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VISUALIZATION OF HENRY MANAMPIRING'S FILOSOFI TERAS BOOK

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Abstract: Generation Z faces significant emotional challenges, including anxiety, stress, and difficulty regulating emotions—issues worsened by social media pressures. While this generation is highly receptive to visual and digital learning, Henry Manampiring's *Filosofi Teras* offers valuable Stoic principles like acceptance and self-control, yet its textual format is less engaging for younger audiences. This final project aims to visualize Stoic concepts from the book into an audiovisual narrative format through a web-based video series. The methodology for this project draws on Robin Landa's *Five Phases of Graphic Design Process* theory combined with Compesi's three-step video production model. The analysis phase utilized Ricoeur's hermeneutics to understand the meaning of the text through an act of appropriation, which then were used in the Conceptual Design phase. The design outcome consists of five 1–2-minute videos that illustrate the application of Stoic principles in daily life, aligning with the book's text. Although some philosophical considerations were used, the main focus is on the visual design experimentation. This project is expected to offer a more relevant and engaging way to convey Stoic values to Generation Z. Future research could explore developing additional episodes covering other topics within *Filosofi Teras* or creating audiovisual works based on other philosophical texts.

Keywords: Generation Z; Stoicism; Audiovisual narrative; Web series

Introduction

Modern life's fast pace and complexity have led to a rise in anxiety, especially among young people (Gillihan, 2019). Akbar et al. (2024) wrote that there was an

increase in cases of depression, anxiety, stress, and sleep disorders in Generation Z compared to Millennials. An American Psychological Association (2018) survey further revealed that 91% of Gen Z experience stress symptoms, such as feeling

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overwhelmed or struggling with emotional regulation.

A key characteristic of anxiety is excessive worry, which involves uncontrolled negative thoughts that often fixate on things beyond an individual's control (Andrews and Borkovec, 1988, as cited in MacLellan & Derakshan, 2021). This can lead to rumination, an over-focus on problems that worsens emotional states (Cohen et al., 2015).

To address these challenges, Stoicism, an ancient philosophy emphasizing acceptance, self-control, and focusing on what's controllable, emerges as a relevant alternative (Koehler, 2023; MacLellan & Derakshan, 2021). Stoic teachings can help individuals develop resilience, manage negative emotions, and find meaning in life (Koehler, 2023). A study found that Stoic training can reduce rumination and boost self-efficacy in highly anxious individuals; where participants who underwent Stoic training showed reduced anxiety-reflecting language and improved emotional management (MacLellan & Derakshan, 2021).

Henry Manampiring's (2018) self-help book, *Filosofi Teras*, introduces these Stoic concepts to Indonesian readers simply, relevantly, and inspiringly. Through easy-to-understand language and everyday examples, it bridges ancient philosophy with modern reality. Its relevance lies in offering an alternative solution for young people who are "anxious about many things," "overly sensitive," "struggle to move on," or "easily offended and angered" in both social media and modern life (Manampiring, 2018).

To optimize the dissemination of *Filosofi Teras*, particularly to Generation Z (aged 18-24), more engaging, relevant, and accessible information media are needed. Henry Manampiring himself believes that visual media, such as animation or content with storytelling elements, would be more

engaging for Gen Z. Research by DCN Research (Price, 2022) indicates that Gen Z strongly prefers consuming information in visual formats like images and videos on social media over long texts. The IDN Research Institute's (2024) study on Indonesian Gen Z reinforces this, showing that video content is significantly more dominant than photo or text-based content on social media platforms. This preference for video aligns with Mayer's (2002) Multimedia Learning theory, which states that multimedia learning, such as videos with narration combining visual and audio elements, is easier to process and remember due to the activation of 'dual-channel processing' in the brain, improving retention and understanding (Mayer, 2002). Furthermore, Statista (2024) reports YouTube as the second most accessed platform after Google. In the digital age, videos on social media platforms like YouTube have become a popular learning medium, capable of presenting information concisely, engagingly, and interactively, thus increasing accessibility and understanding for Gen Z (Baron, 2019).

Based on this, this project plans to visualize examples of everyday Stoic concepts, from scenarios in *Filosofi Teras*, into a series of short videos for YouTube. This accessible and digestible video format is expected to introduce Stoic principles to Gen Z in a lighter and more appealing way. This project offers novelty by adapting complex philosophical concepts into a dynamic video format that matches Gen Z's preference for visual and interactive content. Through this approach, Gen Z is expected to grasp Stoic principles more easily in daily life, ultimately motivating them to read the *Filosofi Teras* book.

This research seeks to answer the following questions:

1. How can the text-based examples

of Stoic scenarios from *Filosofi Teras* be adapted into video format?

