity is shaped by historical values and social attachment, but has not yet been strongly realized in visual representation [5]. Research by Maulana et al., (2025) focused on the design of a sign system to improve visitor orientation, however, it remains partial and does not yet place the area's visual identity as the main focus [6]. Meanwhile, studies on heritage area branding in other locations indicate that logo design plays a crucial role as the foundation of a destination's visual identity system.

Based on this review, a research gap can be identified, namely the absence of studies that specifically address the design of a logo for Heritage Tourism Kampung Kemasan, Gresik, as a symbol of the area's visual identity. Most existing studies still focus on spatial aspects, governance, or partial visual communication, without translating the multiethnic character and historical values of Kampung Kemasan into a representative and applicable logo. The lack of a regional logo has resulted in a weak and inconsistent image of Kampung Kemasan in the minds of the public and tourists. Consequently, Kampung Kemasan is less widely recognized compared to other heritage destinations in East Java, such as Kampoeng Kajoetangan Malang, which has successfully established its branding identity [7].

This article focuses on designing a logo for Heritage Tourism Kampung Kemasan, Gresik, using a visual communication design approach. The design process is carried out through the exploration of the area's multiethnic architectural character and historical values as the foundation for developing the logo's visual concept. The main objective of this article is to create a tourism logo that can visually represent the identity of Kampung Kemasan, strengthen its image as a heritage destination, and serve as a basis for the sustainable development of the area's visual identity.

2 LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Destination Branding

Destination branding, also known as place branding, refers to the application of branding concepts to a specific location with the aim of maximizing its potential. This approach seeks to increase the number of visits, both for tourism and business purposes, which ultimately contributes to foreign exchange and the

regional economy. Local governments typically initiate these efforts through well-organized public policies [8]. The success of destination branding not only impacts the growth in tourist numbers but also encourages the preservation of local culture, strengthens community identity, and creates opportunities for the creative economy that support the sustainability of the heritage area.

2.2 Visual Identity

Visual identity is an essential aspect of brand communication, consisting of graphic elements, colors, typography, logos, and symbols that help distinguish an organization, product, or service from its competitors. Visual identity is not merely a logo, but a comprehensive visual communication system that represents the values, character, and positioning of a brand [9]. To create a strong brand image, visual identity must be applied consistently across all promotional media [10]. In Designing Brand Identity, Wheeler, (2021) defines visual identity as the visual expression of a brand strategy, encompassing logos, colors, typography, grid systems, iconography, and even photographic styles that influence public perception [11].

2.3 Logo

The term "logo" originates from the Greek word logos, which means word, statement, proportion, or part. A logo is a visual symbol that has two main roles for a brand: identification and differentiation [12]. It is one of the key components of visual communication commonly used by multinational companies to strengthen their market position [13].

In graphic design, logos are generally divided into two main elements that are often interconnected, namely:

2.3.1 Logogram

A logogram refers to any visual image, ranging from simple lines to full illustrations, that uses literal imagery to represent and identify itself. A pictorial mark employs images to create a faster connection with potential audiences. Such visuals are universally understood and can transcend language barriers.

2.3.2 Logotype

The term "logotype" first appeared between 1810 and 1840 and is defined as the name of an entity uniquely designed using specific lettering or typography. The most fundamental form of identity is the name itself, followed by how that identity is visually presented [14]. Logotype/Typographic refers to words or letters that help interpret messages and describe visuals more deeply, similar to a logogram or graphic symbol. There are several types of Logotype/Typography:

a. Wordmarks are logos that consist solely of the name, displaying the brand or individual name in a stylized typographic form.
b. Letterforms are logos that use a single letter or number. The strength of the chosen character often becomes the main identity that is easily recognized by the public.
c. Monogram is a combination of two or more typographic characters formed into a logo. It is usually created using the initials of the entity being represented, for example, Chanel, which uses a monogram logo.

2.4 Typography

Typography is the art and technique of arranging type to convey messages visually. In visual communication design, typography goes beyond simply arranging letters; it also includes the selection of typefaces, size, spacing, color, and composition to communicate specific meanings. Therefore, typography functions as a visual language that can strengthen the identity of a brand or communication medium [15].

Typography in informational media must meet standards of readability and legibility so that text can be clearly read, easily seen from various angles, and quickly understood by users. Readability ensures that text remains visible under different conditions, while legibility becomes crucial when information needs to be conveyed rapidly, such as on road signs or wayfinding in tourist areas. In such situations, users must be able to grasp messages quickly without visual obstacles. Therefore, the selection of typefaces and the treatment of typography must be carefully designed to ensure optimal communication [16].

Typography can influence audience perception, mood, and responses to a message [17]. There are several types of typography, including the following:

2.4.1 Serif

Serif is a typeface that features small strokes or "tails" at the ends of its letterforms. This type of font is commonly used because it conveys a formal, classic, and trustworthy impression in visual communication design, especially in print media [18]. Examples of serif fonts include Times New Roman and New Century Gothic.

2.4.2 Sans Serif

Sans serif is a typeface without strokes at the ends of its letterforms, resulting in a simpler, more modern appearance and improved readability, particularly on digital screens. It is highly effective for digital branding due to its high legibility across various electronic devices

[19]. Examples of font Sans Serif include Helvetica and Avant Garde.

2.4.3 Slab Serif

Slab serif is characterized by thick and bold serif features. This type of font is commonly used for headlines and posters because it creates a strong and solid impression, making it effective in building a bold brand identity [18].

2.4.4 Display

Display typefaces are typically used for titles or large-scale text. They play a significant role in creating a distinctive visual impression, such as in posters, advertisements, and product packaging [20].

2.4.5 Script

It is a typeface that resembles connected handwritten lettering and conveys an elegant impression. Script fonts are commonly used in designs that aim to present a luxurious, romantic, or formal atmosphere, such as invitations or premium product packaging [19].

2.5 Color

Color is a visual perception experienced by the sense of sight, caused by the reflection of light from an object to the retina, which is then collected and processed by the brain. In art and design, color is not only seen as an optical phenomenon but also as an aesthetic element with symbolic and psychological meanings [21]. Furthermore, color serves an important role in visual communication by evoking emotions, connections, and specific identities [22]. According to the theory proposed by David Brewster (1781–1868), colors found in nature are categorized into four groups: primary, secondary, tertiary, and neutral colors [23].

2.6 Tagline

A tagline is a short phrase that reinforces a brand's identity and core message. It is designed to be memorable and to stay in the audience's mind. Studies in visual communication show that a tagline is more than just a phrase, it also plays a strategic role in enhancing brand awareness by conveying the brand's values and image [24].

3 RESEARCH METHODS

This design study employs a mixed-method approach, combining qualitative and quantitative methods to obtain a comprehensive understanding of the characteristics, historical values, and public perceptions of Heritage Tourism Kampung Kemasan, Gresik. This approach is chosen because logo design requires not only visual and historical data, but also the perceptions, preferences, and evaluations of the audience as the users and target of the visual identity.

3.1 Data Collection Techniques

3.1.1 Observation

Observation was conducted directly in the Heritage Tourism area of Kampung Kemasan, Gresik, to identify the visual character of the environment, architectural elements, building ornaments, the atmosphere of the area, and ongoing tourism activities. The observation data served as the basis for determining visual potentials that represent the historical and multicultural values of Kampung Kemasan.

3.1.2 Interviews

In-depth interviews were conducted with relevant informants, such as tourism area managers, community leaders, and individuals knowledgeable about the history of Kampung Kemasan. The interviews aimed to gather information related to the historical background, area philosophy, cultural identity, and expectations regarding the design of the Kampung Kemasan heritage tourism logo.

3.1.3 Questionnaire

The questionnaire was distributed to the public and potential tourists to obtain quantitative data on perceptions, levels of interest, and visual preferences toward the heritage tourism logo. The questionnaire data were used to identify respondents' tendencies in evaluating visual elements such as form, color, and the desired character of the logo.

3.2 Design Analysis Method

The TOWS Matrix is used as the analytical method to formulate the logo design strategy by linking the internal and external factors of Heritage Tourism Kampung Kemasan, Gresik. Internal factors include the strengths and weaknesses of the area, while external factors consist of opportunities and threats. The results of the TOWS Matrix mapping serve as the basis for determining the visual concept and logo design strategy to effectively represent the identity of the area.

4 RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The data obtained were analyzed to identify the characteristics, visual potential, and identity-related issues of Kampung Kemasan Gresik as a heritage tourism area. The results of this analysis served as the basis for formulating a logo design concept that is

capable of visually, communicatively, and sustainably representing the historical values, cultural aspects, and image of Kampung Kemasan.

4.1 Observation Data Analysis

Field observations were conducted directly in the Kampung Kemasan Gresik area on September 25, 2025. The observation activities aimed to identify the visual potential of the area, environmental characteristics, and identity-related issues associated with logo design as part of a heritage tourism rebranding strategy. The observations focused on physical elements that have the potential to serve as visual representations of the area's identity, including the entrance gate, information boards, architectural structures, pedestrian pathways, mosque, and creative public spaces such as Sualoka Hub and Kopi Kampung Kemasan.



Figure 4. Kampung Kemasan House
(Source: Personal Documentation, 2025)

The results of the field observations in Kampung Kemasan Gresik indicate that the area possesses strong visual and historical values, particularly reflected in the architectural character that combines European, Chinese, Javanese, and Arab styles. Visual elements such as tall pillars, large windows, facade ornaments, building colors, and the limasan roof form serve as distinctive and consistent characteristics with strong potential as sources of visual inspiration. Additionally, supporting elements such as classical-style pedestrian pathways, Masjid Taqwa Kemasan, and creative spaces like Sualoka Hub and Kopi Kampung Kemasan further enrich the area's character as a heritage tourism destination with significant historical, cultural, and social values.

The observation results also reveal that this visual richness has not yet been developed into an integrated visual identity system. The design of the area's entrance gate, information boards, and directional signage remains simple, inconsistent, and does not strongly represent the heritage character of Kampung Kemasan. Each point within the area still displays a separate visual identity and lacks a unifying symbol. This condition highlights the importance of designing a logo as the main element of Kampung Kemasan's visual identity, which functions to unify the area's visual potential, strengthen its image as a heritage tourism destination, and serve as a foundation for the sustainable development of promotional media and area branding.

4.2 Interview Data Analysis

4.2.1 Historian Interview

An in-depth interview was conducted with Aria Bhaskara, a local historian, manager of Kampung Kemasan Gresik, and an active member of the Gresik Heritage Community, on September 25, 2025, in Kampung Kemasan, Gresik. The interview results reveal that Kampung Kemasan has a strong historical background that originated from gold craftsmanship activities in 1853 by Bhak Liong and later developed through the business of H. Oemar bin Ahmad since 1856. This history is reflected in the architectural character of the area, which combines European, Chinese, and Javanese elements, with distinctive visual features such as tall pillars, large windows, red-colored buildings, limasan roofs, and ornamental details representing prosperity and cultural acculturation. These visual characteristics serve as key assets with strong potential to be translated into the visual concept of the Kampung Kemasan logo.



Figure 5. Interview with Mr. Aria
(Source: Personal Documentation, 2025)

The interview results also indicate that the historical and visual potential of Kampung Kemasan has not yet been optimally communicated through an integrated visual identity system. The area does not yet have an official logo or a consistent environmental graphic system, resulting in a weak and less recognizable image of Kampung Kemasan as a heritage tourism destination. The absence of such visual identity affects the memorability of the area among visitors and reduces the effectiveness of tourism promotion media. Therefore, logo design is considered a fundamental and strategic necessity to establish a representative and communicative visual identity for Kampung Kemasan, as well as to serve as a foundation for the sustainable development of heritage area branding.

4.2.2 Tourist Interview

In this design process, interviews with tourists were conducted at Sualoka Hub on September 28, 2025, involving three visitors of Kampung Kemasan as discussion participants. The interview results show that tourists are attracted to visit the area due to its strong historical value and the uniqueness of its well-preserved heritage architecture. The classical and authentic atmosphere provides a distinct experience compared to other tourist destinations in Gresik. However, tourists also experience difficulty in identifying key points within the area due to the lack of information systems, directional signage, and consistent graphic elements.



Figure 6. Interview with Tourists
(Source: Personal Documentation, 2025)

These findings emphasize that Kampung Kemasan does not yet have an official visual identity capable of strengthening its image as a heritage destination. Tourists recommend the presence of an official logo, an integrated information system, and consistent visual communication media to improve information readability, spatial orientation, and visitor experience. Therefore, logo design becomes a strategic step to build the area's visual identity, unify heritage elements in a communicative manner, and enhance the aesthetic and educational appeal of Kampung Kemasan as a heritage tourism destination.

4.3 Questionnaire Data Analysis

The questionnaire data analysis was conducted to identify public perceptions, interests, and visual preferences regarding Kampung Kemasan Gresik Heritage Tourism, as well as the need for a visual identity for the area. The questionnaire was distributed to residents of East Java and potential tourists from the region, predominantly those domiciled in Gresik. The respondents, aged 18–35, were predominantly university students with an interest in cultural and historical tourism.



Figure 7. Diagram of questionnaire results on the most important visual aspects in strengthening image
(Source: Personal Documentation, 2025)

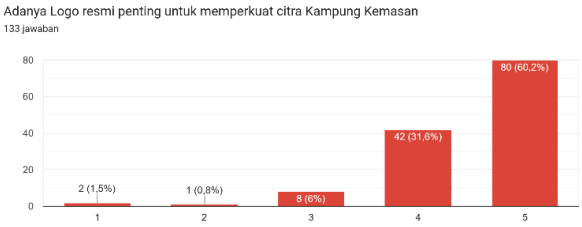


Figure 8. Diagram of questionnaire results on the importance of an official logo in strengthening image
(Source: Personal Documentation, 2025)

The majority of respondents, accounting for 60.2% of 133 participants, agreed that Kampung Kemasan requires an official tourism logo as the area's identity. The logo is considered important for strengthening the destination's image, increasing memorability, and supporting tourism promotion. Respondents' visual preferences tend toward logo designs that represent heritage and historical elements, with a simple and modern style. Distinctive architectural elements and classical color tones are considered the most appropriate to represent the character of the area.

Based on these findings, the questionnaire data emphasize the importance of designing a logo for Kampung Kemasan Gresik Heritage Tourism as a visual identity that is capable of representing historical values and multiethnic character, while remaining relevant to the target audience of younger generations.

4.4 TOWS Matrix Analysis

The TOWS Matrix analysis was used to formulate the logo design strategy for Kampung Kemasan Gresik Heritage Tourism by correlating internal factors (Strengths and Weaknesses) with external factors (Opportunities and Threats). This analysis aims to produce a logo design strategy that is contextual, representative, and capable of strengthening the visual identity of the area.

Table 1. Results of the TOWS Matrix Analysis

TOWS Matrix	Opportunities (O) • Increasing interest of younger generations in heritage tourism • Digital media and social media as tools for tourism promotion	Threats (T) • Competition with other heritage tourism destinations • Risk of degradation of historical values due to commercialization
Strengths (S) • The multiethnic architectural character of Kampung Kemasan is unique and well-preserved • The historical value of gold trade and its status as a cultural heritage area	**Strategi S-O** • Utilizing the multiethnic architectural character and historical values of the area as the main concept in logo design • Optimizing the visual strength of Kampung Kemasan's heritage through a communicative and easily recognizable logo in digital media	**Strategi S-T** • Designing a logo with distinctive visual characteristics based on historical values to differentiate Kampung Kemasan from other heritage destinations • Maintaining the visual authenticity of the area through contextual logo design rooted in local historical values
Weaknesses (W) • The absence of an official tourism logo and area visual identity • The visual image of the area is not yet strong and consistent .	**Strategi W-O** • Addressing the lack of visual identity by designing a logo as the main symbol of the heritage tourism area • Developing a flexible and applicable logo to strengthen the area's image through various digital and print promotional media	**Strategi W-T** • Designing a simple, consistent, and meaningful logo to avoid scattered visual elements • Applying a research-based design approach so that the logo is not generic and can adapt to changing visual trends

4.5 Target Audience

4.5.1 Demographic

Age : 18–35 years old.

Gender : Male and female

Marital status : Married and unmarried

Income : Lower-middle to middle income

Education : Minimum high school/vocational high school (SMA/SMK). The selection of respondents is based on the consideration that, at this level, respondents generally have a sufficient ability to understand visual information and design concepts.

4.5.2 Geographic

Local tourists from Gresik Regency and surrounding areas (Surabaya, Lamongan, Sidoarjo, and Mojokerto). The location is easily accessible by private vehicles and public transportation. The target consists of active and creative urban communities with a strong interest in local culture and aesthetic values, who prefer educational, historical, and visually appealing destinations, and frequently visit for photography, content creation, or learning about the history of Gresik.

4.5.3 Psychographic

Tourists have an active, modern, and creative lifestyle, and enjoy visiting places with cultural and historical themes. They are also active on social media to share experiences, photos, and engaging travel content. They uphold values of cultural preservation, education, and local authenticity. Tourists believe that historical heritage should be preserved and introduced in ways that are appealing and relevant to younger generations.

4.6 Logo Design Concept

4.6.1 Logo

The logo designed for Kampung Kemasan Heritage Tourism combines logotype and logogram elements as a representation of cultural harmony and the aesthetic of multiethnic architecture found in the area. In the design process, references were taken from the logo of Sidoharjo Tourism Village, Gunungkidul Regency.



Figure 9. Logo Reference (Source:https://jadesta.kemenparekraf.go.id/desa/sidoharjo)

4.6.2 Color

The selection of the color palette in the logo adopts an earth tone nuance, dominated by cream and ivory colors to create a sense of nostalgia and visual

warmth that reflects the character of Kampung Kemasan as a historical area. Maroon red is used as a symbol of the aesthetic strength of multiethnic architecture that characterizes the heritage building facades, while gold represents the glory of gold trading in the past, which significantly contributed to the development of the area. This combination of colors creates a harmonious visual with a historical and elegant impression, while strengthening the image of Kampung Kemasan as an authentic and culturally rich heritage destination.



Figure 10. Color Palette Reference
(Source: Personal Documentation, 2025)

4.6.3 Typography

The typography used in the Kampung Kemasan logo applies a serif typeface, TAN Pearl, as the primary typography for the headline. Meanwhile, the secondary typography uses the sans-serif font Poppins for body text. The form of TAN Pearl, which features decorative flourishes, reflects the ornamental details of the houses in Kampung Kemasan, creating a unique and elegant impression. On the other hand, Poppins presents a modern style. The combination of these two typefaces creates balance and harmony in the visual appearance of the logo.

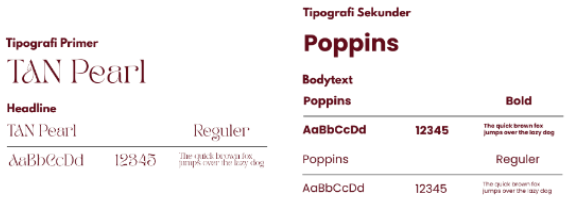


Figure 11. Kampung Kemasan Typography
(Source: Personal Documentation, 2025)

4.6.4 Brainstorming Keyword

To identify visual components that can serve as the foundation for designing the Kampung Kemasan logo, the design planning process begins with a brainstorming session using the keyword “Harmony of Multiethnic Architecture” to generate key visuals, which are then used as the basis for icon studies.

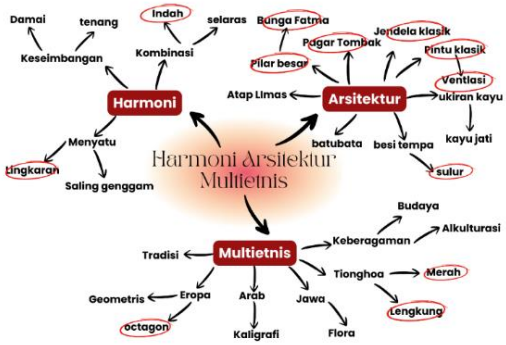


Figure 12. Brainstorming Keyword
(Source: Personal Documentation, 2026)

4.7 Icon Study

The visual references at the icon study stage were generated from the process of exploring keywords through brainstorming. The results of this exploration were then processed and combined into basic logo sketches that reflect the concept of “Harmony of Multiethnic Architecture.”

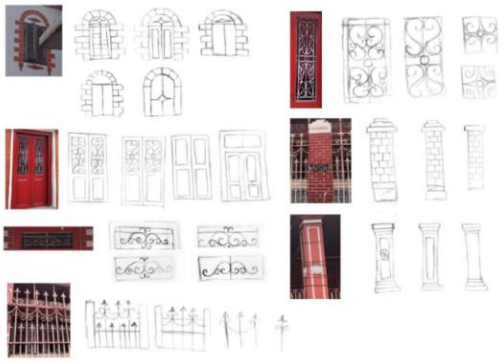


Figure 13. Icon Study
(Source: Personal Documentation, 2026)

4.8 Rough Sketch

After conducting the icon study, the next stage is rough sketching, which involves arranging icons derived from the icon study to form alternative logo sketches.



