

# Analysis of the role of packaging design on brand identity with a case study of Sukabumi souvenirs "MOCHI" Lampion

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**Abstract.** Indonesia has a very diverse cultural diversity, customs, dances, languages, folk songs, special foods, and so on. Among these variations, one of the interesting cultures is the diversity of traditional foods from various ethnic groups in Indonesia. All regional tribes in Indonesia have their own characteristics in traditional types, technology, and food packaging. In general, regional culinary products are categorized in the form of micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs). Maflahah (2012) states that most MSME product packaging does not have an attractive, innovative and creative design. Food products that are only wrapped in transparent plastic without any labels or descriptions give an unattractive impression. MSME products must have an attractive packaging design, because one of the most important elements in product visuals is packaging. Most MSME product packaging does not have a visual element of the product in the packaging, compared to products from companies that have large capital, the selling value and attractiveness are very high. This study will analyze the role of packaging design and exposure to the extent to which a packaging design is able to convey a final message/communication from producers to consumers, through semantic analysis of a product to a product identity of a product Sukabumi "Mochi Kaswari Lampion"

## 1 Introduction

Among the diversity, one of the interesting cultures is the diversity of traditional foods. All tribes in Indonesia have characteristics in the type, and packaging of traditional food itself [1,2]. The diversity of traditional food itself is inseparable from the customs of a certain regional community [3-6]. So that traditional food can become a characteristic of a society [7,8].

Regional culinary products are mostly categorized into micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs) [8-11]. Competition for food MSME products in Indonesia is enlivened by local and international business actors, both legal and illegal from Malaysia, China, Singapore, Thailand and Japan. In Indonesia, the number of MSMEs in the food sector is approximately around 12 million businesses. Indonesia has a taste quality that is able to

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compete, but is less able to attract consumers [12,13]. The results of the study on the marketing of MSME products through large retail networks show that most MSME actors engaged in the food sector have not met product and packaging standards. Based on the percentage, MSMEs in the food sector that do not have codes reach 88.24 percent and those that do not have product innovation reach 67.65 percent and without labels reach 79.41 percent [14].

Maflahah stated that most of the packaging of MSME products does not have attractive, innovative, and creative designs. Food products that are only wrapped in transparent plastic without any labels or information, give a less attractive impression. This makes Indonesia's MSME products less competitive with products from abroad. MSME products should have a very attractive packaging design, because one of the most important elements in a product visual is none other than packaging. Most MSME products are not marketable, compared to products that have large capital or from large companies, so that the selling value and competitiveness are low. The causative factor is a low understanding of the importance of packaging quality and mastery of packaging technology [15].



Fig.1. Mochi lampion packages

Sukabumi has several popular souvenirs, one of which is mochi. Mochi itself is actually a type of Japan wagashi. However, during the colonial period, the Japan tribes also asked for the help of indigenous people to make it when there was an event. Since then, they have tried to make their own snacks at home. From here, mochi has developed in Sukabumi until it has become a typical souvenir of Sukabumi. However, the packaging of this mochi kaswari looks very less representative of the product itself. Even though the packaging is often referred to as the silent salesman/girl because it does not represent the presence of the waiter in showing the quality of the product. For this reason, packaging must be able to convey messages through informative communication, such as only communication between sellers and buyers. In marketing science, it is also mentioned that packaging design is the charm of the product (the product charm), because packaging is at the final level of a production flow process that is not only to attract the eye (eye catching) but also to attract the wearer (usage attractiveness). Seeing the product as a sign is one of the ways of thinking in the science of visual communication design, but this view narrows down how a product is seen from the whole. The problem of packaging design is not only to the presence of a message (sign) contained in the packaging. The packaging is also expected to be able to make consumers loyal to buy the products in the packaging. Design theory uses semiotic instruments, so it

and can allow many things that were previously interpreted as "aesthetics" to become narrower. Describing design through semiotic means is possible and necessary at all levels and in all fields, i.e. from the syntactic in the formation of packaging structure and form construction, to the semantics of the meaning of the product, the form, and the pragmatic level of the consumer and ownership of the packaged product

This research will analyze the role of packaging design and the extent to which a packaging design is able to convey a message/communication from the producer to consumers, the determination of consumer purchase decisions, as well as a brand identity of a product by using a case study of culinary packaging by Sukabumi produced by Lampion. In Sukabumi itself, Mochi only developed around the 1960s, where the old Mochi industry that still exists is Mochi 39 which is located on Jalan Otto Iskandardinata and Mochi Ad Yani which is located near the traffic light of Jalan Ahmad Yani, Sukabumi City. Sukabumi's typical mochi turns out to have a variety of flavor variants. Although originally from Japan, it has now developed in Sukabumi. Currently, there are at least a dozen flavor variants of Sukabumi Typical Mochi, including peanut mochi (original), durian, chocolate, peanut cheese, peanut chocolate sesame, strawberry, blueberry, green tea, cookies and cream, ovomaltine, nutella, kraft cheese, cheese, kitkat green, chocolate kitkat, milo chocolate, and combination flavors. But before 2000, this cake only had three flavor variants, namely cheese, chocolate, and nuts.

