

CREATIVE THINKING IN A DESIGN PROCESS Study Case: Tulaboocha Packaging Design

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ABSTRACT

In an essay written by Beatrice Warde, it is said that people will unconsciously choose eye-catching, ornate packaging instead of common and dull ones. This paper thoroughly studies the design process of the brand Tulaboocha's packaging design. Tulaboocha is a kombucha drink, a tea drink developed by a fermentation process which is still relatively uncommon in Indonesia. Comparing it with other kombucha brands, Tulaboocha's packaging design poses visually distinct differences which made it all the more eye-catching. Tulaboocha's packaging design also received positive responses when exhibited publicly. The author sees that these differences could happen since Tulaboocha's packaging design uses unconventional references that manifest itself into design resolutions that unconsciously reflect the nature of the product itself. This shows that creative thinking plays an integral role in the design process, and when implemented, will manifest itself into an exceptional design result.

Keywords: *Tulaboocha, Packaging Design, Creative Thinking, Creative Design, Graphic Design*

INTRODUCTION

The Visual Communication Design study program in Universitas Pelita Harapan has a collaboration with the Food Technology study program of Universitas Pelita Harapan where year 3 graphic design students help food technology students develop the food innovation products they have developed. Of the many food products developed, one of the products is Tulaboocha, a byproduct of Food Technology student, Delvin Kho, which is a kombucha tea. Kombucha is a beverage that is yet to be widely known by Indonesians and has a very interesting and varied history. Kombucha is a type of drink that is the result of a symbiotic relationship between bacteria and a special yeast culture, called SCOBY, short for Symbiotic Culture of Bacteria and Yeast. SCOBY ferments sweetened tea, which results in a kombucha drink (Tietze, 1996). The origin of kombucha tea is not exactly known, but it is said to have originated from Russia or China (Dufresne and Farnworth, 2000). The name of the drink, kombucha, also has an opaque origin. Some sources say that the name 'kombucha' represents the case of a loan word that was incorrectly applied from Japanese (kombucha means kelp tea in Japanese) to Western languages (Algeo, 1997). These facts are mostly unfamiliar to Indonesians, especially in the Indonesian food scene, and therefore have the potential to be implemented uniquely in the design of brand identity.

Tulaboocha also has a unique selling point that makes its products stand out from other kombucha products. In the process of making Tulaboocha, Delvin Kho did not only ferment SCOBY with sweetened tea but also with thulasee leaf tea. The addition of thulasee leaves in making the product undoubtedly provides more health benefits to Tulaboocha, because thulasee leaf tea contains vitamins A and C, calcium, zinc, and iron (Tewari and Tiwari, 2018). Aside from that, the thulasee

leaf itself is a plant that has roots in Indian culture, especially in Hindu religious traditions (Krishna, 2014).



Figure 1. Tulaboocha product
Source: Tiffany, 2019

Seeing Tulaboocha as an innovative product that is not yet widely known in Indonesia, the authors then carry out the process of designing a visual identity and with that also the application of the final visual identity to relevant mediums, especially packaging design. The purpose of a strong identity and also strong packaging design is also important because it can enhance brand image, help brands communicate more effectively with customers, provide a competitive advantage to brands, and be directly identified with brands (Landa, 2011). That being said, the application of a consistent visual identity needs to be done coherently across cross-media to help build a positive image in the eyes of the audience (Hananto, 2019a). Consistency in application is a crucial aspect of identity design because of the public's ability to identify and group different media centers around the consistency of brand design in each media (Shimp, 2008). Consistent itself doesn't necessarily mean monotonous, as consistency also had variations accompanying the various design applications (Hananto, 2019b).

In this paper, the authors will explain the process of implementing the visual identity for Tulaboocha specifically to the packaging design, while also reflecting the product itself. The authors will also explain how the packaging design can demonstrate the role of visual communication design in retail, especially in the context of contributing to developing the value and image of local products.

Methodology

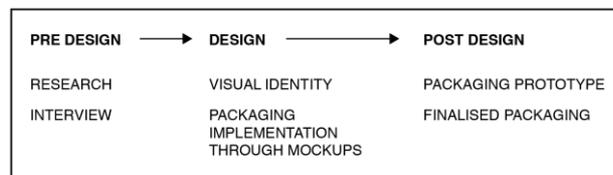


Figure 2. Design scheme
Source: Tiffany, 2020

A design process is generally divided into three parts. The pre-production part is the stage where research and data collection is done, either by interviewing interviewees and also reading written sources that provide secondary material. Secondary materials are research data results that can be used by designers as insights for initiating the design concepts (Noble & Russel, 2005). The next stage is the stage for design production, where production is understood as making design. In this stage, the authors make alternative designs and also evaluate designs through interviews, group discussion forums, and also questionnaires. The input

obtained is then used to make the finalization of the design which is then continued in the post-production stage. In the post-production stage, the design of the obtained visual identity is then implemented on the media needed to help build the Tulaboocha brand.