2. What are the key considerations for creating engaging videos that illustrate Stoic scenarios from *Filosofi Teras* for Generation Z?

Methodology

This study uses a descriptive qualitative approach with a process-based visual design method. The design process refers to the Five Phases of the Graphic Design Process by Robin Landa (2011), aligned with the stages of video production (Pre-production, Production, Post-production) as proposed by Compesi (2019), and is visualized in the Design Flow Diagram (see Figure 1). As shown, the design process is divided into five phases as follows:

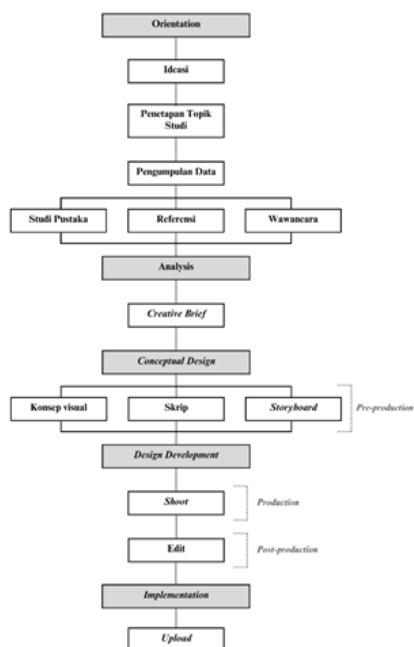


Figure 1. Design Process Flow Diagram based on Landa (2011) and Compesi (2019)
(Source: Personal research documentation)

The research itself also adopts a qualitative approach rooted in the interpretivist paradigm, where meaning is understood as being subjectively constructed by individuals based on their experiences and social context. Regarding interpretation, the researcher applies one of the philosophical accounts concerning hermeneutics from one French philosopher, namely Paul Ricoeur (1913 – 2005). His hermeneutical conception of appropriation is opted deliberately as a rational-philosophical basis for textual interpretation applied in this study. His philosophical conception of appropriation, which is at the end of his “hermeneutic arc”—a three-level process of textual interaction that includes explanation, comprehension, and appropriation—is fundamental to his hermeneutics (Ghasemi et al., 2011). Acknowledging text as “discourse fixed in writing” that exists in a state of essential “distanciation”, is the first step in Ricoeur’s hermeneutic approach (Ghasemi et al., 2011). Distanciation itself is Ricoeur’s hermeneutic account which designates the process of creating a distance between a text and its author or immediate context (Ghasemi et al., 2011). According to Ricoeur, such distance is a prerequisite for meaningful interpretation rather than a barrier.

Different from traditional approaches that are focusing on the author’s psychological intentions behind the text, Ricoeur maintains that “the meaning of the text is autonomous” and “escapes from the psychological intention of the writer” (Suazo, 2008). Its veracity is now unaffected by the author’s initial goal (Rugwiji, 2020). Such textual independence makes room for appropriation. Appropriation, from Ricoeur’s perspective, constitutes the final and most transformative stage of interpretation. For Ricoeur, to appropriate equals to make familiar or to make it one’s own what was once alien. It is asserted that “in order to make himself contemporary with the text, the exegete can ap-

propriate its meaning to himself: foreign, he makes it familiar, that is, he makes it his own" (Ricoeur, 1989). This captures what appropriation means in an interpretative process. The dialectical character of hermeneutics—the conflict between the near and the distant, the familiar and the unfamiliar—is encapsulated in this description.

Ricoeur's assertion captures a profoundly existential and dialogical perspective on reading. By engaging in a methodical act of interpretation that enables the foreign meaning of the text to be internalized—not as alien facts, but as a lived possibility—the exegete becomes contemporaneous with the text rather than erasing historical distance. Understanding turns into self-transformation during this process.

The interpreter appropriates the text (course text) world for themselves at the level of appropriation. Therefore, increased interpretation of horizons (perception and knowledge) emerges as a result (Ghasemi et al., 2011). This broadening of perspectives comes from letting the text's universe speak to oneself rather than forcing one's own beliefs onto it. According to Ricoeur, "the text is the mediation by which we understand ourselves in the last analysis" (Ghasemi et al., 2011).

Ricoeur delineates appropriation as the stage at which a text's meaning takes on existential importance. Instead of viewing texts merely as historical objects to be analyzed in a detached yet objective manner, appropriation encourages the readers to confront them as living conversations which voice directly to current issues. At this stage, the readers cut across questions about the text's literal content and rather open themselves to how the world of the text may expand, deepen, and retune their own understanding. This transformative capacity gives Ricoeur's account of appropriation significant association to arts and

humanities studies, where texts or cultural artefacts function not just as observable objects but as sources of wisdom capable of reorienting human life. Through appropriation, interpretation shifts from a purely intellectual venture to "a moment of dispossession" — an aperture which allows "the text to reveal its world" (Ghasemi et al., 2011). At last, Ricoeur's discussion of hermeneutics, particularly appropriation, provides methodological groundwork for most existential yet scholarly decisions from textual readings which are transformed and presented as visual forms. His hermeneutics account of appropriation is in fact existential and transformative. The reading, the textual interpretation of *Filosofi Teras*, is the practical implementation of such account indeed.

