

BAND MERCHANDISE DESIGN "DOUBLE DEGREE" AS A PROMOTIONAL MEDIUM TO INCREASE BRAND EQUITY AND FAN REACH

By:

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Abstrak

This research aims to design merchandise as a promotion strategy for the Double Degree band using the Design Thinking *approach* of Tim Brown and David Kelley, which includes *the empathize, define, ideate, prototype, and test* stages. Merchandise is positioned not only as a selling product, but also as a promotional medium and identity symbol that strengthens the emotional connection between the band and the fans. Visual consistency through *style guides* is important to maintain uniformity of elements such as logos, colours, and mascots. The design process is focused on understanding the needs of the audience and creating relevant creative solutions so that the resulting designs are attractive, functional, and able to expand the band's market reach and exposure organically, as well as being an additional source of income for indie bands in Indonesia.

Keywords: Merchandise, Promotion Strategy, Visual Identity, Double Degree, Indie Band.

INTRODUCTION

Merchandise is generally in the form of products (objects) that are made and traded by an individual, group, or organization. Merchandise is typically intended for promotion, brand identity, or an additional source of income. Merchandise is needed because it serves as a form of advertising and marketing strategy that can increase awareness of a brand, event, or individual. Brand consistency is very important in the creative process and mass production of merchandise, so a visual guide or "style guide" is needed that contains guidelines on the core elements. Merchandise elements are used consistently and in accordance with brand identity, so that they can maintain integrity and brand recognition in various *merchandise products* (Sutanto et al., 2020). The purpose of the merchandise style guide is to attract consumer interest to reach a wider market.

The integration of consistent merch design concepts through *style guides* and the right promotional strategies can create a strong brand identity and expand the reach of the audience. For the band Double Degree, designing merchandise is an effort to introduce musical works, as well as build a loyal fan community through visual symbols that authentically represent the band's character and values.

Promotions aim to increase awareness, build brand image, and encourage purchasing decisions. An effective promotional strategy can increase sales and strengthen relationships with customers. Double Degree bands need promotion in order to reach audiences with the same scene. *Merchandise* is needed to be one of the most potential promotional tools and strategies, because it not only functions as a marketing tool, but also as a symbol of identity for fans. Attractive merch designs can increase the visibility of the band and create an emotional connection between the band and their fans. The popularity of music in various parts of the world makes this field have many perspectives from scientists. Therefore, it is not surprising

that many researchers think that music is in accordance with their artistic experiences. (Avandra et al., 2023)

The music industry in Indonesia is currently experiencing rapid development, especially with the emergence of many indie bands that are trying to gain a place in the hearts of fans. (Avandra et al., 2023) One of the challenges faced by indie bands is how to effectively promote and build fan loyalty. Therefore, designing merchandise can be an effective solution to overcome the decline in the number of band fans. Band merchandise can strengthen emotional connections with fans, increase visibility, and reach new audiences (Avandra et al., 2023; Fira, 2022.; Sampoerna, 2022; Sutanto et al., 2020).

