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VISUAL MARKETING TRANSFORMATION OF SOUTH JAKARTA UMKM THROUGH THE IMPLEMENTATION OF CANVA ON THE QUALITY OF PROMOTION AS A BUSINESS COMPETITOR

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ABSTRACT

The digital era requires MSMEs to adapt visual marketing strategies in order to remain competitive. The digital era requires MSMEs to adapt visual marketing strategies in order to remain competitive. MSMEs in South Jakarta face significant challenges in optimizing social media as a promotional platform, particularly in creating engaging and professional visual content. Limited financial resources and low digital literacy are the main barriers to accessing professional graphic design services. This study aims to analyze the impact of implementing the Canva platform on improving the quality of promotions and competitiveness of SMEs in the Jagakarsa area of South Jakarta, as well as identifying the factors influencing the success of visual marketing transformation. The study uses a qualitative approach with a community service method through three stages: preparation (comprehensive survey and stakeholder coordination), implementation (face-to-face training with a modular format), and evaluation (impact monitoring through structured questionnaires and in-depth interviews). The program involved 48 SMEs focused on the culinary and handicraft sectors. The implementation of Canva demonstrated a significant improvement in the quality of SME promotional materials. There was heterogeneity in adoption levels influenced by learning motivation, resource availability, and integration with existing business processes, resulting in compelling visual outputs and cost savings compared to professional design services. SMEs that successfully integrated visual marketing into their routine operations demonstrated higher sustainability of use. The Canva platform has proven effective as a solution for democratizing graphic design for SMEs, providing affordable access to professional tools and enhancing competitiveness in the digital marketing ecosystem.

Keywords: Canva, SMEs, Visual Marketing, Promotion

INTRODUCTION

Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) have a strategic role in the Indonesian economy, contributing 61.07% to the Gross Jakarta Product (GDP) and absorbing 97% of the national workforce. In the South Jakarta area, the concentration of MSMEs reaches a significant number with various business sectors that are growing rapidly. However, the dynamics of increasingly fierce business competition require MSMEs to make strategic adaptations, especially in the aspects of marketing and promotion. (Delfira et al,. 2025). Digital developments require MSMEs to transform selling from previously offline by presenting products that are sold directly to selling online by making photos of the products they offer (Utami et al, 2023). The digital era

has changed the marketing communication paradigm, where visual content is the dominant element in attracting consumer attention. Research shows that visual content has a 40 times higher engagement rate than text content, while 65% of the population is a visual learner who is more responsive to image-based information. This phenomenon creates an urgent need for MSMEs to develop competitive visual marketing capabilities (Usulu et al,. 2023).

MSME actors are often too focused on the production process, less balanced with marketing and promotion, so they experience obstacles in selling their products. After the products are produced in abundance, they have difficulty selling them quickly. Promotion carried out conventionally by word of mouth or only displaying their products in shops around their area will not make their business grow (Wijayanti et al, 2022). The fundamental problems faced by MSMEs in terms of visual marketing include several dimensions. First, limited Jakarta resources to access professional graphic design services that generally require substantial investment. Second, the lack of knowledge and technical skills in visual design, which has an impact on the low quality of promotional materials produced. Third, the digital literacy gap that results in MSMEs not being able to optimally utilize available digital platforms and tools to improve business competitiveness. Irgithri, (Syafira et al,. 2024).

This condition is also influenced by the characteristics of MSMEs in Jagakarsa, South Jakarta, which have a high level of competition and consumers with increasingly sophisticated visual expectations. MSMEs that are unable to present visually appealing promotional content tend to experience a decrease in market share and difficulty in building brand awareness (Rivaldi et al, 2024). Further impact is the stagnation of business growth and decreased ability to compete with competitors who have adopted more advanced visual marketing strategies.

