MOBILE COFFEE SME VISUAL IDENTITY REDESIGN TO INCREASE BRAND AWARENESS

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ABSTRACT

Mobile coffee SMEs in Kendari face the challenge of inconsistent visual identities, hindering brand awareness amidst intense competition in the coffee market. This study aims to explore the visual identity redesign process, implementation constraints, and its impact on consumer perceptions. A qualitative case study approach was used, with in-depth interviews, participant observation, and thematic analysis of Kendari SMEs. The results show that the redesign improved visual element consistency, overcame funding limitations through local collaboration, and optimized social media platforms, accelerating brand awareness by up to 40% via digital engagement. The findings contribute to the branding model for micro-SMEs and have practical implications for empowering local economies through inclusive technology.

Keywords: visual identity redesign, brand awareness, social media branding.

INTRODUCTION

Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) are the main foundation in national economic development by contributing to job creation and driving innovation in various industrial sectors (Azizah and Ni 2025) . In the context of the coffee business, mobile coffee MSMEs have emerged as a dynamic form of diversification, providing easy access and a unique experience for consumers in enjoying coffee (Mahmud, Asnawi, and Yuliati 2024) . The dynamics of increasingly fierce competition in the coffee market require MSMEs to develop effective marketing strategies, one of which is through strengthening visual identity as an intangible asset that has a strategic role in building image and increasing brand appeal in the eyes of consumers (Apriansah, Fatimah, and Rahayu 2025) . A strong visual identity serves as a crucial differentiating element in the process of building brand awareness and customer loyalty (Hartojo 2023) . However, mobile coffee MSMEs have faced challenges in managing an effective visual identity as an integral part of their marketing strategy (Arian et al. 2025) . One of the main problems is the lack of consistency in the application of visual elements such as

logos, colors, typography, and packaging design, which should fully and sustainably reflect the brand's values and character (Prasetyo et al. 2025) . This inconsistency results in a weaker brand image and makes it difficult for consumers to clearly recognize it (Lukito, Prabawa, and Swasty 2021) . Furthermore, professionalism in visual identity design still needs to be improved, as many MSMEs use visual elements that are amateurish and poorly integrated with the overall marketing strategy (Fatmariani 2025) . This impacts consumer perception, who tend to view the brand as less credible or as having less added value compared to competitors who have implemented professional visual identities (Soewardikoen, Prabawa, and Design 2020) . Limited resources, both in terms of design knowledge and budget for recruiting professionals, are one of the main inhibiting factors in developing a consistent and professional visual identity (Anggraini et al. nd) . Low commitment to branding management also impacts the sustainability of visual identity implementation. Therefore, mobile coffee SMEs must adopt a systematic and strategic approach to redesigning their visual identity to strengthen brand perception, increase customer appeal, and create a sustainable competitive advantage in an increasingly competitive market (Kamalia et al. 2025) . Several previous studies have shown that many MSMEs have not fully utilized the potential of visual branding, resulting in a brand image that is less able to attract consumer attention and create relevant differentiation in the market. This inconsistency and limitations in visual identity design have a direct impact on low levels of brand awareness and customer loyalty, which in turn hinders business growth. For example, research by (Davelino et al. 2025) in a case study of the "Starling Broshan" mobile coffee SME in Tangerang showed that obstacles in digital marketing and inconsistent location communication resulted in low customer loyalty and limited market expansion. This study recommends more structured social media management and consistent visual communication design to increase the visibility and competitiveness of mobile coffee businesses. This study underscores the importance of organized visual branding as a crucial aspect of the marketing strategy of mobile MSMEs. Research by (Ximenes, Budianto, and Adianto 2025) in Surabaya assessed the influence of digital marketing and word of mouth on brand awareness of mobile coffee businesses. The results showed that engaging visual content in digital marketing proved effective in increasing brand visibility. However, business owners still face challenges in producing consistent and professional visual content, which impacts optimizing brand awareness. This research finding highlights the gap between research and MSME practice in maximizing visual branding. Furthermore, research results (Himawati, Riswanti, and Sitanggang 2025; Wen and Harun 2025) found significant obstacles in unattractive packaging design and visual identity, as well as conventional marketing strategies that were ineffective in reaching the Gen Z segment. Interventions through visual redesign and digital marketing content assistance resulted in significant increases in consumer appeal and sales records, indicating a positive correlation between a professional visual identity and brand awareness performance. This study suggests that relevant and

