



Visual as Language: An Explanation of the “Chocolajit” Wajit Packaging Design within the Context of Branding and Culture

Galuh Regita Pitaloka^{1,*}, Sri Retnoningsih²

Institut Teknologi Nasional Bandung, Bandung, Indonesia^{1,2}
galregitapitaloka@gmail.com^{1,*}, enodkv@itenas.ac.id²

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ABSTRACT

Packaging design plays a strategic role in enhancing the competitiveness of Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs), particularly for regional souvenir products in West Java. This study examines the interactive packaging redesign of the Wajit Cililin product “Chocolajit” by the SOKARYA Team, which functions as an educational medium to foster cultural awareness and responsible behavior in post-consumption packaging management. Through the integration of Sundanese culture, visual elements, and Augmented Reality (AR) technology, the packaging is designed not only to be aesthetically appealing but also to provide educational value and promote sustainability. The use of eco-friendly materials, modular design, and interactive features strengthens local identity while reducing waste. Collaboration between designers and business actors is a key factor in realizing innovative and competitive packaging that supports the growth of culture-based and sustainable creative industries.

1. Introduction

Packaging design plays a crucial role in enhancing the competitiveness of Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs), especially in the regional souvenir sector in West Java. Beyond serving as product protection, packaging functions as a marketing tool, product identity, cultural identity, and a communication medium with consumers. In the context of visual communication, packaging is part of a branding strategy that contributes to building brand identity and product differentiation in the marketplace (Usman, 2025). For SMEs, packaging can also represent elements of popular cultural identity embedded within society.

Souvenir food packaging serves not only a functional purpose but also represents the identity and cultural character of a region. In contemporary contexts, traditional packaging design can be innovatively developed without losing its historical and cultural values. The application of local wisdom elements in packaging design has proven effective in strengthening authenticity and increasing the attractiveness of regional products amid market competition (Bangun et al., 2023).

With the growing global awareness of sustainability issues, eco-friendly packaging innovation has become a necessity in the creative industry and SME sector. Consumers increasingly consider sustainability aspects in their purchasing decisions, including the use of environmentally friendly packaging materials. The principles of responsible consumption and production outlined in SDG 12 emphasize the importance of waste reduction and sustainable resource management (Prinsila, 2020).

Therefore, the selection of nature-based materials and sustainable packaging approaches becomes a strategic alternative in developing local products (Anggalih, 2022).

This study explores how the integration of Sundanese culture into packaging brand design can enhance product value through visual elements, traditional symbols, and technology-based interactive experiences such as Augmented Reality (AR). Packaging is no longer merely a wrapper but also a visual promotional medium that strengthens product positioning (Azizah & Islam, 2024). Thus, collaboration between designers and business actors is essential in creating packaging innovations that are not only aesthetic but also educational, sustainable, and capable of increasing SME competitiveness in national and global markets.

The implementation of culturally based sustainable packaging not only helps reduce waste but also strengthens distinctive local branding that appeals to consumers. Through eco-friendly materials, modular design, and interactive features, packaging can function beyond containment, serving as a medium for education and cultural preservation. Collaboration among designers, entrepreneurs, and government institutions in developing packaging innovations can significantly impact SME growth, enhance competitiveness, and support a more sustainable creative industry.

2. Method

This study employs a mixed-method approach, combining quantitative and qualitative methods as follows:

Quantitative Approach:

A survey was conducted involving 90 respondents aged 22–32 years who have their own income and belong to the middle-class segment. The survey aimed to measure knowledge levels, interest, and public perception regarding wajit products and eco-friendly packaging.

Qualitative Approach:

In-depth interviews were conducted with 16 respondents consisting of : 10 consumers, 5 wajit sellers or souvenir shop employees, 1 Wajit Cililin producer. The interviews aimed to explore deeper perspectives, experiences, and perceptions regarding wajit products and environmentally friendly packaging from various viewpoints.

Data from both approaches were analyzed using f4analyse software to identify key themes and perception patterns related to wajit products and eco-friendly packaging, providing a comprehensive overview of market conditions, consumer preferences, and production-side challenges.