Figure 14. Rough Sketch
(Source: Personal Documentation, 2026)

4.9 Comprehensive Design

The comprehensive design stage is a selection process to determine the most optimal logo sketch, which is then continued to the digitalization stage. The logo is developed by integrating logogram, typography, and colors that align with the predetermined keywords. Furthermore, the design alternatives produced at this stage undergo a validation process with partners and experts in logo design and environmental graphic design.



Figure 15. Logo Alternatives
(Source: Personal Documentation, 2026)

4.10 Design Validation

The design validation process was carried out to determine the best logo among the three alternatives that had been created. The selection involved partners, namely the Gresik Heritage Community, as well as experts in logo design and environmental graphic design (EGD). The results of this process established the first logo alternative as the selected design.

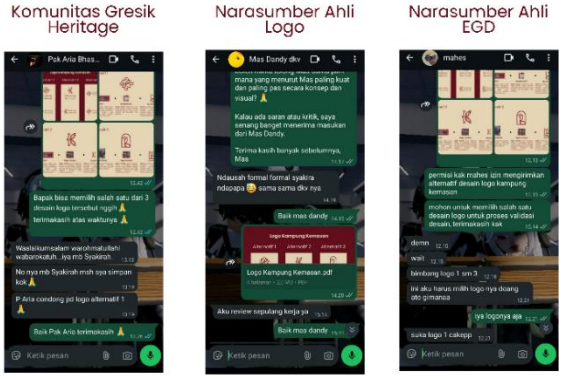


Figure 16. Design validation evidence
(Source: Personal Documentation, 2026)

4.11 Final Design

After completing the design validation process, the selected logo alternative was further developed into the final design, which will be applied across various implementation media.



Figure 17. Final Logo Design
(Source: Personal Documentation, 2026)

4.12 Tagline

The tagline used for the Kampung Kemasan heritage tourism logo is “Ragam Budaya, Satu Harmoni.” This tagline emphasizes a tourism experience that invites visitors to explore the stories of history, culture, and multietnic architectural visuals that blend harmoniously within Kampung Kemasan. The tagline functions as an emotional identity that reflects the character of the area as a living, human-centered historical space rich in shared values, thereby fostering a meaningful connection between visitors and the cultural heritage presented.

5 CONCLUSION

The design of the Kampung Kemasan Gresik Heritage Tourism logo was carried out to address the need for a visual identity that is capable of strongly representing the area’s historical and cultural character. Based on the results of observations, interviews, and questionnaires, the area possesses the visual potential of

multiethnic architecture and historical values that have not yet been integrated into a visual identity system. Through the TOWS Matrix analysis, a logo with the concept of "Harmony of Multiethnic Architecture" was developed by combining logogram and logotype elements, along with color and typography that represent heritage values, with the aim of strengthening the image and memorability among tourists. The recommendations include consistent application of the logo across various media, the development of brand guidelines, and further expansion into environmental graphic design systems to optimize the area's visual identity.

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A Roland Barthes Semiotic Analysis of Feudalism Representation within the World Government in the Anime Series One Piece Episode 886

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Abstract

Episode 886 of the anime series *One Piece* portrays a system of feudalism through the political and social structure of the world created by Eiichiro Oda. In this fictional world, power is centralized under the World Government, which is controlled by the Celestial Dragons, known as the Tenryuubito—descendants of the twenty original kingdoms that founded the regime. The Tenryuubito occupy the highest tier of a feudal hierarchy, enjoying extreme privileges without accountability for their actions. This study aims to identify the denotative, connotative, and mythological signs related to feudalism in *One Piece*, specifically Episode 886. The research employs a qualitative method using Roland Barthes' semiotic analysis framework. Data were collected through scene observation and documentation of dialogues, visual symbols, and narrative elements as units of analysis, while validity was ensured through source triangulation and interpretive consistency. The findings indicate that at the denotative level, feudalism is depicted through the dominance of the Tenryuubito, who are regarded as gods and protected by Cipher Pol Aigis Zero (CP0), while common citizens and even other nobles are positioned as inferior. At the connotative level, the World Government is represented as a symbol of absolute power and modern feudalism, with the Tenryuubito portrayed as untouchable rulers and CP0 functioning as an apparatus safeguarding elite interests. At the mythological level, feudalism is constructed through the Tenryuubito as symbols of political and economic authority who naturalize injustice, commodify Shirahoshi, and reinforce CP0's role as protector of elite privilege. These findings imply that popular media such as anime can function as a critical medium for reflecting and challenging hierarchical power structures, thereby contributing to broader discussions on social inequality and ideological control in contemporary society.

Keywords: *One Piece*, Feudalism, Representation, Semiotics, Roland Barthes.

1 INTRODUCTION

The anime series *One Piece* implicitly portrays a system of feudalism through the political and social structures of the world created by Eiichiro Oda. The world of *One Piece* is governed by the World Government, which is controlled by the Celestial Dragons (Tenryuubito), descendants of the twenty original kingdoms that established the regime. The Tenryuubito live as the highest feudal class, enjoying extreme privileges without accountability for their actions. They treat ordinary people as slaves, and even the Marines submit to their authority, creating sharp social and legal inequalities.

Feudal elements are also reflected in territorial structures such as the Goa Kingdom, which emphasizes social stratification and inequality. This depiction reinforces the broader critique of hierarchical power systems within the series. As Siswanto [1] notes, the concept of feudalism in land control encompasses an unequal relationship between landowners or ruling elites and the communities whose livelihoods depend upon that land. Feudalism describes a rigid hierarchical system in which landholders exercise comprehensive authority over the use of land and the natural resources attached to it.

Beyond battles and adventures, the series presents narratives that reflect real-world social conditions. Through its representation of the World

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Government, the anime mirrors systems of oppressive power that generate social inequality. Elements such as clothing symbols, body gestures, and architectural structures in Episode 886 function as signs that represent elite dominance and feudal relations between rulers and commoners. These elements are particularly compelling when analyzed through the semiotic framework of Roland Barthes, who conceptualizes signs across three levels: denotation, connotation, and myth. However, despite the richness of symbolic representations in One Piece, previous studies have largely focused on general themes of power and inequality without specifically examining how feudal ideology is constructed and naturalized through semiotic processes within the World Government system. This indicates a gap in the literature regarding the detailed semiotic interpretation of feudal power representation in specific narrative contexts.

Based on this background, the present study seeks to examine how struggles for life and power are represented in *One Piece* through Barthes' semiotic analysis. These three dimensions—denotation, connotation, and myth—form an integrated unity within Barthes' theory of signification, generating a global coherence that ultimately leads to conclusions regarding the meanings embedded in the series. The researcher selected this object of study because the series contains numerous layered signs that offer valuable insights for broader society. The signs presented in *One Piece* convey profound messages worthy of scholarly exploration.

The decision to analyze feudalism within the World Government stems from the depiction of a hierarchical power structure that closely resembles classical feudalism. The World Government is controlled by the Tenryuubito as the highest hereditary elite, exercising absolute authority over the military, legal system, and global resources. This analysis is significant because it demonstrates how inherited power without accountability produces inequality, oppression, and exploitation—central themes that motivate the resistance of protagonists such as Monkey D. Luffy against a corrupt world system. Although previous studies have examined feudalism in *One Piece*, this research focuses specifically on the representation of feudal power within the World Government as portrayed in Episode 886, highlighting its relevance to both historical and contemporary social realities.

Ultimately, Episode 886 not only advances a narrative of power struggles but also conveys social criticism through visual and narrative signs. By employing Barthes' semiotic framework, this study reveals how *One Piece* utilizes signifiers—such as clothing, royal symbols, and character behavior—to communicate signified meanings of social inequality and to construct myths that justify injustice within the fictional world and, implicitly, in real-world contexts.

Thus, *One Piece* is not merely entertainment; it embeds critiques of oppressive hierarchical systems in which elites such as the Tenryuubito wield unchecked authority while ordinary people endure fear and injustice. By examining this system, the researcher aims to demonstrate how popular culture, particularly anime, can reflect and critique feudal structures in society while promoting values of justice, freedom, and resistance against tyranny.

In line with these considerations, this study investigates the signs of feudalism in *One Piece* Episode 886 by analyzing filmic elements—including objects, context, and textual components—through Barthes' semiotic method. Barthes distinguishes two primary levels of signification: denotation and connotation, which facilitate access to a deeper level of meaning known as myth [2]. Denotation refers to the literal definition of the object under study, while connotation involves its emotional or subjective associations. Myth, according to Barthes, is not merely an idea but a mode of signification that naturalizes particular ideological meanings [3]. Through this semiotic approach, the researcher seeks to uncover the signs and myths embedded within the elements of *One Piece* Episode 886, encompassing its objects, contexts, and textual dimensions.

2 LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Digital Communication

Communication is a means of conveying messages, intentions, or purposes from one person to another. It can be carried out through various methods and symbols. When communication is directed toward large audiences, it is referred to as mass communication. According to Alamsyah et al. [4], the digital era has generated challenges such as the spread of unverified information, opinion polarization, and complex data privacy issues. However, it has also created opportunities for active public participation and broader access to information.

The advancement of information and communication technologies has driven significant transformations in the ways individuals interact. According to Komunikasi Digital, digital communication not only accelerates the exchange of information but also enables broader interactions without geographical and temporal constraints. This development reinforces the central role of digital communication in everyday life. Within this framework, representation becomes a critical tool for analyzing how power operates symbolically. In the context of One Piece, visual and narrative elements do not merely tell a story but function as systems of signs that construct and legitimize feudal power relations. Through semiotic analysis, these representations can be decoded to reveal

how hierarchical authority, domination, and inequality are normalized within the World Government structure.

2.2 Representation

Representation refers to the linguistic process through which events or realities are presented clearly through language. Language plays a crucial role in constructing acts of representation, which are often supported and disseminated by media through news and other forms of publication. Therefore, the use of language in media deserves critical attention, as it shapes how reality is written, framed, and interpreted by the public.

Representation may appear in the form of words or written text, and it can also be manifested visually, such as in the anime series *One Piece*. Fundamentally, representation concerns how meaning (the signified) is attributed to the object being depicted. It may also refer to forms of digital communication in contemporary media contexts.

2.3 Anime

Anime is a term used in Japan to refer to animation. The word "animation," in Indonesian, means "animasi." According to Vaughan, as cited in Ni Wayan Eka Putri Suantari, animation is an effort to transform static presentations into dynamic, lifelike forms. Animation is created through continuous visual changes. In the book The Animation World, Ni Wayan explains that animation consists of images containing objects that appear alive due to sequential changes in regularly displayed frames. The objects in animated images may include text, shapes, colors, and special effects.

Anime enthusiasts are drawn to anime because of its distinctive visual styles and graphics, including 2D, 3D, and special visual effects, which are typically produced by different animation studios. These visual elements create an effect that closely resembles reality, making the animated scenes appear vivid and lifelike.

As a visual medium, anime presents icons, images, individuals, and groups in ways that appear alive, even though these figures are merely electronic constructions. This perception informs how audiences interpret representation in film and animation [5].

2.4 Feudalism

Feudalism refers to one of the oldest political systems in the world, historically implemented by noble classes, often under monarchic rule. The structure of this system is based on hereditary lines, in which rulers possess supreme authority, and relationships between lords and vassals are founded on subordination.

Feudalism represents one of the largest and oldest social systems in human history. According to Mulya [6], feudalism encompasses three forms of social systems: primitive social systems, traditional or feudal social systems, and modern social systems that have been adopted by many major nations.

Feudalism has also undergone transformation into what is often referred to as neo-feudalism, a more sophisticated form of power that permeates various sectors—from territorial governance to societal structures. In neo-feudalism, it becomes difficult to recognize and escape the system due to its deeply embedded and subtle mechanisms of control.

Within a feudal order, peasants are bound to the land, burdened with heavy obligations, and deprived of autonomy, thereby creating deeply rooted structural inequality.

Thus, it can be understood that feudalism is an ideological and structural system exercised by the nobility to control territories they claim, characterized by the concentration of substantial power in the hands of landowners.

2.5 Semiotics

Semiotics is the study or analytical method concerned with signs. Etymologically, the term "semiotics" derives from the Greek word semeion, meaning "sign." A sign is defined as something that, based on socially constructed conventions, represents something else.

According to Rorong and Suci [7], semiology seeks to examine how humanity signifies things. In this context, a sign cannot be equated merely with communication. A sign implies that objects not only convey information—through which they communicate—but also constitute a structured system of signs. Thus, signification is understood as a total process within an already structured arrangement. Signification is not limited to language; it also encompasses phenomena beyond linguistic expression. Barthes regards social life as a form of signification; in other words, social life in any of its forms constitutes its own system of signs.

Semiotics, or in Barthes' terminology, semiology, fundamentally aims to study how humanity produces meaning. This suggests that objects not only carry information but also function communicatively. According to Barthes, semiology is a science of forms, as it studies systems of signification independently of their specific content. He further argues that images tend to be more imperative (emphatic) than written text. An image can present a sign in its entirety without analyzing or diminishing it; in this sense, images function as a kind of writing. However, like writing, images require a vocabulary to be interpreted. Roland Barthes emphasizes the interaction between text and the personal and cultural experiences of its users, highlighting the interplay

between conventions embedded within the text and the conventions experienced and anticipated by its audience.

In Barthes' semiotic theory, semiotics is understood as the science of humanity that studies signs in all aspects of life. He maintains that a sign is not merely something to be interpreted but also a vehicle for conveying information and facilitating communication. Barthes asserts that all social life constitutes a distinct sign system. Moreover, he argues that the relationship between the signifier and the signified is not naturally given but arbitrary [8].

Roland Barthes emphasized three central elements in his analysis: denotation, connotation, and myth. Barthes developed a semiotic theory focusing on how signs operate within popular culture.

In *One Piece* Episode 886, the feudal system depicted through global elites such as the Tenryuubito and the hierarchical structure in Mary Geoise is saturated with symbols of power. Barthes' semiotics allows these signs to be read critically—not merely as elements of fictional storytelling, but as visual and symbolic representations of oppressive social structures.

2.6 *One Piece*

One Piece belongs to the adventure and fantasy genres. The series originated as a Japanese manga written and illustrated by Eiichiro Oda. The story follows the adventures of a pirate named Monkey D. Luffy, a young man with a unique body possessing elastic properties similar to rubber after consuming a Devil Fruit known as the Gomu Gomu no Mi.

The Devil Fruit grants its user extraordinary powers and unique abilities. However, in exchange for this strength, the user permanently loses the ability to swim. Through Luffy's journey and the broader narrative world, *One Piece* presents not only adventure and fantasy but also complex social and political themes embedded within its storyline.

3 RESEARCH METHODS

This study employs a qualitative research method. The primary object of this research is Episode 886 of the anime series One Piece, which is selected due to its explicit depiction of hierarchical power relations within the World Government. The units of analysis in this study consist of visual symbols and narrative elements, including costumes, body gestures, spatial settings, and dialogues that represent power relations within the episode. Data were collected through documentation techniques, including screenshot capture of selected scenes and transcription of relevant dialogues, as well as literature review to support the theoretical framework. Qualitative research is often described as research conducted in natural settings. It is an approach chosen by the researcher to collect information or data in a comprehensive and contextual manner.

Qualitative research methods are grounded in the philosophy of post-positivism and are used to examine phenomena under natural conditions (as opposed to experimental settings), where the researcher serves as the key instrument. Data sources are selected purposively, and data collection techniques involve triangulation (a combination of methods). Data analysis is inductive and qualitative in nature, and the findings emphasize meaning rather than generalization [9].

By employing a qualitative method, the researcher aims to produce a comprehensive and in-depth study. The findings are presented descriptively using established scientific procedures. This methodology was selected because the researcher seeks to explore, examine, and understand the phenomenon of feudalism in the anime series *One Piece*. This understanding is closely related to social experiences that have occurred historically and continue to be relevant today. Therefore, qualitative research enables a descriptive explanation of the phenomenon under study. Moreover, the researcher applies a data analysis approach that is thorough, in-depth, and extensive in order to clarify the meanings embedded in the signs being examined.

The analytical approach used in this research is the semiotic framework developed by Roland Barthes. Semiotics—or semiology, in Barthes' terminology—seeks to understand how humanity creates meaning. It assumes that objects not only convey information but also communicate meaning. According to Barthes, semiology is a science of forms, as it studies systems of signification independently of their specific content. He further argues that images tend to be more imperative or emphatic than written text. Images can convey meaning simultaneously without necessarily analyzing or weakening it; however, like written language, images also require a kind of vocabulary to be interpreted.

Barthes emphasizes the interaction between text and the personal and cultural experiences of its users. Meaning arises from the interaction between conventions embedded within the text and the conventions experienced and expected by its audience. In his analytical model, Barthes highlights three central levels of signification: denotation, connotation and myth.

4 RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This study examines the representation of feudalism within the World Government system in *One Piece* Episode 886 using Roland Barthes' semiotic analysis. The findings are structured according to three

levels of signification: denotation, connotation, and myth. Each level reveals how feudal ideology is constructed, reinforced, and simultaneously questioned within the narrative.

4.1 Denotative Level

At the denotative level, meaning is constructed through literal and observable elements within the episode. The analyzed scenes depict explicit hierarchical interactions among the Tenryuubito (Celestial Dragons), Princess Shirahoshi, King Neptune, Rebecca, CP0, and other world leaders during the Reverie.

The Tenryuubito are visually distinguished through luxurious white aristocratic clothing and transparent bubble helmets. One Celestial Dragon is shown riding a chained human slave, a direct visual representation of domination. Dialogue explicitly expresses ownership over Shirahoshi, while King Neptune physically shields his daughter. CP0 agents stand behind the Tenryuubito, silently guarding them. Rebecca displays visible anger but refrains from direct confrontation.

These literal signs construct a rigid social hierarchy consisting of absolute rulers, submissive subjects, and a small number of morally resistant individuals. Feudalism is clearly presented as a system of stratification where authority operates vertically. The Tenryuubito occupy the highest position, protected by institutional power, while other characters display fear, restraint, or forced submission.

Table 1. Denotative Representation of Feudalism

Scene Element	Signifier (Visual/Textual Form)	Denotative Meaning
Tenryuubito riding a slave	Noble sitting on chained human	Physical domination and ownership
Transparent helmet and white attire	Distinct aristocratic costume	Noble identity separated from others
Claim over Shirahoshi	Verbal assertion of possession	Ownership claim over a person
Neptune shielding Shirahoshi	Protective gesture	Defense against threat
CP0 standing behind nobles	Masked agents guarding elites	State security protecting elite
Rebecca's restrained anger	Emotional protest expression	Moral objection within fear

Denotatively, the structure appears inflexible: rulers command, others obey. Human beings are reduced to objects, representing extreme feudal domination.

4.2 Connotative Level

At the connotative level, these signs generate deeper associative meanings shaped by cultural and ideological codes. The depiction of the Tenryuubito riding humans does not merely show slavery; it signifies dehumanization and the normalization of systemic oppression. The bubble helmet symbolizes ideological separation, suggesting that the elite consider themselves superior and untouchable.

Shirahoshi's position carries strong connotative significance. Although she is a princess, she remains powerless before the Tenryuubito. This paradox reveals that in a feudal hierarchy, dignity and protection apply only to the highest elite. Her vulnerability symbolizes marginalized groups whose social status does not guarantee safety under absolute power.

The silent presence of CP0 connotes institutional complicity. Their function is not to ensure justice but to preserve elite privilege. Rebecca's anger, quickly restrained, reflects collective fear within society—an emotional indicator of hegemonic control.

Thus, feudalism is represented not merely as a political system but as an ideological structure that legitimizes inequality. Power operates not only through physical force but also through psychological submission and institutional reinforcement.

Table 2. Connotative Meanings of Feudal Signs

Denotative Sign	Connotative Interpretation
A chained human used as transportation	Normalization of dehumanization within hierarchical power relations
Transparent helmet	Social exclusivity and superiority ideology
Shirahoshi's helplessness	Vulnerability of marginalized classes
CP0 protection	Institutional preservation of elite interests
Neptune's resistance	Moral opposition emerging within an oppressive structure
Rebecca's restraint	Fear-induced compliance with hierarchical authority

Through these connotations, the episode functions as social criticism. It mirrors historical and contemporary systems where inherited authority and unchecked power create structural injustice.

4.3 Myth Level

At the myth level, meaning evolves into ideological naturalization. According to Barthes, myth transforms historically constructed power relations into something perceived as natural and inevitable. In Episode 886, the Tenryuubito are presented as descendants of the original twenty royal families who founded the World Government. This lineage produces the myth of divine or sacred authority.

The fear and silence of other characters reinforce the myth that elite supremacy is unquestionable. Institutional structures such as CP0 and the Marines further naturalize inequality by presenting authority as inherently legitimate. Economic privilege, extravagant lifestyle, and unrestricted control over others construct the myth that certain individuals are "born to rule."