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METHODOLOGY

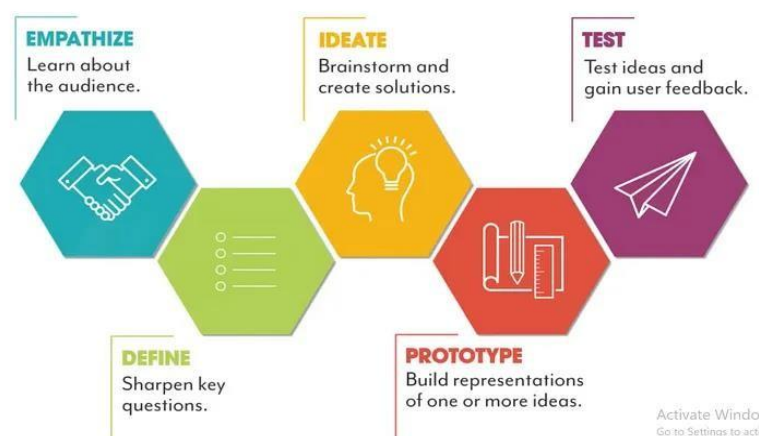


Figure 1. Design Thinking Methods David Kelley and Tim Brown

For the design of the Double Degree band merchandise, it will use the design thinking method by David Kelley and Tim Brown. Design Thinking is a problem-solving approach that emphasizes empathy, collaboration, and creativity. It is a process that can be applied in a wide range of fields, from business to education, to develop innovative solutions (Martin & Hanington, 2012). In this topic, we will explore the key principles of Design Thinking and how it can be used by anyone, regardless of their educational or professional background, to address challenges in a structured and creative way (Camacho, 2020)

This design method has 5 stages, including *Empathize*, which is the first stage in this design thinking method that aims to understand the needs, behaviours, and feelings of users in depth. This process is carried out through collecting qualitative data through literature studies, observations, and interviews to understand the user's perspective directly, then the second stage is *Define*. In the define stage, the designer organizes and analysis the problem clearly based on the results of literature studies, observations, and interviews to find out the core of the problem that needs to be solved.

The purpose of this stage is to formulate a clear, specific, and user-oriented problem statement in order to be a basis for making this design. Then, *Ideate (Idea)*, the third stage in

this design thinking method, focuses on the exploration and development of various creative ideas to solve problems. The author began to brainstorm, come up with various creative ideas and other creative methods. At this stage, the exploration of ideas is also carried out with an approach of looking for references, brainstorming, discussion, mentoring and based on relevant music scenes according to the problem to give rise to innovative solutions, Prototype (**Initial Model**), in the prototype stage in the design thinking method focusing on making an initial version or model of the solution to the existing problem.

Designers will start with sketches, alternative designs, dummies, or mock-ups to produce a prototype of the merchandise. The results are developed, tested, evaluated and improved before the product is finally made, then *the test* at this last stage there is a test stage that focuses on testing the prototype with fans to produce a direct effectiveness evaluation with the prototype. The use of a prototype is the result that has been tested on fans and received feedback in the context of evaluation, and the results are used to improve or repeat the previous process if needed. The test ensures that the solutions developed are truly tailored to the needs of users, enhancing the fan experience and solving problems in an optimal and innovative way.

Based on the type of design that the author will use, the author will collect data in a qualitative way to be able to get more specific answers. The qualitative research method is a research method based on the philosophy of post positivism, used to research on the condition of natural objects, (as opposed to experiments) where the researcher is the key instrument, sampling of data sources is carried out purposively and snow ball, collection techniques by triangulation (combined), data analysis is inductive/qualitative, and qualitative research results emphasize meaning rather than generalization. There are several qualitative data collection methods that the designer will use, namely Literature Studies, Interviews, and Observations.

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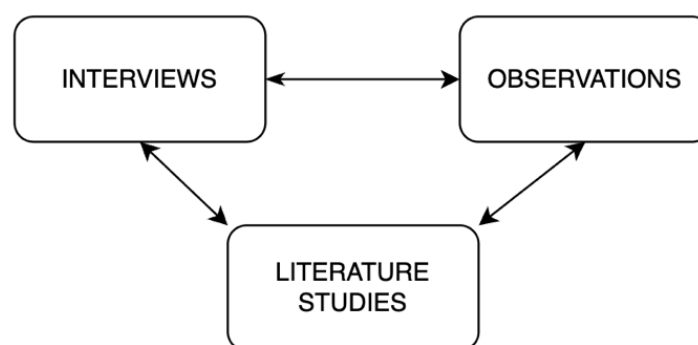


Figure 2. Triangulation Shape

Triangulation is a technique used in research to check the validity of data by utilizing various methods or data sources. This approach aims to increase the credibility and validity of research results by reducing the bias that may arise from the use of a single method or data source.

Triangulation is essentially a multi-method approach that researchers take when collecting and analyze data. The basic idea is that the phenomenon being studied can be understood well if approached from various points of view, allowing for the attainment of a level of authentic truth. (Rahardjo, 2010).