Orientation

In this phase, topic exploration and data collection were carried out through literature review, media references, and interviews with relevant sources. The book *Filosofi Teras* was chosen for its relevance to emotional anxiety issues commonly experienced by Generation Z. The literature review covered not only the book's content but also readers' responses as additional data to determine which concepts were suitable for visualization. Interviews were conducted with the author of the book and with experts in the field of philosophy to enrich contextual understanding.

Analysis

The collected data were analyzed using descriptive coding and in vivo coding (Saldaña, 2013) to identify the main themes in the book and audience responses. In addition, Ricoeur's hermeneutics was utilized to understand the meaning of the text through an act of appropriation.

An act of making the text familiar and researcher's own through dialectical process of intimacy and distance. This analysis resulted in a creative brief that served as the conceptual foundation for the design.

Conceptual Design (Pre-production)

This phase involved planning the visual output, including the development of concepts, scripts, and storyboards based on the analysis. The book's content was adapted into a video format using narrative and visual approaches that align with Generation Z's preferences.

Design Development (Production & Post-production)

The production phase involved video recording based on the storyboard, while the post-production phase included visual editing using software such as CapCut, Adobe Photoshop, and Canva. This process ensured that the visual narrative was delivered effectively and engagingly.

Implementation

The final educational video was uploaded to the YouTube platform. This platform was chosen due to its broad reach among Generation Z audiences (Baron, 2019).

Result

In the Orientation phase, data was gathered from literature review, media references, and expert interviews. From the analysis of the structure and content of the book *Filosofi Teras*, the researcher determined that Chapter 1, which primarily presents survey data, was excluded from the visualization due to its lack of concep-

tual content. Similarly, Chapters 12 and 13, which serve as the book's conclusion and summary, were also deemed unsuitable for visual adaptation. As a result, the core material selected for visual translation focused on Chapters 2 through 11.

Reader reviews collected from Goodreads highlighted recurring keywords such as control/trichotomy of control, STAR (Stop-Think-Assess-Respond), overthinking, managing thoughts and emotions, and anxiety/ stress. These keywords reflected the aspects of the book that resonated most with readers, especially those experiencing emotional challenges.

Media references were drawn from YouTube channels such as Einzelgänger (2.34 million subscribers), The School of Life (9.43 million), and The Pursuit of Wonder (3.22 million). These platforms often communicate philosophical ideas through narrative-based videos supported by animated visuals. Their success with Gen Z audiences influenced the decision to employ a similar narrative and visual approach in this project.

An interview with Henry Manampiring, the author of *Filosofi Teras*, conducted in Jakarta, Indonesia on 28 September 2024 revealed that the dichotomy of control is the concept most frequently mentioned by readers. He also emphasized that the part about maintaining rationality is especially relevant to young people today. In his view, if the book were to be visualized, it should use storytelling techniques involving characters or fables to make abstract ideas more engaging.

Further insight was gained from an interview with Prof. Dr. Francisco Budi Hardiman, S.S., M.A, a professor of philosophy at UPH. He stated that the most effective way to communicate philosophical ideas to young audiences is by presenting relatable examples and using a clear, accessible narrative structure.

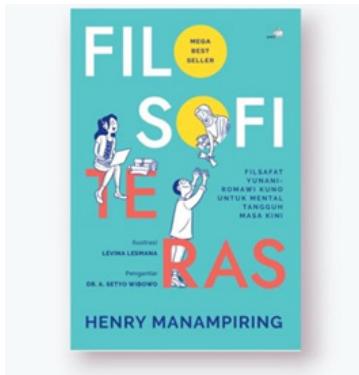


Figure 2. Filosofi Teras Book
(Source: Kompas.id)

Discussion

Ricoeur's view of appropriation allows the researcher to select which scenarios from the book Filosofi Teras that would be visualized in this project. Through which, five scenarios from the book were selected as most relevant for visualization.