However, the narrative simultaneously destabilizes this myth. The visible discomfort of other leaders, the moral stance of Neptune, and the suppressed anger of Rebecca suggest cracks within the ideological structure. These reactions function as semiotic disruptions, exposing the constructed nature of elite divinity.

Table 3. Myth Construction of Feudal Ideology

Sign System	Myth Produced	Ideological Implication
Noble lineage of Tenryuubito	Divine right to rule	Inherited power is natural and legitimized
Public fear and obedience	Elite authority is absolute	Oppression becomes normalized
Institutional protection	Authority equals justice	State legitimizes inequality
Economic privilege	Wealth signifies superiority	Class hierarchy appears natural
Moral resistance	Possibility of awakening	Myth can be deconstructed

Through this mythic layer, *One Piece* portrays feudalism as an ideology that intertwines political power, economic control, and symbolic dominance. Yet, by presenting resistance and discomfort, the anime challenges the permanence of that ideology.

5 CONCLUSION

This study demonstrates that feudalism in One Piece Episode 886 is constructed through layered systems of signs operating at denotative, connotative, and mythological levels. Rather than merely depicting hierarchy, the anime presents feudal power as a normalized and ideologically sustained structure, reinforced through symbolic representation and institutional authority. These findings indicate that media texts function as sites of meaning production that both reflect and legitimize social inequality.

Theoretically, this study contributes to communication and media studies by bridging representation and semiotic analysis, showing how popular culture encodes complex power relations through visual and narrative signs. By applying Barthes' framework in a focused and systematic way, the research offers a model for examining ideological structures within media discourse.

The originality of this study lies in its micro-level analysis of a single episode to uncover broader socio-political meanings. It highlights the potential of anime as a critical medium for understanding contemporary forms of symbolic power and ideological control, opening pathways for future research using comparative or alternative critical approaches.

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Design of the "ECO-ELT" Social Community Logo as a Brand Identity

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Abstract

The ECO ELT (Ecological English Language Teaching) community is a global platform dedicated to addressing environmental challenges through English language education. Despite its growing membership of 567 members across multiple countries as of 2025, the community lacks a formal visual identity, particularly a logo, which limits its ability to establish a professional and recognizable presence in comparison to similar communities. This gap represents a significant limitation in branding and community communication. This study aims to design the ECO ELT community logo as part of a comprehensive visual identity system to strengthen its brand recognition. A qualitative research method was employed, collecting data through non-participant observation, in-depth interviews, and documentation. The Design Thinking methodology was applied across five stages: empathize, define, ideate, prototype, and test. The results include the ECO ELT logo, a Graphic Standards Manual (GSM), and application across supporting media including t-shirts, tote bags, letterheads, and employee ID cards. The visual identity produced offers a distinctive and consistent representation of the community's values and educational mission.

Keywords: Logo Design, ECO-ELT, Visual Identity.

1 INTRODUCTION

A community is a group of members united by a shared vision, mission, and common goals. According to Rogers [1], within the field of communication, a community is based on organizational communication among individuals, with a structure and division of labor designed to achieve specific goals. These specific goals serve as a key factor in the formation of a community. Thus, communities that exist around us are founded on the commonalities they share, such as shared hobbies, leading to the formation of motorcycle communities, nature-loving communities, and other similar groups. The growing prevalence of social communities stems from those formed on the basis of a strong sense of social understanding. A social community is a non-profit organization in which members collectively formulate their vision, mission, and goals, translating them into concrete actions. With these objectives, social communities typically work to foster social awareness within society by conducting activities in the areas of environment, education, culture, history, and related fields.

The social community known as Ecological English Language Teaching, or ECO ELT, is a community focused on global environmental issues. The ECO ELT community was established as a platform for researchers and educators from around the world who are interested in addressing global environmental challenges through English language education. The term ECO ELT was introduced in 2014 and gained broader traction in 2023. ECO ELT was initiated by Jefri Ali Syaiful, Ph.D. As of 2025, the community has grown to 567 members from various countries, operating primarily through the Facebook social media platform.

However, a critical issue facing the ECO ELT community is the absence of a visual identity necessary to distinguish it from other communities. The form of communication that creates a brand and facilitates the presentation of a professional image is known as a visual identity. Visual identity consists of elements that must convey a symbolic meaning that is difficult to articulate in words [2]. Examples of such elements include logos, icons, typography, and color.

A visual identity, in the form of a logo, serves as a unifying element across promotional media, ensuring consistency across platforms. A logo is an integral part of a community's identity, and its primary purpose is to serve as a distinctive symbol that is easily recognizable, as well as a means of communication that reflects the

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community's core values. Additionally, a logo plays a vital role in building public awareness of the brand or organization (Anggoro, as cited in Januariansyah, 2017). Therefore, this study was motivated by the need to design a logo for the ECO ELT community, aimed at establishing a distinctive identity, creating a unique impression compared to similar communities, and making it more easily recognizable to the general public interested in joining ECO ELT.

In designing the logo for ECO ELT, the authors focused on visual identity elements such as typography, color, icons, and the logo itself. These elements will primarily consist of images and illustrations intended to serve as the distinctive features and character of the ECO ELT community. The design is guided by the Design Thinking methodology to ensure the final output reflects the community's actual needs and identity values.

2 LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Visual Identity and Brand Identity

Visual identity is a set of visual elements used by an organization to represent and communicate its values, mission, and character to its audience. According to Landa [2], visual identity consists of elements that convey a symbolic meaning that is difficult to articulate in words alone. These elements include logos, icons, typography, color palettes, and graphic patterns. Together, they form a coherent system that enables an organization to communicate a consistent image across various platforms and media.

Brand identity, a broader concept, encompasses both visual and non-visual elements that define how an organization presents itself. For communities and non-profit organizations, brand identity is particularly important because it builds credibility and distinguishes the organization from others operating in the same field. A consistent visual identity across digital and physical media contributes directly to brand recognition and audience trust [12].

2.2 Logo Design

A logo is the cornerstone of any visual identity system. According to Rustan [9], a logo must align with the concept and characteristics of the entity it represents, and must meet three key criteria: uniqueness, simplicity, and flexibility. Uniqueness means the logo has a distinct meaning and is unlike any other. Simplicity ensures the logo is easy to understand and not overly complex. Flexibility means the logo can be applied across various media and contexts without losing its integrity.

Wheeler [8] adds that one important criterion for a good logo is its ability to function effectively in black and white, so that it remains legible when reproduced via photocopying or other monochrome processes. This principle ensures the logo's practicality across a range of real-world applications. The logo design process typically moves from conceptualization—through brainstorming, keyword mapping, and sketching—to digital refinement and final selection.

2.3 Color in Logo and Visual Identity Design

Color is one of the most powerful elements in visual identity design. According to Adams et al. [10], different colors carry distinct psychological associations that influence audience perception. For example, black is associated with seriousness, strength, authority, elegance, and timelessness. Green evokes nature, health, and sustainability—associations particularly relevant for environmentally oriented communities such as ECO ELT. Blue conveys trust, stability, and professionalism. The deliberate selection of color in logo design is therefore a strategic decision that shapes the audience's emotional and cognitive response to a brand.

2.4 Supergraphics

Supergraphics are a component of visual identity that helps the audience recall a brand's identity without necessarily seeing the logo directly. According to Olins [11], supergraphics can be derived from elements within the logo itself, taking any form—typography, patterns, or geometric shapes. In practice, supergraphics serve as versatile background patterns or decorative elements that reinforce brand recognition across physical and digital media.

2.5 Design Thinking

Design Thinking is a human-centered problem-solving methodology widely applied in the field of visual communication and product design. It consists of five interconnected stages: empathize, define, ideate, prototype, and test. The empathize stage involves understanding the needs and context of the target community. The define stage synthesizes research findings into a clear problem statement. The ideate stage encourages the generation of diverse design concepts through brainstorming. The prototype stage involves creating tangible design outputs for evaluation. The test stage validates the design with stakeholders and refines it based on feedback. This iterative process ensures that the resulting design is both contextually appropriate and functionally effective [3].

3 RESEARCH METHODS

This study adopts a qualitative research approach. According to Creswell [13], qualitative research is a model that explores and delves into the meaning attributed by individuals or groups to a social problem.

This approach was selected because the design of a visual identity is inherently contextual and interpretive, requiring in-depth engagement with the community's values and needs. The design process followed the Design Thinking methodology, structured across five stages, empathize, define, ideate, prototype, and test—as illustrated in Figure 1.

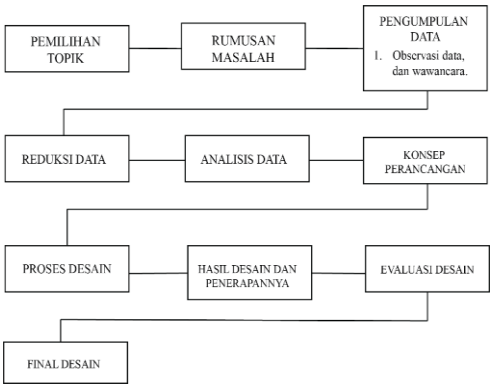


Figure 1. Design Process Flowchart

3.1 Data Collection Techniques

Data collection in this study was guided by three primary techniques: non-participant observation, interviews, and documentation.

3.1.1 Observation

The researcher conducted non-participant observation, meaning they did not directly participate in the activities of the ECO ELT community. Observation was carried out over three weeks through the ECO ELT Facebook group to document community interactions, member behavior, and the visual materials currently in use. This method provided contextual data relevant to the empathize and define stages of Design Thinking. Figure 2 shows the ECO ELT Facebook group that served as the primary observation site.

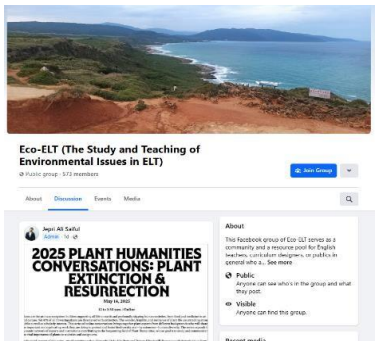


Figure 2. ECO-ELT Community Facebook Group

3.1.2 Interview

An in-depth interview was conducted with Jefri Ali Syaiful, Ph.D., the founder of ECO ELT. The interview was conducted face-to-face, lasted approximately 60 minutes, and covered topics including the community's history, vision and mission, target audience, values, and visual identity preferences. Open-ended questions were used to allow the informant to elaborate freely on each topic. The interview data informed the define and ideate stages of the Design Thinking process, providing the conceptual foundation for the logo design. Figure 3 documents this interview session.

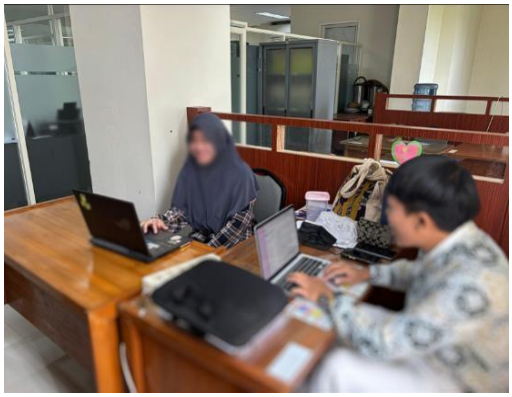


Figure 3. Documentation of the Interview with the ECO ELT Founder

3.1.3 Documentation

Documentation was collected from archival sources including existing visual materials, community announcements, and digital assets used by ECO ELT. This technique, as defined by Forman et al. [5], involves the use of evidence from non-human sources and provides contextual grounding for the design decisions.

3.2 Data Analysis

Data analysis in this study followed a qualitative descriptive approach [7]. The analysis process began with data reduction: the researcher reviewed all collected data—observation notes, interview transcripts, and documentation—and systematically filtered out irrelevant information, retaining only the elements most pertinent to the visual identity design. According to Sugiyono et al. [6], data reduction involves collecting and sorting key elements, focusing on important aspects, identifying themes and patterns, and ultimately providing a clearer basis for design decisions.

Following data reduction, the distilled findings were applied within the Design Thinking framework. The empathize and define stages drew directly from the interview and observation data to establish the

community's design requirements. The ideate stage used these requirements to generate brainstorming keywords and initial sketch concepts. The prototype stage produced digital logo alternatives, which were then evaluated with the community founder in the test stage. In the test stage, the founder reviewed both digital alternatives against the criteria established in the define stage: the logo must communicate ecology, English language education, and global community membership. Feedback from this session was documented and directly informed the selection of the final design. Revisions to form and color were made before the final prototype was confirmed. This iterative process ensured that design decisions were grounded in the community's actual identity and communicative needs.

To ensure the trustworthiness of qualitative findings, this study applied two validity strategies. First, data triangulation was used: findings from the interview were cross-checked against observation data and documentation to confirm consistency. Second, member checking was conducted by returning key design requirements derived from the interview to the community founder for verification before the ideate stage began. These strategies reduce the risk of researcher bias and strengthen the credibility of design decisions grounded in the data [7].

4 RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Results

4.1.1 Basic Design Concept

Based on the findings from the empathize and define stages, the author developed a keyword map to guide the conceptualization of the ECO ELT logo. Keywords were drawn from the community's core identity: ecology, education, environment, global, English language, and community. From these, a brainstorming session generated visual associations including the sun, teacher figure, woman, leaf, globe, and the concept of learning and growth. Figure 4 presents the brainstorming diagram developed for the ECO ELT logo.

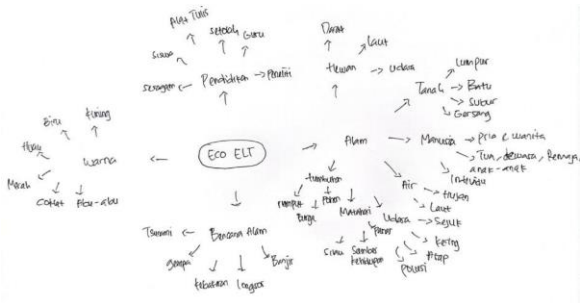


Figure 4. Brainstorming Keywords for ECO ELT

4.1.2 Sketches and Ideation

Based on the brainstorming outcomes, the author produced multiple initial sketches exploring different visual directions for the ECO ELT logo. Three primary sketch concepts were developed, as shown in Figures 5, 6, and 7. Each sketch explored a different arrangement of symbolic elements—combining natural imagery with typographic elements—to reflect the community's dual focus on ecology and English language teaching.



Figure 5. Sketch of the ECO ELT Logo – Concept 1

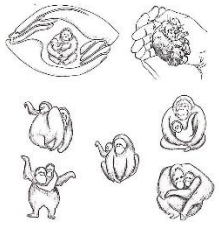


Figure 6. Sketch of the ECO ELT Logo – Concept 2

4.1.3 Selected Concept and Form Philosophy

Following evaluation of the three sketch concepts against the defined design criteria, one concept was selected for further development, as shown in Figure 8. The selected design integrates typographic and iconographic elements that reflect the ECO ELT community's identity. The logo incorporates organic, curved forms to evoke nature and fluidity, avoiding rigidity. The arrangement of elements symbolizes connection, collaboration, and growth—key values expressed by the community founder during the interview. The form philosophy of this logo deliberately communicates that ECO ELT is an open, welcoming, and globally oriented community.



Figure 7. Selected Sketch of the ECO ELT Logo

4.1.4 Digital Logo Alternatives

The selected sketch was then digitized using graphic design software to produce two refined alternatives for review. The first alternative (Figure 9) and the second alternative (Figure 10) were presented to the ECO ELT founder for evaluation. Both alternatives were rendered in black and white in the initial phase to assess their structural integrity before the application of color, in accordance with the principle that a good logo must be effective in monochrome [8].



Figure 9. ECO ELT Digital Logo – First Alternative



Figure 10. ECO ELT Digital Logo – Second Alternative

After the review session, the first alternative was selected as the final logo design. Color was then applied to the finalized form. The final color palette, shown in Figure 11, uses three primary tones: green (reflecting ecology and sustainability), blue (reflecting trust and professionalism), and white (providing visual balance and legibility). The primary typeface used in the logo is [INSERT FONT NAME], selected for its readability across digital and print applications. These choices are consistent with the community's dual mission in environmental education and academic communication.

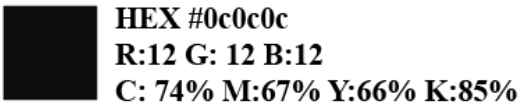


Figure 11. Color Palette of the ECO ELT Logo

4.1.5 Supporting Media Application

The ECO ELT visual identity was applied to four supporting media to demonstrate its versatility: a t-shirt (Figure 13), a tote bag (Figure 14), a letterhead (Figure 15), and an employee ID card (Figure 16). Each application integrates the ECO ELT logo and supergraphic in a manner consistent with the overall brand standards. [NOTE TO AUTHORS: Figures 15 and 16 showing the letterhead and ID card designs must be inserted here before final submission, as these outputs are cited in the abstract and conclusion.]



Figure 13. T-Shirt Design



Figure 14. Tote Bag Design

4.2 Discussion

The findings of this study demonstrate that the Design Thinking methodology provides an effective framework for developing a community logo that is both visually coherent and contextually meaningful. Each stage of the process produced tangible outputs that directly informed subsequent design decisions. This section discusses the significance of those decisions in relation to the theoretical framework established in the literature review.

4.2.1 Design Thinking as a Methodological Framework

The application of Design Thinking in this study was not merely procedural. It was instrumental in ensuring the final design aligned with the real needs of the ECO ELT community. The empathize stage, conducted through direct observation of the Facebook group and an in-depth interview with the community founder, revealed that ECO ELT's primary challenge

was not just the absence of a logo, but the absence of a coherent identity that could communicate its dual mission: ecology and English language education. This insight shaped the entire design direction and would not have been accessible through a more conventional research approach.

The define stage consolidated these insights into specific design requirements: the logo needed to convey environmental awareness, educational purpose, and global community. The ideate stage then operationalized these requirements through keyword mapping and sketching, resulting in three concept directions. The iterative nature of Design Thinking—particularly the test stage, in which the founder evaluated two digital alternatives, ensured that the final logo reflected the community's identity from an insider perspective rather than solely from the designer's aesthetic judgment.

4.2.2 Logo Form and Philosophy in Context

The selected logo design employs curved, organic forms that communicate the ECO ELT community's connection to nature and its collaborative ethos. This aligns with Rustan's [9] three criteria: uniqueness, simplicity, and flexibility. By integrating ecological and typographic elements specific to ECO ELT, the logo avoids generic conventions common in community logos, remains legible at small scales, and functions effectively across digital and print media. For a community operating across multiple countries, this visual differentiation supports recognition and credibility.

4.2.3 Color Choice and Psychological Associations

The color palette applied to the ECO ELT logo was selected based on both theoretical grounding and community-specific considerations. Adams et al. [10] established that color carries potent psychological associations that shape audience perception. For ECO ELT, the selected color tones were chosen to evoke ecological values and educational professionalism. The use of nature-referencing tones communicates the community's environmental focus, while the overall palette maintains a professional quality appropriate for an academic community.

Importantly, as established by Wheeler [8], the logo was first evaluated in black and white before color was applied. This sequence ensures that the logo's structural integrity is independent of color—a critical consideration for reproduction across different media and technologies. The black-and-white version remains fully legible and expressive, confirming the logo's fundamental design soundness. Color is therefore an enhancement rather than a structural dependency.

4.2.4 Supergraphics and Brand Consistency

The development of a supergraphic system constitutes a significant contribution of this study beyond the logo itself. As noted by Olins [11], supergraphics allow audiences to recall a brand's identity without needing to see the full logo. For ECO ELT, which operates primarily on digital platforms and through community events, the supergraphic provides a versatile visual shorthand that can appear across backgrounds, patterns, and decorative elements without redundantly replicating the main logo.

The ECO ELT supergraphic was derived directly from geometric and organic elements within the logo, maintaining visual coherence with the overall system. Its application across supporting media—t-shirts, tote bags, letterheads, and ID cards—demonstrates that a single coherent visual language can be adapted across diverse physical and digital formats. This consistency is important for community branding because it reinforces the community's identity every time a member or stakeholder interacts with any piece of ECO ELT material [12].

4.2.5 Supporting Media and Communication Strategy

The four supporting media produced in this study, t-shirt, tote bag, letterhead, and employee ID card serve as a strategic communication toolkit for the ECO ELT community. These media function to inform, identify, disseminate, and attract audiences, as noted by [12]. Their design demonstrates that the ECO ELT visual identity is not merely theoretical but functional across tangible media that the community is likely to use in real-world contexts.

The t-shirt and tote bag designs position the ECO ELT logo and supergraphic in high-visibility locations, ensuring that community members who wear or carry these items act as mobile brand ambassadors. The letterhead design establishes ECO ELT's professional identity in written communication, reinforcing its credibility as an academic community. The ID card design ensures consistent representation of members when participating in events or conferences. Together, these applications constitute a Graphic Standards Manual that guides future design production for the community.