In this paper, the focus of the discussion will be carried out up to the production stage, particularly in the evaluation discussion at the exhibition held by Universitas Pelita Harapan Food Technology. This was done because the post-production process is still ongoing in certain media.

DATA DESCRIPTION AND DISCUSSION

The advance of technology allows brands to have more points of contact with their target markets now than ever. Despite that, it is an undeniable truth that often a target market's first point of contact with a brand is through its product inside a packaging, placed on a shelf amongst other similar products. Therefore, it is crucial for packaging to be not only eye-catching but also able to instantly present the brand to the target market.

A physical product undeniably requires packaging. Aside from protecting the product inside, product packaging also helps to present the product more attractively. That being said, the surfaces of a product packaging also allows informative facts about the product that might help the brand sell the products and alternatively also help target market in choosing which products they should buy (Ambrose & Harris, 2011).

In an essay on typography, Beatrice Ward proposes a metaphor: 'Imagine that you have before you a flagon of wine. You may choose your favorite vintage for this imaginary demonstration so that it be a deep shimmering crimson. You have two goblets before you. One is of solid gold, wrought in the most exquisite patterns. The other is of crystal-clear glass, thin as a bubble, and as transparent. Pour and drink; and according to your choice of goblet, I shall know whether or not you are a connoisseur of wine. For if you have no feelings about wine one way or the other, you will want the sensation of drinking the stuff out of a vessel that may have cost thousands of pounds; but if you are a member of that vanishing tribe, the amateurs of fine vintages, you will choose the crystal, because everything about it is calculated to reveal rather than hide the beautiful thing which it was meant to contain.' (Warde, 1956).

This metaphor may have been made for typography, but it also impacts our understanding of people's perception of packaging design. In her metaphor, Ward states that anyone with no prior knowledge of wine, when served wine in two contrasting approaches: one in a decorative gold goblet and the other crystal-clear glass, will most definitely go for the gold goblet. This is because they do not understand wine and what is good for it, and will subconsciously pick the one that is more attractive and eye-catching, putting the wine out of consideration. As such, we can easily conclude the importance of a product's packaging design.

Tulaboocha has a product that is not yet widely known by Indonesians. Also, kombucha the making of kombucha is very unique and unknown. This uniqueness, which has the potential to build a different and distinctive brand, can be represented on the packaging design so that the representation of identity design for the brand can be comprehensive.

With thorough research, some interesting facts that can be used are found. There is one thing that is very unique from the way of making kombucha. Kombucha is a fermented beverage, and the fermentation process uses a mushroom named

SCOBY. SCOBY does not have a definite shape, because it grows to fit the container that holds it. The container also has to be strong, sturdy, and circular. This is because the fermentation process creates pressure. When fermented in a container that has an uneven surface area, for example rectangular, or is made of weak materials like plastic, it will cause the container to burst due to the pressure that is created. Also, the resulting beverage must always be kept cold, or else the bacteria will keep on fermenting and spoil the drink. Moreover, there is a specific step when fermenting the kombucha. The container must be enclosed not with a lid, but with a cloth. This specific use of cloth instead of a lid is because the bacterias fermenting the solution must have air to breathe. While exposing the fermenting solution is a possible and practical solution to it, it is not recommended because small particles can go into the mixture and ruin the fermentation process.

Based on data collected and analyzed, a design is made with a concept that carries SCOBY as the basic ingredient of Tulaboocha. This can be seen particularly in the logo, where the two o's are yellow and rounder than it should have been. To amplify the concept, the nature of SCOBY and the drink itself is desired to also be implemented in the packaging design (Wong, 2020).



Figure 3. First packaging design draft & Figure 4. Final packaging design
Source: Tiffany, 2019

On the first draft of the packaging design, a circular dark glass bottle of volume 250ml is used, along with a round label on the front of the bottle as a visual representation of SCOBY. Although it is a direct representation, the object that is represented, which is a SCOBY, is already represented in the logo. So thinking in another approach was important.

As stated in the paragraphs before, a crucial step in making kombucha is the cloth lid protecting the product when it is fermenting. This cloth lid was then implemented to the final packaging design for primary packaging. The reason this cloth lid is used does not only as a reference to means as to how kombucha is made but by using this cloth lid, the brand also wants to show that Tulaboocha's product is naturally made, just like how kombucha is supposed to be made. Additionally, a clear glass bottle is used because most kombucha brewing bottles are transparent so the color-changing progress is visible, and also by using a transparent bottle the product can be showcased to the utmost possibility.