In providing solutions, the Canva platform offers a democratized approach to graphic design through a user-friendly interface and customizable templates without requiring in-depth technical expertise. The implementation of Canva as a visual marketing tool has the potential to be a catalyst for transformation for MSMEs in improving the quality of promotion while building sustainable competitiveness. Design training is part of online promotion which aims to make products from MSME players can spread widely and right on target to customers who need these products. The training material provided is how to create complete digital advertisements and attract potential customers so that product sales can increase. The resulting digital advertisements can be used to promote through social media and the right marketplace to market their products (Wijayanti et al, 2022).

The Jagakarsa region as one of the strategic sub-districts in South Jakarta has unique characteristics with a diverse and dynamic MSME ecosystem. Based on field data, there are 48 MSMEs spread across various business sectors, with a composition that reflects the diversity of the local economy. The distribution of business sectors shows that the culinary sector dominates with 6 established MSMEs, while the craft sector contributes through 4 MSMEs that focus on handmade products and creative industries. An in-depth analysis of the existing conditions of MSMEs in Jagakarsa reveals an interesting paradox in the context of visual marketing development. A total of 10 MSMEs consisting of 6 culinary MSMEs and 4 craft MSMEs have shown good awareness of the importance of brand identity through the development of a distinctive logo that characterizes their products. This investment in logo development reflects a fundamental understanding of the importance of visual branding in building brand

recognition and product differentiation in a competitive market. Implementation of the use of canva for 48 MSMEs by providing training with the mobile media or cellphones they use, then guided to use the features in canva and the products or goods to be promoted. The design results are sent in the whatsapp group and then evaluated and given input on the design.

The urgency of this research lies in the need to empirically analyze the impact of Canva implementation on the visual marketing transformation of MSMEs. In-depth studies are needed to understand the mechanisms of change that occur, measure the effectiveness of implementation, and identify factors that influence the success of transformation. Objectives and Results The research is expected to make a theoretical contribution in developing a digital marketing transformation model for the MSME segment, as well as providing a practical framework that can be replicated for MSME empowerment in other regions. However, the achievement in the aspect of brand identity contrasts with the reality faced in the implementation of digital promotion strategies. Field observations show a significant gap between the visual potential and the ability to execute on digital marketing platforms. These MSMEs experience substantive obstacles in optimizing social media as the main promotional channel, especially in creating engaging and professional visual content.

This research becomes relevant in terms of accelerating the digitalization of MSMEs which is a priority agenda of the government, as well as supporting the achievement of sustainable development goals, especially in the aspects of inclusive economic growth and creative economy empowerment.

METHOD OF IMPLEMENTATION

The method used in the implementation of this community service has several stages, which can be seen from this diagram:

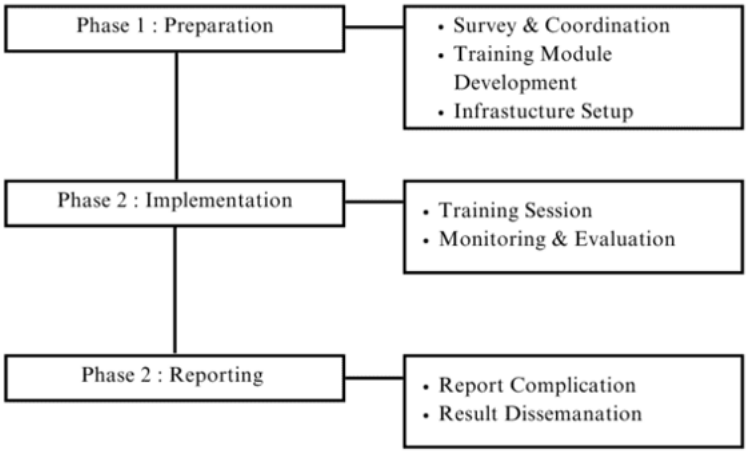


Figure 1. Stages of Sctivity

1. Preparation Stage

   The initiation phase began with the implementation of a comprehensive survey to identify specific needs and analyze the development potential of MSMEs in the Jagakarsa area. The survey focused on three fundamental aspects: characteristics of the products produced, target market segmentation, and evaluation of promotional media that have been implemented by each MSME. The strategic coordination process was conducted by involving relevant stakeholders, including local government agencies namely the relevant Industry, Trade, Cooperatives, Small and Medium Enterprises of South Jakarta Administrative City, regional MSME association organizations. This coordination aims to ensure program synergies with existing MSME empowerment policies and utilize the existing support system network. The development of the training module was carried out systematically by integrating three main components: fundamental concepts of graphic design, in-depth exploration of Canva features, and presentation of case studies in the form of promotional design examples that meet professional standards and high visual appeal.