4.2.6 Contribution and Implications

This study contributes to the field of visual communication design by demonstrating how Design Thinking can be systematically applied to the logo design process for a non-profit academic community. The resulting visual identity system addresses a practical communication gap identified in the ECO ELT

community and provides a replicable model for similar communities seeking to establish visual identities. The study also reinforces the importance of grounding design decisions in empirical community research rather than relying solely on aesthetic judgment, a point well established in the design research literature.

The limitation of this study lies in its reliance on a single informant—the community founder—for interview data. Future research could broaden participant representation to include ECO ELT members from multiple countries, thereby capturing a more diverse range of identity perspectives. Additionally, the testing stage of this study was limited to an evaluation session with the founder; further usability testing with the broader community would provide stronger validation of the design outcomes

5 CONCLUSION

This study successfully designed the ECO ELT community logo as part of a comprehensive visual identity system. Using the Design Thinking methodology, the research moved through five structured stages, empathize, define, ideate, prototype, and test, to produce a logo that reflects the community's ecological values and educational mission. The final logo integrates organic, curved forms with a strategic color palette derived from nature-referencing tones, meeting the criteria of uniqueness, simplicity, and flexibility established in the logo design literature.

In addition to the primary logo, the study produced a supergraphic system and its application across four supporting media: a t-shirt, tote bag, letterhead, and employee ID card. These outputs constitute a Graphic Standards Manual that provides ECO ELT with a coherent and actionable brand identity framework. The visual identity system developed here enables ECO ELT to present a professional, consistent, and distinctive image to its growing international membership.

The contribution of this study to visual communication design lies in its demonstration that community-specific, research-grounded design processes produce more contextually meaningful outcomes than purely aesthetic approaches. Future research should expand participant representation in the data collection phase and conduct broader usability testing of the visual identity system to further validate its effectiveness across the community's diverse international membership.

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Exploring the Meaning of Direct Selling from Salespersons' Perspectives

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Abstract

In the digital era, where most marketing activities have shifted online, some individuals still engage in direct selling as a primary occupation. This study aims to explore the meaning of direct selling from the perspective of a salesperson. Using a qualitative method with a phenomenological approach, data were collected through in-depth interviews, observation, and literature review. The informant in this study is Dimas, a salesperson who actively works in direct selling. The findings reveal several emergent meanings. First, direct selling is perceived as a promising source of income. Second, it offers flexibility in managing working time. Third, it serves as a practical space for applying communication skills. Fourth, it is seen as a profession full of challenges. Finally, direct selling is often underestimated or viewed negatively by society. In conclusion, direct selling is not merely a sales activity but a meaningful profession shaped by both opportunities and challenges. It provides economic benefits, personal growth, and flexibility, while also requiring resilience in dealing with social perceptions and work-related difficulties.

Keywords: Direct Selling, Salesperson, Phenomenology, Meaning, Communication.

1 INTRODUCTION

The development of information and communication technology has driven significant changes in modern marketing practices. Today, marketing activities are increasingly carried out through various digital platforms such as social media, marketplaces, websites, and instant messaging applications. Digitalization has enabled businesses to reach consumers more broadly, quickly, and efficiently compared to conventional marketing methods. In addition, digital technology also offers various interactive features that facilitate communication between producers and consumers. This situation has made digital marketing one of the dominant strategies in marketing communication activities in the contemporary era. According to a survey by the BPS-Statistics Indonesia, in 2024, 42.02% of companies in Indonesia have conducted online sales or are categorized as e-commerce businesses [1].

The rapid growth of digital marketing is not without reason. This phenomenon is driven by changes in consumer purchasing behavior. Today's consumers increasingly prefer online shopping for various daily needs. A report by Compas.co.id titled *FMCG E-commerce Outlook Report 2026* noted that the total sales value of fast-moving consumer goods in Indonesian e-commerce reached IDR 128 trillion as of November 2025, growing by 27.1% compared to the same period the previous year [2]. This achievement highlights the role of e-commerce as a key channel for daily consumption among Indonesian consumers.

However, despite the rapid growth of digital marketing, conventional marketing practices are still found in various business sectors, one of which is direct selling. Direct selling is a marketing method that relies on direct interaction between sellers and consumers. In practice, direct selling practitioners usually conduct face-to-face product presentations, demonstrate how products are used, and build personal relationships with consumers. In Indonesia, this practice can still be observed in everyday life. Companies that still apply this method include: Yakult, MyRepublic, IndiHome, insurance companies, etc.

This phenomenon shows that direct selling practices are not entirely replaced by digital marketing. Instead, there is a tendency for direct selling practitioners to adapt to changes in the marketing environment. Face-to-face interaction, which is a key characteristic of direct selling, still appears to hold its own value as it is able to build emotional closeness, trust, and interpersonal relationships with consumers. As stated by Bayuputra et al. (2025), direct selling allows a salesperson to adjust to the needs and characteristics of consumers, enabling the development of closeness between salesperson and

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consumers. This makes it one of the most effective and efficient promotional approaches for reaching consumers [3].

Unfortunately, many people question the effectiveness of conventional marketing strategies such as direct selling among the dominance of digital marketing. There is a perception that this strategy makes it more difficult to gain customers and increase sales, especially in digital era. In addition, direct selling is often seen as requiring more resources to implement. This becomes even more challenging as consumers now have easier access to product information through social media, marketplaces, and online reviews, making them more selective in choosing products. Another challenge is the increasing competition from various digital channels that offer faster, more transparent, and more convenient shopping experiences compared to traditional face-to-face interactions. This situation brings up critical questions regarding the relevance of direct selling in attracting new consumers, as well as maintaining customer loyalty in a fast-paced, information-driven digital era. Moreover, today's consumers tend to be less appreciative to direct face-to-face sales approaches.

In addition, currently not many Gen Z are willing to pursue careers in conventional marketing or sales. They tend to feel that it is not relatable to them. Compared to previous generations, Gen Z and Millennials demonstrate a twofold preference for product discovery via social platforms over conventional advertising or direct selling. This shift away from traditional marketing is driven by an inherent demand for genuine interactions and peer endorsements, rather than curated corporate messaging.

However, despite the increasing digitalization of marketing and the ease with which consumers can purchase products online, there are still individuals who choose to work in direct selling. This phenomenon shows that for some people, direct selling remains relevant and effective, even in the face of various challenges brought by digital transformation. The presence of these direct selling practitioners is particularly interesting, as they do face-to-face sales activities and build personal interactions with consumers, which differs from the online transaction patterns today. Moreover, many of direct selling practitioners are young individuals who are also familiar with the digital world.

This condition indicates that direct selling remains part of the marketing ecosystem in Indonesia, opening up space for further research to explore the experiences, perceptions, and meanings that practitioners attach to direct selling practices in the digital era. In other words, although the world is increasingly moving toward full digitalization, direct selling still represents a unique form of conventional marketing continuity that is worth examining from an academic perspective.

A study on direct selling was conducted by Ersa, Raf, & Kartika (2021) [4], who examined the influence of direct selling on consumers' purchase intention for automotive products, specifically cars. The research employed a quantitative approach involving 91 respondents. The findings indicated that direct selling has a significant effect on consumer purchase intention. Based on these results, the authors recommended that the automotive company under study continue to maintain and strengthen its direct selling strategy.

Another study on direct selling at a global scale was conducted by Behera & Mallick (2025) entitled *Economic Growth through Direct Selling: A Global Comparison with India's Insights* [5]. This study examines the performance of direct selling in India in comparison with global trends. The results show that direct selling is an important component of India's economy, contributing significantly to both turnover and employment. The study also highlights that direct selling offers various benefits at both individual and societal levels. It provides opportunities for individuals to generate income, achieve personal and professional goals, and enhance self-esteem. In addition, direct selling helps individuals develop essential skills such as communication, leadership, and entrepreneurship. These competencies not only empower individuals but also support the growth of industry and the broader economy.

Both studies, as well as other research on direct selling, primarily focus on its impact as a business strategy. They do not explore the meaning of direct selling from the perspective of the practitioners themselves. This becomes the distinguishing point of the present study, which aims to explore the meaning of direct selling based on the lived experiences, feelings, and interpretations of the individuals directly involved in it.

This study aims to explore and understand the meaning of direct selling in the digital era from the perspective of the practitioners' experiences. For this purpose, a phenomenological approach is considered the most appropriate. One of the key figures in phenomenology, Alfred Schutz [6], stated that *the social world is interpreted by the actor in terms of his own subjective meaning*. This means that individuals interpret a phenomenon subjectively, rather than through a collective meaning. He also noted that *all interpretation of the world is based upon a stock of previous experiences*. In this sense, experience becomes the central element in the process of interpretation.

In addition, Schutz distinguishes between two types of motives: *because-motives* (which are rooted in past experiences) and *in-order-to motives* (future-oriented goals that are planned), both of which form an important structure for understanding the reasons behind social actors' actions. In this study, the informant' experiences and motives will be explored in depth. Furthermore, the researcher will also examine the challenges faced by informant in carrying out direct selling as part of his lived experience (*lifeworld*). These three elements ultimately

lead to the meaning constructed by the informant regarding direct selling.

This study aims to provide a more comprehensive understanding of how direct selling practitioners engage in marketing communication activities and build relationships with consumers, with a particular emphasis on the meaning they attach to direct selling in their everyday practice. The findings are expected to contribute new perspectives to marketing communication studies by highlighting how direct selling is understood and experienced by those who perform it. Therefore, the focus of this study is to explore the meaning of direct selling from the salesperson's perspective.

2 LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Direct Selling

Direct selling is a marketing strategy that involves selling products or services directly to consumers without going through traditional retail intermediaries such as physical stores or marketplace platforms. This method is not only viewed as a distribution channel but also as an intense form of interpersonal communication between sellers and buyers. It emphasizes personal interaction and direct experience, which differs from digital marketing strategies that are typically mass-oriented. Cochran et al. (2021) define direct selling as referring to *the sale of products or services directly to consumers through an independent salesforce, usually outside traditional retail locations* [7]. Meanwhile, Klein & Rouziou (2024) state that direct selling is a dynamic and adaptable industry that continues to grow globally, benefiting both sellers and consumers [8].

From a marketing communication perspective, direct selling can be understood as part of the marketing communication mix that emphasizes two-way communication between sellers and consumers. Through this direct interaction, sellers are able to deliver marketing messages more personal, better understand consumer needs, and adjust their communication strategies accordingly. This approach allows for closer relationships between companies and customers, as the communication process takes place in a more dialogic and interactive manner. Therefore, direct selling is often seen as an effective marketing communication strategy for building consumer trust, enhancing product understanding, and encouraging purchase decisions.

From a communication studies perspective, direct selling is seen as a process of message exchange that takes place through direct dialogue, rather than merely one-way information delivery. It is not simply a typical go-to-market model, but rather a communication channel that places people at the center of the marketing and sales process. This perspective highlights that the role of a direct selling person goes beyond just transferring products; they act as communicators who construct meaning, build trust, and develop long-term relationships with consumers.

Meanwhile, Ellsworth (2022) describes how direct selling operates as a model that removes the role of intermediaries, allowing sellers to interact directly with consumers, either through face-to-face encounters or other forms of personal contact [9]. He emphasizes that one of the key advantages of direct selling lies in empowering sellers to choose the most suitable approach for their target market and to build effective personal relationships with customers. This suggests that direct selling offers a more personalized marketing strategy compared to traditional or digital channels, which tend to be more impersonal.

Beyond functioning as a distribution channel, direct selling can also be understood as a form of marketing communication that emphasizes direct interpersonal interaction. In practice, the selling process is not only about delivering product information, but also involves persuasion, negotiation, and the development of trust between the seller and the consumer. This interaction allows sellers to customize their marketing messages more flexibly to the needs and characteristics of each consumer. This is one of the distinctive features of direct selling that sets it apart from mass marketing strategies, which tend to be more one-way in nature. The following are some of the benefits of direct selling as cited from *distri.id* [10]:

a. Make it easier to target and segment consumers.
b. Helps increase profits and sales.
c. Allows direct feedback from consumers.
d. Enables immediate evaluation of service and product quality.

On the other hand, direct selling also creates space for more intensive two-way communication between sellers and consumers. In this situation, consumers are not just passive recipients of messages, they also actively provide feedback on both the product and how it is presented. This feedback can influence the communication strategies used by sellers during the product offering process. Therefore, direct selling is not merely an economic activity, but also a dynamic social interaction process in which meaning, perception, and experience are shaped through direct communication between both parties.

In contemporary academic literature, direct selling is viewed as a phenomenon that continues to evolve alongside the development of digital technology. A review article by Hussain (2023) states that direct selling has become an important model in the modern economy because it is able to maintain personalized interaction even as consumers become increasingly accustomed to digital channels such as marketplaces and social media [11]. This is significant as it shows that direct selling

strategies can be strengthened within a digital context rather than being replaced by it.

In addition, a study by Seow (2022) shows that direct selling has evolved from a traditional practice into a global phenomenon that contributes to micro-business development and social relationships in various communities, rather than merely increasing sales volume [12]. According to Seow, direct selling offers a different perspective on marketing strategy by integrating social and economic aspects in the relationship between distributors and consumers. This further emphasizes that direct selling is an inseparable part of the contemporary marketing landscape.

This understanding is important in marketing communication studies because direct selling is not only related to transactional aspects, but also to the construction of messages that are adaptive to consumers' specific needs and contexts. This interaction reflects a dynamic two-way communication process, where sellers continuously adjust their approach based on direct feedback from consumers, creating a more meaningful buying experience.

Direct selling strategies play an important role in strengthening customer loyalty. Communication between salespeople and customers is especially crucial in this process. By using the right communication approach, a direct seller can encourage potential customers to spend time interacting with them, be more open to their ideas, and become interested in purchasing the products. In some cases, this interaction can even lead customers to recommend the product to others [13].

However, direct selling also faces significant challenges in the digital era. The dominance of digital technologies such as marketplaces, e-commerce platforms, and social media has changed consumer behavior, made product information more accessible, and accelerated transaction processes. This is in line with what Draskovic & Haric (2021) highlight regarding the challenges that must be addressed [14], namely:

a. Adapting to digital and technological changes.
b. Competition from digital channels and online shopping habits.
c. Impact of global crises (e.g., COVID-19) on business operations

This often raises questions about the relevance of direct selling as an effective marketing strategy amid the rapidly evolving digital technology landscape. Some researchers argue that the implementation of direct selling needs to be adapted to the digital context in order to maintain its relevance.

2.2 Salesperson

There are many terms used to refer to professionals in direct selling. Some refer to them as salespersons, sales representatives, door-to-door sales agents, and others. In this study, the researcher uses the term "salesperson" to refer to individuals working in the direct selling profession. Although, linguistically, direct selling practitioners could be called "direct seller", in practice this term is not commonly used. The use of the term "salesperson" aligns with the definition by Kotler & Armstrong (2021), who state that *a salesperson is an individual acting for a company by performing one or more of the following activities: prospecting, communicating, selling, servicing, and information gathering* [15].

The form of direct selling discussed in this article refers to the *Single-Level Marketing model* (pure direct selling), rather than *Multi-Level Marketing* (MLM). In the single-level model, the focus of the practitioner is entirely on product sales and customer service, without any recruitment scheme or compensation from downlines. Salespeople in this model represent independent sales agents who concentrate fully on market penetration through direct interaction with end consumers. A key characteristic of these practitioners is their autonomy in managing sales territories and customer approach strategies, without the burden of building a network structure beneath them. This allows for a sharper focus on the quality of product presentation and the fulfillment of consumers' specific needs on a more personal level.

Kotler & Keller (2022) outline six stages in the direct selling process, namely: prospecting and qualifying, pre-approach, presentation and demonstration, handling objections, closing, and follow-up [16]. These six stages represent the steps in personal selling activities, which can also be applied in direct selling practices.

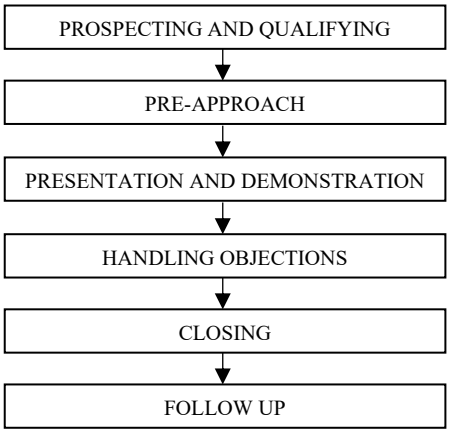


Figure 1. Stages of direct selling

A salesperson's success is largely determined by a strong command of product knowledge and the ability to deliver convincing demonstrations. Since they do not rely on recruitment systems to generate income, their earnings are directly correlated with the volume of sales they

achieve. Therefore, work efficiency and time management become essential competencies that must be mastered. According to Brown and Harrison (2023) in their study on direct selling effectiveness, the professionalism of modern salespeople has evolved into that of solution consultants who are able to provide technical advice that customers would not typically find on traditional supermarket shelves [17].

In carrying out their role, a salesperson acts as a key information bridge between company and consumers. They do not just sell products, but also collect valuable market feedback that is essential for future product development. The relationship formed between salesperson and customers is transactional in nature, yet carries a strong emotional depth due to the presence of personal trust. This creates a healthy business ecosystem in which customer satisfaction becomes the primary benchmark of individual success, rather than simply meeting company quotas.

Financial freedom is one of the main motivations that drives individuals to pursue this profession. As official partners of a company, they have full control over the income targets they aim to achieve through the intensity of their daily sales activities. Miller (2022) explains that a successful salesperson tends to have a significantly higher level of self-discipline compared to typical office workers, as they must be able to create their own work structure independently without direct supervision from a field supervisor [18]. This discipline ultimately shapes a strong entrepreneurial mindset.

Another prominent aspect of a salesperson is their ability to adapt to changes in communication technology. Although they still rely on face-to-face meetings, many practitioners now utilize digital platforms as interactive catalogs to facilitate ordering and tracking of goods by customers. This shift does not change the essence of direct selling. Rather, it accelerates administrative processes, allowing salesperson more time to focus on product education. The integration of interpersonal skills and technological efficiency has become a new standard of individual competence in this sector.

An individual's credibility is the most valuable asset for a salesperson in maintaining their customer base. Amid the rise of online shopping fraud, the physical presence of salespeople who can explain product benefits and guarantee after-sales service provides a sense of security for consumers. At a macro level, the population of salespersons makes a significant contribution to product distribution in areas that are difficult to reach through conventional distribution networks. They serve as the frontline of the economy, driving household consumption through a more human-centered approach. Salespersons are independent economic agents capable of creating added value through personalized services that cannot be replaced by any e-commerce algorithm. Their presence ensures that human interaction remains at the heart of global trade activities.

In contrast to digital marketing approaches that emphasize speed and broad reach, direct selling continues to preserve the value of interpersonal relationships as its unique strength. Direct selling can offer a more personal and context-sensitive consumer experience compared to purely digital transactions. This provides an important rationale for further exploring the meaning of direct selling practitioners' experiences within the context of modern marketing digitalization. Direct selling is not merely an outdated conventional marketing method, but a marketing strategy that continues to adapt and remains relevant when viewed from the perspective of interpersonal relationships and consumer experience.

2.3 Gen Z

Since the informant in this study comes from Generation Z, it is important to briefly discuss this generation. Generation Z, or Gen Z, generally refers to individuals born after the Millennial generation, approximately between 1997 and 2012. They have grown up during a period of rapid digital technological development, which means they have been familiar with the internet, smartphones, and social media from an early age. This condition has led Gen Z to be widely described as *digital natives*, as technology is not something new to them but an inseparable part of their everyday lives.

In terms of characteristics, Gen Z is known as a generation that is adaptive, quick to learn, and highly open to change. They tend to be more independent in seeking information, less reliant on a single authority, and accustomed to fast and instant access to information. In addition, Gen Z also shows a relatively strong concern for social issues, the environment, and diversity. In many cases, they are also more expressive in sharing their opinions, particularly through digital platforms.

When compared to Millennials (born around 1981–1996) and Generation X (born around 1965–1980), there are noticeable differences in how they view technology and the world of work. Generation X tends to be more stable, hierarchical, and values clear organizational structures. Millennials are more flexible and begin to prioritize work-life balance while being relatively comfortable with digital technology. Meanwhile, Gen Z is far more digitally connected from an early stage, faster in processing and switching information, and tends to prefer a more dynamic and less rigid work system.

In the context of the workplace, Generation Z has distinct orientations that have also been highlighted in academic studies. Zahra et al. (2025) emphasize that Gen Z tends to prioritize flexible, inclusive, and self-development-oriented work environments [19]. They do not view work merely as a source of income, but also as a

means for both personal and professional growth. Therefore, Gen Z is more attracted to organizations that provide space for creativity, strong technological integration, and collaborative work culture. These findings indicate that Gen Z has relatively high expectations of the workplace, particularly regarding work-life balance and opportunities for continuous learning and development. Furthermore, Gen Z is more adaptive to change, accustomed to digital environments, and shows a preference for flexible work patterns. Research also indicates that they tend to reject overly hierarchical and rigid structures, and instead prefer systems based on collaboration and open communication.

