

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

Indonesia is one of the countries with a large number of automobile enthusiasts. Based on data from the Indonesian Automotive Industry Association (GAIKINDO), Indonesia controls approximately 31% of the Southeast Asian automotive market, making it the largest automobile market in the region. In 2021, the Southeast Asian automotive market recorded total sales of 2.79 million units, an increase of 14% compared to 2020. Of the total sales, the largest contribution came from Indonesia with 887,202 units, followed by Thailand with 754,254 units, Malaysia with 508,911 units, Vietnam with 304,149 units, the Philippines with 223,488 units, Singapore with 58,953 units, and Myanmar with 9,350 units. In the following year, automobile sales in Indonesia increased to 1,048,040 units in 2022, with projections indicating continued growth in the coming years. These figures demonstrate that Indonesian society has a very high interest in motor vehicles, particularly automobiles. With significantly higher sales dominance compared to neighboring countries such as Thailand and Malaysia, Indonesia demonstrates strong enthusiasm and demand for automobiles, both as a means of mobility and as symbols of modern lifestyle (Purba et al., 2024). This phenomenon indicates that public perception toward automobiles in Indonesia is not only oriented toward functional needs, but is also influenced by symbolic values attached to the vehicles themselves.

According to research conducted by (Kharizsa et al., 2015), modern automobiles function not only as transportation tools, but also as symbols of lifestyle and social identity for their owners. In the context of urban society, ownership of new or modern cars is often associated with economic status, personal taste, and prestige. Although automobiles do not directly indicate social status from a functional perspective, public perception still positions new and expensive vehicles as representations of success and financial achievement. Therefore, modern automobiles function not only as mobility tools, but also as forms of self-expression and status symbols in contemporary social life (Kharizsa et al., 2015).

On the other hand, the charm of retro automobiles is equally attractive compared to modern cars. Retro cars possess a distinctive appeal that is rarely found in newly manufactured vehicles, which are often associated with luxury, while retro automobiles offer historical, aesthetic, and unique character values. According to an article published by RGB.id written by (Muhammad Hikam, 2024a). every retro car carries stories and identities from its era, making it more than merely a vehicle, but also a symbol of automotive history and culture. Unique details such as distinctive body designs, retro-style interiors, and the rarity of the units contribute to the high aesthetic and collectible value of retro automobiles. Beyond functioning as transportation, retro cars also represent identity, personal taste, and appreciation toward automotive history that should continue to be preserved so that their values and charm are not lost amidst the development of modern times (Muhammad Hikam, 2024a).

The phenomenon of interest in retro automobiles is also closely related to automotive culture or car culture. Within automotive culture, automobiles are no longer viewed solely as transportation tools, but also as parts of identity, lifestyle, and self-expression for their owners. Automotive enthusiasts often not only use their vehicles for transportation purposes, but also maintain, modify, and restore them. In addition, the emergence of automotive communities and activities such as car meets and touring events further demonstrates that automobiles possess social roles capable of bringing together individuals with similar interests. This indicates that automobiles possess broader values, not only in terms of functionality, but also in terms of aesthetics, history, and cultural values that shape automotive culture within society (Hewer & Brownlie, 2007).

This phenomenon is also closely associated with the automotive glory period known as The Golden Age. During the 1980s and 1990s, many retro automobiles were produced with strong design identities and high performance, making them iconic vehicles that remain relevant despite the advancement of modern automotive technology. As reported by Tribunnews.com and written by (Choirul Arifin, 2017), “The 1980s to 1990s represented The Golden Age.” This statement demonstrates that retro automobiles from that era are not merely symbols of the past, but also possess significant historical and aesthetic value.

The uniqueness of retro automobiles from The Golden Age era is still not widely recognized or appreciated by today's younger generation, partly due to the limited documentation regarding these vehicles. Based on an interview with Enos Aditya, an automotive content creator in Surabaya, retro automobiles from the 1980s–1990s possess distinctive identities that will never reappear in the modern era. Therefore, better documentation efforts are necessary to preserve the historical and aesthetic values of these retro vehicles so that they can continue to be introduced to younger generations as part of retro automotive heritage.

