

Product Photography Training as an Effort to Enhance the Creativity of Visual Communication Design Students at SMK Plus Qurrota A'yun Samarang

Asep Sandi^{a)}, Ummu Salamah

Communication Study Program, Faculty Of Communication and Information, Universitas Garut, Garut,
Indonesia

^{a)}Corresponding author: 24071120124@fikom.uniga.ac.id

ABSTRACT

Product photography is more than just taking pictures of products; it involves incorporating visual design elements and requires specific photography skills to enhance the product's image and market value. In the Visual Communication Design program, students learn communication concepts through creative expression, applied across various visual communication media, including product photography. The goal of this community service activity is to improve the skill level and creativity of students in the Visual Communication Design program at SMK Plus Qurrota A'yun in product photography, broaden their knowledge about professional photography tools, and motivate and develop their potential and interest in product photography. The methods used in this community service include training and mentoring. The training, conducted over four days with 15 participants, provided theoretical and practical product photography instruction. The results of this activity include a better understanding of product photography among students, particularly in practicing product photography, as evidenced by an increase in post-test scores from 40% to 86%. Participants also demonstrated the ability to create photos using their own products.

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INTRODUCTION

In today's digital era, product and service marketing systems have changed. Previously, products or services were sold conventionally, but now offers and transactions can be conducted simultaneously by leveraging digital platforms as intermediaries (S et al., 2023). This shift has increased the need for product photography skills to enhance the appeal of products during marketing.

Therefore, everyone should have photography skills, whether it's knowing how to take photos or understanding the components of a camera to capture moments (Prihantoro & Rasyid Ohorella, 2023). Photography is well-known in urban environments, and everyone in the city is familiar with it. There are many fields of photography, one of which is product photography, which involves capturing images of packaging or products (Halim et al., 2021).

Product photography refers to visual images produced for current marketing needs, particularly for displaying products in e-commerce sales (Cipta et al., 2024). Product photography is not just about taking pictures of products: it also involves the addition of visual design elements and requires specialized photography skills to enhance the product's image and market value. In the Visual Communication Design program, students learn communication concepts expressed through creative expression and applied across various visual communication media, including product photography (Abdurrozaq & Rahma Deni, 2022). Product photography, also known as commercial photography, is a type of photography with commercial value, aimed at promoting a brand or service (Fallah & Purnama Sari, 2022). A photograph must include three essential elements idea, technique, and message to be considered a good work of art (Ardianto, 2021). The resulting photos are used for promotional purposes on websites, social media, e-commerce sites, or other platforms to drive product sales (Suprianingsih et al., 2022).

Learning in the field of product photography can provide a competitive edge in an increasingly tight job market. It offers experience that enhances their understanding and skills in the creative industry. The creative industry is one sector expected to become a new force in supporting a sustainable national economy, focusing on adding value to products through the utilization of talent, creativity, and skills (Ravelino et al., 2023).



Picture 1. Example of Product Photo Source: (Maulidya et al., 2023)

The purpose of the product photos above is to promote a food product. The images have specific meanings, such as: the plastic packaging for the 'kerupuk seblak' indicates that the product is presented in a plastic container; the black bowl suggests that the 'kerupuk seblak' is abundant, the paper bag signifies that the kerupuk can be carried in the bag; the logo on the product packaging represents the product's distinctive features; while the other images are intended to enhance the overall appearance of the product photo (Maulidya et al., 2023).

The focus of the issues in this community service project, based on interviews with the head of the Visual Communication Design program at SMK Plus Qurrota A'yun, reveals several problems: students have a limited understanding of product photography tools due to a lack of equipment for practice; there is a shortage of instructors, particularly for product photography subjects, leading to a learning process that does not meet the required competencies; and there is a lack of students' skills and creativity in developing their potential and interest in product photography. Interviews are the most commonly used method for gathering diverse data from informants in various situations and contexts (Yusra et al., 2021).