Several studies indicate that Generation Z faces particular challenges when adapting to certain types of work environments, especially those that require intensive face-to-face interaction and high levels of operational or field-based activity. According to an analysis published by Forbes (2024), Gen Z often experiences difficulty in workplaces that demand strong in-person communication skills and frequent mobility [20]. This is particularly evident in entry-level roles that are more operational and field-oriented, where flexibility tends to be limited.

In addition, the report highlights a growing gap between Gen Z's expectations and the structure of more traditional job roles. This generation generally shows a stronger preference for flexible work arrangements, digitally supported environments, and greater autonomy in how tasks are completed. In contrast, jobs that involve repeated direct interaction and field activities are often perceived as less appealing. Based on these characteristics, it can be concluded that direct selling roles, which require extensive fieldwork, continuous face-to-face engagement, and high mobility, are generally less aligned with the preferences of Generation Z and therefore tend to be less favored by them. This becomes a unique finding, as the informants in this study, who come from Generation Z, choose a profession as salespersons engaged in direct selling activities.

3 RESEARCH METHODS

This study uses a qualitative method with a phenomenological approach. Spradley (1980) explains that qualitative research can be used to study anything ranging from a single social situation to a complex society. A single social situation may consist of one individual, involving specific activities within a particular setting [22]. Meanwhile, Kuswarno (2009) explains that the number of informants in phenomenological research is not specifically mentioned. What is more important is the informants' ability to describe the meaning of the phenomenon in detail [23]. The informant in this study is Dimas, a 23-year-old salesperson at an internet service provider company who resides in Bandung City, West Java. The selection of Dimas is based on Kuswarno's criteria, namely that informants must have directly experienced the phenomenon under study, be able to explain it both in terms of its reality and its meaning, voluntarily agree to participate, accept recording and observation, and consent to the publication of research findings. Dimas meets all of these criteria and was therefore chosen as the informant.

According to Creswell (2015), the aim of phenomenology is to represent individual's lived experiences of a phenomenon into a universal description [21]. Phenomenology does not study the phenomenon itself, but rather the meaning of a phenomenon or reality as experienced by individuals. In this study, the researcher explores the lived experiences of direct selling practitioners (salespersons) in order to uncover the meaning of direct selling for them, particularly in today's digital era.

During the research process, the researcher applied bracketing to the phenomenon in order to allow it to reveal itself without interference. The researcher then elaborates on both textual meaning and structural meaning to obtain the final result in the form of emergent meaning.

Data in this study were collected using three techniques: in-depth interviews, observation, and literature review. Data analysis followed the steps outlined by Creswell (2015), namely: (1) describing individuals' personal experiences of the phenomenon, (2) compiling a list of significant statements, (3) grouping statements into units of meaning, (4) creating a textural description, (5) creating a structural description, and (6) composing a combined textural and structural description.

Next, to test the credibility of the data, the researcher carried out the following steps: (1) Prolonged engagement, conducted with the aim of obtaining depth, breadth, and certainty of the data. The researcher builds rapport to establish familiarity and trust with the informants; (2) Technique triangulation, where data were collected through interviews and then compared with observations and literature review; (3) Use of reference materials, such as photographic documentation.

4 RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

People's experiences are often important because they shape how events influence their lives. An experience is commonly understood as a feeling or a way of perceiving and thinking about something, such as an event, a problem, a lack of skill, an understanding, or the choices available for action [24]. In this study, the researcher will first describe the informant's experiences as a salesperson engaged in direct selling activities.

The informant in this study works as a salesperson for an Internet Service Provider (ISP) company in Indonesia, MyRepublic. He is 23 years old, unmarried, and resides in Bandung City, West Java. He has been

working as a salesperson for approximately three years: one year at an IT consulting company selling cashier application software, followed by two years at MyRepublic, where he is currently employed. Before becoming a salesperson, the informant worked as a cashier at a minimarket for approximately 10 months.

Regarding employment status, the informant is not directly employed by MyRepublic. Instead, he works under a manpower provider company that collaborates with MyRepublic. His status is that of a contract employee under the manpower provider, not a permanent employee. Among all salespeople in his company in the Greater Bandung area, only a small number come from Generation Z.

The informant shared that he is the youngest salesperson in his office. In fact, some of his colleagues are in their 50s. He once asked his older colleagues about their motivation for continuing in this profession. Some said that they have been in the field for a long time and are reluctant to leave the profession because they already understand it thoroughly. According to the informant, one of his colleagues has even been working as a salesperson for 23 years. The following is the informant's account of what his senior colleagues who have long been engaged in direct selling have said: *"This is basically my world now. And yeah, the income's pretty good too, that's what they say. The hours are nice, I get more time with my family, and I'm still making money as well."*

The informant explained that the first six months of working as an ISP salesperson were a relatively challenging period for him. Although he already had prior experience as a salesperson, he stated that during this time he faced difficulties related to product knowledge, customer approach strategies, and other aspects of the job. This was mainly due to differences in the characteristics of the products being offered. Throughout this six-month period, he admitted that he was not yet able to fully focus on achieving the sales targets set by the company.

Each salesperson in his workplace is assigned a monthly sales target of 15 customers. If this target is achieved, the salesperson receives rewards or additional bonuses. The informant shared that he was only able to meet this target in his seventh month of employment.

The informant stated that he does not feel burdened by the target system. What he finds more challenging is having to divide his time and attention between sales targets and his academic activities at university. He is not particularly pressured by sales targets because he holds the principle that what matters most is to never stop trying to find new customers. "*Whether I get any customers or not, I just gotta keep trying*", the informant said.

Formally, the working hours of a salesperson at MyRepublic are from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. However, since much of the work is conducted outside the office, these working hours are highly flexible. As proof of attendance, a salesperson only needs to log in through a mobile application that can be installed on a smartphone. The login must be completed no later than 8 a.m. each day.

Within the application, salesperson also input their planned visits for the day, including the intended locations for direct selling activities based on the company's regional database. The primary targets for these visits are residential areas. Once they arrive at the designated location, they confirm their presence again through the application, indicating that they have completed the visit.

Through this system, supervisors or managers are able to monitor the activities of the sales team. During field visits, salesperson may go individually or in groups. However, even when traveling together, they will split up once they arrive at the location and carry out their activities separately.

When engaging in direct selling activities, the informant always wears a complete uniform and an ID card. According to him, both are very important as personal identification while performing the job. Initially, not all members of the direct sales team used uniforms and ID cards when going into the field. However, the informant proposed to the supervisor that uniforms should always be worn during field activities so that consumers can clearly identify them and do not become suspicious.



Figure 2. The informant (left) is conducting direct selling activities with his team.

The informant then described the sequence of activities he typically carries out upon arriving at a location. After parking his motorcycle in a safe place, he immediately prepares the brochures he brings. There are two types of brochures: the standard company brochure and one that he creates himself. He explained that he makes his own brochure because, in his view, the information provided in the company's standard brochure is not sufficiently complete. He usually prepares around 50 to 100 copies of his self-made brochures in his bag.



Figure 3. Official brochure from the company.



Figure 4. Brochure created by the informant.

The next stage is when the informant begins door-to-door sales activities by walking around residential areas. If he meets the homeowner, he will immediately conduct a sales pitch. However, if he is unable to meet the residents, he leaves the brochure in front of the house. For the informant, the brochure serves as a "weapon" because it not only contains product information but also includes his personal contact number. After finishing one area, the informant quickly moves on to another area, as he explained: "*After finishing canvassing in one area, I'd immediately check out in the app, then move on to the next area and do the same thing. In one day, I can cover up to three areas at most*." What the informant refers to here is his door-to-door direct selling activity.

The informant explained that when meeting a potential consumer, he begins by introducing himself and the company. He then asks whether the consumer already subscribes to a home Wi-Fi service. If the consumer says they are already subscribed, he will ask which company they use, what package they are on, how much the monthly fee is, and whether they have experienced any issues with their current provider.

When consumers express complaints about their current provider, the informant quickly introduces MyRepublic's products. However, if the consumer states that they have no issues with their current Wi-Fi subscription, the informant tends to shift the conversation to more casual topics unrelated to the product. For example, when meeting a consumer who is cleaning a birdcage, he would talk about birds. Once the consumer feels comfortable speaking with him, he will then reintroduce the product topic and attempt to persuade them to switch services.

At this stage, consumers usually respond that they need to discuss the decision with their family first. The informant then provides a brochure for them to review. If possible, he also tries to obtain the consumer's contact number, although this is not always easy as not all consumers are willing to share it. At times, he suggests that consumers simply save his contact number instead.

The most memorable experience the informant had while carrying out direct selling activities occurred during the month of Ramadhan. At that time, he was visiting a potential consumer's home when it was already time to break the fast. Surprisingly, the consumer invited him into the house to join the family for iftar. To this day, the relationship between the informant and that consumer remains close, resembling that of close friends. In fact, when the consumer's relatives express interest in subscribing to a Wi-Fi service, the consumer consistently informs the informant about it.

The negative experience the informant once encountered was being scolded by someone he had just met. The chronology was as follows: right after he introduced himself, the person suddenly asked him to leave while speaking angrily. The informant tried to explain that he only intended to introduce the product, but the individual refused to listen and continued to reprimand him. With a bitter smile, the informant said to the researcher: "*Oh, so this is what it's like… being looked down on…*"

Incidents in which people looked down on the salesperson profession were not experienced by the informant only once. He explained that during the first six months of working as a salesperson, he learned many of the ups and downs of the profession. However, he tried to persist and continue learning. His supervisors and managers frequently motivated him not to take things personally when encountering potential customers who behaved unfavorably. These successive experiences eventually shaped the informant's resilience. In the following period, when consumers outright rejected his presence, the informant responded more calmly: "*Some people just straight-up reject me. I've barely even approached them and they're already telling me to go away. But yeah, since I'm used to it, I just enjoy it anyway…*" the informant said while laughing.

Now, we will discuss the informants' motives for becoming salespersons. A motive can be understood as a stimulus, drive, or source of energy that triggers an action or behavior [25]. A motive is the underlying factor that directs a person's actions toward achieving a particular goal [26]. In this study, the motive refers to the underlying reasons that led the informant to work as a salesperson.

In relation to phenomenology, Alfred Schutz distinguishes human action into two types of motives:

because motives and *in-order-to motives*. *Because motives* explain actions as the result of past experiences and habitual patterns. Meanwhile, *in-order-to motives* refer to the goals or future-oriented purposes that individuals aim to achieve through their actions [27].

The informant explained several reasons for joining the salesperson profession. First, he enjoys talking and building interactions with other people. Second, he is interested in exploring the direct selling profession more deeply, as he had previously worked in this field. In addition, he does not prefer desk-based jobs, as he considers them monotonous and boring, an experience he once had when working as a cashier at a minimarket in Bandung City, West Java.

> *"Actually, it's because I like talking to people. And I also had experience in direct selling before, so I wanted to explore it more in this ISP company. I used to work as a cashier at a minimarket. But in that job, it was hard for me to gain broader knowledge. In terms of time, it always ended up being overtime. So, I didn't really have time to learn other things. My whole day was spent at the store doing the same stuff over and over. Every day there was about 2–3 hours of overtime, and there was no overtime pay. Besides that, I also had this push to start college at that time. But the minimarket where I worked didn't allow employees to study while working because of the shift system. So, in the end, I decided to resign, enroll in college, and look for a job as a salesperson because the working hours are more flexible."*

The reasons mentioned above: enjoying conversations and interpersonal interaction, having prior experience in direct selling, and disliking desk-based work, can be classified as *because motives* in Schutz's concept. These three factors form the basis that ultimately led the informant to choose the salesperson profession. A *because motive* refers to past experiences or predispositions that influence an individual's present actions and decisions.

Regarding the *in-order-to motive*, the informant stated that income is his main goal. The salesperson's earning scheme serves as a strong attraction for him. Compared to his friends who work in offices from morning to late afternoon for a full month, he does not need to work that long yet is able to earn a higher income than those who work full-time for an entire month.

The informant expressed regret that many Generation Z individuals are not interested in this profession, even though, in his view, the job is legitimate and provides income. The informant said: "*In terms of income, working in direct sales really depends on yourself. If you manage to sell a lot, then your income will be high too…*"

The informant stated that through his work as a salesperson, he is able to purchase the items he wants, such as: shoes, clothes, etc. In addition, part of his income is allocated to support his parents and to finance his studies. These benefits help ease his concerns when he sees other Generation Z individuals who are not engaged in direct selling.

> *"I also have those Gen Z sides in me. Sometimes, I find myself thinking, like, it must be nice that other Gen Z friends have comfortable jobs, while I'm working as a salesperson with coworkers who are mostly older. But then I calm myself down by reminding myself that the income as a salesperson is pretty good. I can basically afford the things I want by working in this job."*

Another factor underlying the informant's decision to pursue this profession is the flexibility of working time and system. He explained that although sales targets are calculated on a monthly basis, he often manages to achieve them before the end of the month. Once the target has been met, he usually spends his days engaging in lighter activities, such as hanging out with friends or spending time with close acquaintances. Supervisors and managers do not object to this arrangement, considering that a salesperson's work is based on sales targets rather than the routine requirement to be present in the office.

Regarding this flexibility in working time, the informant explained that he often receives questions from people close to him about his job, as he is frequently seen not going to work. However, this is not because he is lazy, but because he has already met his sales targets. While laughing, the informant explained:

> *"People often think I'm unemployed. You know, in a month there are about 30 days. Sometimes by the 15th, I've already hit my sales target, even more than I'm supposed to. For example, I might have already gotten around 20 customers. At that point, I usually end up doing other things, like hanging out with friends. So… my parents, relatives, and even my girlfriend often ask whether I actually have a job or not, because I don't really look busy…"*

In addition, the informant is currently a Communication Studies student at a university in Bandung City, West Java. From his perspective, working as a salesperson serves as a platform for him to apply the knowledge he gains from his academic studies in a real-world context. He enjoys testing whether the theories and

concepts learned in lectures are applicable in practice. This is reflected in the informant's statement:

> *"It also aligns with my studies in Communication Science. I wanted to apply what I learn in college about communication in real life. So, I applied for jobs related to communication. I wanted to see whether the theories and knowledge I got in class are really relevant in actual work. That's basically it…"*

Every job comes with its own risks and challenges. Workers were required to identify occupational risk factors from a set of categories grouped into six types of exposure: physical, biomechanical, biological, chemical, irregular working hours, and psychosocial risks. Physical risks, for instance, include exposure to vibrations, harsh weather conditions, ultrasound, radiation (both ionizing and non-ionizing), and extreme temperatures [28]. The following section outlines the risks and challenges faced by individuals engaged in direct selling.

Behind all the advantages mentioned above, the salesperson profession in direct selling also comes with several challenges. The informant stated that the most difficult challenge in this profession is dealing with various types of consumer personalities. A salesperson's primary target is achieving a sale (closing). Since the product being marketed does not target a specific segment, the informant has to face a wide range of consumer characteristics: *"The challenge is that as salespeople, we have to deal with all kinds of different personalities. We're expected to stay professional when facing all sorts of customer types…"*

The informant explained that in his role as a salesperson, the type of consumer he prefers is someone who is willing to give him an opportunity to interact. He particularly enjoys consumers who are open to two-way communication involving questions and answers, even if it does not necessarily result in a sale.

On the other hand, the type of consumer he dislikes is one who shows no response at all when approached. Even after being given a brochure, such consumers do not display any expression or reaction. This often leaves the informant feeling confused.

However, regardless of the type of consumer he encounters, the informant always strives to remain professional by prioritizing friendliness, even when he is not in the right mood. He uses a Sundanese term to describe this friendliness, namely "someah." According to him, understanding the various types of customers and how to engage with each effectively is key to building loyalty and satisfaction. One never knows whether a professional attitude in dealing with different consumer characteristics will lead to repeat orders or new sales. In this context, the ability to show empathy plays a very important role [29].

In addition to consumer characteristics, weather conditions are also a challenge in the salesperson profession, particularly during the rainy season. The job requires direct visits to target areas, which are usually carried out on foot. For this reason, clear or sunny weather is preferred by salespeople. When it rains, however, they are unable to carry out door-to-door sales activities.

> *"Since the work is done in the field, the weather also has an impact. Like during seasons like this, sometimes it rains, sometimes it's hot. When it rains, I can't really do anything, so I stop visiting the area. Usually, the only thing I do is send broadcast messages…"*

Besides working in sales, the informant is a part-time student in the evenings. When academic pressure increases, he struggles to balance his studies with his direct selling responsibilities.

> *"When I'm busy with college assignments, there are times when I feel torn between finishing my school tasks and hitting my work targets. On one hand, if I don't reach my sales target, I won't get the income I want. That's where the pressure comes in for me. But once my assignments are done and I go back to focusing on work, thankfully it doesn't feel like a burden anymore. Because my motivation is simple: if I don't hit the target, I don't get paid. And that's just part of the risk of being a salesperson, so I try to take it easy and enjoy it. I already understand how it works, like how to approach sales. The important thing is just to keep looking for customers."*

On a broader scale, the informant identified the main challenge as the large number of similar companies in Indonesia. This results in intense competition in acquiring customers.

> *"Now there are more and more internet providers. Even local RT/RW internet networks are popping up. Even though they can be considered illegal, it makes it harder for me to sell our product because their prices are much cheaper. And sometimes, local residents are also difficult to negotiate with because they feel like they're the original people of the area. If that local internet network gets banned, it could even lead to our company's poles being taken down by residents."*

Data from the BPS-Statistics Indonesia indicates that in 2024 there were 1,248 internet service provider (ISP) companies in Indonesia [30]. Meanwhile, a KedaiKOPI survey revealed the data on the 10 most

widely used WiFi operators in Indonesia as of May 2025 as follows:

Table 1. Favorite WiFi operators in Indonesia

WiFi Operator	Persentage of Users
Indihome	56,8%
MyRepublic	8,2%
Biznet	8,0%
First Media	5,5%
Iconnet	4,4%
XL Home	4,2%
MNC Play	1,7%
CBN	1,2%
Oxygen.id	0,8%
Megavision	0,6%

The final stage of phenomenological research involves the researcher seeking to uncover meaning based on the informant's statements. In phenomenological studies, researchers do not merely collect descriptions of experiences, but also conduct hermeneutic interpretation to identify the meanings that emerge from the informant's data. This interpretation is an active process in which the researcher seeks to understand the phenomenon as it is experienced by the informant. And the final stage in phenomenological research is the synthesis of meaning and essence, where textual and structural descriptions are integrated intuitively to produce a comprehensive statement regarding the essential nature of the phenomenon under study [31].

The following is an elaboration of the emergent meaning identified in this study based on the structural description provided by the informant:

4.1 Direct Selling as A Promising Source Of Income

- *"In terms of income, working in direct sales really depends on yourself. If you manage to sell a lot, then your income will be high too..."*
- *... But then I calm myself down by reminding myself that the income as a salesperson is pretty good. I can basically afford the things I want by working in this job."*

During the interviews and observations, the informant stated that through his direct selling work, he is able to meet all of his personal needs. A portion of his income is used to purchase personal items such as clothing, shoes, and others. In addition, he allocates part of his earnings to support his parents and to cover his educational expenses.

It is not uncommon for individuals to choose a salesperson profession with the aim of earning a high income. Unlike other positions within a company, a salesperson engaged in direct selling typically receives additional components of compensation beyond a basic salary, usually in the form of sales commissions and bonuses.

The level of income in the salesperson profession varies depending on the individual. This profession allows each person to earn as much as possible, depending on how many sales they are able to generate. In direct selling, in addition to a basic salary, salespersons also receive incentives for each successful sale. These incentives become the main priority for a salesperson.

Johnston, Ogilvie, & Marshall (2025) explain that *some firms, regardless of their size or position in their industries, offer their salesperson opportunities to make very large amounts of financial compensation* [32]. This can be understood because a significant portion of a company's revenue depends on salespeople. As a result, the compensation structure for salespeople is allocated differently compared to other employees.

Based on the informant's, in the direct selling division where he works, a salesperson is assigned a target of acquiring 15 customers per month. If this target is achieved, in addition to receiving a salary, the salesperson also earns sales commissions and bonuses. This compensation scheme is what makes direct selling an attractive field.

As an illustration, in Indonesia a junior salesperson can earn around IDR 8–15 million per month if they succeed in meeting their sales targets. In industries such as property, B2B, technology, and automotive, earnings can even reach tens of millions of rupiah per month [33]. Considering these facts, it is understandable that the informant perceives direct selling as a promising field in terms of income potential.

4.2 Direct Selling Offers Flexibility In Managing Working Time

- *"...The hours are nice, I get more time with my family, and I'm still making money as well."*
- *"...So, in the end, I decided to resign, enroll in college, and look for a job as a salesperson because the working hours are more flexible."*

The informant explained that his reason for switching jobs from a cashier at a minimarket to direct selling was due to time flexibility. Working as a cashier involves a strict scheduling system and relatively long working hours. In contrast, direct selling tends to be more dynamic and flexible.

