

## Leveraging Visual Rhetoric on Instagram: A Case Study of Heylocal's Product Marketing Strategy

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### Abstract

*The purpose of this study is to analyze the types of visual rhetoric that the Instagram account @heylocal.id used in its product marketing strategy and to comprehend the messages that were presented in the promotional videos. This study employed a descriptive qualitative methodology, gathering data through the observation and documentation using purposive sampling technique from 15 reel videos that were uploaded during January until May 2024. Identifying types of visual rhetoric, including metonymy, symbolism, visual metaphor, visual repetition, and others, as well as the informative, persuasive, and branding and promotional messages they conveyed, are the main goals of the analysis. The result demonstrated that Heylocal regularly uses visual rhetoric elements to enhance emotional appeal, develop brand image, and increase the effectiveness of promotional messages. Visual rhetoric proves to be a strategic tool in attracting audience attention and building consumer attachment to fashion products offered through the Instagram platform.*

*Keywords : Visual rhetoric, Heylocal, Marketing Strategy.*

### 1. INTRODUCTION

Social media has become one of the best media in product marketing. Over time, a significant shift towards visual content has been experienced by social media. Images, colors, videos, and other visual elements are tended to be responded to more by users than just text. Therefore, the utilization of visual rhetoric is viewed as key in product marketing strategies.

According to Nordquist (2025), visual rhetoric refers to elements such as images, color, videos, and texts that are visually packaged to convey persuasive messages and intention. It influences perception through symbolic strategies and picture into the human tendency to respond more strongly to visual. Visual rhetoric not only draws attention but also emotions, simplifies complex messages, and build stronger brand connections often influencing purchasing decisions. It creates compelling narratives that enhance message memorability and trust.

Visual rhetoric play an important role in social media, especially on the Instagram platform, which has 1.74 billion users globally as of January 2025 (*Datareportal*). Instagram is a visual-centric platform with various attractive features for sharing photos and videos, making it a powerful communication tool, branding, influencing the audience. Businesses leverage these tools to market products creatively and target audiences effectively through personalized content and interactions like comments, likes, and direct messages. Instagram has evolved from a social app to a critical pillar in digital marketing strategies.

To maximize these features, brands often incorporate visual rhetoric into their content. One such brand is Heylocal, a well-known Indonesian fashion brand with 2.5 million Instagram followers by July 2025. Known for its visually compelling product launches, Heylocal frequently sells out item within hours. In 2021, Heylocal received an MURI award for selling 4,363 London Bags in one minute, it is demonstrating the power of its Instagram marketing and use of strategic visual storytelling.

This study aims to explore the effectiveness of visual rhetoric in contemporary digital marketing strategies, focusing on the types of visual rhetoric and messages conveyed used in @heylocal.id video content.

## **2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE**

### **Related Study**

Wijaya's 2016 study "*Analisis Retorika Visual Pada Iklan a Mild Versi Manimal*" examines visual rhetoric in advertising by PT. HM SAMPOERNA, Tbk. The research uses the Visual Rhetoric Theory and Hesford & Brueggemann rhetorical triangle analytical framework to analyze the creatively designed advertisements. The study found that each scene in the advertisement depicts urban culture, particularly among young people, through metaphorical representations of human and animal behaviors.

The concepts and theories of visual rhetoric in visual communication, specifically in public service advertising campaigns, are covered in the study by Alim & Rahim (2021) titled "*Visual Rhetoric in Visual Communication: Theory and Concepts in Public Service Announcements Advertising Campaign*". Visual observation and documentation analysis were used to gather data using a qualitative descriptive method. This study investigates the effective communication of campaign messages using a semiotic and visual rhetoric approach. In order to enhance higher-order thinking abilities and raise public awareness of the significance of visual rhetoric in delivering social messages, the findings highlight the value of critical thinking in comprehending the connection between visual rhetoric and advertising campaigns.

### **Related Theory**

#### **Communication**

Marlina and Arvianti (2022) states that effective communication is crucial for ensuring that messages are received and understood clearly by the recipient. Marlina and Arvianti (2022) explain that communication has five main elements: the sender, message, medium, recipient, and feedback. If any of these elements fail, communication becomes ineffective. The goal of communication is to create understanding, encourage acceptance, and influence attitudes or actions (Dwiyarthi, 2022). Communication can be divided into verbal, nonverbal, written, oral, and visual forms (Nugroho, 2023). Visual communication is particularly effective because it conveys messages quickly, clearly, and emotionally without using words.

According to Tuhovsky (2017), good communication skills offer several advantages. These include better personal and professional relationships, improved career prospects, and increased self-confidence. Therefore, effective communication and choosing the right media are crucial for connecting with audiences and building strong relationships in different contexts, including digital marketing.