The issues in the community service project are supported by empirical data obtained from survey results:

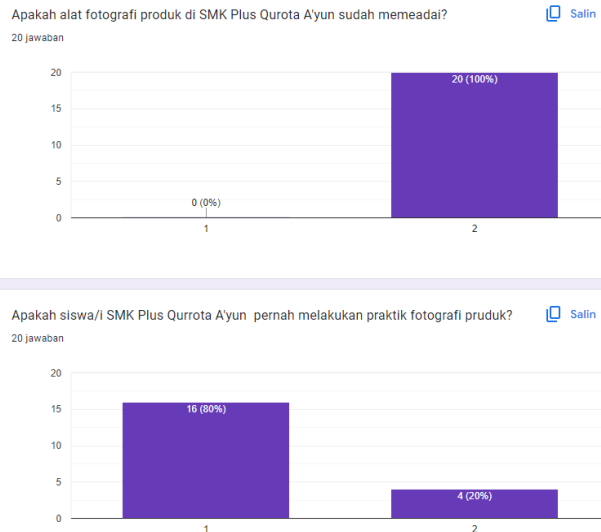


FIGURE1. Questionnaire Results

Based on the diagram above, the product photography equipment at SMK Plus Qurrota A'yun is inadequate, and most students in the Visual Communication Design program have only practiced photography using smartphones and makeshift tools.

The community service conducted by the author is relevant to the title "Basic Photography Training for Enhancing Professional Potential of Multimedia Students at SMK Muhammadiyah 3 Gemolong." The previous study discussed issues such as the lack of material on digital photography, which meant that not all students understood how to use digital camera settings like ISO, shutter speed, aperture, and composition. The goal of the community service was to enhance the photography knowledge and skills of students at SMK Muhammadiyah 3 Gemolong within the Revised 2013 Curriculum currently used by the school. The method involved conducting small-scale training, which was considered more effective and capable of meeting the desired achievement standards. The results of this community service provided basic photography skills and knowledge that could be developed according to the student's interests (Ardianto, 2021).

The second community service, titled "Product Photography Training for the Baiturrahman Mosque Youth Association," aimed to provide participants with basic and intermediate photography skills. The method used for this service was skills training, as not all participants had the foundational skills required to engage in basic product photography training. The results showed that participants were able to produce product photos at various levels of proficiency (Halim et al., 2021).

Similarities and differences between community service 1 and 2 with the community service that the author will do. Namely having similarities in basic photography training activities to improve students' skills, then the difference is that previous community service 1 focused on basic photography training and increasing professional potential for multimedia students at SMK Muhammadiyah 3 Gemolong. Previous

community service 2 focused on product photography training where the practice in the activity involved using a smartphone. The novelty in the previous community service above is that it focuses on product photography using professional tools and improving the skills and creativity of students majoring in Visual Communication Design at SMK Plus Qurrota A'yun.

The purpose of this research is to enhance the skills and creativity of Visual Communication Design students at SMK Plus Qurrota A'yun, particularly in the field of product photography. Additionally, the research aims to broaden students' knowledge about professional photography equipment, serve as a source of motivation, and help develop their potential and interest in product photography.

The reason for conducting this community service activity is the limited availability of photography equipment, particularly for product photography, at SMK Plus Qurrota A'yun. This situation highlights the need for product photography training to foster students' interest and talent in the subject. The training aims to provide students with hands-on experience using professional photography equipment, making the learning process more practical and effective.

Therefore, it is hoped that product photography training will significantly enhance students' skills and better prepare them for the increasingly competitive job market. This training is specifically designed to equip the students of SMK Plus Qurrota A'yun with knowledge and skills in the field of product photography.

METHOD

This community service activity is conducted directly at the research site, which is SMK Plus Qurrota A'yun, located at Jalan Raya Samarang No. 144, Desa Sirnasari, Kecamatan Samarang, Kabupaten Garut, West Java 4482. The focus of this study is on product photography training as an effort to enhance the creativity of Visual Communication Design students. The methods used in this community service include training and mentoring,

Which involve presenting material, practical exercises, and the implementation of the learned concepts (Rohaendi & Salamah, 2019).