   Infrastructure and logistics preparation included procuring hardware such as laptops and projectors, ensuring stable internet connectivity, setting up Canva accounts with free access for all participants, and producing printed materials for the training modules. The schedule, location, and criteria for participants were determined by considering accessibility and representativeness.

   The involvement of 48 MSMEs in the Jagakarsa area as program partners began at the preparation stage through active contribution in a comprehensive survey to identify their specific needs. These businesses participated by providing in-depth information on product characteristics, target market segmentation, and evaluation of previously used promotional media. During the implementation phase, MSME partners showed significant engagement through full participation in three strategic training sessions, ranging from learning the fundamentals of graphic design principles and familiarization with the Canva platform, practical application of creating promotional designs according to their respective product characteristics, to active involvement in collaborative presentation and evaluation forums. They did not only act as passive participants, but as co-creators who adapted Canva templates according to their product branding and visual identity, and provided constructive feedback to fellow participants in the spirit of collaborative learning.

2. Implementation Stages

   The implementation of the training program is carried out in a face-to-face format that applies applicable health protocols. The training structure was designed in a modular format consisting of three strategic sessions:

   a. The first session provided a comprehensive introduction to the principles of graphic design and familiarization with the Canva platform. Materials included account registration procedures, navigation of available templates, editing techniques for design elements, and procedures for saving and downloading work.
   b. The second session focused on practical application through the creation of promotional designs tailored to the product characteristics of each MSME.

Participants were given intensive guidance from the facilitator team to explore various design formats according to their promotional media needs, including posters, flyers, business cards, logos, video content, and other formats.

c. The third session featured a presentation forum and collaborative evaluation of the participants' work. The facilitator team provided constructive feedback and recommendations for design quality optimization. This session also facilitated peer-to-peer learning through sharing feedback and inspiration among participants.
d. The implementation of monitoring and evaluation of the impact of the training was conducted to measure improvements in three dimensions: conceptual knowledge, technical skills, and motivation to implement Canva in MSME promotional activities. Measurements were conducted through structured questionnaire instruments, in-depth interviews, and participatory observations.

3. Report Stage

The documentation stage includes the preparation of a comprehensive report that describes all aspects of community service activities. The report includes components of program background, objectives to be achieved, benefits generated, implementation methodology, analysis of results and discussion, formulation of conclusions and recommendations, and relevant supporting documentation.

The process of submitting activity reports is carried out to agencies that have authority and interest in the MSME empowerment program. This step ensures accountability and transparency of program implementation.

The dissemination strategy of the program results was carried out through publications in mass media and social media platforms to expand the reach of information and share best practices regarding the implementation of Canva design training for the MSME segment. This effort aims to create a multiplier effect and encourage replication of similar programs in other regions.