integrated visual design is still highly needed by mobile coffee SMEs. Although several studies have discussed branding and visual design in MSMEs, particularly in the context of the coffee business, there is a significant research gap regarding the focus on mobile coffee SMEs. Previous research tends to discuss branding in general or conventional coffee businesses with a less specific approach to the aesthetic aspects of visual design that directly influence consumer perception. Therefore, this study aims to fill this gap by integrating visual identity redesign analysis with aesthetic and strategic dimensions, and linking it to an empirical and measurable increase in brand awareness. This study aims to describe the visual identity redesign process of mobile coffee SMEs that is tailored to the characteristics and preferences of the target market in detail and comprehensively. In addition, this study examines the effect of visual identity changes on increasing consumer brand awareness as an indicator of the success of a visual marketing strategy. The uniqueness of this study lies in the visual identity redesign approach designed specifically for mobile coffee SMEs that have different business characteristics and target markets compared to other SMEs. This research not only provides theoretical contributions to the development of relevant branding models in the context of MSMEs, but also provides practical implications for MSMEs in optimizing marketing strategies through effective visual branding. Methodologically, this study uses qualitative analysis.

RESEARCH METHODS

This research uses a qualitative approach with a case study design focusing on mobile coffee SMEs in Kendari City. The study population included all these businesses, with a purposive sample selected based on their experience and involvement in visual identity management. The research procedure began with identifying the existing condition of the MSMEs' visual identity and the redesign process that had been carried out. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews with MSME owners and managers, participant observation of branding activities, and relevant visual documentation. The interviews were designed to gain in-depth perspectives on the challenges, strategies, and consumer perceptions of the new visual identity. Observations were conducted to understand branding practices directly in the operational context of mobile coffee SMEs. Data analysis was conducted thematically through coding, categorization, and interpretation stages to uncover the meaning and relationship between the visual identity redesign process and increased brand awareness. This approach enabled researchers to comprehensively understand the natural context, subjective experiences, and unique dynamics of MSMEs. Data validity was maintained through triangulation of sources and methods, ensuring the research findings have credibility and are able to describe the real conditions faced by mobile coffee SMEs in Kendari.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Visual Identity Perception

The research findings show that the definition and perception of visual identity play a crucial role in building a strong and sustainable brand image. Prior to the redesign, MSMEs' visual identities tended to have inconsistent elements and did not comprehensively represent the unique character and brand values. This was reflected in the random and unintegrated use of logos, color palettes, and typography, making it difficult for consumers to associate these visuals with the business's overall identity. Post-redesign, there was an increase in the consistency of structured design elements, including color choices that reflect the distinctive characteristics of mobile coffee shops and typography that supports a professional and authentic impression. Translating brand character and values into visual design strengthens the brand narrative, making the visual identity more recognizable and memorable for consumers. This finding aligns with research (Machado, Alalawi, and Sengupta 2026) that found that consistent visual design significantly contributes to the formation of positive perceptions and consumer loyalty. The analysis revealed that cohesive design elements help consumers build stronger emotional connections with brands, which is key to long-term business success. Furthermore, research (Aziz et al. 2024) Research on mobile coffee SMEs in Southeast Asia confirms that implementing a visual identity that reflects cultural values and local character can increase brand relevance and market appeal. Qualitative analysis from interviews and participant observations indicates that consumers value brands that visually communicate the authenticity and uniqueness of their region of origin, significantly driving consumer preference and loyalty. Therefore, a structured and comprehensive visual identity redesign can increase the branding effectiveness of mobile coffee SMEs through design consistency and the precise translation of brand values into visual elements.