Enos further explained how the film *Tokyo Drift* featured retro automobiles in order to keep “those cars alive even though they are no longer in production.” This demonstrates that visual documentation, both through videography and photography, plays an important role in preserving the cultural values of automobiles from the golden automotive era. However, for more practical and efficient documentation purposes, photography can serve as a more suitable medium.

Photography possesses advantages in delivering messages quickly, efficiently, and in an easily understandable manner compared to other visual media such as videography. This argument is supported by research conducted by (Paulina Gunawan, 2021) in the journal entitled *Communication Process through Visual Media Photography as Illustration*. Through the visual strength reflected in composition, lighting, and objects, photography is capable of conveying meanings that can be directly understood by audiences without requiring lengthy verbal explanations. This makes photography a simple yet effective medium for attracting attention and building understanding, especially within the context of modern visual communication that demands speed and clarity of message delivery (Paulina Gunawan, 2021).

Along with the advancement of digital technology, photography can now also be presented through more interactive and accessible formats, one of which is digital books (E-Books) that function as both documentation and educational media. This perspective is supported by research from the University of Jember entitled *Development of Digital History Learning Media: Photobooks and Historical Collections on Agriculture and Colonial Plantations to Enhance Student Understanding*, which demonstrated that digital

photobooks are capable of increasing students' interest and understanding of learning materials. Through the combination of informative text and photographic visuals, digital photobooks function not only as documentation media, but also as interactive and easily accessible educational tools. The findings of the study indicate that the use of digital photography books can strengthen the process of visual message delivery, build awareness, and preserve cultural values in a more efficient and communicative manner within the digital era (Hilmiah et al., 2025).

The suitability of this media can also be associated with the characteristics of today's audience, particularly Generation Z, which is considered the group most familiar with the digital world. Generation Z tends to prefer information delivery that is concise, clear, and easy to understand. This is caused by the characteristics of Generation Z, who were born and raised in the digital era and are therefore accustomed to fast and instant flows of information. Based on research conducted by (Hassoun et al., 2023) in the journal *Practicing Information Sensibility: How Gen Z Engages with Online Information*, it was found that Generation Z prefers forms of information delivery that are "short, easily digestible, and quickly consumable," particularly through social media and digital platforms rather than lengthy articles or conventional news sources. They seek information that is relevant, efficient, and presented in visually appealing formats that are easily accessible through digital devices. The study also explained that Generation Z possesses a high level of digital literacy, yet often experiences fatigue from excessive information overload. Therefore, Generation Z prefers concise content that directly addresses the main point and provides useful insights without unnecessary elaboration (Hassoun et al., 2023).

In addition to preferring concise and visual forms of information delivery, Generation Z is also known for possessing a high level of curiosity regarding the development of digital technology. Based on research conducted (Rahayu et al., 2025) in the journal "The Role of Hedonic Motivation in Influencing TikTok Use and How It Relates to Generation Z Characteristics", Generation Z has a deep connection with digital technological developments that naturally shapes their curiosity toward various digital tools and platforms.

This demonstrates that Generation Z does not merely act as passive users, but also actively explores emerging technologies around them. Their curiosity encourages them to experiment with new features, applications, and content as part of adaptation and entertainment within the digital era. Therefore, exploratory behavior and high curiosity have become some of the primary characteristics of Generation Z in interacting with modern digital media (Rahayu et al., 2025).

With exploratory characteristics and high curiosity toward digital technology, Generation Z has developed into a generation that is highly adaptive toward change and quick in absorbing new information. In contrast to previous generations, older generations tend to face challenges in keeping up with technological developments and modern learning patterns. This statement is reinforced by research in the journal “Generational Differences in Adult Education Methodology – The Point of View of the Instructors” by (Malatyinszki, 2021), which explains that generations prior to Generation Z tend to have limitations in time and ability to adapt to technological developments and modern learning systems. This occurs because older generations tend to focus more on work and daily responsibilities, resulting in limited opportunities to expand knowledge or learn new things. The journal further explains that the ability to utilize digital devices and online spaces decreases with age, where active technology usage begins to decline after the age of 40.

Furthermore, older generations are generally more comfortable using traditional learning methods such as reading books or written notes rather than utilizing digital media. This condition indicates that limitations in time and technological adaptation are major factors that prevent generations before Generation Z from seeking new information or expanding knowledge as quickly as Generation Z, especially since Generation Z was raised in a digital era that supports fast and flexible access to information (Malatyinszki, 2021).