In general, employees in Indonesia work for approximately 8 hours per day, typically from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. This may differ if the company applies a shift-based system. However, in most cases, work is carried out within an 8-hour daily time frame.

The policy is actually based on UU No. 13 Tahun 2003 Pasal 77, which stipulates two working schemes per

week. The first scheme is a six-day work week: 7 hours per day or 40 hours per week. The second scheme is a five-day work week: 8 hours per day or 40 hours per week [34].

Working in direct selling has a slightly different concept. Formally, they also have an 8-hour working schedule, except for salespeople with freelance status. However, even though they have a formal 8-hour workday, their main priority is sales targets. This is especially true because the work is carried out outside the office in a highly dynamic environment. It is not uncommon for a salesperson to work until late at night, while on other days they may only work for a few hours, or even not work at all if the sales target has already been achieved.

Salem (2025) explains in his study that the salesperson profession widely applies flexible working hours. Flexible working arrangements, including flexible hours and hybrid work options, significantly influence employees' perceived autonomy and retention intention [35]. Flexible working hours offer many benefits, as stated by *business.com*, namely: flextime can make work fit better into employees' lives, not the other way around. By giving people more control over their schedules, businesses can support better work-life balance, lower stress and greater job satisfaction [36].

The informant stated that flexible working hours allow him to do other things, such as completing his academic assignments. As he is still a young member of Generation Z, he also uses his free time to hang out with friends, family, or his partner.

4.3 Direct Selling As A Practical Space For Applying Communication Skills

- *"Actually, it's because I like talking to people."*
- *"...I wanted to apply what I learn in college about communication in real life."*
- *"...I wanted to see whether the theories and knowledge I got in class are really relevant in actual work..."*

Even though the informant is enrolled in an employee-class program, he demonstrates a highly critical mindset. He is strongly driven to apply the knowledge gained from his studies to his daily work. This is precisely why he choses to work in direct selling as a salesperson, as the profession is deeply rooted in communication.

In academic terms, direct selling is classified under the domain of marketing communication [37]. However, in practice, it encompasses various other areas of communication, such as interpersonal communication, persuasive communication, negotiation, and more. This is because direct selling activities involve extensive interaction with people, meaning that communication processes are constantly taking place.

The informant has acquired various fields of communication during his studies. At this stage, he feels it is time to test whether this knowledge is applicable in real-world situations. For instance, when dealing with customers, he seeks to simultaneously apply empathy, interpersonal communication, and persuasive communication techniques. He continues to practice and refine his communication skills through direct interactions with customers. He hopes that in the future, after graduating, his communication abilities can be considered well-established and validated through real-life experience. Currently, he is working on his undergraduate thesis as a final academic requirement.

In Indonesian society, it is still commonly found that many unemployed individuals hold a bachelor's degree. The latest data from BPS-Statistics Indonesia as of August 2025 shows that the number of open unemployment among university graduates in Indonesia reached 904,440 people [38]. According to Sri Mulyani (2025), one of the causes of unemployment among university graduates is that many graduates in Indonesia lack the practical and technical skills required by the modern industrial sector [39]. For example, within the field of communication studies, students may understand persuasive communication theoretically, but they are not necessarily able to apply it effectively in real-world contexts.

Therefore, the informant feels that direct selling serves as a platform for him to practice and apply all the communication knowledge he has acquired during his studies. Since he has not yet graduated, he sees this period as an opportunity to develop practical communication skills. He hopes to possess strong practical communication abilities rather than merely theoretical understanding. He also states that the communication knowledge gained during his studies has been highly beneficial in supporting his work.

One of the main benefits of studying while working is the ability to directly apply what has been learned. In class, students are introduced to theoretical concepts, and on the following day they can observe the application of those concepts in real work settings [40]. This integration creates a beneficial learning cycle. Students do not only master theory but also develop into competent practitioners. It helps them cultivate critical thinking, problem-solving skills, and decision-making abilities based on two foundations: academic knowledge and practical experience. This combination is relatively rare and highly valued by many companies.

4.4 Direct Selling As A Profession Full Of Challenges

- *"...In one day, I can cover up to three areas at most."*

- *"The challenge is that as salespeople, we have to deal with all kinds of different personalities..."*
- *"Since the work is done in the field, the weather also has an impact..."*
- *"When I'm busy with college assignments, there are times when I feel torn between finishing my school tasks and hitting my work targets..."*
- *"Now there are more and more internet providers..."*

Based on the informant's, working in direct selling involves several challenges, both physical and non-physical. The physical challenges include stamina and weather conditions. The informant carries out direct selling through a door-to-door approach, walking around residential areas. One day, he sometimes covers up to three housing complexes. Without good physical stamina, it would be difficult to sustain this line of work. Weather conditions also pose a challenge, as door-to-door activities are sometimes conducted under intense and scorching sunlight.

Meanwhile, the non-physical challenges faced by the informant include dealing with diverse customer characteristics, difficulties in managing time when academic assignments are demanding, and competitive pressures due to the presence of many similar competing companies. These challenges must be addressed by the informant as a trade-off for the benefits gained from working as a salesperson.

Several marketing communication scholars have identified a number of challenges commonly encountered in direct selling activities, namely:

a. Sales often involve frequent rejection, demanding persistence and emotional resilience [16].
b. Direct selling typically involves significant travel, extended work hours, and considerable physical endurance [41].
c. Salesperson often face role stress because of competing demands from their work and personal lives [42].
d. During a sales presentation, salespeople often encounter direct competition when customers evaluate alternative products [41].

Direct selling is not an easy job. Many people consider sales to be one of the most difficult job. However, in reality, any job, if done seriously and consistently, will eventually yield results. The informant also stated that he believes that sustenance has already been determined. His responsibility is simply to keep making efforts by consistently carrying out direct selling activities every day. This aligns with Bettger (2009), who stated that selling is the easiest job in the world if you work it hard, but the hardest job in the world if you try to work it easy [43].

Initially, these challenges had a considerable impact on the informant's mental state. However, over time, he made efforts to adapt to these challenges. As a result, when the researcher asked about these difficulties, the informant responded casually with a laugh, saying, "*Just enjoy it…*"

4.5 Direct Selling Is Often Perceived Negatively Or Underestimated

- "*Oh, so this is what it's like… being looked down on...*"
- "*Some people just straight-up reject me. I've barely even approached them and they're already telling me to go away...*"
- *"People often think I'm unemployed..."*

Amin et al. (2023) stated that salespeople recognize that many customers hold negative stereotypes about the sales profession. As a result, they may develop defensive attitudes and feel anxious or fearful about being judged by customers based on those perceptions [44]. This situation often affects how salespeople interact with customers during the selling process, leading them to be more cautious in their communication and behavior. Over time, such perceptions can also influence their self-confidence and the way they construct their professional identity in the field of sales.

The informant explained that during his work in direct selling, he frequently encountered unpleasant treatment and attitudes. These ranged from suspicious and unfriendly looks from homeowners to outright rejections expressed in harsh words. He had also been scolded without any clear reason. The informant experienced all of these situations, particularly in the early stages of his work in this field.

According to the informant, such responses may occur because consumers tend to perceive this profession only at a glance. The informant, who conducts direct selling on foot and often appears sweaty, may be equated with itinerant street vendors such as vegetable sellers or food vendors. Moreover, since the informant engages in door-to-door sales, the interaction can give the impression that he is merely asking for something from consumers. However, when viewed more deeply, the informant's role is actually to provide solutions for consumers who need internet access. In this sense, the relationship is essentially reciprocal: the informant needs consumers, and consumers also need the informant as a salesperson.

In addition, the flexible working hours often lead to perceptions that he does not take his job as seriously as others. Direct selling work is based on achieving sales targets. Once the target has been met, a salesperson is able to take a short break from work routines. This type of system is seen as unusual by some people, particularly

those accustomed to standard office-hour working structures.

In Indonesian society, the profession of salesperson may not be considered an ideal or highly desirable occupation. Salespeople often face various negative stigmas, such as being perceived as overly pushy in persuading consumers to make purchases, lacking ethical standards, and making exaggerated claims about their products [45].

When examining the types of jobs preferred by Generation Z, almost none are related to the sales field. A survey conducted by ZipRecruiter, Glassdoor, and Forbes highlights several occupations considered most popular and promising among Gen Z, including sports content creator, graphic design, social media, data science, technology, and healthcare [46]. Hamid et al. (2022) explain that despite offering clear prospects for high earnings, many graduates hesitate to pursue a sales career, mainly due to negative stereotypes and concerns about job security [47].

Specifically, Generation Z tends to be less interested in sales-related jobs for the following reasons [48]:

a. High Uncertainty & Constant Pressure
b. Hard Work in an Unstructured Environment
c. Mobility Constraints & Frequent Relocations
d. Ethical Stigma & Misconceptions
e. Gender Gap in Sales: A Major Concern
f. No Clear Career Growth Path
g. Work-Life Balance & Mental Health Challenges

In addition to the factors mentioned above, on a global scale, the shift in transaction patterns from conventional to digital has also transformed consumer behavior. In the digital era, consumers tend to be reluctant to accept direct sales offers. They prefer to make their own purchasing decisions based on information available on the internet. This is especially true for Gen Z, who are accustomed to conducting transactions not through direct interaction, but via digital devices and online platforms.

This fact has made direct selling strategies less popular. Direct selling is considered outdated by some parties, particularly digital marketing practitioners. It is often seen as irrelevant to Generation Z and more suitable for their parents' generation. A 2025 article in *Radar Bojonegoro* reported an HR practitioner's view that sales professions, especially direct sales, are among the most avoided by Gen Z, as they are perceived as incompatible with expectations of workplace comfort and involve high pressure from direct interpersonal interaction [49].

In this digital era, new professions have also emerged that primarily operate in the online space. Many of them even claim to be able to generate substantial income simply by using a gadget and internet access, without having to go out and physically offer products to consumers. This shift is further supported by the rise of delivery services, which have become a common feature in digital transactions.

5 CONCLUSION

Based on the findings, it can be understood that direct selling is not merely a transactional activity, but also a meaningful field of work shaped by the lived experiences of salespersons. In many cases, informants perceive this field as financially promising, especially because it offers income opportunities that are relatively flexible compared to conventional jobs. At the same time, the flexibility of working time allows them to manage personal and professional responsibilities more independently.

Beyond its economic and practical benefits, direct selling is also understood as a space for applying and developing communication skills in real-life contexts. Informants describe their work as an ongoing process of learning how to approach different types of customers, adapt communication styles, and build persuasive interactions. However, these experiences are inseparable from the challenges embedded in the profession. Salespersons frequently encounter rejection, pressure to meet targets, and emotionally demanding situations, all of which require resilience and adaptive strategies. These challenges, while difficult, also contribute to shaping their professional identity and competence.

Meanwhile, the study highlights a social paradox surrounding direct selling. Despite its potential demands, the profession is often perceived negatively or underestimated by society. This perception creates a tension between how salespersons value their work and how it is viewed by others. Nevertheless, informant continue to find meaning in their roles, suggesting that direct selling is not only about selling products, but also about navigating social judgments, building self-worth, and constructing personal significance through everyday work experiences.

Based on the findings, companies engaged in direct selling are encouraged to strengthen their support systems for salespersons by providing continuous training that not only focuses on product knowledge and sales techniques but also on communication skills, emotional resilience, and strategies for handling rejection in field practice. In addition, organizations are advised to develop structured mentoring and psychological support mechanisms, such as coaching sessions or peer support groups, to help salespersons cope with work-related stress and maintain motivation. Companies should also consider improving the public image of direct selling through ethical marketing practices and transparent communication to reduce negative societal perceptions, while ensuring that performance targets are realistic and accompanied by fair incentive systems. Although direct selling offers flexibility, clear guidelines are also needed

to maintain a healthy work-life balance and ensure sustainable productivity among salespersons.

This study has several limitations that should be acknowledged. First, the number of informants is relatively limited, so the findings may not fully represent the broader population of direct selling practitioners across different regions or industries. Second, this research emphasizes subjective lived experiences, meaning the results are interpretative in nature and cannot be generalized statistically. Third, the study does not specifically differentiate between various types of direct selling companies or product categories, which may influence the experiences of salespersons in different ways. Lastly, the data were collected within a specific period, so potential changes in organizational practices or market conditions after the research timeframe may not be captured in the findings.

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Reading Power Through the Camera: Gender Representation, Trauma, and Resistance in the Short Film Hotspot

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Abstract

This study analyzes how the Indonesian independent short film *Hotspot* constructs representations of sexual harassment, power relations, and female resistance through visual and narrative structures. Drawing on Laura Mulvey's male gaze theory, bell hoo ks's feminist critique of objectification, Michel Foucault's conception of power as relational practice, and Bordwell and Thompson's film theory, the study employs qualitative close-reading analysis at the scene and shot level, combined with feminist discourse analysis. Findings show that sexual harassment is represented through digital messages, tight framing, and nonverbal expressions of distress, while power dynamics manifest through the perpetrator's symbolic dominance, the victim's silence, and the structural vulnerability of female interns. Resistance emerges through solidarity, the act of recording, and a shift in aspect ratio from 4:3 to 16:9—marking a transition from confinement to the public sphere. This study contributes to Indonesian film studies by establishing a feminist analytical framework for independent short films and demonstrating how audiovisual texts produce systems of meaning regarding power, trauma, and gender-based violence.

Keywords: Gender Representation, Male Gaze, Sexual Harassment, Feminist Film Theory, Indonesian Independent Film.

1 INTRODUCTION

Gender-based violence in Indonesia has increased significantly over the past decade, particularly in educational and workplace settings. Data from Komnas Perempuan [1] indicates that cases of sexual harassment in the educational sector rose from 5% to 12% over the past three years, with the majority of victims being women aged 15–24. UN Women [2] emphasizes that sexual harassment is rooted in unequal power dynamics rather than individual desire, while the WHO [3] notes that its impacts include long-term psychological trauma such as depression, chronic anxiety, and loss of self-confidence. The expansion of digital communication has further diversified forms of harassment, making this a complex social problem requiring multidisciplinary attention.

Regulatory progress in Indonesia has advanced with the enactment of Law No. 12 of 2022 on Criminal Acts of Sexual Violence (UU TPKS), recognized as a milestone in victim protection [4]. Legal scholars assess that the law provides stronger foundations for evidentiary procedures and victim recovery compared to prior frameworks [5]. A Human Rights Watch report [6] links this development to growing social movement pressure aligned with global feminist discourse that views legal regulation as a challenge to patriarchal structures [7][8]. Nevertheless, implementation continues to face cultural and structural barriers, confirming that legal reform alone has not fully transformed social relations at the practical level.

Academic research on gender representation in film provides an important lens for understanding these dynamics. Mulvey's [16] foundational analysis of the male gaze demonstrates how cinema structures the objectification of women's bodies. Bordwell and Thompson [26] and Sikov [30] further argue that technical decisions in film production shape ideological meaning. In the Indonesian context, Ula's [32] research on short films addressing sexual violence reveals how visual representations influence public perception, while Hidayat [34] examines power and resistance in contemporary Indonesian cinema. However, no academic study has specifically analyzed the short film *Hotspot* through a feminist and film theory framework—a gap this study addresses.

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The short film *Hotspot* was produced on February 28, 2024, in Sidoarjo, East Java, in collaboration with SEStudio, and screened at several film festivals. Its narrative depicts two female interns who experience sexual harassment from a gardener and ultimately find the courage to speak out. Because this study analyzes a film in which the researcher was involved as filmmaker, a reflexive approach is applied: the film is treated strictly as an object of study, interpreted through a systematic theoretical framework and scientific method rather than through creative preferences. This positionality is acknowledged as both a resource—providing direct access to production documentation—and a potential source of interpretive bias, which is managed through rigorous theoretical grounding and analytical distance.

This study addresses three research questions: (1) How does *Hotspot* represent experiences of sexual harassment in an internship setting through narrative and visual structures? (2) How are power relations represented in the interactions between characters? (3) How can *Hotspot* be positioned as a cultural text reflecting the dynamics of female resistance? The study's contribution is twofold: theoretically, it expands Indonesian film studies by applying an integrated feminist-film theory framework to an independent short film; practically, it offers filmmakers, educational institutions, and the creative industry a model for ethical, gender-conscious production analysis.

2 LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Feminist Film Theory

Feminist film theory examines how cinema functions as a site of ideological production that shapes cultural understandings of gender, identity, and power. Tong [10] identifies three principal strands relevant to film analysis: liberal feminism, which focuses on individual rights and equal representation; radical feminism, which interrogates structural patriarchy embedded in social and cultural institutions; and socialist feminism, which links gender oppression to economic and class structures. Within this framework, film is understood not merely as entertainment but as a discursive apparatus that reproduces or contests gender hierarchies. hooks [8] extends this analysis by arguing that objectification is not an individual experience but a social process perpetuating power imbalance through mechanisms that appear normative. This theoretical position establishes the ground for analyzing how independent films such as *Hotspot* both reflect and interrogate the conditions of their cultural production

2.2 The Male Gaze and Power Dynamics in Cinema

Mulvey's [16] concept of the male gaze remains one of the most cited frameworks in feminist film scholarship. Mulvey argues that mainstream cinema structures the viewing subject as masculine, positioning women's bodies as objects of spectacle and control. This cinematic arrangement, she contends, is not merely technical but ideological, reproducing asymmetrical power relations. Foucault's [27] theory of power as a network of relations, dispersed across everyday practices rather than concentrated in a single authority, complements this analysis by explaining how domination operates through subtle mechanisms of surveillance, spatial control, and discursive legitimation. Bordwell [25] and Monaco [14] extend these insights to the level of film technique, demonstrating that framing, lens choice, and spatial composition function as aesthetic instruments through which power relations are produced and naturalized. Together, these frameworks enable a systematic analysis of how visual choices in *Hotspot* embody and critique gendered power structures.

2.3 Representation of Sexual Violence in Film

Cinema has a documented capacity to represent, normalize, or critique sexual violence, depending on the ideological orientation of the text. McDonald [22] shows that power dynamics within the film industry are frequently manipulated to produce mechanisms of fear and psychological dependency, particularly affecting women in junior or intern positions. Caruth's [23] trauma theory provides a framework for understanding how film can represent the somatic and psychological effects of violence through nonverbal, bodily registers—silence, trembling, withdrawal. Nichols [29] argues that documentary and quasi-documentary aesthetics in film produce claims of social truth that carry particular ethical weight when addressing sensitive subjects such as gender-based violence. Fairclough's [28] critical discourse analysis further enables examination of how the language of film—including its visual and narrative choices—constructs social positions, legitimizes certain identities, and silences others.

2.4 Indonesian Independent Film and Gender Studies

Scholarly attention to Indonesian independent films as sites of gender analysis remains limited. Ula [32] examines how short films addressing sexual violence in Indonesia influence public perception and victim positioning, finding that visual representation significantly shapes audience interpretation of culpability and agency. Hidayat [34] analyzes power and female resistance in contemporary Indonesian cinema,

identifying recurring narrative strategies that either reinforce or challenge patriarchal structures. Pratiwi [17] documents how women in junior professional positions face compounded pressure from gender norms and institutional power imbalances, a finding directly relevant to the internship context depicted in *Hotspot*. Wicaksono [33] notes that Indonesian film scholarship has disproportionately focused on mainstream commercial productions, leaving independent short films under-analyzed as research subjects. This study addresses that gap by positioning *Hotspot* as a primary analytical object within feminist film studies.

3 RESEARCH METHODS

This study employs qualitative textual analysis with a close-reading approach to film, combined with feminist discourse analysis as its interpretive framework. This approach follows the tradition of film research that places the film text at the center of inquiry as the primary source of data [29]. Rather than testing a hypothesis or identifying causal variables—approaches more suited to quantitative designs—this study pursues an interpretive analytical focus on three interrelated dimensions: (1) the visual and narrative construction of sexual harassment; (2) the representation of power relations in character interactions; and (3) the articulation of female resistance through bodily, spatial, and narrative strategies.

Data sources include: (1) the short film *Hotspot* [36]; (2) the final draft screenplay [35]; and (3) the production document *Menjadi Sutradara Film Pendek Hotspot* [37]. The unit of analysis is the scene and shot level, with particular attention to framing, spatial composition, gesture, dialogue, and the dynamics between characters as meaning-making elements. Data collection involved intensive viewing and systematic scene archiving, organized by three analytical categories: representations of power, practices of domination, and moments of resistance.

The analytical procedure proceeded in three steps. First, scenes were archived by category through repeated viewing and notation. Second, visual symbols, character dynamics, and dialogue patterns were coded using thematic categories drawn from the theoretical framework: the male gaze [16], objectification [8], and Foucauldian power networks [27]. Third, coded categories were interpreted in relation to the research questions, with reference to film-theoretical concepts of mise-en-scène, cinematography, and narrative structure [26]. Fairclough's [28] discourse analysis framework was applied to examine how the film constructs social positions regarding gender, power, and institutional setting. This procedure ensures that interpretation is systematic, theoretically grounded, and responsive to the analytical focus of the study.