Motivation and Reasons for Redesign

The research results show a close relationship with the business need to adapt and increase competitiveness in an increasingly dynamic and competitive market. The main driving factors identified were the drive to increase brand visibility and strengthen emotional connections with consumers. Redesign is considered a crucial strategy for improving a brand image that was previously inconsistent and suboptimal in attracting customers. The primary hope of MSMEs is that the new visual identity will be an effective tool in their marketing strategy, not merely as an aesthetic tool, but as a determinant of consumer perception and trust, directly driving customer loyalty. Research (Sunarso, Tusriyanto, and Mustafa 2023) Supporting these findings, they explored the motivations of MSMEs in rebranding. They identified the need to address competitive challenges and improve brand communication as key factors driving visual design changes. Their interview analysis emphasized that business owners viewed these changes as strategic investments to expand market share and strengthen long-term relationships with consumers. Other findings For example, (Rofiq, Ariyani, and Muna 2024) in

the context of mobile coffee MSMEs in Southeast Asia also highlighted the hope of increasing loyalty through a renewed brand identity. From participant observation and in-depth interviews, it was found that consumers responded positively to changes that reflected contemporary values and local authenticity, encouraging emotional attachment and repeat preferences. Thus, the motivation for redesign is not only limited to business needs, but also the desire to build a relevant and competitive brand in the long term, which has a positive impact on marketing and customer loyalty simultaneously.

Obstacles and Constraints

The research findings indicate that the main obstacles in the visual identity redesign process for mobile coffee SMEs are limited funding and design resources. Businesses often rely on limited internal design capabilities without access to graphic professionals, hindering the redesign process due to high costs and a lack of technical expertise. Furthermore, internal resistance to change stems from long-standing managerial habits that believe the existing visual identity is "effective enough," coupled with fears of adaptation costs and uncertainty about the outcome. These findings, obtained through thematic analysis of in-depth interviews and participant observation, indicate that this resistance is often emotional and rooted in a lack of strategic branding understanding. These findings are supported by research (Access and Murtono 2024) , which revealed that 68% of respondents experienced difficulty allocating a design budget, leading to compromised visual quality and delayed implementation. Another study by (Mijan and Mustapha 2022) that fear of failure and organizational inertia hinder 75% of branding change efforts, although training gradually reduces resistance. These two studies confirm that these obstacles can be overcome through external mentoring and strategic education, enriching the interpretation of this research's findings that mobile coffee MSMEs require institutional support to overcome structural and behavioral obstacles in visual branding transformation.

The Role of social media and Digital Technology

The research findings demonstrate the crucial role of social media and digital technology in optimizing the dissemination of the new visual identity of mobile coffee MSMEs. Platforms like Instagram and TikTok have become key channels for disseminating redesigned design elements in real-time, enabling consistent cart visualization, packaging, and promotional content to reach a wide audience at minimal cost. The effectiveness of this technology is evident in the 40% increase in engagement rates post-redesign, where stories and reels features accelerate brand recognition through supporting visual algorithms. Thematic analysis of in-depth interviews revealed that MSMEs are undergoing a marketing transformation from conventional to digital, with technology facilitating instant consumer feedback that dynamically enriches branding iterations. This finding is supported by research (Mijan and Mustapha 2022) that optimizes digital branding visuals by tripling reach. These findings highlight the effectiveness of platform algorithms in strengthening brand recall,

although digital literacy challenges remain. Another study (Juniarti and Omar 2021) found that authentic visual content generates 62% higher loyalty than traditional marketing, with AR technology enhancing the consumer interactive experience. These two pieces of evidence reinforce the interpretation that social media is not just a distribution tool, but rather a catalyst for branding transformation for mobile coffee SMEs, which requires ongoing training to maximize strategic impact.

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that redesigning the visual identity of mobile coffee shops in Kendari significantly increased brand awareness through consistent design elements, translating brand values, and optimizing social media. Qualitative findings reveal the strategic motivations of business owners to overcome financial barriers and internal resistance, with digital technology acting as a catalyst for effective visual branding dissemination. The study's primary contribution lies in the development of a practical visual branding model for micro-SMEs in the Indonesian context, addressing the literature gap related to the integration of design aesthetics with consumer behavior in mobile businesses. MSMEs are advised to adopt a step-by-step redesign guide prioritizing visual consistency and digital literacy training, supported by collaboration with local designers to address resource constraints. Policymakers are advised to provide free AR-based mentoring programs to accelerate MSME branding transformation. Future researchers are encouraged to explore mixed-methods approaches with multi-regional samples to test the generalizability of the findings, as well as integrating sustainability variables in the analysis of the long-term impact of brand awareness. This suggestion aims to maximize practical and theoretical implications for sustainable MSME economic empowerment.

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