#### **Marketing Communication**

Marketing communication is a process for sharing information, persuading, and reminding consumers about products and brands. If it is not done well, consumers may not know about the products they need. Jatmiko (2014) points out that marketing communication can teach consumers about the functions and uses of products. Wardaya (2016) differentiates between general communication strategies and marketing communication strategies, which focus on marketing activities.

Muliyati (2022) mentions that changes in information and media segmentation have transformed marketing communication practices. Firmansyah (2020) states that marketing

communication includes advertising, sales promotion, public relations, personal selling, and direct marketing, as well as content marketing, digital marketing, social media, event marketing, and word-of-mouth. The overall goal is to build relationships with consumers and deliver messages effectively.

### **Social Media Management**

Social media management involves various activities focused on creating, managing, and analyzing content to attract and engage users across different social media platforms. According to Torning (2015), social media management includes organizational practices and academic studies connected to using digital platforms for communication and marketing. Montalvo (2016) states that social media management is crucial for building brand reputation and awareness. It relies on strategy, data analysis, creativity, and teamwork.

Key parts of this management are content planning, performance analysis, user interaction, and trend monitoring. Izza (2023) notes that its main functions are to boost brand awareness, shape brand image, and act as an effective promotional tool. The benefits include increased business visibility, a broader market reach, and stronger customer relationships. A social media manager's main tasks involve developing strategies, creating and scheduling content, and continually monitoring and assessing campaign performance.

### **Instagram**

Antarsari & Pratiwi (2022) claim that Instagram facilitates online product promotion for companies and makes it simpler for customers to locate the things they require. Ads, hashtags, product visualization, direct consumer interaction, and enhanced brand awareness are some of the ways that Instagram helps businesses reach a larger audience (Kusuma & Sugandi, 2018). Special features for business accounts, like Instagram Insights, Ads, Shopping, and Business Profile, help businesses establish a strong online presence and more successfully accomplish their marketing objectives.

### **Visual Rhetoric**

Visual rhetoric is a communication strategy that uses visual elements such as images, symbols, warnings, and compositions to convey ideas in an emotionally and persuasive manner (Nurusholih, 2020). Alim & Rahim (2021) identify three types of visual rhetoric: symbolic, human intervention, and audience awe. They also identify three types of persuasive, informative, and promotional rhetoric using logos, ethos, and pathos. While Gracia (2018) emphasizes the importance of visual rhetoric in statistics and other visual media, such as advertisements and movies, Setiawan (2023) explains that video is a multimodal medium that combines visual, aural, textual, and rhythmic elements to convey ideas.

According to Aini et al. (2021), visual rhetoric encompasses a variety of techniques, including metonymy, visual irony, Kairos, symbolism, visual metaphor, visual analogy, repetition, and contradiction, all of which are intended to create emotions.

## **3. METHOD**

### **Research Design**

The research method used in this study was descriptive qualitative. The primary goal of qualitative research is to illustrate phenomena or fact and determine whether they corresponded with facts or hypotheses in the study area.

### **Location and Object of the Study**

The research location referred to the area or place where the study was conducted. In this case, the research location was social media, specifically the @heylocal.id Instagram account. The object of research elucidated what and/or who the study is focused on, as well as the study's location and methodology.

The object of research was the Instagram reel videos of @heylocal.id. Specifically, the research focused on videos with that featured product stories and narratives posted during the January-May 2024 time period. A purposive sampling method was applied, selecting 15 videos with the highest level of engagement, measured by the number of views and likes during that period. Through this approach, an in-depth exploration of the most effective use of visual rhetoric in @heylocal.id's promotional strategy was conducted.

### **Research Instrument**

The researchers used direct observation and screenshots from video reels to identify visual rhetoric used categories from Aini et al. (2021) and messages conveyed, and theory from Alim & Rahim (2021) to identify messages conveyed: informative, persuasive, and promotional/branding messages.

### **Data Collection Technique**

This study used primary data collection methods, including direct observations and analysis of reel videos content on @heylocal.id Instagram account, to identify visual rhetoric techniques and message conveyed in product advertising videos. Documentation was used to display video footage and screenshots.

### **Data Analysis Technique**

Data analysis is the process of processing data into new information to understand and solve problems, particularly in research. This study used three types of data analysis techniques: descriptive qualitative, content analysis, and data collection. Descriptive qualitative analysis allowed data collection, processing, and interpretation, while content analysis focused on visual rhetoric in product videos. Data collection involved direct observation and documentation of the object.

## **4. RESULT & DISCUSSION**

Based on information gathered from the analysis of video content on @heylocal.id Instagram posts from January to May 2024, this study was able to gathered 15 video reels with text narratives that promoted products. Screenshots of every upload that included pertinent textual and visual components were taken in order to gather the data using the documentation method. The purpose of this study was to examine the kinds of visual rhetoric and messages that Heylocal used in each of its uploaded videos. Data processing was a crucial step in the analysis of Heylocal's use of visual rhetoric as part of the marketing strategy, guaranteeing the precision and applicability of every conclusion.

