

THE ROLE OF VISUAL BRANDING IN SHAPING CUSTOMER ENGAGEMENT IN SOCIAL MEDIA: A CASE STUDY OF PORTOPHOTO

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ABSTRACT

The digital era has made visual branding a crucial element in building customer engagement on social media, especially for photography brands whose main product is visual content. This study aims to analyze the influence of visual branding on customer engagement on Portophoto's social media, identify the most influential visual elements, and explain the mechanism of forming consumer engagement patterns. The study used a quantitative approach with a survey research design on 257 active Instagram Portophoto followers who were used as respondents through a total sampling technique. The characteristics of the respondents were dominated by the age group of 18-25 years old at 60.7% with a S1 education level of 49.8%. Data collection was conducted using a structured questionnaire adapted from the Visual Brand Identity and Customer Engagement Behavior scale with high reliability ($\alpha = 0.891$ and 0.923). Data analysis used simple linear regression with SPSS software version 26. The results showed that visual branding had a positive and significant effect on customer engagement with a determination coefficient value of $R^2 = 0.530$ and a significance value of $p = 0.000$. The aesthetic dimension of content obtained the highest perception (mean = 4.35), while emotional engagement became the dominant dimension in consumer engagement patterns (mean = 4.18). These findings confirm that visual branding consistency is able to explain 53.0% of customer engagement variations, providing strategic implications for digital marketers to optimize aesthetic quality and visual composition to improve customer interaction on social media platforms.

Key words: Visual Branding; Customer Engagement; Social Media; Commercial Photography; Posted on Instagram

INTRODUCTION

The digital era has changed the paradigm of marketing communication, where *Social Media* It is now the main platform for brands to build relationships with consumers. In this context, *Visual Branding* It plays a crucial role as a communication element that is able to effectively convey the brand's identity, values, and message. According to research (Pandey & Pandey, 2018), visual content on social media has a level of *Commitment* 650% higher than text-based content. Studies conducted by (Isibor et al., 2021) reveals that visual consistency can improve *Brand recall* up to 80% and significantly influence consumer purchasing decisions. Recent research shows that *Customer Engagement* in social media has complex dimensions, including *cognitive engagement*, *emotional engagement* and *Behavioral Engagement* (Isibor et al., 2021). However, there is still a gap in the literature regarding how specific elements of *Visual Branding* Contribute to the level *Commitment* user. Study by (Naem & Okafor, 2019) identify that the brand that implements the strategy *Visual Storytelling* that is authentic to enhance *user-generated content* up to 28%. Research by (Voorveld et al., 2018) emphasizes that *Brand-consumer interaction* on social media is influenced by the quality of visual content and the frequency of posts. In addition, the research (Appel et al., 2020) reveals that social media algorithms are increasingly prioritizing content with a *Commitment* tall. Thus, this study aims to comprehensively analyze how *Visual Branding* Portfolios on social media form patterns *Customer Engagement*. Based on the background that has been described, this study formulates several research questions as follows: (1) How to *Visual Branding* that is implemented by Portophoto on social media platforms? (2) Elements *Visual Branding* What are the most influential factors in the *Customer Engagement* on Portophoto's social media? (3) How is the mechanism *Visual Branding* in shaping patterns of interaction and behavior *Commitment* consumers of the Portophoto brand?

This study aims to: (1) Analyze the visual branding strategies implemented by Portophoto on social media, (2) Identify visual branding elements that influence customer engagement, and (3) Explain how visual branding shapes customer engagement patterns. The results of this research are expected to contribute to digital marketing theory and provide practical insights for creative businesses in designing effective visual branding strategies.

METHOD

This study uses a quantitative approach with a survey design to analyze the influence of visual branding on customer engagement on Portophoto's Instagram account. The population consists of 257 active followers of the Portophoto Instagram account. Because the population size is relatively small, a total sampling technique was used so that all followers meeting the criteria became research respondents.

The data collection instrument uses a structured questionnaire adapted from the scale *Visual Brand Identity* by Kumar and Ayodeji (2021) with 15 statement items to measure perceptions of *Visual Branding*, and scale *Customer Engagement Behavior* by (Isibor et al., 2021) with 18 items to measure the level *Commitment* Consumer

Dimensions *cognitive, Emotional and Behavioral Engagement*. The questionnaire uses a five-point Likert scale, with a score of 1 indicating "strongly disagree" to a value of 5 indicating "strongly agree". The validity test is performed using *Pearson Product Moment Correlation* with an R value of > 0.30 as a valid item indicator, while the reliability test uses *Cronbach's Alpha* with a standard value of $\alpha > 0.70$ to ensure the internal consistency of the instrument. Data is collected through *Google Forms* disseminated to respondents through *direct message* Instagram and *Posted on Instagram* over a two-week period. The data analysis method uses *Simple Linear Regression Analysis* to test the influence *Visual Branding* towards *Customer Engagement* and *Descriptive Statistics* to describe the demographic characteristics of respondents and the distribution of answers. Data processing is carried out using SPSS software version 26 to ensure the accuracy and reliability of statistical analysis results.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