Table 1. Chosen Scenarios
(Personal research documentation)

| No | Chapter | Scenarios |
|----|--|--|
| 1 | 4. Dikotomi Kendali (Dichotomy of Control) | <i>Skenario kencan pertama dari perspektif cowok</i> (First date scenario from a male perspective) |
| 2 | 4. Dikotomi Kendali (Dichotomy of Control) | <i>Skenario menghadapi sidang skripsi</i> (Thesis defense scenario) |
| 3 | 4. Dikotomi Kendali (Dichotomy of Control) | <i>Skenario selalu mengikuti omongan pacar</i> (Scenario of always following a partner's opinions) |
| 4 | 5. Mengendalikan Interpretasi dan Persepsi (Controlling Interpretation and Perception) | <i>Skenario kemacetan</i> (Traffic jam scenario) |
| 5 | 5. Mengendalikan Interpretasi dan Persepsi (Controlling Interpretation and Perception) | <i>Skenario "lebay" karena Sosial Media</i> ("Overreacting" scenario caused by social media) |

Based on the analysis of various philosophy-themed YouTube channels, it was observed that most videos use visually engaging elements, which serve as a key factor in attracting viewers. However, these videos often have long durations and focus heavily on in-depth conceptual explanations.

In contrast, this project takes a different approach. Rather than lengthy explanations, it presents Stoic concepts through short, everyday-life scenarios in the form of short stories. As a result, storytelling becomes the main method for delivering the message. While the video duration is shorter, dynamic graphics will still be used to maintain visual interest, similar to the reference videos.

Conceptual Design (Pre-production)

The project will take the form of a web-based short-video series, combining everyday-life storytelling with a simple yet engaging visual style. The videos will feature a mix of real footage and mixed media animation, using a black-and-white color scheme to reflect the simplicity of Stoic ideas. This aesthetic choice is inspired by the analog, nostalgic visual styles of films like *Vivre Sa Vie*, works of Ingrid Bergman, and Wes Anderson, evoking a timeless quality in line with Stoic philosophy.

Additionally, intertitles will be used to reinforce the three-act storytelling structure (Yorke, 2014), reminiscent of classic Hollywood films. The scenarios adapted from the book contain elements of theater and comedy, so the visual style is designed to enhance this mood.



Figure 3. Mood board
(Source: Personal research documentation)

The visual keywords are 'analog' and 'theatrical'. In addition, the genre of the video is slice of life, with a tone that is lighthearted and comical. This combination aims to make philosophical concepts more relatable and enjoyable for a younger audience.

For the script, it was developed using the three-act structure, consisting of cause, effect, and resolution. The language style combines Indonesian and English, reflecting the bilingual tone used in Filosofi Teras and aligning with the communication style familiar to Generation Z. The title and short summaries for each episode are as follows:

1. Cara First Date Tanpa Overthinking (How to Go on a First Date Without Overthinking)

The main character becomes overwhelmed by intrusive, uncontrollable thoughts during a crucial moment in Act II. Stop motion techniques are used to visually depict the chaos in their mind, disrupting the scene. Eventually, they learn to shift their focus toward things they can control.

2. Cara Ngerjain Skripsi Dengan Lebih Sedikit Stress (How to Work on Your Thesis with Less Stress)

This episode portrays the struggles

of a final-year student who panics and overthinks while working on their thesis. Through the Stoic approach of the Dichotomy of Control, they learn to approach the process with more calmness, accepting what can't be controlled and focusing only on the efforts they can make today.

3. Hati-hati Bucin! (Beware of Getting Love-Struck!)

This story highlights an individual who loses themselves in an attempt to please their partner, which results in unfortunate circumstances. Through the lens of Stoicism, they come to realize the importance of establishing emotional boundaries and not placing their happiness in external factors or other people.

4. Macet? Santai Aja (Stuck in Traffic? Just Relax)

This episode follows the main character as they get stuck in a traffic jam (a common occurrence in big cities). Initially, the character responds with negative interpretations and emotional outbursts. The character learns to accept external situations they cannot change and practices staying calm using the STAR technique: Stop, Think, Assess, Respond.

5. Lebay di Jempol, Lebay di Pikiran (Overreacting Online, Overreacting in the Mind)

This episode examines the psychological impact of doomscrolling and heightened emotional responses to online opinions. Through the application of Stoic principles, the main character learns to discern which external stimuli are worth responding to and which are best disregarded, thereby fostering emotional regulation and mental clarity.

Then, the storyboards are developed as visual guides. Each scene is accompanied by brief description of the types

of shots used, based on the fundamental camera techniques written in Grammar of the Shot by Bowen & Thompson (2009).