The sustainable participation of MSME partners is also reflected in the monitoring and evaluation phase through the completion of structured questionnaires, involvement in in-depth interviews, and contribution in participatory observations to measure improvements in conceptual knowledge and technical skills. In the follow-up phase, 48 MSME participants committed to implementing Canva design skills in their routine promotional activities, formed a sustainable community of practice to share design tips and tricks, and actively participated in the program dissemination strategy through sharing testimonials and success stories with other MSME communities. This comprehensive participation shows that the program does not only function as a unidirectional knowledge transfer, but as a co-creation and collaborative learning platform that involves MSMEs as active partners in every stage of implementation, resulting in a multiplier effect impact in the form of individual capacity building, collective competency strengthening, and the development of a sustainable learning ecosystem within the MSME sector.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Technological advances have led to lifestyle changes, which in turn force users to continue to own and use the internet as one of their supporting devices in order to follow the changing patterns of the times in interacting and transacting (Widiati et al, 2024). The problem is even more complex when it comes to the characteristics of consumer behavior in the digital era that demands instant gratification and high visual appeal. Contemporary consumers have limited attention span and tend to make quick decision making based on visual first impression. In this case, MSMEs that are unable to present eye-catching and professionally executed promotional content risk losing significant market opportunities (Deli et al, 2021). The inability of MSMEs to optimize visual marketing for promotional campaigns creates several concerning strategic impacts. First, there is an underutilization of digital marketing potential which results in MSMEs not being able to maximize the return on investment from their presence on digital platforms. Second, the gap in responsiveness to market trends and seasonal opportunities results in MSMEs losing competitive timing that is crucial in attracting consumer attention.

A further impact is a substantial opportunity cost, where sales momentum that should be optimized through timely and visually appealing promotional campaigns cannot be fully utilized. This contributes to stagnant sales growth and declining market share relative to competitors who are more agile in digital marketing execution. This phenomenon becomes even more critical given the characteristics of South Jakarta consumers who have a high level of digital literacy and sophisticated visual expectations. This consumer segment tends to do comparison shopping and has a strong preference for brands that can deliver a seamless and aesthetically pleasing experience across digital touchpoints. The conditions faced by MSMEs in Jagakarsa reflect the urgency to develop solutions that can bridge the gap between existing brand identity and execution capabilities in visual marketing campaigns. The implementation of Canva as a democratization tool in graphic design is highly relevant, because it can provide MSMEs with the ability to transform existing brand assets into various promotional materials that are responsive to market dynamics.

MSMEs have the opportunity to switch to a digital platform with Canva. MSMEs can expand their market reach with the adoption of this technology to reach a wider range of digital customers. This expansion is crucial due to Canva's ability to create visual content that is appealing and in line with the latest design trends. MSMEs can use its various features, such as responsive templates and flexible design elements, to create marketing materials that stand out across various digital platforms. This not only increases product appeal, but also creates a strong and modern online presence. (Alamsyah, 2024).

The problems faced by MSMEs in Jagakarsa have specific and multidimensional characteristics. At the operational level, MSMEs experience difficulties in transforming their existing brand identity into dynamic and contextual promotional content. This limitation is especially evident in terms of promotional campaigns that require rapid visual adaptation and responsiveness to market momentum. This phenomenon is particularly evident in the implementation of event-based promotional strategies and time-specific campaigns. MSMEs experience significant barriers in creating attractive visual content for discount programs and promotional offers. When competitors and market leaders use the momentum of pay day sales or strategic dates such as national

days, weekend specials, or seasonal promotions, MSMEs in Jagakarsa tend to be late or unable to present competitive visual content.

Figure 1 Training on Canva Usage by MSMEs







Figure 2. Training on Canva Usage by MSMEs

Visual marketing has become an important element in modern marketing strategies. Research shows that visual content has 40 times higher engagement rate than plain text (Pertiwi et al,. 2025). For MSMEs, the ability to create attractive visual content is a key factor in competing with other business actors. However, MSMEs generally face obstacles in accessing professional design services due to budget constraints. The cost of graphic designer services, which ranges from 500,000 to 2,000,000 rupiah per project, is a heavy burden for MSMEs with limited capital. Canva comes as a solution that allows MSMEs to produce quality designs at an affordable cost.

First, the economic aspect is the main consideration. By subscribing to Canva Pro for 150,000 rupiah per month, MSMEs can produce unlimited designs. This calculation shows cost savings of up to 70% compared to using the services of professional designers. Second, Canva removes the technical barriers to design creation. The platform is designed with a simple interface so that users without a design background can operate it easily. The drag-and-drop feature allows design creation in just a few minutes. Third, Canva provides thousands of templates that can be customized to suit the needs of different types of businesses. These templates have been designed by professional designers resulting in a look that is attractive and in line with the latest design trends.