## 2 Literature Review

### 2.1 Product

A product is everything that is offered to satisfy a need and desire. Meanwhile, conceptually Tjiptono (2000) states that "Products are subjective understanding of producers of something that can be offered as an effort to achieve organizational goals through the fulfillment of consumer needs and desires in accordance with the competence and capacity of the organization as well as the purchasing power of the market".

Other experts give the understanding that a product is a complexity of the nature of the goods or services produced by a company. This is as stated by Swastha and Irawan (1993) that "A product is a property that is both palpable and intangible, including packaging, color, price, prestige of the company and retailer that is accepted by buyers and satisfies needs and desires". Product strategies that are generally applied are focusing on packaging and ways to attract consumer interest by influencing consumer decisions.

Packaging can be defined as the entire activity of designing and producing packaging or wrapping a product. Packaging includes three things, namely the brand, the packaging itself, and the label. Kenneth R. Berger. 2005. "A Brief History of Packaging" University of Florida. February 28, 2005 [56].

There are 3 main reasons for packing, namely

- The packaging meets the requirements of safety and utility. Packaging protects products in transit from manufacturers and consumers. Packaged products are usually cleaner, more attractive, and resistant to damage caused by the weather. Packaging can carry out marketing programs. Through packaging product identification becomes effective and in itself prevents exchange by competitor products. Packaging is the only way a company distinguishes its products.
- Packaging is a way to increase the company's profits. Therefore, companies must make the packaging as attractive as possible. With attractive packaging, it is expected to attract and attract the attention of consumers. In addition, packaging can also reduce the possibility of damage to goods and ease of delivery.

## 2.2 Packaging Function

Hermawan Kartajaya, an expert in the field of marketing, said that technology has changed the function of packaging, in the past people said "packaging protect what it sells" now "packaging sells what it protects". In other words, packaging is no longer a protector or container but must be able to sell the product it packages. The development of packaging functions does not stop there. Nowadays, packaging also functions as a medium of communication. Packaging can also communicate a certain image. By looking at the packaging function which is so very important, the concept of packaging function must cover the entire marketing process from product concept to final use

## 2.3 Packaging Design Objectives

Generally, the purpose of packaging design is specific to each specific product or brand. Packaging design can also be directed to

- Reinforcing the distinction between product varieties and product lines.
- Maintain uniformity in a product brand.
- Develop different packaging shapes according to the product.
- Using new materials and developing innovative structures to reduce costs, be more environmentally friendly, or improve functionality.
- Displays the unique attributes of a product.
- Strengthens the aesthetic appearance and value of the product

## 2.4 Packaging Design Principle

In packaging design, the basic principles of design must be adjusted to meet the goals of each design task. This guide defines how colors, typography, structure, and imagery are applied in a design layout to create a sense of balance, intensity, proportion, and appearance. This is what makes design elements form the communicative attributes of a packaging design.

There are many variables that affect how a packaging design attracts consumers. Consumer preferences spend a lot of time analyzing these variables. From a pure design perspective (moving other marketing variables such as price, location, and brand loyalty) there are important elements that capture the consumer's attention very well and break through the visual crowd and retail competition [18].

The four main eye catchers of a packaging are

- Color.
- Printers.
- Symbol.
- Physical Structure and Form

## 2.5 Semiotics of Products

In each product, a variety of information instruments can be found in the form of shapes, colors, compositions, proportions, and others, each of which works to reconstruct a certain image or image. The image that is formed can be realized based on thematically,

For example, a form image that has the content of information elements of its "functional use" or operation, an image of "process" information that occurs in a system used in a product or information about how the product is made [19,20].

An image or a character that is deliberately formed by a designer in a product is not only intended to get a novelty of the form, but also to arouse potential consumers to be interested

and choose according to their interests. Thus, a product designer involved in the design process in an industry can also participate in determining which market segment they will target and how it will position when the product is aligned with similar products. The positioning of products between other similar products aims to compare them so that it can be concluded about the advantages and disadvantages of the product based on supporting aspects such as price, function, and form [21].

Horst Oehlke mentions that structural elements, functional effects, and the appearance of objects are all connected to the design process of a product. In principle, all fields of industrial product design, both related to their structure and function, can be used as the subject of semiotic studies. Semiotics influences three fundamental aspects of product design: as an object-mediated nonverbal communication for social groups or individuals; as an optimization of the interaction instrument between product and people; as a perception of aesthetics [22].

### 3 Material and Methods

The research method applied is a descriptive qualitative method that systematically describes the facts in the field the nature of an object, in this case the primary and secondary data obtained by the author. The data analysis carried out is inductive, that is, the data collected is compiled and analyzed along with the data collection process. As a research instrument, efforts are made to straighten validation, which can be done by source triangulation techniques, namely matching data collected based on various sources; namely analysis that can be traced through reference and archival studies, interviews with related manufacturers.