Table 2. The Extended Family of Basic Shots
(Bowen & Thompson, 2009)

| Shot Name | Description |
|---------------------------------|--|
| Extreme Long Shot (XLS / ELS) | Also known as a very wide shot, typically used for exterior scenes. Shows a very wide field of view. |
| Very Long Shot (VLS) | Part of the wide shot family, can be used for interior or exterior shots if the setting is spacious enough, such as a large warehouse. |
| Long Shot / Wide Shot (LS / WS) | Usually shows the subject's full body, with the head and feet visible within the frame. Suitable for indoor or outdoor settings. |
| Medium Long Shot (MLS) | Cuts the subject's body above or below the knees, depending on costume or movement needs. |
| Medium Shot (MS) | Also known as a waist shot, where the frame cuts just below the waist and slightly above the wrists. |
| Medium Close-Up (MCU) | Sometimes called a two-button shot, framing around the chest near the top two buttons of a shirt, always above the elbows. |
| Close-Up (CU) | Often referred to as a head shot, showing the face from just below the chin to the top of the head (sometimes cropping the top of the head). |
| Big Close-Up (BCU) | The face fills almost the entire frame, still clearly showing the eyes, nose, and mouth. |
| Extreme Close-Up (ECU / XCU) | Focuses on very specific details, such as only the eyes, mouth, ears, or hands. |

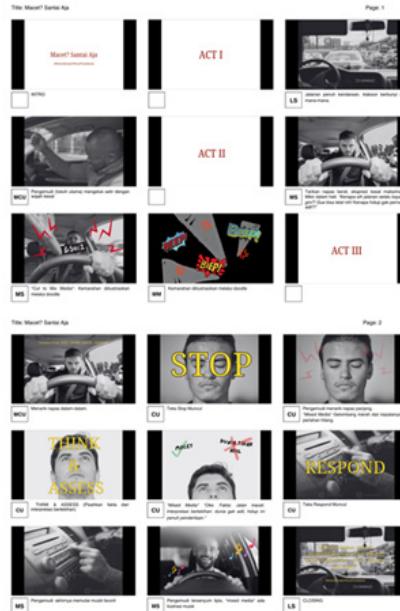


Figure 4. Examples of Storyboard.
(Source: Personal research documentation)

Design Development (Production & Post-production)

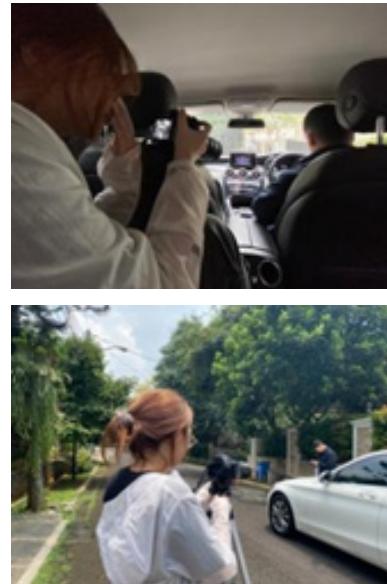


Figure 5. Behind The Scenes
(Source: Personal research documentation)

After the production is finished, the next stage is post-production. During the post-production process, several trials and errors occurred. The initial plan for creating mixed media animation assets involved a manual approach (printing the assets, scanning them, and compiling them digitally). However, due to time constraints, the mixed media assets were ultimately created entirely digitally using Adobe Photoshop and Canva. Therefore, the post-production phase utilized a combination of applications: CapCut Pro for assembling the footage, Adobe Photoshop and Canva for the mixed media/stop-motion elements, and Adobe Illustrator for creating the introduction, title, and intertitles.

There is a clear visual system applied throughout this project, as it is designed as a web series. A consistent visual style is important to ensure coherence across all episodes.



Figure 6. Introduction and Title
(Source: Personal research documentation)

Each video opens with an introduction inspired by classic films, incorporating theatrical elements to match the theme. This section features text appearing over a curtain, which then opens using a stop-motion technique to reveal the video title. The color red is used for the curtain to catch viewers' attention, while the yellow text creates contrast and a glowing effect, resembling projector lights. This approach is intended to immediately captivate Gen Z viewers, who, according to research, tend to engage only with content that grabs their attention within the first few seconds. The typefaces used are a mix of script (Great Vibes) and serif (Athelas), chosen to evoke nostalgia and align with the project's design references.



Figure 7. Intertitles
(Source: Personal research documentation)

Each act is introduced with black-and-white intertitles such as 'Act 1', 'Act 2', or 'Act 3' along with short descriptions of each act's theme. The black-and-white color scheme helps the text feel like a natural part of the narrative. A serif typeface (Athelas) is used to resemble the look of typewritten text.

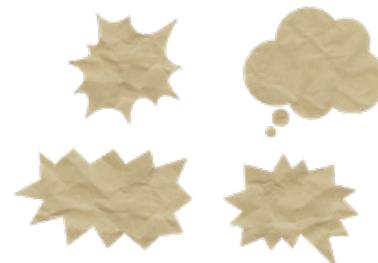


Figure 8. Speech Bubble Assets
(Source: Personal research documentation)



Figure 9. Mixed media clips
(Source: Personal research documentation)

The video footage is in black and white to create a nostalgic mood, while only the mixed media assets are in color.

or. The mixed media style is playful and comic-like, using elements such as speech bubbles, action lines, and squeans (comic effects). This animation style appears mainly during scenes where characters experience inner monologues or intense overthinking.