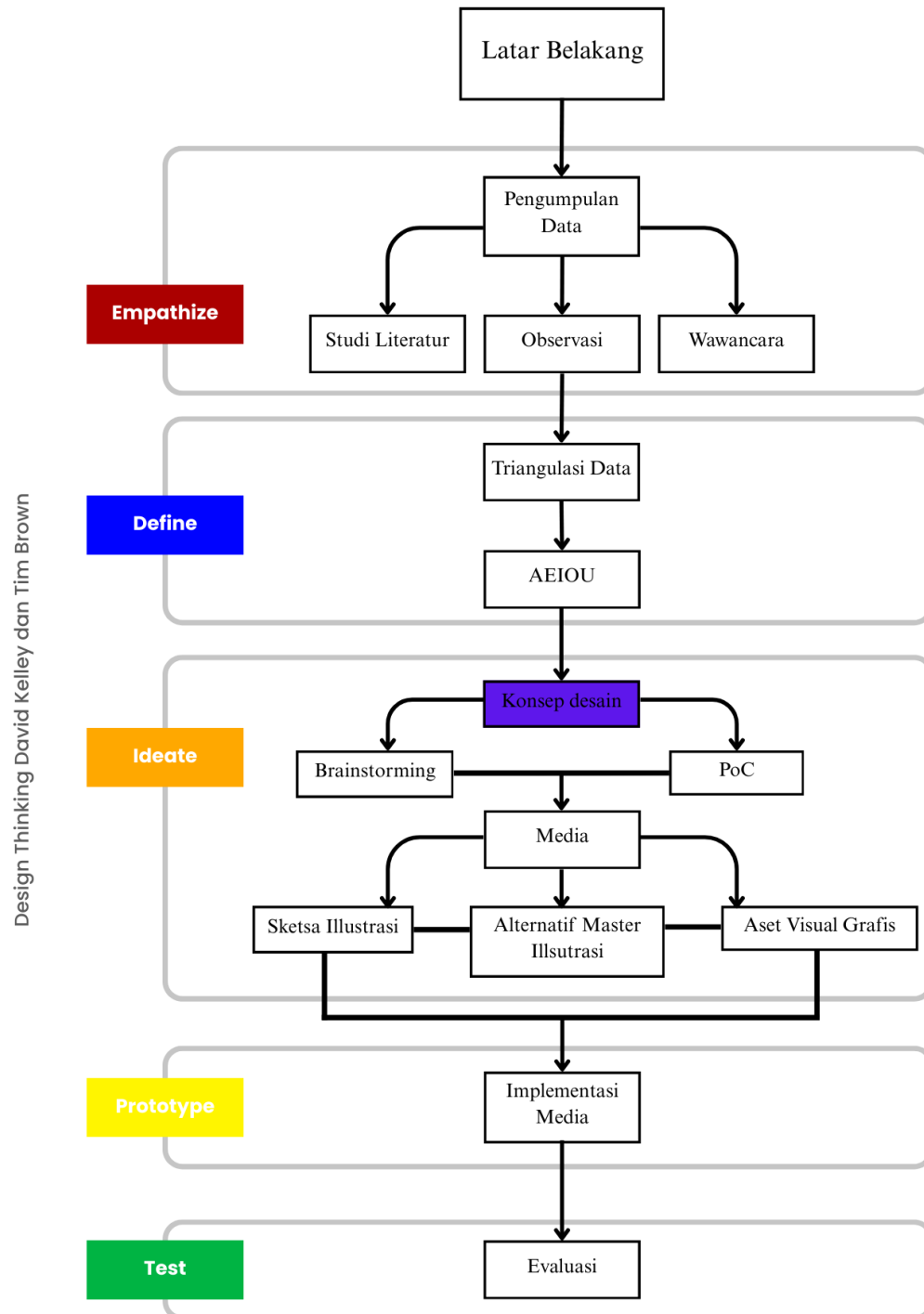


Figure 3. Planning Procedure Chart

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The results of the literature review of previous works that have been compared by the designers are that the four previous works have similarities, namely, merchandise can be an

income source for the band, and band merchandise can be used as a medium for band promotion. Merchandise can also increase the reach of listeners and fans to reach a wider market. Merchandise as a promotional medium plays an important role for indie bands such as the band Double Degree. Merchandise can increase the number of listeners and fans to enhance the image of the band Double Degree in the realm of indie alternative rock music at the national and international levels.