RESULT

Respondent Characteristics

Table 1. Demographic Characteristics of Respondents (N=257)

Characteristic	Category	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Gender	Man	143	55,6
	Woman	114	44,4
Age	18-25 years old	156	60,7
	26-35 years old	78	30,4
	36-45 years old	18	7,0
	>45 years old	5	1,9
Education	High School/Equivalent	62	24,1
	Diploma	45	17,5
	S1	128	49,8
	S2/S3	22	8,6
Work	Student/Student	98	38,1
	Private Employees	89	34,6
	Entrepreneurial	41	16,0
	Professional	21	8,2
	Other	8	3,1
Long Follow-Up	3-6 months	87	33,9
	7-12 months	102	39,7
	>12 months	68	26,4

Source: Primary data processed, 2025

The majority of respondents were male (55.6%), while female respondents accounted for 44.4%. Most respondents were aged 18–25 years (60.7%), indicating that Portophoto’s audience is dominated by Gen Z and millennials who actively use social media. In terms of education, most respondents had a bachelor’s degree (49.8%). Regarding occupation, the largest group consisted of students (38.1%) followed by private employees (34.6%).

Instrument Validity and Reliability Test

Table 2. Instrument Validity and Reliability Test Results

Variable	Number of Items	Value Range r	Cronbach's Alpha	Information
<i>Visual Branding</i>	15	0,342 - 0,687	0,891	Valid & Reliable
<i>Customer Engagement</i>	18	0,318 - 0,721	0,923	Valid & Reliable

Source: Primary data processed, 2025

The validity test showed that all questionnaire items had correlation values above 0.30, indicating valid measurement instruments. The reliability test produced Cronbach’s Alpha values of 0.891 for visual branding and 0.923 for customer engagement, which indicates that the instruments were highly reliable.

Description of Visual Branding Variables

Table 3. Description of Visual Branding Variable Statistics

Dimension	Mean	Std. Deviation	Category
Color Consistency	4,12	0,58	Tall
Typography	3,87	0,64	Tall
Visual Composition	4,28	0,52	Tall
Content Aesthetics	4,35	0,49	Tall
Visual Identity	3,94	0,61	Tall
Total Visual Branding	4,11	0,47	Tall

Source: Primary data processed, 2025

Categorization: Low (1.00-2.33), Medium (2.34-3.67), High (3.68-5.00)

The descriptive analysis shows that respondents perceive Portophoto’s visual branding positively with an average score of 4.11, which falls into the high category. Among the visual branding dimensions, content aesthetics received the highest score (mean = 4.35), followed by visual composition (4.28) and color consistency (4.12). Typography obtained the lowest score (3.87) but remained within the high category. Customer engagement also showed a high level with an average score of 3.99. Emotional engagement had the highest score (4.18), followed by cognitive engagement (4.02) and behavioral engagement (3.76).

Customer Engagement Variable Description

The descriptive analysis of *customer engagement variables* measures the level of respondents' engagement with Portophoto content through three main dimensions: *cognitive engagement*, *emotional engagement*, and *behavioral engagement*.

Table 4. Description of Customer Engagement Variable Statistics

Dimension	Mean	Std. Deviation	Category
<i>Cognitive Engagement</i>	4,02	0,56	Tall
<i>Emotional Engagement</i>	4,18	0,53	Tall
<i>Behavioral Engagement</i>	3,76	0,68	Tall
Total Customer Engagement	3,99	0,52	Tall

Source: Primary data processed, 2025

Categorization: Low (1.00-2.33), Medium (2.34-3.67), High (3.68-5.00)

The results of the descriptive analysis in Table 4 show that *Portophoto's customer engagement* followers as a whole are in the high category with an average value of 3.99 and a standard deviation of 0.52. The *emotional engagement* dimension has the highest score of 4.18, indicating that Portophoto's visual content has managed to evoke positive emotional responses such as awe, inspiration, and emotional connection with the brand. The *cognitive engagement dimension* was second with a score of 4.02, indicating that followers were active in processing visual information, paying attention to content details, and thinking about the messages conveyed through Portophoto photos. The *behavioral engagement dimension* has a value of 3.76, which although still relatively high, shows the lowest value compared to the other two dimensions. This indicates that even though followers have high cognitive and emotional engagement, conversions to tangible actions such as *commenting*, *sharing*, or *saving* content can still be further optimized.