4 RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 The Female Body as Site of Power: Representation of Sexual Harassment

Power relations in visual representations operate through gender constructions rooted in a long history of social, institutional, and symbolic legitimation. According to hooks [8], patriarchy operates through a structure of meaning that positions the female body as a site of control, moral evaluation, and an instrument for legitimizing norms. Foucault [27] interprets power as a network dispersed within everyday practices—not a singular authority but a diffuse system operating through discourse, space, and the body. Cinema, as Bordwell and Thompson [26] argue, translates these abstract power relations into concrete visual and narrative choices that determine how audiences understand characters, spaces, and social dynamics. This section addresses the first research question by analyzing how *Hotspot* represents experiences of sexual harassment through visual language, screenplay, and character dynamics.

The film's visual structure demonstrates how the camera functions as an instrument shaping space, bodily movement, and the psychological experience of female characters. Monaco [14] argues that framing and image composition are narrative choices determining how audiences interpret character authority, vulnerability, or subordination. The production document *Menjadi Sutradara Film Pendek Hotspot* [37] details the use of a 4:3 aspect ratio, a 35mm lens, and the tatami shot technique to create a confined space restricting the female characters' physical expression.



Figure 1. Production Document 'Menjadi Sutradara Film Pendek Hotspot' Page 4

These choices align with Mulvey's framework on the politics of the gaze [16], in which the camera functions as an agent that positions women's bodies within a space of symbolic powerlessness. Unlike mainstream Hollywood productions where the male gaze is often naturalised as the default viewing position, *Hotspot* employs a reflexive aesthetic that makes the spatial constraint itself visible—a strategy also identified by Ula [32] in her analysis of Indonesian short films that

foreground the victim's phenomenological experience rather than the spectator's voyeuristic pleasure.

The experience of sexual harassment is depicted through a scene in which Kia receives an explicit digital message from Firman. This scene illustrates how control operates through digital media as an instrument of power, a non-physical act that nonetheless generates fear, confusion, and self-subordination. McDonald [22] notes a similar dynamic in the global film industry, where perpetrators exploit hierarchical structures and professional titles to control victims without requiring physical presence. In the Indonesian context, Pratiwi [17] documents that women in junior positions face compounded institutional and gendered pressures, a pattern the film translates into visual terms through Kia's tense body and anxious expression.

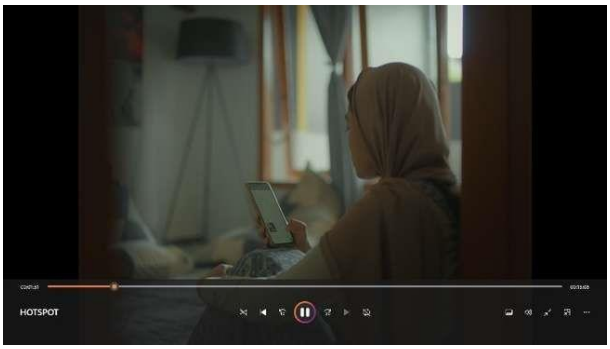


Figure 2. Scene in which Kia receives an explicit digital message from Firman

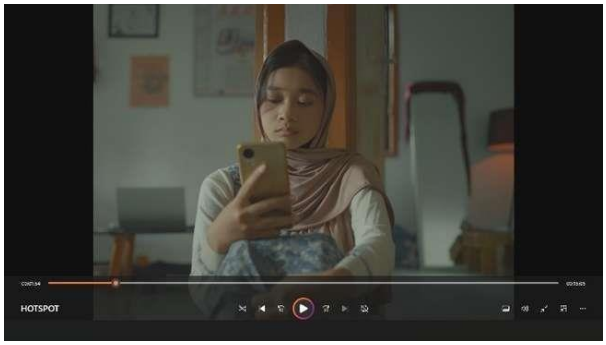


Figure 3. Kia's facial expression shifts to visible anxiety

The representation of trauma in Kia and Yessa's bodies becomes increasingly evident through silence, tears, and minimal gesture, the nonverbal language of their experience. The WHO [3] documents that trauma from sexual abuse often manifests through somatic responses, including inability to speak, shallow breathing, and withdrawal. Bordwell and Thompson [26] note that cinema can depict psychological states through visual language without dialogue. Caruth's [23] trauma theory further explains the body as an archive of experience, preserving traces of power and fear that resist verbalization. The following scene enacts this archival function.



Figure 4. Scene in which Kia cries in her bedroom

The directorial decisions documented in Figure 1 reveal that the 4:3 aspect ratio and tight framing are not merely aesthetic choices but representational strategies that confine women's bodies within a restricted frame. Monaco [14] notes that framing produces representational hierarchies controlling characters' range of motion. By bringing the camera close to the female body (Figures 2, 3, 4), the film forces the viewer to confront the character's emotions directly while simultaneously restricting her space to move. This technique addresses the first research question: the film uses visual strategies to depict harassment without explicit scenes, demonstrating that the visual space functions as a psychological mechanism constraining the body within a power structure dictating her social and emotional position.

Firman's presence demonstrates how a perpetrator can remain the center of control even when rarely appearing in close-ups. Mulvey [16] notes that within cinematic patriarchy, power can operate through narrative, instruction, and symbolic domination without requiring visual presence. Project Multatuli [18] identifies this pattern in real-world cases: perpetrators in the creative industry exploit symbolic positions to control relationships. In *Hotspot*, Firman controls through digital messages, gazes, and interpersonal proximity that create psychological discomfort.

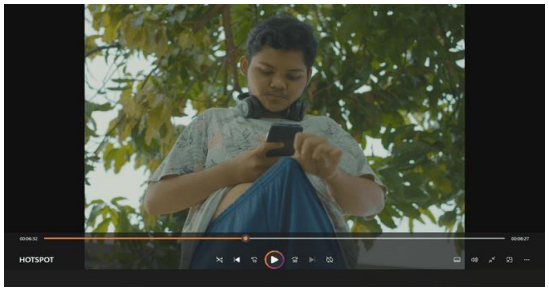


Figure 5. Firman prepares to send harassing digital content

An analysis of the four female characters, Kia, Yessa, Irene, and Angel—reveals how narrative and visual structures work in tandem to portray sexual harassment as a form of power that regulates the body, emotions, and space. hooks [8] argues that women's bodies serve as arenas where ideological control is tested through mechanisms of domination, internalization, and resistance. This collective experience shifts from internal pressure toward a shared consciousness, depicted in the following scene.



Figure 6. Kia, Yessa, Irene, and Angel begin to share their experiences

4.2 Power Relations, Interaction Structures, and the Production of Submission

Power relations in *Hotspot* are evident through patterns of character interaction that place the perpetrator in a dominant position and the victim in a subordinate one. Foucault [27] understands power as a relationship constantly negotiated through social practices that appear ordinary yet are laden with subjugation. In *Hotspot*, the positions of Kia, Yessa, Angel, and Irene are not determined by individual capabilities but by relational structures that have positioned perpetrators as figures of authority through their access and symbolic legitimacy. hooks [8] asserts that gender domination operates through the body, narrative, and social situations that normalize fear as part of psychological discipline. This section addresses the second research question: power in the film operates not through isolated aggressive actions but through a network of interpersonal representations that produce fear and silence.

The scene in which Kia reads Firman's message demonstrates how power relations emerge through digital communication, influencing the victim's emotions even when the perpetrator is physically absent. Bordwell [25] states that cinematic interactions are constructed not only through direct dialogue but also through objects, spaces, and media that produce specific dramatic effects. McDonald [22] notes a parallel in the global creative industry, where professional positions are used to regulate victims' behavior through implicit rather than explicit threat.

2 INT. RUANG TAMU KANTOR - DAY 2

Sebuah rumah kontrakan yang juga digunakan sebagai kantor Production House.

Terdengar suara notifikasi pesan Whatsapp berturut-turut. KIA duduk bersandar dinding sembari membiarkan runtutan pesan masuk pada ponsel yang ia tatap. ANGEL keluar dari dapur sambil mengelap tangannya di pinggang. Angel mengambil sebuah minuman kemasan di kulkas lalu memberikan pada Kia.

ANGEL
Dia lagi?

KIA
Aku blokir ya?!

Kia memandang Angel yang sibuk dengan berkas-berkas yang terletak di atas meja dekat sebuah laptop.

ANGEL
Nggak usah! Semua chat dan apa pun yang dia kirim jangan ada yang dihapus! Ntar aku aja yang backup biar kita punya bukti.

KIA
Masak aku kudu ngeladenin dia terus? Aku udah nggak kuat!

ANGEL
Udah gapapa.. Tenang ada aku.

Angel seketika memeluk Kia yang tak kuasa menahan tangis.

Figure 7. Scene in which Kia reads Firman message

The dynamics among the female characters reveal a spectrum of responses to the power dynamics they experience, ranging from silence to openly questioning one another's decisions. hooks [8] argues that women's solidarity does not arise automatically, as responses are shaped by social and cultural contexts and the internalization of patriarchal values. Bordwell and Thompson [26] explain that group dialogue can serve as a narrative turning point revealing the tension between fear and the urge to resist. This scene demonstrates that power relations occur not only between perpetrators and victims but also within the dynamics of solidarity being negotiated—a finding consistent with Hidayat's [34] observation that Indonesian films often depict female solidarity as a gradual, non-heroic process.

The directorial choices documented in *Menjadi Sutradara Film Pendek Hotspot* [37] place the women's group conversation in a single static-camera space to depict power negotiation without excessive dramatization. Monaco [14] explains that such decisions allow space to become a rhetorical arena where

characters confront the moral and psychological consequences of the actions being considered.



Figure 8. Bedroom scene: the four characters negotiate their respons

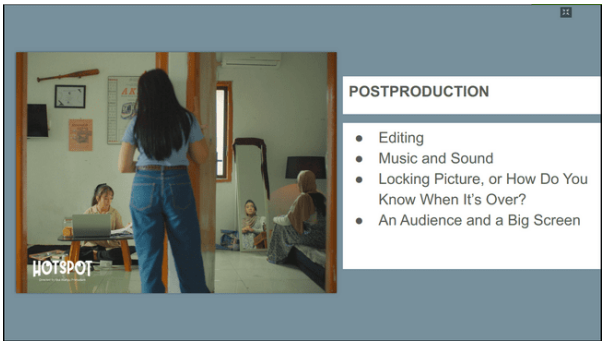


Figure 9. Production document page 10 : directorial approach to the group conversation

In the living room scene, the placement of the four characters sitting in a row reveals an effort to redistribute awareness and courage as a strategy to alleviate Kia's pressure. This structure illustrates how power dynamics are represented through shifts in spatial positioning, dialogue intensity, and nonverbal expression—a dynamic also identified by Ula [32] in her analysis of solidarity as a narrative turning point in Indonesian short films on gender-based violence.

Firman's absence from key scenes suggests that power operates as a shadow influencing victims' actions without physical presence. Mulvey [16] argues that in patriarchal cinema, masculine figures serve as the center of control structures even when not visually dominant. Project Multatuli [18] identified a parallel pattern in documented cases of sexual violence in the Indonesian creative industry, where perpetrators leverage reputation and position as a threat not requiring direct articulation. This mechanism of absence becomes an aesthetic device reinforcing the impression of power as invisible yet significantly influential—a strategy that distinguishes *Hotspot* from films that rely on graphic depiction of the perpetrator to convey threat [22].

KIA
Aku takut nyebar Angel!

ANGEL
Kamu tuh korban kok takut lapor?!

KIA
Resikonya itu lho..

ANGEL
Ya udah diemin aja?!

Yessa menatap Angel dengan tatapan frustasi.

YESSA
Kok dibiarin?! Ntar Firman tambah ngawur loh! Kamu mau kena juga?

KIA
Nah?!.

Kia dan Angel terkejut. Irene segera mengalihkan dengan pertanyaan.

IRENE
Ehh... Kita lapor orang kantor aja yuk! Pasti mereka punya solusi.

Kembali hening, semua mengarahkan pandangannya pada Irene yang tampak kikuk. Angel memutar bola matanya sambil mengangguk pelan, menimbang saran Irene yang kini menatap tajam ke Kia, menunggu respon.

ANGEL
Kalo ternyata mereka gamau tanggungjawab, gimana?

KIA
Atau parahnya kita yang dikeluarin?

YESSA
Nggak bakal selebay itu kalii..

IRENE
Ahh! Kita bikin video aja!

YESSA
Terus kalau udah bikin video?

ANGEL
Share di sosmed lah! Viralin!!

KIA
Aku takut_ sama konsekuensinya. Gimana kalo jadi makin parah?

Angel menatap Kia penuh empati, kemudian memegang tangan Kia yang menggaruk untuk menghentikannya.

Figure 10. Living room scene : spatial redistribution of agency among the four characters

4.3 Power Relations, Interaction Structures, and the Production of Submission

The film positions female resistance as a cultural response to power structures that suppress women's bodily experiences and voices within creative production spaces. hooks [8] explains that resistance arises from a critical awareness of one's position within the patriarchal system—operating through symbols, social relations, and narrative control. Bordwell [25] states that the development of a character arc reveals a shift in the character's self-perception as part of the narrative's structure of meaning. This section addresses the third research question: *Hotspot* can be positioned as a cultural text reflecting the dynamics of female resistance precisely because it portrays this shift as a process rather than an event.



Figure 11. A range of emotional expressions across the female characters

In the group dialogue scene, solidarity serves as the primary medium for transforming women's positions from victims to agents capable of disrupting mechanisms of social control. Sikov [30] explains that emotionally charged dialogue scenes function as narrative catalysts propelling characters out of subordinate positions. hooks [8] defines feminist solidarity as a political form that breaks down psychological isolation and fosters more equitable relationships. This is consistent with Pratiwi's [17] finding that in Indonesian professional contexts, collective support among junior female workers significantly mitigates the psychological impact of institutional harassment.

INT. KANTOR - DAY 14

Kia telah siap membuat video. Angel membantu menata ponsel.
Kia mengatur napas dan.... (teriak)

MATCH CUT TO:

BACK TO SCENE 1

YESSA meluapkan amarahnya, berteriak sekencang-kencangnya.

YESSA
Aaaa.....

Figure 12. Angel, Irene, and Yessa provide support to Kia

Resistance in the film is not represented through physical confrontation or heroic narrative but through acts of speaking out and rejecting bodily discipline imposed by perpetrators. Rahmadi [19] notes that silence frequently functions as a power mechanism limiting women's access to truth-telling and justice. Monaco [14] explains that affective narrative moments such as these mark shifts in meaning within the story's structure. Butler [7] interprets the public articulation of trauma as a performativity of resistance that reclaims the body's agency from symbolic subjugation.



Figure 13. Kia accompained by Angel, records her experience on video

The visual dimensions of the film construct resistance through spatial compositions that evolve as the female character decides to document and voice her experience. As described in the production document [37], the shift in aspect ratio from 4:3 to 16:9 (Figure 1) symbolizes a spatial expansion after psychological boundaries are crossed. Monaco [14] asserts that visual contrasts in film can function as markers of ideological shifts in power relations. This visual transformation—also noted as a strategy in Ula's [32] analysis of Indonesian short films—demonstrates that women's bodies are no longer confined within a narrow frame isolating their emotions: they enter a representational space that accommodates their full subjectivity.



Figure 14. Kia decide to record her experience, expanding from private to public sphere

Video recording (Figures 13 and 14) expands the terrain of female resistance from the narrative space to the broader public sphere. Dovey and Rose [24] note that audiovisual technology has become a political instrument enabling victims to produce cultural traces as evidence and resistance against oppressive power

structures. hooks [8] views speaking out in public spaces as a means of reclaiming authority over women's bodies and stories. Kantor and Twohey's [20] investigation of systematic abuse in the Hollywood industry demonstrates how such recordings can catalyse institutional accountability—a social function the film both depicts and enacts by entering the public sphere through festival distribution. Thus, the technology depicted in the film functions as a tool for reproducing agency: resistance is simultaneously performative and communicative.

5 CONCLUSION

This study demonstrates that the short film *Hotspot* constructs a coherent system of meaning regarding power, trauma, and female resistance through three interrelated representational strategies. First, it employs tight framing, a 4:3 aspect ratio, and close-body cinematography to position the female body as spatially constrained and psychologically pressured—a visual language of domination that operates without explicit depiction of violence. Second, it represents power as a relational network operating through digital messages, interpersonal gestures, and the symbolic weight of absence, consistent with Foucauldian [27] and Mulveyan [16] frameworks. Third, it portrays female resistance not as a heroic individual act but as a collective, processual practice grounded in solidarity, emotional acknowledgment, and the performative act of recording—a pattern that aligns with findings from both global feminist scholarship [8] and Indonesian gender studies [17][32].

The study's academic contribution is twofold. Theoretically, it establishes an integrated feminist-film analytical framework that can be applied to Indonesian independent short films—an under-examined corpus in the existing literature [33]. Methodologically, it demonstrates the value of combining close-reading film analysis with Fairclough's [28] critical discourse analysis and trauma theory [23] for interpreting gender-based violence in audiovisual texts. These contributions extend the Indonesian film studies canon in the direction advocated by Hidayat [34] and Ula [32], who call for more systematic feminist reading of independent productions.

This study has several limitations. The analysis is restricted to a single short film, limiting the generalisability of findings. The researcher's dual role as filmmaker and analyst introduces potential interpretive bias that, while managed through theoretical rigor and analytical distance, cannot be entirely eliminated. Additionally, the study does not include audience reception data, leaving questions about how viewers interpret the film's representations unaddressed.

Future research should extend this framework to comparative analysis of multiple Indonesian short films addressing gender-based violence, incorporate audience reception studies to examine how representations are negotiated in social spaces [24], and integrate institutional analysis to understand how production ethics and organizational structures enable or constrain equitable representation. Distributing analytical frameworks of this kind to educational institutions and film communities has potential to foster both critical literacy and safer creative production practices [13][15].

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Designing an Interactive Children's Storybook about Outdoor Activities Using a Fable Illustration Approach

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Abstract

The use of gadgets among early childhood children has increased over time. However, excessive gadget use without parental supervision can have negative impacts, such as making children less physically active, reducing their social interaction, causing difficulty in concentration, and decreasing motor activities. This problem indicates the need for alternative media that can divert children's attention from gadgets while supporting learning activities. One medium that can be used is an interactive storybook, as it not only presents a story but is also equipped with activities such as matching shapes, solving mazes, and finding hidden objects. This study aims to design an interactive storybook as an alternative medium to reduce children's dependence on gadgets. This study uses a qualitative method, with data collected through observation and interviews. The results of this study are expected to produce an attractive and educational interactive storybook design that can encourage children to be more active socially, cognitively, and physically.

Keywords: Buku cerita anak, Interactive Book, Gadget, Fabel.

1 INTRODUCTION

The development of technology has made the use of gadgets increasingly close to everyday life, from early childhood to adulthood. Gadgets have attractive features such as videos, games, sounds, and moving images that are easily liked by children. However, gadget use among children should still be limited and supervised by parents, because at that age children still need a great deal of direct stimulation through playing and moving activities, speaking, and interacting with their surrounding environment.

In daily life, many parents give gadgets to toddlers as a medium of entertainment, educational media, or to prevent children from disturbing the parents' activities. When children cry, gadgets are often given to calm them down. If this habit continues without supervision, children may become accustomed to depending on gadgets and become difficult to redirect to other activities. This condition leads to gadget addiction, in which children continuously use gadgets and find it difficult to control their behavior, causing them to neglect other activities such as playing, learning, and social interaction [22]; [9].

Gadget addiction has negative effects on children's development. Excessive gadget use can reduce social interaction, lower communication skills, hinder cognitive development, and make children less physically active. Research shows that uncontrolled gadget use can disrupt concentration, decrease children's interest in reading and writing activities, and hinder motor development because children spend more time sitting and focusing on screens [25]. In addition, prolonged gadget use without parental guidance can affect the social, emotional, and cognitive development of early childhood children [26].

Therefore, an alternative medium is needed to divert children's attention from gadgets while still supporting the learning and playing process. One medium that can be used is an interactive children's storybook. An interactive storybook does not only present a story but also involves children directly through activities such as placing stickers, solving mazes, matching shapes, and finding hidden objects. These activities can help children train their focus, hand-eye coordination, fine motor skills, and problem-solving abilities.

The design of this storybook raises the theme of outdoor activities using a fable approach. Outdoor activities are introduced so that children become more interested in recognizing activities that can be done outside the home, such as camping, collecting seashells,

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and exploring the surrounding environment. Outdoor activities are important because they provide direct experiences, develop creativity, increase curiosity, and encourage children to move actively.