Figure 10. Clip transition from real footage to mixed media
(Source: Personal research documentation)

Transitions between live footage and stop-motion are made using paper transitions, maintaining the comic book aesthetic.

In addition, the videos include yellow subtitles in a sans-serif typeface for clarity and readability, similar to subtitles used in cinemas. These subtitles are broken into short, quickly changing segments to align with the shorter attention spans and preferences of younger audiences.



Figure 11. Episode 2 & 3 Closings
(Source: Personal research documentation)

Each video ends with a large, yellow script-font quote intended to leave a reflective and lasting impression on the viewer.

Conclusion

This project demonstrates that Stoic philosophy, as presented in *Filosofi Teras*,

can be effectively adapted into audiovisual formats by translating key textual scenarios into short, narrative-driven videos using a combination of real footage and mixed-media stop motion (see the resulting video compilation in this link <https://youtu.be/6kqqdVofr3A>). The adaptation process emphasized storytelling techniques and visual consistency to ensure clarity and emotional resonance.

By tailoring the visual style and pacing to suit the viewing habits of Generation Z, such as through dynamic visuals, short durations, and accessible language, the videos successfully deliver Stoic concepts in a format that is both engaging and educational. The web series format allows for episodic exploration of philosophical ideas, supporting gradual learning and better retention.

This project contributes not only to creative reinterpretations of classical philosophy but also proposes an alternative medium for emotional education among young audiences. Future development could involve broader topic coverage and expert collaboration to further enhance philosophical accuracy and educational value.

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CAMPAIGN DESIGN TO INCREASE INTEREST IN TRADITIONAL SNACKS AMONG YOUTH AGED 16–20 IN JAKARTA

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Abstract: Globalization has reshaped snacking habits of Jakarta's youth, with international snacks dominating social media and daily consumption. Meanwhile, traditional Indonesian snacks are losing appeal due to limited visibility and outdated representation. This study explores how digital media can re-engage youth with traditional snacks through the Design Thinking approach (Empathize, Define, Ideate, Prototype, Test). Qualitative methods such as interviews, questionnaires, and observations with respondents aged 16–20 in Jakarta were used to understand perceptions and preferences. Findings show that young consumer are drawn to humorous and visually dynamic snack content. Traditional snacks can regain appeal when presented with currently relevant trends and storytelling. Based on these insights, a social media campaign titled "Jadoel Still Cool" was developed and tested through short illustrated video, showing improved awareness and positive attitudes toward traditional sancks. This study demonstrates how human-centered design and digital storytelling can help preserve Indonesia's culinary heritage amidst globalization-driven food trends.

Keywords: traditional snacks; social media campaign; illustrated video; visual communication

Introduction

The younger generation in Jakarta is increasingly exposed to global food trends, a development that was largely driven by the forces of globalization, technological advancement, and digital cultural exchange. For example, hybridization of Western with Indonesian food culture or even fast-food franchises adapting to local tastes (Herminingrum, 2020). A data by GoodStats, titled Preferences of Indonesian Youth Snack Types (2022), reveals

that 55% of respondents aged 18–24 prefer junk/fast food (28.18%), light snacks (18.64%), and instant food (8.18%) (Shafina, 2023). This shift has resulted in changing dietary patterns, where traditional snacks are gradually being replaced by more convenient, globalized alternatives.

Recent research also shows that Generation Z's interest in traditional foods is shaped by sustainability values, influencer culture, and digital food engagement

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(Kristia et al., 2024). The growing dominance of global foods leads to a loss in culinary diversity and a weakening of cultural identity tied to traditional snacks. As shown in this article, the globalization of Korean food in Indonesian cities demonstrates how foreign culinary formats are accepted and localized, often overshadowing indigenous snacks (Dialektika et al., 2024).

A study focusing on Indonesian youth highlight that perception and consumption of traditional snacks are not aligning. Teenagers rated traditional snacks as generally acceptable but still showed a strong interest towards modern snacks (Maulidiah & Andrian Syah, 2025). Another study found that although fast food is preferred many still consume traditional snacks, but this does not guarantee their prominence in youth snack culture (Briawan et al., 2023).

However, limited research has examined how visual communication can strategically reframe traditional snacks as relevant and appealing to Generation Z audiences in the digital era.

Meanwhile, the rapid escalation in digital media use among Indonesian youth opens up strategic possibilities. Social media such as Instagram, TikTok, and YouTube have been shown to shape food perception, culinary identity, and consumption patterns. For instance, digital media interventions can strengthen local food heritage through storytelling and visual formats that enhances audience understanding (Prastyo et al., 2025). This suggests that digital media could be leveraged to revive interest in traditional snacks rather than just serve global snack trends.