Canva provides more than 250,000 templates categorized by business type and purpose. For culinary MSMEs, there are special templates for menus, food promotions, and social media content that match the characteristics of the food business. Fashion MSMEs can utilize templates that display products with trendy visual styles. These

templates are regularly updated following the development of design trends and specific seasons. This ensures that MSMEs can produce content that always looks fresh and relevant to market conditions (Hindarwati et al, 2025). The Brand Kit feature allows MSMEs to maintain visual consistency across all marketing materials. MSMEs can upload logos, determine color palettes, and choose fonts that will be used consistently. This consistency is important for building brand recognition in the eyes of consumers.

When creating a new design, the system will automatically apply the predefined brand elements. This saves time and ensures all promotional materials have a uniform look. MSMEs with multiple employees can utilize the collaboration feature to work together on designs. Multiple people can edit the same design simultaneously, provide comments, and approve through an integrated system. This feature is very helpful for MSMEs that want to involve business owners, marketing employees, and other staff in the process of creating promotional materials. Canva provides features to schedule posts on various social media platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter (Pertiwi et al, 2023). MSMEs can prepare content for a week or a month ahead and schedule it to be published automatically. This feature helps MSMEs maintain a consistent presence on social media without having to manually post every day.

The platform also provides data on the performance of published content. MSMEs can see the level of engagement, number of likes, shares, and comments for each post. This data helps MSMEs understand what type of content is most favored by their target market. Canva is designed with simplicity in mind. Menus and features are organized logically so that new users can quickly find what they need. The process of creating a design starts with selecting a template, then replacing text and images as needed (Priyandaru et al, 2024). This platform provides various learning materials in the form of video tutorials, articles, and design examples. MSMEs can learn basic to advanced design techniques through Canva Design School which is available for free. Canva can be accessed through a mobile application that has almost complete features like the desktop version. This allows MSMEs to create and edit designs anytime and anywhere using a smartphone.

By using Canva, MSMEs can produce professional-looking promotional materials. This increases consumer confidence and allows MSMEs to compete with larger businesses. The ability to create designs quickly allows MSMEs to respond to market trends or certain momentum immediately. For example, when there is a national holiday or viral trend, MSMEs can immediately create relevant promotional content. Canva allows MSMEs to create visual consistency across different marketing platforms (Aswar et al, 2025). This consistency is important for building brand recognition and consumer trust. With the ease that Canva offers, MSMEs can produce more promotional content without significantly increasing costs. A higher volume of content has the potential to increase visibility and engagement with consumers. The analytics feature in Canva helps MSMEs understand their consumers' preferences. This data can be used to improve marketing strategies and create more effective content. Canva implementation provides several strategic advantages for MSMEs. First, MSMEs can differentiate themselves from competitors through better visual quality. Second, increased engagement with consumers through attractive content. Third, operational efficiency that allows resource allocation for other business development. Thus, Canva is not just a design tool, but a strategic investment that helps MSMEs increase competitiveness in the digital era.

The implementation of Canva as a graphic design platform in the South Jakarta MSME ecosystem shows complex and multidimensional transformation dynamics. Based on the results of community service activities that have been carried out, heterogeneity in the level of adoption and competence in utilizing this platform was found (Solihah & Zakiah, 2022). This phenomenon reflects a common reality in the digital transformation process, where technology adoption does not always correlate linearly with implementation effectiveness. In-depth analysis of program participants revealed a clear segmentation in Canva's adoption rate. The first category is MSMEs that already have familiarity with the platform but face limitations in producing compelling visual outputs. This condition indicates a gap between technical literacy and design literacy, which is fundamental in visual marketing.