In addition, the fable approach is used because animal characters have forms and personalities that are appealing to children. Characters such as rabbits that like to jump, squirrels that like to climb, and ants that like to work can become figures that are close to children's world. Through these animal characters, children can more easily understand the story, recognize character traits, and become interested in following the activities in the book. Fables are not only a form of entertainment but can also broaden children's knowledge and provide learning values [16].

The interactive storybook is also designed to be used together with parents, because this activity can strengthen the relationship between parents and children while helping children understand the story content and the activities contained in the book [8]. With the presence of story elements, fable characters, outdoor activities, and interactive features, this book is expected to become an alternative medium to reduce children's habit of using gadgets. Through the design of this interactive storybook, children are expected to become more socially, cognitively, and physically active, as well as more interested in doing outdoor activities.

2 LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Gadget Use in Toddlers

Gadgets have become a daily necessity for everyone, from adults to children. Many parents introduce gadgets to their children before they can speak. According to the Central Statistics Agency (BPS), gadget use among young children in Indonesia is 33.44%. For children aged 0-4, it is 22.5%, and for those aged 5-6, it is 52.76%. This data comes from the Yogyakarta Region V Service Agency [24].

Fundamentally, toddlers are not yet suitable for gadgets due to the negative impacts they can have, requiring parental supervision. In Indonesia, many children use gadgets, including laptops, cell phones, and so on [7]. For toddlers aged 2 to 5, the ideal gadget usage time is around 30 minutes to 1 hour [19]. In Indonesia, very few toddlers use gadgets for less than 1 hour. The average gadget usage time for toddlers is around 3-6 hours per day [7].

In general, gadget use among toddlers has both positive and negative impacts. This depends on the duration of gadget use and parental supervision. These impacts affect child development (Susanti and Mariyana, 2022). The positive impacts of gadgets on children include (1) improving motor skills such as finger and wrist movements; (2) improving cognitive abilities, including thinking, remembering, logic, and problem-solving; and (3) providing entertainment for children, as gadgets offer sound, color, and attractive images, often enjoyed by children through videos and games [22].

Excessive use of gadgets by children can have negative impacts, including (1) disrupting social development [22], (2) making them lazy to engage in activities because they are focused on the gadget; (3) reducing memory; (4) making it difficult to concentrate [14], and (5) causing emotional disturbances because children do not yet understand their emotions, resulting in them becoming angry and impatient [22].

Gadget addiction negatively impacts social development. Toddlerhood is known as the "golden age" because during this period, intellectual, emotional, and spiritual intelligence develops rapidly. This can hinder children's social interactions, reduce communication skills, and lead to dependence on gadgets. Therefore, it is important for parents to supervise their children to prevent negative impacts [22].

2.2 Interactive Children's Story Book

Interactive children's storybooks are books that combine visual/picture aspects and verbal/word aspects arranged sequentially to convey a story. This type of book is not only for reading, but children can interact directly with the content of the story so that they become involved in the storyline. [15][10].

2.3 Benefits of Reading Interactive Children's Story Books

Reading interactive storybooks can provide benefits for children's growth and development [2]. Through stories and illustrations, children can learn new vocabulary, understand storylines, develop imagination, and improve observation skills. Illustrations in books help children understand the content of the story because early childhood children more easily receive information through images [4].

Interactive books encourage children to improve their cognitive abilities. According to Piaget's theory, early childhood children aged 2–7 years find it easier to understand something through images rather than logic when understanding story content, making conclusions, and recognizing the sequence of events in a story [11]. In addition, Vygotsky's theory also states that when children retell the content of a story using their own words, they unconsciously learn how to arrange words using their own language and understand the story content [13].

Interactive features in books can train children's motor skills and focus. Sticker-placing activities can train fine motor skills, focus, and shape recognition [14]. Maze activities can help develop motor coordination and

line-drawing skills [17]. Meanwhile, hidden-object activities can train memory, concentration, and problem-solving abilities. Through these activities, children become more interested in reading the book again.

2.4 Interactive Books as a Solution to Reduce Gadget Use in Children

Excessive gadget use in children causes them to focus too much on screens and engage less in other activities. Children become less physically active, less socially engaged, and more easily lose focus. This issue highlights the need for an alternative medium that can divert children's attention from gadgets while still being attractive and enjoyable for them.

Interactive storybooks can be one solution because children do not merely look at pictures or listen to stories, but are also invited to carry out direct activities such as placing stickers, finding a way out of a maze, and discovering hidden objects. These activities can replace children's habit of playing with gadgets with activities that are more active and beneficial.

In addition, interactive stories can help develop children's cognitive, motor, language, and social abilities. Children can learn new vocabulary, understand stories, practice hand movements, and create opportunities for discussion with parents about the story content. Therefore, parental guidance is still needed so that children can understand the contents of the book. By reading together, parents can explain vocabulary, discuss the storyline, and convey moral messages. Regular guidance can also gradually improve children's reading ability and comprehension [23].

Thus, interactive storybooks are needed as an alternative medium to reduce children's dependence on gadgets. This medium does not only function as entertainment, but also as a learning tool that can encourage children to be more active, focused, and involved in activities that support their development.

2.5 Theory of Designing Illustrations for Interactive Children's Storybooks

In designing this book, the author chose the PRE-READ 2 level for children aged 4-6. Illustrations are used predominantly (90 percent), while the text only includes 1-3 concrete words without using complex reading rules. The font used is sans-serif with a minimum size of 28 pt, and the number of pages is 8-16. This book requires adult guidance. At this level, children are taught about divine values, humanity, developing good manners, recognizing animals, plants, surrounding objects, numbers 1-20, and letters.

The illustrated book design process begins with pre-sketches. Sketches are then developed, starting with character design, which includes character research, including gender, age, culture, and personality. Shape is crucial for characters; round shapes convey a friendly impression, triangles convey an aggressive impression but can be modified to be soft, and squares convey a strong and stable impression. Attributes are then added to strengthen the character's identity.

After the character sketches, the next step is to create a storyboard for each page, including the layout of the illustrations and text. Don't forget to continue with the color selection process and add shadows, light, and texture. Color selection is important because it influences the emotional atmosphere of a story. The placement of the focal point is also important to highlight the illustration that readers want to see first [6].

2.6 Design Theory for Interactive Children's Storybook Illustrations

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2.7 Stages of Writing Short Stories for Children's Books

Before writing, the writer must determine the child's age group, as this affects the number of words and illustrations used. For example, children aged 5-6 can read more words than children aged 3. The writer also needs to determine the main theme or topic to be created.

The story structure is divided into three parts: the beginning, which introduces the characters, the middle,

which is the culmination of the events, and the end, which resolves the story. Although the story aims to convey a moral message, it must be conveyed subtly and without being patronizing. Children's reading is for enjoyment, not for being lectured. Although the story's message is not directly conveyed, children can grasp the moral message.

A balance between text and illustrations must be maintained to avoid confusion or make the story feel heavy. Sentences should be concise and concise. The process of creating a children's story requires effort, such as choosing the right words and conveying the story in a way that is effective. Finally, efforts should be made to differentiate the story from other storybooks by emphasizing the story's unique characteristics [20].

3 RESEARCH METHODS

This study uses a descriptive qualitative method. This method was chosen because the data collected consisted of interview results and visual analysis of several children's storybooks.

Data collection was carried out using two types of data: primary data and secondary data. Primary data was obtained through interviews with sources related to the design of children's storybooks, namely a children's book illustrator and a child psychologist. Meanwhile, secondary data was obtained through literature studies and document analysis in the form of children's storybooks and children's activity books that are relevant to the design theme.

3.1 Primary Data

Primary data was obtained through interviews. The first interview was conducted with Eshaly Esti, a children's storybook illustrator who has published works through Yaumi Kids. Some of her children's book illustration works include *Adrenalin dan Bayang-Bayang Ketakutan , Banjir Dopamin Gara-gara Gadget, Ciptaan Allah di Liburan, and Allah Ciptakan Aku dan Temanku.* This interview aimed to understand the creative process in designing interactive children's storybooks, particularly regarding visual style, color, typography, character expressions, and interactive elements suitable for children.

The second interview was conducted with Fabiola Priscilla, a child psychologist who works at Dharmawangsa Mental Hospital, teaches at UNIKA Atma Jaya, and is actively involved as a speaker in seminars. This interview aimed to understand children's interest in adventure-themed stories and outdoor activities, as well as to identify the types of characters, activities, and story values that are appropriate for early childhood children.

The research subjects in these interviews consisted of two informants. The informants were selected because they have knowledge and experience relevant to the needs of the design process, namely from the perspective of children's storybook visuals and child development. However, this study has limitations because it has not directly involved children as the main target audience or parents as children's companions.

3.2 Secondary data

Secondary data was obtained through literature studies and document analysis. This data was used to support the interview results and serve as a reference in the process of designing the interactive children's storybook.

Document analysis was conducted on four books relevant to the design, namely:

1. *Aku Bisa Sedekah untuk Hewan*
2. *Dongeng Sebelum Tidur: Krayon Baru Rumi*
3. *Dongeng Seru Hewan Laut: 10 Dongeng Memikat untuk Anak*
4. Quiet Book

These four books were selected because they are suitable for early childhood children, as they contain attractive illustrations, fable characters, and are appropriate references for the design process. The aspects analyzed include illustration style, use of color, character design, typography, background, storytelling, and interactive elements.

3.3 Data Analysis Technique

The data obtained were analyzed using a descriptive qualitative analysis technique. The results of the interviews and document analysis were grouped into information needed for the design process. These themes included illustration style, color, typography, characters, and types of engaging interactive activities.

After the data were grouped, the writer drew conclusions from all the information. These conclusions were then used as inspiration to help the writer design the interactive children's storybook, such as determining the visual concept, story content, characters, and interactive activities that are interesting for children.

4 RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Illustrator Interview Results



Figure 1. Illustrator interview documentation

The author interviewed children's book illustrator Eshaly Esti. The interview was conducted online via WhatsApp on Sunday, March 23, 2025. The interview concluded that an art style suitable for children's storybooks is one with bright, contrasting colors and clear facial expressions. Adding texture and patterns to the background and characters helps children understand basic concepts such as rough-smooth, dense-sparse, and geometric shapes.

For children aged 2-5, bright, contrasting colors are used, while for children aged 3-5, more complex but still bright colors are used. Typography should be large, simple, and easy-to-read, such as a sans-serif font. Creating an interactive book that engages children should involve physical and imaginative activity. Interesting characters are expressive, possessing distinctive characteristics that reflect their personalities. Clear facial expressions also help children understand the story and develop their imagination. Educational elements can be adapted to the message conveyed in the book.

4.2 Child Psychologist Interview Results



Figure 2. Illustrator interview documentation

The author conducted an interview with a child psychologist named Fabiola Priscilla. The interview was conducted online via Direct Message on Instagram on Tuesday, April 14, 2025. The interview concluded that to create educational and engaging children's stories, it's best to base them on familiar places, such as the neighborhoods they live in and see. However, it can be expanded by introducing new places, such as forests or underwater, to broaden children's horizons.

Characters or figures that children enjoy are those with positive values, such as saviors, helpfulness, perseverance, and kindness, thus serving as role models for them. Meanwhile, engaging in outdoor activities for children involves physical activity and imagination, such as planting trees and rescue missions. Adventure stories can provide benefits for children, such as enhancing creativity, learning to solve problems, enhancing social development, and fostering resilience and always choosing the right.

4.3 Observation

In this study, the author analyzes several children's storybooks that will serve as references in designing interactive children's storybooks. The analysis focuses on illustration style, color, typography, and story delivery.

4.3.1 "Aku Bisa Sedekah Untuk Hewan"– Author Intari Dyah Pramudita and Illustrator Bella Ansori



Figure 3. Cover of the book "I Can" Giving Charity to Animals
(Source: Shopee)

This book uses cartoon-style illustrations suitable for toddlers. The illustrations are characterized by large heads, large, round black eyes, and white lines for hair. This makes the characters appear cute, expressive, and adorable, making them easily recognizable to children.

The backgrounds remain consistent with the cartoon style, but are enhanced with lines forming wood, leaves, and dots representing grass. These elements create a distinctive feel. The dominant color is green, depicting a garden. Other colors, such as red, yellow, blue, and orange, create a contrasting and harmonious effect, creating a balanced color scheme when combined. The author will use the character styles, settings, and colors in this book as inspiration for designing an interactive children's storybook.

In terms of storytelling, the story is arranged using a chronological plot. The story begins with Salim and Salma playing in the garden. The conflict appears when they see a caterpillar eating leaves, which makes them dislike the caterpillar. After that, their father explains that animals are also creations of Allah and should not be hurt. This makes Salim and Salma understand that animals need to be treated kindly.

The story then continues with Salim and Salma helping a bird by giving it water. At the end of the story, their father explains that giving water to animals is a good deed and is considered an act of charity. Overall, this story conveys its message through daily activities, making it easy to understand without feeling too preachy.

The typography used is a sans-serif typeface that tends to be rounded and clean, giving a cheerful impression. The spacing between letters is quite loose and the font size is large, making it easier for children to read.

4.3.2 "Dongeng Sebelum Tidur krayon Baru Rumi" - Author Iwok Abqary and Illustrator : Bella Ansori



Figure 4. Book Cover Dongeng sebelum tidur krayon baru Rumi
(Source: Shopee)

This book uses a cartoon-style illustration of animal characters with simple shapes. Each animal is drawn in a simple, yet not overly complex or detailed form, making it easily recognizable, especially for toddlers. This style of animal characters creates a cute and adorable impression.

The backgrounds consistently use a cartoon style, but are not plain. Instead, they feature textures such as colored pencil strokes forming lines and dots, and a blend of colors and textures creates a cheerful impression. The colors used vary depending on the story, but the dominant colors are green and brown. Other colors, such as red, blue, yellow, and purple, when combined with the dominant colors, create a contrasting, non-dark, or pastel look. The author will use the backgrounds and animal characters in this book as references for designing interactive children's storybooks.

The storytelling in this book uses a simple plot that is closely related to children's daily lives. Each story begins with everyday situations, such as riding a bicycle, hearing a strange sound, receiving a gift, climbing a tree, or playing jump rope. The moral messages are easy for children to understand without feeling preachy, such as being brave to try, not giving up easily, helping one another, being careful, and staying enthusiastic.

Overall, the storytelling in this book is suitable for early childhood children because it uses simple conflicts, interesting animal characters, and events that are close to children's experiences. The stories are not too long, making it easier for children to understand the storyline and the message being conveyed.

The typography used is a sans-serif typeface, but it resembles a handwriting font. The spacing between letters is loose, making it easier for children to read. In addition, the book also contains text effects that differ from the main font. This aims to emphasize the atmosphere of the story.

4.3.3 " Dongeng Seru Hewan Laut 10 Dongeng Memikat Untuk Anak"- author Dhiwangkara Ilustrator Singgih Cahyo



Figure 5. Cover book Dongeng Seru Hewan laut
(Source: Shopee)

This book uses illustrations of marine animals in a cartoon style. Uniquely, the character illustrations use a poster-paint texture. The sea animal characters are uniquely designed with hands, feet, and clothing, creating an appealing impression for children. The eye shapes are varied yet simple.

The dominant color is dark blue to reflect the underwater atmosphere. Other colors, such as dark red, purple, brown, yellow, orange, and green, when combined with the dominant color, create contrasting colors. However, compared to the bright colors typical of children's storybooks, this book uses darker and more muted colors.

The background uses a cartoon style with a poster-paint texture. The coloring technique applies textured poster-paint shading along with paint splatter

effects. Line details and graphic elements such as sea plants and other details use colored pencil, and this combination creates a harmonious impression.

The stories presented are close to children's everyday experiences, such as going to school, playing hide-and-seek, delivering packages, looking for friends, and going to the library. The problems in the stories are made easy to understand, for example when a character feels sleepy while swimming, has difficulty finding a friend, feels itchy because of parasites, or is confused about finding a book. The resolutions are presented in positive ways, such as apologizing, helping friends, working together, and understanding mistakes.

Overall, the storytelling in this book is suitable for children because the conflicts are not too heavy, the characters are appealing, and the messages are easy to understand. The stories also introduce undersea life in a fun way, so children can learn while getting to know the characters of sea animals.

The font used is a sans-serif typeface that tends to be rounded, neutral, and without decoration. For sound effects, a handwriting style is used in the typography, making it not only something to be read, but also something to be felt.

4.3.4 " Dongeng Seru Hewan Laut 10 Dongeng Memikat Untuk Anak"- Penulis Dhiwangkara Ilustrator Singgih Cahyo



Figure 6. Cover book Quiet Book
(Source: Shopee)

This activity book is designed to engage children interactively. It features attractive and easy-to-use removable Velcro stickers. In this activity book, children not only stick stickers but also learn to recognize animal shapes, fruit and vegetable shapes, arrange pizza slices, learn the names of planets, learn about the weather, put together puzzles, and arrange numbers from one to nine.

The illustrations use a cute and simple cartoon-style vector, making them easy for toddlers to understand. The colors used are bright and striking. The dominant color is light blue, with other colors such as pink, green, brown, orange, yellow, red, and purple creating contrasting colors when combined. The character and background illustrations do not use shading or texture. This book can be used as a reference for designing interactive elements in the form of stickers.

5 CONCLUSION

5.1 Design Style



Figure 7. Rabbit Character Design
(Source:Jennie Clarissa)

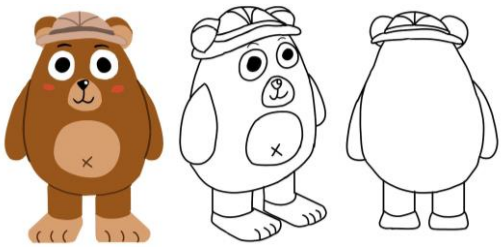


Figure 8. Bear Character Design
(Source: Jennie Clarissa)

The type of illustration used in interactive children's storybooks is cartoons. Cartoons are drawings or caricatures created to convey messages, ideas, or criticism in a humorous manner [18]. The author chose a cartoon art style because the shapes are unique and can be made more expressive, making them easier for children to recognize and understand. Cartoons are able to capture children's attention, making them suitable for interactive children's storybooks.

For the rabbit character, the author used geometric shapes: an oval for the head and a rectangle. For the bear, an oval for the head and body, a cube for the feet, and circles for the ears are used.

5.2 Typography



Figure 9. Futura Font (Source : Dafont Free)

The font used to fill the content of the interactive children's story illustration book is sans-serif so that it is easy for children to read. This font selection refers to the book grading matrix from the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology for early readers level B for ages 4-6 years, which recommends using unrelated letters and adequate spacing. In the heading section, the author chose the Futura font. Futura is a typeface designed using geometric shapes such as circles, triangles, and squares. The author's reason for choosing Futura is that the letters are simple and have no excessive decoration, so they are easy for children to read [5].

5.3 Colour



Figure 10. Colour Palette (Source: Jennie Clarissa)

The type of illustration used in interactive children's storybooks is cartoons. Cartoons are drawings or caricatures created to convey messages, ideas, or criticism in a humorous manner [18]. The author chose a cartoon art style because the shapes are unique and can be made more expressive, making them easier for children to recognize and understand. Cartoons are able to capture children's attention, making them suitable for interactive children's storybooks.

For the rabbit character, the author used geometric shapes: an oval for the head and a rectangle. For the bear, an oval for the head and body, a cube for the feet, and circles for the ears are used.

5.4 Design Content

Book 1: Adventures in the Forest

This book tells the story of a bear and a rabbit who find a piece of paper that turns out to be a treasure map. They work together to put the map together and begin their journey to find the treasure. However, along the way, a monkey steals their map and disappears. Rabbit and Bear must navigate a maze to find the monkey and persuade him to trade the map for bananas.

After recovering the map, they continue their journey and arrive at a gloomy flower garden, where the flowers are colorless. Rabbit and Bear ask the reader for help in making the flowers colorful and making the garden beautiful again. Once the flowers are colored, they find clues leading to the treasure and finally find it.

Book 2: Adventures Under the Sea

This book tells the exciting adventure of Rabbit, who rides a seahorse and discovers a sea polluted with trash. Rabbit then helps clean the sea and continues his journey. He also arranges fish and seashells. Rabbit sees a dolphin crying because he has lost a favorite item. Rabbit happily helps him find it. The dolphin thanks him. On the journey, Rabbit sees a turtle struggling to lift a sea turtle. Rabbit happily helps.

5.5 Design Results



Figure 11. Interactive sticker display sketch (Source: Jennie Clarissa)

This book tells the adventures of a bear and a rabbit who find a piece of paper that turns out to be a treasure map. They work together to put the map together and embark on a journey to find the treasure. However, along the way, a monkey steals their map and disappears. Rabbit and bear must navigate a maze to find the monkey and persuade him to trade the map for bananas.

After recovering the map, they continue their journey and arrive at a gloomy flower garden, where the flowers are colorless. Rabbit and bear ask the reader for help in recoloring the flowers to restore the garden's beauty. Once the flowers are colored, they discover clues leading to the treasure and finally succeed.

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