### **Kind of Visual Rhetoric**

According to the results, metonymy and visual repetition are the most frequently employed forms of visual rhetoric by Heylocal, as they are featured in 15 videos (100%), followed by symbolism (13 videos), visual contrast (13 videos), visual metaphor (10 videos), and visual analogy (9 videos). In contrast, there was no visual irony in the one video where Kairos appeared.

Types	Number	Percentage
Metonymy	15	100%
Visual Repetition	15	100%
Symbolism	13	87%
Visual Contrast	13	87%
Visual Metaphor	10	67%
Visual Analogy	9	60%
Kairos	1	7%
Visual Irony	0	0%

The 15 videos analyzed show a consistent pattern in building brand image through aesthetic and symbolic visual styles.

1. **Metonymy** is used to symbolize products as part of consumers' self-identity. In Heylocal videos, bags or shoes are not merely presented as products but as symbols of the wearer's lifestyle or personality. For example, the bag worn by the model in the "Moon Bag" video is not just an accessory but represents the independence and courage of modern women.
2. **Visual repetition** is used to strengthen visual memory and create brand consistency. In different scenes, logos, product colors, and design patterns are repeated. For example, in the video "Halle and Clay Sunglasses," the gold/silver hues and sunglasses frames are repeatedly displayed from different perspectives.
3. **Symbolism**, Heylocal used symbolism to convey deeper meanings, like flowers in the "Sera Prayer Set" video, emphasizing femininity and religiosity, and using pastels for purity and earth tones for warmth.
4. **Visual Contrast**. By using variations in color, lighting, or texture, visual contrast is used to draw attention to particular objects. For instance, in the video "Moon Bag," bright lighting and a black clothing background contrast sharply with maroon products, drawing the viewer's attention.
5. **Visual metaphors** make the connection between abstract ideas and actual objects. In the video "Moon Bag," for instance, the bag's half-circle shape is linked to a crescent moon, which metaphorically represented for elegance, freedom, and the peace of the night. This improves the product's emotional appeal and enhances the visual story.
6. **Visual analogy** compares two objects to show similarities or compatibility. In a collaborative video Staccato x Heylocal, scarves, shoes, and bags are displayed in a single frame that matches in color and style, forming an analogy that all three are part of a unified fashion identity.
7. **Kairos** is a strategy of delivering messages at the right time. Since it was released before Ramadan and touches on a religious occasion that is highly significant to the target audience of Muslim women, only one video—"Sera Prayer Set"—strongly exemplifies the element of Kairos.
8. **Visual irony** relies on the contrast between appearance and actual meaning to create a critical or satirical effect. However, this type is almost non-existent in Heylocal content,

as its approach is more aspirational than critical. Only one video slightly hints at irony through the contrast between fashionable style and religious context, but it is not explicit.

### **The Messages Conveyed in Reel Videos @heylocal.id**

An analysis of 15 videos uploaded by the Heylocal Instagram account between January and May 2024 showed that the messages conveyed are informative, persuasive, branding, and promotional. This aligns with the idea of visual marketing communication proposed by Alim & Rahim (2021). Messages serve to provide product information while also building brand image and influencing audience behaviour.

The informative messages in Heylocal videos presented clear facts about the product, including details like material, size, model, color, and production quality. This information is direct and easy to remember, supported by detailed visuals of the product. The goal of this strategy is to equip consumers with enough knowledge to make informed purchasing decisions.

Persuasive messages put more focus on creating a positive image and encouraging the audience to buy. This strategy uses eye-catching visuals, music that matches the brand, and emotional stories that inspire aspirational feelings. Phrases like “premium quality,” “elevate your style,” and “crafted for your comfort” enhance emotional appeal. Visual elements such as symbolism and visual metaphors suggest values like exclusivity, elegance, and modernity.

Furthermore, Heylocal's video reels consistently showed branding messages. This is seen in the use of logos, signature color schemes, and strategic brand placement in all content. This consistency improved brand recall and strengthens Heylocal's status as a local fashion brand with competitive quality in the national market.

## **5. CONCLUSION**

This study revealed that Heylocal used a variety of visual rhetorical techniques in its product marketing strategy. The most prominent forms are visual repetition and metonymy, which strengthen the brand identity, aesthetics, and personal values linked to each product. Other commonly used types include symbolism, visual contrast, and visual metaphor. Heylocal's approach leans towards timeless, symbolic, and emotionally impactful messages, rather than socially reactive or satirical commentary. In this study there were messages conveyed such as informative messages, persuasive messages, and branding and promotional messages in each reel videos to promote their product.

The study found that Heylocal's visual marketing strategy focuses on building a strong, consistent, and appealing brand image, using visual rhetoric to conveyed factual product benefits, create emotional connections, and enhance brand credibility

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