After many revisions, the final packaging design eventually has two layers of label on the surface of the bottle. The first layer is prototyped by a sheet of transparent stickers. This sticker is based on white ink, to make the texts more visible after the product is enclosed into the packaging. The second layer is placed after the first layer. As seen in fig. 4, the first transparent layer is the layer that has the MUI logo. The second layer is then the main label, printed on a matte sticker. The idea

behind this unconventional method of labeling was first conceived with the SCOBY in thought. The addition of SCOBY in the process of making kombucha is undisputedly a very unique concept to the production of beverages, which makes it in a class of its own. This 'addition' idea is a very compelling concept to be reflected in the packaging design, and the label stickers are just the perfect medium for it to be implemented. The first transparent layer represents the sweet tea solution, and the second upper sticker layer represents the SCOBY that is added to the sweet tea.

Aside from the bottle packaging, it is also necessary to make a secondary packaging to protect the bottles, especially due to the tender nature of the product. It is a necessity for a finished kombucha to be kept in low temperature to stop SCOBY to ferment any more than needed and thus spoiling the product. That is why a secondary packaging is made for the brand, with the main objective as a cooler. Therefore, a clothed cooler bag is made. The cooler bag is made with the same material with the cloth lid on the primary packaging so both objects can be identified as from one product (Gestalt's Law of Similarity).

This tender nature of the product is also put into consideration when thinking about how the product is to be sold to the market. Through field research, it is found that competitors selling the same product have their products sold in grocery stores, most frequently placed in their refrigerators. To make Tulaboocha more striking to the buyers, another approach must be made. First, a medium was chosen to act as the yardstick. There are two possible choices: a mini-fridge point-of-purchase and a standing label attached to the grocery store's fridge shelf. A standing label, however, is deemed too general to the point of being too familiar to the eyes of the market, which is something Tulaboocha does not believe in especially by looking at the designs at hand. So a mini-fridge was chosen, but only a regular fridge will not do the trick.



Figure 5. Havaianas store display
Source: creo-uk.com



Figure 6. The final Point of Purchase Design
Source: Tiffany, 2019

From field research, one noticeable thing that can be observed is that something is lacking in point-of-purchases that are in the market now, that is the lack of dimension. Usually, point-of-purchase is flat, and only platforms that the products are situated in are dimensioned. Tulaboocha wants to solve this problem, so references from other objects were made. One reference that was used when developing the point-of-purchase design was storefront displays (fig. 5). Storefront displays have similar objectives and some visual characteristics as a point-of-purchase. Moreover, storefront displays frequently experiment more with its space, resulting in more dimensions in its display. This nature of storefront displays is implemented to Tulaboocha's point-of-purchase. The result is a 360-degree point-of-purchase with 2 fridges facing both ends, and visual elements that are not only printed on the point-of-purchase but pop out to give dimension to the point-of-purchase.

The packaging designs of Tulaboocha have become part of the Universitas Pelita Harapan Food Technology product exhibition in November 2019. In the exhibition,

the brand displayed its point of purchase, packaging design (primary, secondary and also food stall editions), merchandise that can be taken by visitors, along with the booth's design.

Based on feedback from several visitors, there were many compliments and comments about the uniqueness of the design produced and how the design was able to provide a unique and distinctive image to Tulaboocha's product itself. Respondents were given open-ended questions about what was considered attractive from the packaging design of Tulaboocha. Of these questions, several visitors specifically praised the primary packaging design, stating that the 2 layered labels on the bottle stood out amongst other brand's packaging design and is a very fresh and unique idea.

CONCLUSION

Based on what has been done for the brand Tulaboocha, the writer concludes that the packaging design for Tulaboocha was responded positively by the visitors of the exhibition. Although not all elements are mentioned, such as the cooler bag, the authors see that the responses obtained from interviews represent an appreciation of these aspects as well.

What can be concluded by the writer at this stage is that the packaging design in food products can help the recognition and image development of these products. The image development, as discussed, needs to pay attention to the consistency of the message and the visuals used to be able to show a consistent image.

Recommendations that the authors can offer in regards to similar designs based on what the authors have examined are:

1. The packaging design must also be considered in the design development process, especially when the product is still in the public recognition phase. When the product recognition process is carried out simultaneously with the introduction of visual identity, the public can simultaneously form a view or assessment of the product directly.
2. Designing a good and thorough packaging design needs to consider the identity and also the characteristics of the product or entity that will be represented visually. This is done to build a rational association between the product (or entity) with the design.

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