Besides being recognized as a digital generation, Generation Z also demonstrates strong interest in visual culture and past aesthetics that develop through social media and the internet. This phenomenon can be observed through the increasing interest in vintage fashion, analog cameras, old music, and retro vehicles or automobiles. Although they did

not directly experience those eras, Generation Z recognizes and appreciates past culture through digital media, films, photography, and communities, resulting in a connection between Generation Z and retro automobiles. This interest is not solely based on vehicle functionality, but also on aesthetic values, stories, design characteristics, and lifestyles attached to retro automobile culture and car culture (George et al., 2025).

Considering the relationship between Generation Z, visual culture, and interest in retro aesthetics, a medium is needed that can convey information while simultaneously documenting automotive culture in a visually appealing manner for younger audiences. Visual and digital-based media become relevant choices because they align with the characteristics of Generation Z, who are accustomed to accessing information through digital devices and visual media.

Therefore, Generation Z, particularly retro automobile enthusiasts and automobile enthusiasts in general, are considered suitable audiences for receiving retro-themed photography E-Book content. Their familiarity with digital technology and concise visual information delivery makes this medium effective in attracting attention and building understanding. Through a digital photography approach, this E-Book content is expected to become an educational medium that not only documents the historical value of retro automobiles, but also fosters younger generations' appreciation toward automotive heritage that is gradually being forgotten. Thus, the use of retro automobile photography E-Books becomes a strategic effort to educate and revive younger generations' appreciation toward retro automotive cultural values amidst the flow of modernization.

1.2 Identify the problem

Based on the background that has been described, several problems can be identified as follows:

- Based on interviews with Enos Aditya, documentation of retro automobiles remains limited and requires preservation through visual media..
- Based on research conducted by (Hassoun et al., 2023) in the journal *Practicing Information Sensibility: How Gen Z Engages with Online Information*, it was found that Generation Z's media consumption behavior tends to favor short,

interactive, and easily accessible visual content through digital platforms. However, there are still limited educational visual media presenting the historical and aesthetic values of retro automobiles.

- Based on the author's observations through social media exploration, Generation Z's interest in retro automobiles generally emerges only from trends such as films or games, rather than from an understanding of the historical and aesthetic values of the vehicles themselves. This indicates the need for media capable of educating while simultaneously attracting younger audiences toward retro automobiles through engaging visual approaches.
- Based on research conducted by (Hilmiah et al., 2025) from the University of Jember, digital photobooks have been proven effective in improving readers' understanding and interest.

These identified problems provide a strong foundation for designing a photography-based E-Book about retro automobiles aimed at increasing Generation Z's awareness of the historical and aesthetic values of retro automobiles, strengthening appreciation toward retro automotive culture, and presenting visually appealing media relevant to the digital characteristics of today's generation.

1.3 Problem Formulation

Based on the background and problem identification, the formulation of the problem in this design project is as follows:

- How to design a photography-based E-Book about retro automobiles as an awareness medium for Generation Z.

1.4 Problem Limitations

- The documentation process will be conducted in Surabaya and surrounding areas.
- The target audience is Generation Z, both individuals who are interested in automotive culture and those who are not.
- The primary medium used is automotive photography presented in an E-Book format rather than printed or audiovisual media, consisting of approximately 100 pages.

- The visual content presents documentation of retro automobiles using photography techniques such as still shoot and rolling shoot.

1.5 Purpose of design

- To design a photography based E-Book about retro automobiles as an awareness medium for Generation Z.