The research will be carried out by analyzing the meaning of semiotics in general but will describe which semiotics are related to the product (semiotic product). Where the product is characterized by a sign system (signification system) which is not only a communication system but also as the meaning of the product. Semiotics and its concepts can be used to analyze, describing design objects as a principle of experimentation. As well as using a principled approach in packaging design, so that the results analysis in the form of the roles of souvenir food packaging design are able or not in conveying a final message/communication from the producer to consumers, as a tool for determining consumer purchase decisions, as well as a product brand identity

### 4 Results and Discussion

#### 4.1 Semiotic Analysis of Packaging Design and Brand Identity

Semiotics, the study of signs and symbols and their use or interpretation, provides a powerful framework for analyzing how packaging design contributes to brand identity. In the context of "Mochi Lampion," a traditional Sukabumi souvenir, the packaging acts as a signifier, a physical form that conveys specific meanings about the product and the brand it represents. The effectiveness of the packaging design lies in its ability to communicate the cultural values, heritage, and quality of the product to the consumer through visual and textual signs

## 4.2 Case Study: Mochi Lampion

### 4.2.1 Mochi Lampion as a Cultural Signifier

Mochi Lampion is not just a food product; it is a cultural artifact that carries the traditions and heritage of Sukabumi. The packaging, therefore, serves as a semiotic tool to signify the cultural and historical significance of the product. Current packaging of Mochi Lampion, which is simple and functional, might fail to fully convey these cultural signifiers, limiting the product's potential to communicate its rich heritage to consumers

### 4.2.2 Denotation and Connotation in Packaging Design

- Denotation: The literal, obvious meaning of the packaging design elements, such as the use of basic plastic or cardboard, and minimalistic branding, denotes a product that is functional and straightforward. It focuses on practicality protecting the mochi from external elements and making it easy to transport.
- Connotation: Beyond its literal meaning, the packaging carries deeper, culturally embedded connotations. For Mochi Lampion, ideal connotations would include tradition, authenticity, and cultural pride. However, the current packaging might fail to evoke these feelings due to its lack of traditional or culturally significant design elements

## 4.3 Semiotic Elements in Packaging Design

### 4.3.1 Icons, Indexes, and Symbols in Packaging

- Icons: Visual elements that directly resemble or represent the product's cultural background. For Mochi Lampion, icons could include images of traditional Sukabumi architecture, local landscapes, or cultural motifs like batik patterns. These icons would immediately signify the product's origin and cultural roots.
- Indexes: Elements that point to the product's quality or authenticity. For example, using traditional materials like natural fibers or incorporating hand-drawn elements could index the artisanal quality and cultural authenticity of Mochi Lampion.
- Symbols: Arbitrary or conventional signs like logos, colors, or fonts that convey specific brand messages. The choice of font style, color palette, and logo design can symbolically represent the brand's identity. For Mochi Lampion, using a traditional font and colors like red and white can reinforce the brand's connection to its roots

### 4.3.2 The Role of Color in Semiotics

Color is a powerful semiotic resource in packaging design, capable of evoking specific emotions and cultural associations. For Mochi Lampion, incorporating colors associated with Sukabumi, such as red and white, can evoke a sense of tradition and authenticity. However, using generic colors may fail to evoke the rich cultural connotations that could enhance the brand identity.

## 4.4 Impact of Semiotic Design on Consumer Perception

### 4.4.1 Creating a Cultural Narrative

Through the strategic use of semiotics in packaging design, brands can create a cultural narrative that resonates with consumers. For Mochi Lampion, a packaging design that effectively uses cultural icons, symbols, and colors can create a narrative of **craftsmanship, quality, and tradition**. This narrative not only attracts consumers but also fosters a deeper emotional connection to the brand.

### 4.4.2 Enhancing Brand Identity through Semiotics

The semiotic analysis suggests that by embedding **cultural and traditional signs** into the packaging design, Mochi Lampion can strengthen its brand identity. When consumers recognize these signs, they are more likely to associate the product with authenticity, tradition, and high quality. This association can lead to **increased brand loyalty and a stronger market presence**.

## 4.5 Recommendations for Semiotic Packaging Design

Based on the semiotic analysis, the following recommendations are proposed for enhancing the packaging design of Mochi Lampion:

- **Integrate Cultural Elements:** Incorporate traditional patterns, architecture, or natural landscapes, to create a direct visual link between the product and its cultural origin.
- **Leverage Indexical Signs:** Incorporate materials and design elements that index the artisanal nature of the product, such as using **natural, locally sourced, or handmade design features**.
- **Use Symbolic Elements Wisely:** Choose symbols like logos, fonts, and colors that resonate with the cultural and traditional aspects of Sukabumi. This could include using traditional fonts or colors that symbolize local customs and history.
- **Build a Cultural Narrative:** Develop a packaging narrative that tells the story of Mochi Lampion. Use **text, images, and symbols** to communicate this story effectively.

## 5 Conclusion

The semiotic analysis highlights the potential of packaging design to act as a powerful tool for communicating and reinforcing brand identity, especially for culturally significant products like Mochi Lampion. By thoughtfully integrating semiotic elements into the packaging design, the brand can better communicate its cultural values, enhance consumer perception, and establish a stronger, more distinct brand identity. This approach not only benefits the brand in terms of recognition and loyalty but also **helps to preserve and promote the cultural heritage of Sukabumi**.

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