Data obtained from social media platforms shows Double Degree's social media profiles, including those found on Instagram and Spotify. According to Double Degree's Instagram account, the band has 296 followers for an indie alternative rock band. Fan response on Double Degree's Instagram account is said to be positive, with several other indie bands responding with encouragement and support



Figure 4. Double Degree Band Activities
Source. Doc. Band Double Degree

In the picture above, you can see that there are 4 local bands that support and encourage the band Double Degree, namely The Polar Bear, Haleday, Cantina, and Tomorrow Comes Today. These bands are local bands of various genres. Starting from the band The Polar Bears, a midwest emo genre band from Malang that is quite famous in the midwest emo genre scene, one of the members of the band named Mas Marcel who is the drummer of the band The Polar Bears is quite active in interacting on the Instagram of the band Double Degree and he is the owner of HAZ4 STUDIO where Double Degree recorded the single "Just A Fool". Next is Haleday, an indie band in the alternative pop genre from Malang, who is quite active in supporting the band Double Degree both on Double Degree's social media and directly. The Cantina band is a new band from Malang in the alternative pop genre. This band also often interacts on the Instagram of the band Double Degree and is most active in encouraging the band Double Degree directly when they meet. Lastly, the band Tomorrow Comes Today, which

is a rock genre band from Malang, has one of the drummers named Mas Naufal, who is very active in supporting and helping the band Double Degree both on social media and directly.

This Double Degree band has its own uniqueness, which is that every time after this band finishes performing, they will distribute stickers for free. It is their strategy to get new fans and increase the listeners of their songs as well as their branding because they are an indie band that moves alone. Another uniqueness of this band, according to fans, is their song genre, which is quite unique and rare in Malang itself, the branding of their band on social media and in real life, which is often described as a children's band because of the behaviour of each member, who is funny and fun like a child. They also have a mascot named DEDE, which is included as their band's branding, and they also have colours that are very similar to the band Double Degree, which is blue and red.

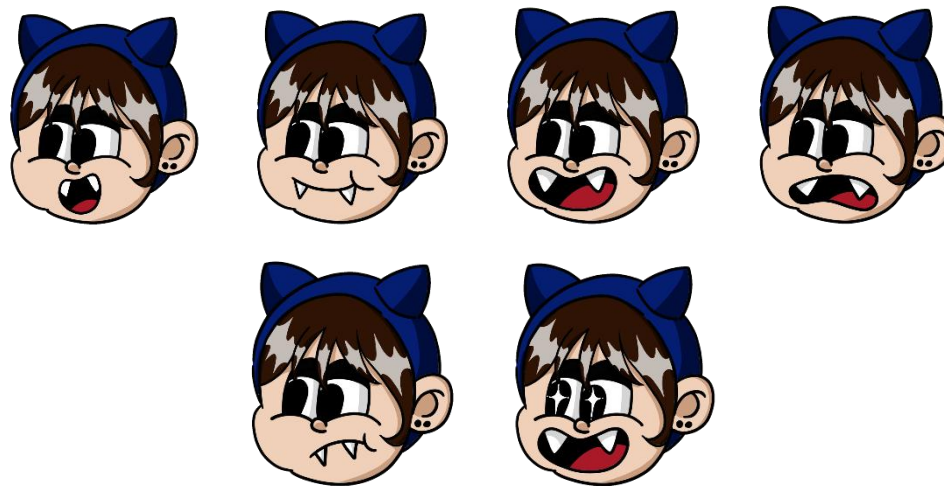


Figure 5. Mascot Band Double Degree

The band Double Degree needed merchandise as a promotional strategy for the band to the alternative rock scene market. Merchandise is a promotional strategy to increase the number of fans and listeners in the alternative rock music scene. Merchandise is designed according to the characters of the Double Degree band so that their existing characters are unchanged and exclusive.