Classic Assumption Test

Table 5. Classical Assumption Test Results

Test Type	Method	Value	Criterion	Conclusion
Normality	Kolmogorov-Smirnov	0,068	$p > 0.05$	Normally distributed data
Linearity	Test for Linearity	0,000	$p < 0.05$	Significant linear relationships
Heteroscedasticity	Glejser Test	0,421	$p > 0.05$	Heteroscedasticity does not occur

Source: Primary data processed, 2025

The results of the normality test using *the Kolmogorov-Smirnov* showed a significance value of 0.068 ($p > 0.05$), which means that the residual data is normally distributed and meets the normality assumption. The linearity test yielded a significance value of 0.000 ($p < 0.05$), indicating that there is a significant linear relationship between *the visual branding variables* and *customer engagement*. The heteroscedasticity test with *the Glejser Test* produced a significance value of 0.421 ($p > 0.05$), which means that there is no heteroscedasticity or homogeneous residual variance. With the fulfillment of all classical assumptions, a simple linear regression model is feasible to predict the relationship between variables in this study.

Simple Linear Regression Analysis

Table 6. Results of Simple Linear Regression Analysis

Type	Coefficient	Std. Error	t-count	Sig.	R	R ²	Adjusted R ²
Constant	0,847	0,182	4,654	0,000	0,728	0,530	0,528
Visual Branding	0,765	0,044	17,386	0,000			

Source: Primary data processed, 2025

Regression equation: $Y = 0.847 + 0.765X$

Information:

- $Y = \text{Customer Engagement}$
- $X = \text{Visual Branding}$
- $a = 0.847$ (Constant)
- $b = 0.765$ (Regression coefficient)



Figure 1. Scatter Plot Visual Relationship Branding and Customer Engagement

The scatter plot graph shows the distribution of data with a positive linear pattern and regression lines showing a positive relationship between visual branding (X-axis) and customer engagement (Y-axis). The data points are scattered around the regression line in a consistent pattern.

Source: Primary data processed, 2025

The correlation coefficient (R) was 0.728, indicating a strong relationship between visual branding and customer engagement. The coefficient of determination (R²) was 0.530, meaning that visual branding explains 53.0% of the variation in customer engagement, while the remaining 47% is influenced by other variables. The t-

test result showed a significance value of 0.000 ($p < 0.05$), indicating that visual branding has a positive and significant effect on customer engagement.

DISCUSSION

The findings show that visual branding has a significant positive influence on customer engagement on Portophoto's social media. This result supports previous research stating that visual content plays an important role in increasing interaction between brands and consumers (Pandey & Pandey, 2018). For a photography brand like Portophoto, visual consistency in elements such as color palette, composition, and aesthetics strengthens brand identity and makes content more recognizable. This phenomenon can be explained by cognitive fluency theory, which suggests that consumers tend to engage more with brands that have consistent and easily recognizable visual identities (Moran et al., 2020).

The descriptive analysis also shows that content aesthetics is the most influential visual element. This indicates that followers highly value the visual quality and artistic composition of photography content.

In terms of engagement dimensions, emotional engagement had the highest score. This suggests that visual content is capable of creating emotional connections between the audience and the brand. However, behavioral engagement such as commenting or sharing content still has room for improvement.

Understanding audience demographics also provides important insights. Most followers belong to the millennial and Gen Z segments who have high visual literacy and strong social media activity. Therefore, maintaining high visual quality and consistent branding is crucial for sustaining engagement among this audience.

CONCLUSION

This study successfully proves that visual branding has a positive and significant influence on customer engagement on Portophoto social media, with a contribution of 53.0% to the variation in customer engagement levels. The aesthetic dimension of content and visual composition proved to be the visual elements of branding that were most appreciated by followers, while emotional engagement emerged as the dominant dimension in consumer engagement patterns, indicating that high-quality visual content is capable of evoking strong emotional responses. The mechanism of visual branding influence on customer engagement takes place through a process of cognitive fluency, where the consistency of visual identity facilitates easy brand recognition and reduces the cognitive burden in processing information, thus encouraging more intense engagement. The demographic characteristics of followers, which are dominated by millennials and Gen Z with high visual literacy, show the importance of maintaining consistent visual quality standards to meet the expectations of digital native audiences. These findings provide strategic implications for digital marketers to not only focus on visual aesthetic aspects, but also integrate interactive elements that can convert emotional and cognitive engagement into measurable behavioral actions. Further research is suggested to explore the comparative influence of visual branding across various social media platforms and integrate moderator variables such as brand trust and perceived authenticity for a more comprehensive understanding of engagement dynamics in the digital ecosystem.

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