The fundamental problem identified in MSMEs that have used Canva is the lack of design aesthetic and strategic thinking in visual communication. The output produced tends to meet functional aspects but lacks consideration of psychological impact and consumer behavior principles. This is reflected in the selection of color schemes that are inconsistent with the brand identity, typography that is less readable, and visual composition that does not consider visual hierarchy. The identification of success factors in the visual marketing transformation of MSMEs revealed several key variables that determine the effectiveness of the program (Geraldina et al, 2024). The first is the motivation level and openness to learning of the business owners or staff involved. MSMEs with proactive leadership in embracing digital transformation show a higher adoption rate. Second is the availability of resources, both in terms of time allocation and technological infrastructure. MSMEs that can allocate dedicated time for the learning process and have adequate internet connectivity show a more rapid progression. Third is integration with existing business processes. MSMEs that successfully integrate visual marketing activities with overall marketing strategy show better sustainability in long-term implementation (Berlianti et al, 2025).

Visual marketing transformation through Canva implementation has strategic implications that extend beyond immediate improvements in promotional materials. This program contributes to overall digital literacy enhancement which is the foundation for future technology adoption. Sustainability aspect is an important consideration in evaluating program effectiveness. Follow-up assessments show that MSMEs that continue to use Canva consistently are those that have successfully integrated the visual creation process into routine business operations. To ensure long-term impact, an ongoing support mechanism is needed in the form of a community of practice, periodic refresher training, and access to updated resources.

This indicates that digital transformation in the MSME segment requires sustained intervention rather than a one-time training program. Based on the findings and analysis that have been conducted, several strategic recommendations can be formulated for the optimization of future programs. First, the implementation of differentiated training modules tailored to the baseline competency level of participants. This allows for more targeted learning objectives and efficient resource utilization. Second, the development of a mentorship program that connects advanced users with beginners to facilitate peer-to-peer learning. This approach has proven effective in creating a sustainable learning ecosystem. Third, the integration of business coaching elements that assist MSMEs in strategic planning for visual marketing initiatives. This ensures that the technical capabilities developed can be translated into tangible business value.

The evaluation results before and after the activity showed a significant increase in the knowledge and competence of MSME partners related to graphic design and utilization of the Canva platform. In the early stages, most participants experienced difficulties in transforming existing brand identities into dynamic and contextual promotional content, especially in terms of promotional campaigns that require rapid visual adaptation and responsiveness to market momentum. Baseline conditions show that MSMEs tend to be late or unable to present competitive visual content when competitors utilize strategic momentum such as pay day sales, national days, weekend specials, or seasonal promotions. After participating in the training program, there was a substantial transformation where participants were able to produce compelling visual output by considering psychological impact and consumer behavior principles, including the selection of color schemes that are consistent with brand identity, readable typography, and visual composition that considers visual hierarchy.

CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

The results showed that the implementation of Canva as a graphic design platform successfully transformed the visual marketing capabilities of 48 MSMEs in the Jagakarsa area, South Jakarta. The comprehensive training program was able to bridge the gap between the existing brand identity and the ability to execute visual marketing campaigns, resulting in significant improvements in three key dimensions: conceptual knowledge, technical skills, and implementation motivation. The success of the program is reflected through the transformation of MSMEs from the initial condition of having difficulty transforming brand identity into dynamic and contextual promotional content, to being able to produce compelling visual output by considering psychological impact and consumer behavior principles. The implementation of Canva proved effective in overcoming the limited financial resources of MSMEs to access professional design services, with cost savings of up to 70% through a Canva Pro subscription that allows unlimited design production.

The main findings of the study revealed that the success factors of the visual marketing transformation of MSMEs are determined by three key variables: motivation level and openness to learning from business owners, availability of resources in terms of time allocation and technological infrastructure, and integration with existing business processes. Follow-up assessments show good program sustainability, where MSMEs that continue to use Canva consistently are those that have successfully integrated the visual creation process into routine business operations. The strategic impact of Canva implementation extends beyond immediate improvement in promotional materials, contributing to overall digital literacy enhancement which becomes the foundation for future technology adoption. This program produces a multiplier effect in the form of increased individual capacity in visual branding aspects, strengthening of collective competence through peer learning, enhancement of market competitiveness through professionalization of promotional materials, and development of a sustainable learning ecosystem that supports continuous improvement in the MSME sector.

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