The designer conducts participant observations, where the designer will participate directly with the Double Degree band activities when they are going to perform. The designer came to the performance location and then documented it with photos and videos, and observed the conditions of the performance location firsthand. This field observation was carried out on March 15, 2025, when the band Double Degree was performing, Gigs Garasi Omah Vol 1, which was located at Café *Wong Ndeso* Cangkruk, Dau, Malang Regency. The selection of direct observation by the designer is used as additional information for the designer in working *on the Merchandise*. The following is an explanation of the observation data obtained:

Double Degree consists of 5 members, consisting of Manu as vocalist and guitarist, Becky as vocalist, Rijal as drummer, Neo as bass, and Fadli as guitarist. The members of the band Double Degree have a cheerful and cheerful character. Even though their character is cheerful, when they are practicing, they will be serious at certain moments. As a result of the designer's observation, even though they are cheerful people and tend to be like children, Manu can lead his friends firmly and Manu is a fairly skilled songwriter and song producer, in the band Rijal is a person who is quite good at repairing cables, Becky even though her role is only a vocalist, she is able to mediate if there is an argument, for Neo, he is a very religious and cheerful person, and the last one is Fadli who is very good at playing the guitar and he is a person who takes care of his speech quite well.

The design begins with the process of reviewing insights based on the results of the analysis, then looking for references, and then brainstorming and producing a design that meets the needs of the Double Degree band and its fans. The insight is that the band Double Degree needs merchandise that remains in accordance with the character of the band Double Degree as a promotional strategy to increase the number of listeners and fans in the alternative rock scene. If the band Double Degree is active in creating and designing merch that reflects the musical identity and brand of Double Degree, then the intended audience will be even narrower and will increasingly enter the right scene. The production process will involve designs, materials, and vendors that suit the needs of the Double Degree band and their fans.

The results of this mind mapping produce key words, namely red, blue, semi-formal, cat, Dede, stars, children, toys, and bright colours. As a result of this brainstorming, the designer found several references that are suitable for this merchandise mix, such as the following

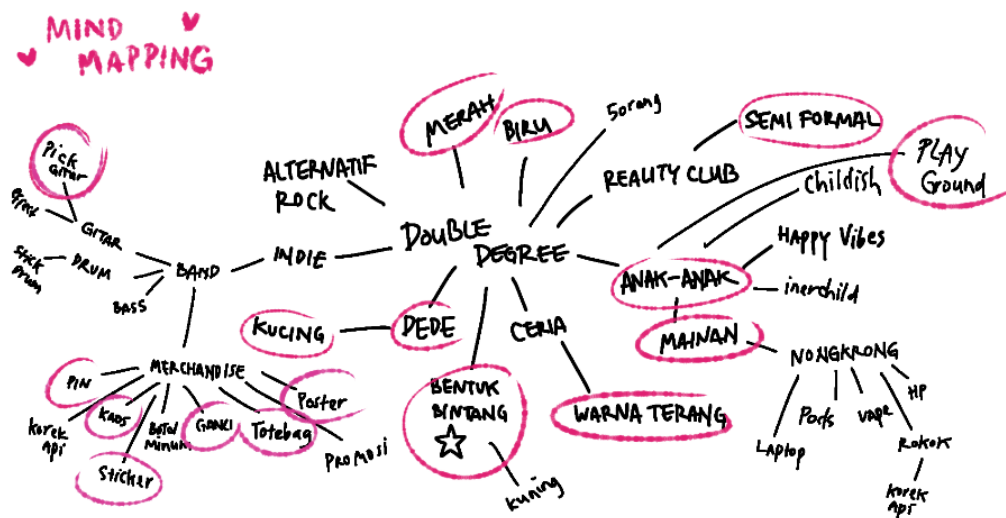


Figure 6. Brainstorming

As a result of the point of contact table under the designer, the designer decided to design, t-shirts, keychains, pins, patches, hats, tumblers, tote bags, scarfs, lanyards, sticker packs, guitar picks, matches, flags, card holders, drum sticks, e-money, sticker pods, business cards, x-banners, infographic posters, keychain packaging, t-shirt packaging, product tags, and business cards.