3. Results and Discussion

This study aims to examine consumer and business perceptions of Wajit Cililin products, particularly regarding environmentally friendly packaging that integrates Sundanese cultural elements and Augmented Reality (AR) technology. The mixed-method approach provides both numerical and contextual findings.

3.1. Consumer Knowledge of Wajit Cililin

Findings indicate that consumer awareness of Wajit Cililin is relatively high. Most respondents reported being familiar or very familiar with wajit as a typical West Javanese souvenir product. This suggests strong brand awareness among productive-age consumers. However, some respondents indicated limited knowledge, suggesting that information regarding product uniqueness, history, and cultural value has not been fully communicated. This presents an opportunity for packaging to function as a stronger visual communication medium.

Table 1. Consumers' Level of Knowledge of Wajit Cililin Products

Knowledge Category	Numbe	Treatment
Highly Knowledgeable	5	25%
Knowledgeable	9	45%

Moderately Knowledgeable	4	20%
Not Knowledgeable	2	10%

3.2. Perception of Eco-Friendly Packaging

Results show overwhelmingly positive perceptions toward eco-friendly packaging. Most respondents agreed that sustainable packaging is important for souvenir products and enhances product image. This aligns with increasing public awareness of environmental sustainability. Consumers now evaluate products not only based on taste but also on environmental impact. Therefore, environmentally friendly materials provide significant added value and strengthen brand image as socially and environmentally responsible.

Table 2. Consumers’ Perceptions of Environmentally Friendly Packaging

Statement	Strongly Agree	Neutral	Disagree
Eco-friendly packaging is important for souvenir products.	85%	10%	5%
Environmentally friendly packaging enhances the product image.	85%	10%	5%

3.3. Interest in Sundanese Cultural Elements and AR

The integration of Sundanese cultural elements in packaging design received high interest. Traditional motifs, regional illustrations, and culturally representative color schemes create product differentiation in a competitive market. Consumers perceive culturally based packaging not merely as wrapping but as a representation of regional identity with historical and emotional value.

Additionally, the implementation of Augmented Reality (AR) features received positive responses. Consumers believe AR enhances interactive experiences and provides richer product information. Through AR, packaging can present educational content such as production processes, product history, and Sundanese cultural philosophy in a more engaging and interactive way. Packaging thus becomes a two-way communication medium that increases consumer engagement, particularly among digitally literate younger generations.

Table 3. Consumers’ Interest in Sundanese Cultural Elements and Augmented Reality (AR) in Packaging

Packaging Aspects	Strongly Agree	Neutral	Disagree
Sundanese Cultural Elements	80%	15%	5%
Augmented Reality (AR) Features	80%	15%	5%

3.4. Challenges in Implementation

Interviews with sellers and producers indicate that despite its strong potential, sustainable and technology-based packaging innovation faces challenges, including:

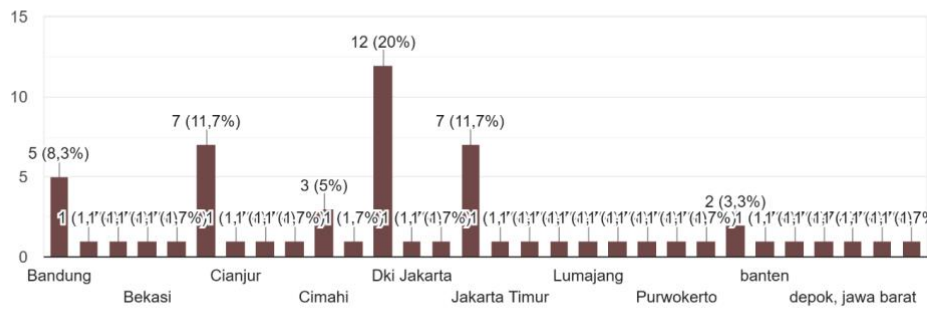
- a. Production cost limitations
- b. Limited availability of eco-friendly materials
- c. Lack of knowledge regarding AR technology

SME actors often prioritize production and sales aspects, viewing packaging innovation as an additional expense rather than a long-term investment. This highlights the need for guidance and education to help SMEs recognize packaging as a strategic business development component.