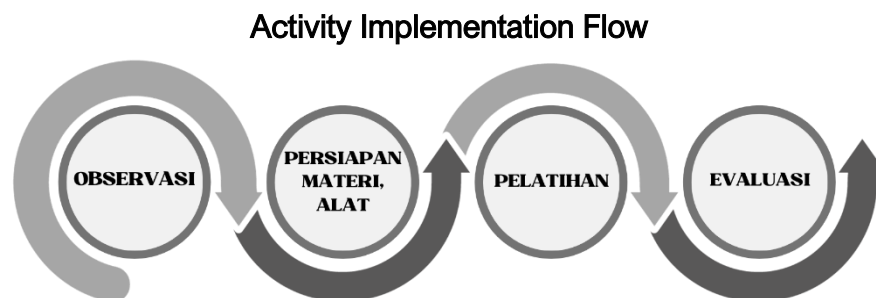


FIGURE 2. Flow of Community Service Implementation

1. Observation

Simply put, observation is a research technique carried out directly (Nurjanah, Ayu Putri., Anggraini, 2013). Observation involves systematically watching and recording data (Husnul Khaatimah, 2017). In this community service activity, the first step taken by the author was to gather information and coordinate with the school. During this phase, the author conducted a direct survey by visiting SMK Plus Qurrota A'yun. In the observation stage, the author aimed to identify the issues faced by Visual Communication Design students so that the training provided would be relevant to the problems experienced by the students.

2. Preparation of materials and tools

In the preparation phase, the author organized the sequence of activities for the community service to

ensure that the event was conducted in an orderly and directed manner. The author also prepared materials on the fundamentals of photography and product photography, and arranged the necessary equipment to address the identified issues. This included cameras, lighting for illumination, backgrounds, and products to be used as subjects for product photography practice.

3. Training

The third phase is the implementation of the training activities, which will take place over four days from December 13-16, 2023. During this phase, training will be conducted for 15 students from the 11th-grade Visual Communication Design program. The training will cover product photography through both theoretical presentations and hands-on practice, divided into four stages.

4. evaluation

According to Ivo (in Pohan, 2016), evaluation is the process of collecting and refining information to determine alternatives. These alternatives are other options that can be used to achieve specific goals. In the evaluation of the activities conducted over the four days, the results will be assessed by evaluating the students' performance after they have gained knowledge during the community service process. This evaluation will be carried out through a post-test.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In this section, the author presents the results of the community service activities that have been carried out and provides an in-depth discussion of product photography to address the issues found within the community by offering solutions. The community service conducted by the author involved product photography training aimed at enhancing the creativity of 15 Visual Communication Design students at SMK Plus Qurrota A'yun. The training, which took place from December 13 to December 16, 2023, was conducted over four days and divided into four stages. Before presenting the training material, students were given.

a pre-test to measure their abilities prior to the product photography training conducted by the author (Magdalena et al., 2021).

Step 1

Step 1 was conducted on Wednesday, December 13, 2023, in the Visual Communication Design laboratory. During this initial phase, participants were provided with an overview of basic photography, including the definition of photography and the exposure triangle, delivered by the author. These topics are fundamental to photography. Additionally, the author covered other basic materials, such as types of photography, an introduction to product photography equipment, differences between cameras, and an introduction to various kinds of lenses. The goal was to provide a comprehensive understanding of basic photography concepts for all participants.



FIGURE 3. Presentation of basic photography material by the author



FIGURE 4. Introduction to photography tools by the author

Step 2

Step 2 was held on Thursday, December 14, 2023, in the Visual Communication Design laboratory room. At this stage, which is a continuation of the first stage which explains the basic material of photography, the author presents material on product photography starting from the definition of product photography, the function of product photography, types of product photos, composition in product photography to how to make product photos. The material presented by the author is important material in product photography that must be understood when making a product photo. In addition to the presentation of material on product photography, at this stage there is also a discussion and question and answer session between participants and the author, which aims to better understand the material on product photography in general.



FIGURE 5. Product photography material presentation by the author

Step 3

Phase 3 was conducted on Friday, December 15, 2023, in the Visual Communication Design laboratory. This phase focused on mentoring, where students practiced and implemented the material presented by the author in Phases 1 and 2. The mentoring was conducted individually, with students taking turns practicing product photography using professional equipment provided by the author, including cameras, lighting, and softboxes. During the practice sessions, students used products they had created themselves, such as keychains, as subjects for their product photography.