Considering these developments, there is an urgent need to raise awareness among younger consumers about the value of traditional snacks, not only as food but as cultural heritage and identity. If cur-

rent trends continue, there is a risk that many traditional snacks will no longer be remembered and eventually lost from the youth market and cultural memory.

Based on this context, this study focuses on the first four stages of Design Thinking process (Empathize, Define, Ideate, and Prototype) to develop a strategic digital campaign that increases interest in traditional snacks among youth aged 16-20 in Jakarta. Through thoughtful use of digital media and culturally relevant content, the campaign seeks to revitalize appreciation for Indonesia's culinary heritage in the face of globalization-driven dietary shifts.

Methodology

This study applies the first four stages of Design Thinking approach: Empathize, Define, Ideate, and Prototype to develop a digital campaign promoting traditional Indonesian snacks. The final Test stage is recommended for future implementation and evaluation of audience response. According to Hasso Plattner (2020) these five stages form the foundation of a human-centered design process.

Empathize is a critical phase in which designers aim to understand users' behaviors, needs, thought processes, and values in the context of the problem. In this study, the Empathize stage involved qualitative research with 10 participants aged 16-20 in Jakarta through semi-structured interviews, questionnaires, and field observations to explore their perceptions of traditional snacks and engagement with social media culinary content.

Interviews were used to explore young people's perception of traditional snacks and their engagement with social media culinary content. Some questions includes, how often they consume traditional snacks, if they were faced with traditional and international snacks what

they would choose, traditional snacks they are familiar with, reason behind not wanting to try a snack, their awareness of the declining interest in traditional snacks among Generation Z's, how much impact a social media post can influence their choices, social media platforms they often use, if there were a promotion about traditional snacks what could make it interesting, and lastly is it important to reintroduce traditional snacks to youths through social media.

The respondents are aged 16-20 years old and currently living in Jakarta. Most respondents rarely consume traditional snacks because they are hard to find often depend on their parents to buy them. When visiting malls, they tend to choose international snacks such as ice cream, foreign pastries, or fried foods like corn dogs and crispy chicken. The traditional snacks they still recognize are fried snacks like risoles and pastel, as well as cakes such as klepon and bika ambon. Their snack choices are mainly influenced by nostalgia, taste, price, and social media trends. Quite a lot of respondents are not willing to try a new snack because it might not suit their tastes, they end up not eating it and wasting their money. Many respondents agreed that traditional snacks are becoming less known among the younger generation and social media plays a major role in influencing their choices. Instagram and TikTok are the most used platforms, with short video content and appealing visuals seen as the most effective forms of promotion. Respondents also believe it is important to reintroduce traditional snacks to younger audiences through social media to preserve Indonesia's culinary heritage.

The questionnaire was distributed to teenagers aged 16-20 through Google Forms. A total of 101 respondents participated, answering multiple-choice, short-answer, and checkbox questions. The respondents consisted of high school

and university students who consumed traditional snacks about one to three times a week, usually obtained from family members such as parents or relatives. Their main reasons for trying particular snacks were their good taste, curiosity, and affordable price. The snacks most frequently purchased included ice cream, boba drinks, and French fries. Social media also had a significant influence on respondents' snack choices, with Instagram and TikTok being the most commonly used platforms for food references. The type of content that most attracted respondents to try snacks was short videos with unique information (such as origin stories or fun facts) and a touch of humor.

Most respondents believed that reintroducing traditional snacks to younger generations is important because these snacks represent cultural identity and heritage that should not be lost. They also felt that future generations also deserve to experience traditional snacks.

The next part of the questionnaire explored respondents' design preferences. Most preferred cartoon or cute-style illustrations. The favored color schemes for digital content were combinations of traditional Indonesian tones (brick red, dark brown, turmeric yellow) and bright colors (blue turquoise and OCTO red). The visual elements were a mix of video and illustration featuring cute characters or figures. The preferred content themes were those that combined humor (funny and relatable), aesthetic appeal (visually pleasing), and informative value (containing facts and educational content).

An observation was made by going to malls and other similar places that sell both traditional and international snacks. From this observation, it is clear that people who have an interest in traditional snacks are generally older and have a family. From the number of tenants, international snack booths dominate mean-

while traditional snack booths are very few and tucked away in the back of flashy international snack booths.



Figure 1. Observation at a mall
(Source: Personal research documentation, 2025)

The Define stage synthesized all collected data to identify recurring patterns and pain points. Analysis revealed that the younger generation often perceives traditional snacks as outdated, less appealing, and irrelevant in comparison to modern international snacks. These insights led to the formulation of a central problem statement, which is how to reposition traditional snacks as modern, relevant, and valuable cultural assets in the eyes of today's youth. This definition became the guiding foundation for the campaign's creative and communication strategy. The qualitative data were analyzed using thematic coding, allowing key insights and recurring patterns to guide the creative direction in subsequent stages of ideation and prototyping.