Overall, sustainable packaging development based on culture and technology plays a strategic role in enhancing Wajit Cililin’s competitiveness. Packaging functions not only as protection but also as marketing, educational, and cultural preservation media. Collaboration among designers, SMEs, academics, and government institutions is crucial to support sustainable innovation.

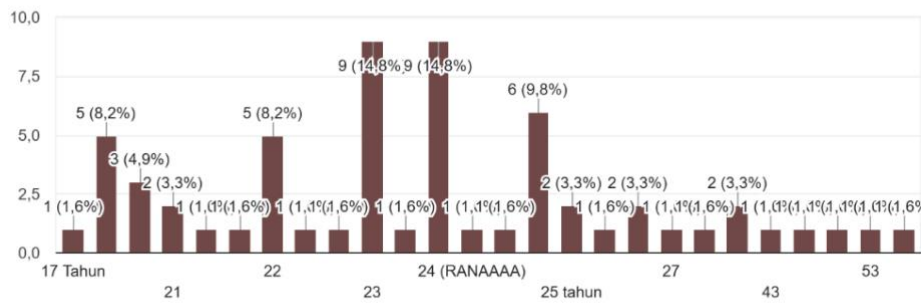
Dimanakah domisili anda?

60 jawaban



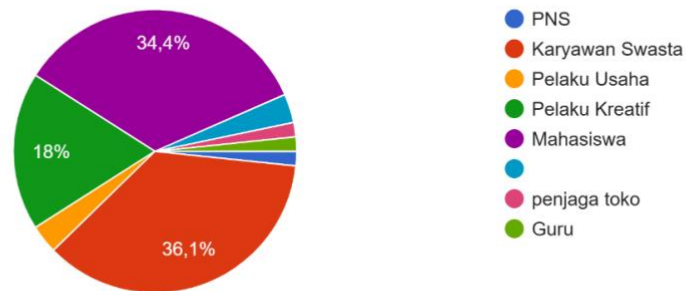
Berapa usia anda?

61 jawaban



Pekerjaan anda saat ini?

61 jawaban



Jenis Kelamin anda?

61 jawaban

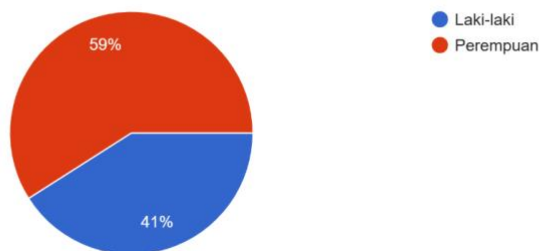


Figure 1. Questionnaire Results (Source: Author's Survey Results, 2025)



Figure 2. New Packaging 3D Dieline (Source: Author's Design Results, 2025)



Figure 3. Physical Packaging Displayed at the West Bandung Regency Cultural Exhibition, Bale Pare – Kota Baru Parahyangan (Source: Author's Documentation Archive, 2025)



Figure 4. Product Photograph for Documentation (Source: Author's Documentation Archive, 2025)



Figure 5. Physical Packaging Displayed at the West Bandung Regency Cultural Exhibition, Bale Pare – Kota Baru Parahyangan (Source: Author’s Documentation Archive, 2025)

4. Conclusions

The study concludes that Wajit Cililin has relatively strong brand recognition as a typical West Javanese souvenir but still holds significant potential for development through packaging design innovation. Packaging is perceived not merely as protection but as a visual communication medium that builds image, identity, and product appeal.

Eco-friendly packaging receives positive consumer responses, indicating that sustainability is an important factor in product development. The integration of Sundanese cultural elements strengthens local identity and market differentiation. Furthermore, AR technology enhances interactive experiences and serves as an educational and cultural preservation tool.

However, implementation challenges such as cost limitations, technological knowledge gaps, and material access require collaborative support among stakeholders. Cross-sector collaboration is key to fostering sustainable and applicable packaging innovation for SMEs.

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