1.6 Benefits of planning

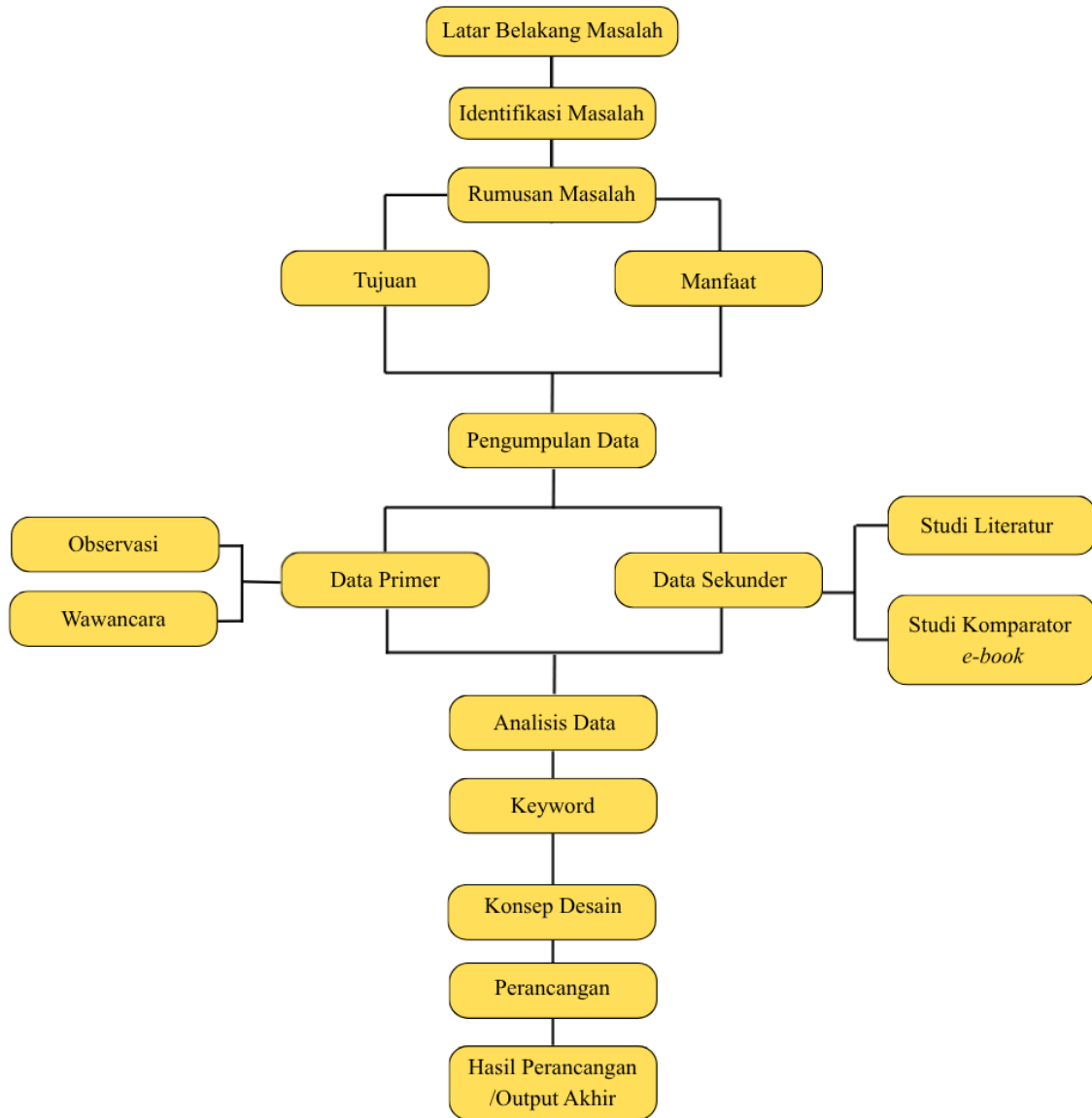
A. Academic Benefits

This design project is expected to contribute as a scientific reference and learning resource for Visual Communication Design students in understanding the application of retro automobile photography as a medium representing culture, history, and aesthetics. In addition, this project also provides an example of applying visual design methods through E-Book media that are relevant to the characteristics of modern audiences such as Generation Z.

B. Practical Benefits

In general, this design project aims to increase public appreciation, especially among Generation Z, toward the cultural values and design aesthetics of retro automobiles. Through attractive visual presentations and easily understandable narratives, this E-Book is expected to inspire not only retro automobile enthusiasts, but also audiences who were previously less interested in retro automobiles, encouraging them to recognize and appreciate the artistic and historical values of retro vehicles. Furthermore, this work is also expected to become a medium for preserving retro automotive culture in Surabaya and motivating photographers to continue producing visually creative and informative works according to the characteristics of each era.

1.7 Design Framework



*Figure 1. 1 Design Framework
Source: Personal Documents*