FIGURE 6. Product photography practice mentoring by the author

Step 4

Phase 4, the final stage, took place on Saturday, December 16, 2023. It began with a review of all the students' product photography practice results, attended by the head of the Visual Communication Design program at SMK Plus Qurrota A'yun. After the review of the participants' photos, an evaluation and post-test were conducted. This involved administering a questionnaire to assess the students' understanding after the training and mentoring in product photography, to evaluate their progress and learning outcomes. (Hati, 2023). Once all activities were completed smoothly, the author formally closed the event and concluded with a group photo involving all participants and relevant school staff.



FIGURE 7. Evaluation and closing of activities by the author

The implementation of the training was influenced by various factors, including supporting and hindering factors. One of the supporting factors that contributed to the smooth execution of the activities was the positive reception from various involved parties and the enthusiasm of the participants, which provided additional motivation to complete the program. On the other hand, a hindering factor was the lack of a sufficient team of presenters to deliver the material and conduct the practice sessions, which resulted in a longer duration required to complete the activities.

During the implementation of this activity, the participants' knowledge and understanding of the material presented by the author underwent significant improvement. This included topics such as the definition of product photography, the functions of product photography, types of product photos, composition in product photography, and methods for creating product photos. As shown in the table below, before the training, an average of 40% of the 15 participants knew these topics. After the training and mentoring, their understanding increased to 86%. This improvement indicates that the training effectively enhanced the participants' skills and creativity, as well as their motivation regarding product photography. Therefore, it can be concluded that the effectiveness of the training was quite successful and achieved its objectives (Praseptiawan et al., 2021).

TABLE 1. Capacity change indicators (Participant Responses)

Training materials	Capacity Change Indicator (Participant Response)			
	Know		Do not know	
	Pretest	Posttest	Pretest	Posttest
1 Exposure Triangle	29%	93%	71%	7%
2 Lighting in product photography	27%	80%	73%	20%
3 Product Photography Composition	64%	87%	36%	13%
Average	40%	86%	60%	14%

Various results were achieved from this community service activity, including the product photos shown below. These products are creations by the students of the Visual Communication Design department at SMK Plus Qurrota A'yun. Besides serving as practice materials during the training, this activity also

contributed to enhancing the quality and value of the products and improving the sales potential of the keychains.



FIGURE 8. Photo results of training participants (Source: Baban Firdaus)

Based on the results of the community service, the discussion related to product photography training to enhance students' creativity in product photography is relevant to the previous community service titled "Basic Photography Training to Enhance the Professional Potential of Multimedia Students at SMK Muhammadiyah 3 Gemolong." The author addresses the issue of the absence of material on digital photography, which results in not all students understanding the use of digital camera settings such as ISO, shutter speed, aperture, and composition. The goal of this community service is to improve the knowledge and skills of students at SMK Muhammadiyah 3 Gemolong in the field of photography. The results of the community service show an increase in knowledge and skills related to basic photography, as well as the development of insights in the field of photography (Ardianto, 2021).

The second community service activity, titled "Product Photography Training for the Baiturrahman Mosque Youth Association," aimed to equip participants with basic and intermediate photography skills. The method used in this activity was skills training, as not all participants had the necessary foundation or skills to follow the basic product photography training. The result of this community service was that participants could create product photography works using smartphone cameras at various skill levels (Halim et al., 2021).

The synthesis between previous community service activities and the one the author conducted reveals focus differences. The previous community service focused on improving knowledge and skills in basic photography and product photography using smartphones. Meanwhile, the author conducted community service centered on introducing complete photography equipment, such as lenses, cameras, and lighting, as well as comprehensive material on basic and product photography. Therefore, the author's discussion focuses on product photography, from theory and creativity in product photography to hands-on practice, including background setup, lighting and camera settings, product layout, and capturing images using professional product photography equipment.

CONCLUSION

After the community service activity was conducted, it can be concluded that all 15 participants showed an improvement in their understanding of the material related to product photography, as evidenced by the increase in the percentage from 40% in the pre-test to 86%. The activity also successfully enhanced the participants' creativity in producing valuable product photos. Additionally, the community service program enabled the participants to create high-quality and appealing product photos, thereby increasing their attractiveness and market value.

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