The media is said to have been selected by the designer through the results of mind mapping and table point of contact to be designed into the Double Degree band merchandise. There are several characteristics that the Double Degree band has, namely:

- Logo band Double Degree
- Mascot DEDE
- Blue and red colours
- Personality of the personnel
- The music genre of the band Double Degree is alternative rock

With some of these characteristics, designers can combine these elements into the merchandise design that will be designed without neglecting the characteristics of the Double Degree band.

Table 1 Point of contact

No.	Activities	Point of contact	Media
1.	Studies	Bags, drinking bottles, folders, books, tabs/iPads, laptops, cell phones, helmets, wallets, clothing accessories, pods, vapes, cigarettes, matches	T-shirts, keychains, stickers, cell phone hangers, clothes, cell phone cases/tablets, card holders, shirt accessories (pins, hats, scarves), tote bags, lanyard pods, matches, e-money
2.	Works	Computers, laptops, drinking bottles, dining bags, laptop bags, backpacks, motorcycles, cars, matches, cigarettes, cell phones, power banks, pods, vapes, lanyards, access cards, files, clothing accessories, hats, jackets, glasses, wallets,	Laptop bags, tote bags, tumblers, key chains, lanyards, card holders, stickers, cell phone hangers, clothing accessories (pins, hats, scarves), tote bags, lanyard pods, lighters, e-money
3.	Hanging Out	Cell phone, Wi-Fi, laptop, wall, headset, iPad/tablet, bag, charger, coffee (any drink), matches, cigarettes, pods, vape, liquid, necklace pods, wallet, cigarette	Mobile phone, Illustrations on cases, posters, stickers, keychains, t-shirts, necklace pods, cigarette cases, clothing accessories (pins, hats, scarves), tote bags, matches, e-money, patches
4.	Gigs	T-shirts, bags, drinking bottles, matches, pods, vapes, wallets, clothes, fans, shoes, clothing accessories, flags, necklace pods, motorcycles, cars, cell phones, helmets, cigarettes	T-shirts, keychains, matches, scarves, pins, necklace pods, stickers, pins, shirt accessories (pins, hats, scarves), tote bags, lanyard pods, matches, e-money, patches
5.	Perform	T-shirts, keychains, matches, scarves, pins, necklace pods, stickers, pins, shirt accessories (pins, hats, scarves), tote bags, lanyard pods, matches, e-money, patches	Stickers, key chains, stickers, pins, scarves, hats, patches

Design for media implementation uses the master design as the main element for implementation on selected media. Here is the process of designing the master design that will be used.

In conclusion, Double Degree should design high-quality merchandise, have an iconic but still simple design, with colour variations that match the band's identity. In addition, the strategy of distributing free merchandise at several events can also increase fan attraction and loyalty, such as collaborating with other bands by wearing Double Degree band t-shirts while performing. Here is the merchandise that was designed:



Figure 7. Double Degree Band Merchandise Design

CONCLUSION

The main problems raised in this design are the lack of promotional media that is able to represent the visual identity of the band "Double Degree" in a consistent and attractive manner, as well as the limited promotional reach that makes the band less known to a wide audience, especially outside the scope of their initial listeners. As an indie band with the alternative rock genre that has a cheerful musical character but is full of emotional meaning, a promotional strategy is needed that is not only communicative but also relevant to the lifestyle of the target audience.

The solution offered in this design is through the creation of merchandise design as a functional and emotional non-conventional promotional medium, such as the merchandise that has been designed above, which raises the Double Degree band mascot, illustrations of the members, and logos as visual representations of the band's identity. The merch design is developed with a visual approach that matches the musical character and image of the band, while also considering the visual preferences of the target audience of young people aged 18-25 years.

By integrating strong graphic design elements and visual branding strategies through merchandising media, the design aims to build an emotional closeness between the band and its listeners, as well as create promotional tools that can reach new audiences organically through the daily use and distribution of physical products. Merchandise not only serves as a collectible product, but also as a visual communication medium that expands the existence and reach of the band "Double Degree" in the midst of competition from the independent music industry.

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