During Ideate stage, various creative approaches were explored to determine the most effective way to communicate this repositioning. Brainstorming and benchmarking were conducted to generate ideas for content formats, tone, and visual direction that would resonate with the target audience.



Figure 2. Sketching ideas
(Source: Personal research documentation, 2025)

Successful promotional strategies from other culinary campaigns were analyzed to identify best methods in youth-oriented digital marketing. The final campaign concept, "Jadoel Still Cool", emerged as a synthesis of these explorations by merging nostalgic elements of traditional snacks with modern aesthetics to make them appear culturally relevant.

Prototype stage involved developing a short, illustrated video as the campaign's primary medium. The video introduces traditional snacks through narration, concise storytelling, and visually appealing animation suitable for social media platforms. Supporting media such as Instagram posts and stories were also created to extend campaign reach and encourage audience interaction. These materials were designed with consistent visuals, tone, and narrative flow to maintain a cohesive campaign identity.

Finally, the Test stage was conducted to evaluate the effectiveness of the prototype. Testing occurred in two phases, Alpha and Beta Test. Alpha testing was carried out with a small group of target users to collect initial feedback on visual quality, message clarity, and emotional appeal. After revisions were made, Beta testing was conducted with a broader audience but still within target to assess engagement levels, content reception, and overall campaign effectiveness. Feedback gathered from both testing phases are used for final adjustments to enhance clarity, relevance, and appeal before full implementation.



Figure 3. Beta Test
(Source: Personal research documentation, 2025)

Some suggestions from Beta testing were very good but not applicable in such short time frame, especially fully animating movement and mouths. This can be a recommendation for future work.

Result

The Ideate and Prototype stages produced several design outcomes informed by user insights from the Empathize phase. These insights were translated into specific visual and communication strategies, summarized in Table 1 below.

Table 1. User Insights and Design Response
(Source: Personal research documentation, 2025)

| No. | User Insight | Design Response |
|-----|---|--|
| 1. | Youth prefer short, visually dynamic content on TikTok and Instagram. | Developed a 40 second illustrated video format optimized for mobile viewing. |
| 2. | Respondents value humor and relatable tone. | Used light, casual narration, and expressive characters. |

| | | |
|----|--|---|
| 3. | Traditional snacks are seen as outdated. | Bilingual title “Jadoel Still Cool” reframes them as culturally relevant. |
| 4. | Bright, modern visuals preferred over muted tones. | Adopted color palette combining red #CB2028, yellow #ED6D1B, turquoise #18B99B, and also other accent colors. |

1. Short Illustrated Video



Figure 4. Short Illustrated Video Panels
(Source: Personal design documentation, 2025)

The short illustrated video was designed to present traditional snacks, such as onde-onde, through a sequential storytelling format that emphasizes recognizable characteristics and cultural origin. Each panel integrates visual cues and narrative elements aligned with respondent' stated preferences for short, informative, and sustains viewer attention content, as

gathered from interviews and questionnaires.

2. Logo



Figure 5. Campaign Logo
(Source: Personal design documentation, 2025)

The “Jadoel Still Cool” logo functions as the campaign’s primary visual identity, translating user insights into a design that merges tradition with modern appeal. The retro serif typeface for “JADOEL” in red references heritage, while the turquoise “COOL” conveys modernity and relevance, reflecting respondents’ preference for combining traditional and contemporary tones. The illustrated risoles and klepon replacing the letter “O” were based on interview findings identifying these snacks as the most recognizable among youth. The simplified shapes and balanced color palette enhance legibility across digital and print formats.

3. Mascot

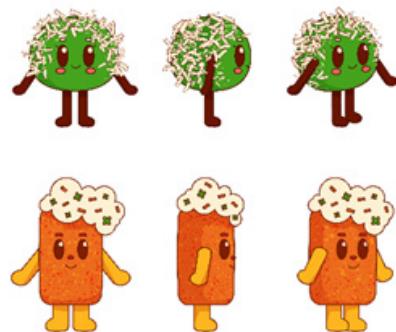


Figure 6. Campaign Mascot Lepon and Isol
(Source: Personal design documentation, 2025)

Two mascots, Lepon (inspired by klepon) and Isol (inspired by risoles), were created to visualize traditional snacks as characters. Their development was based on user research from questionnaire indicating that respondents preferred “cute” cartoon-style illustrations with traditional colors inspired by the snack itself. The mascots were designed in a simplified retro cartoon style to align with these preferences and ensure clarity in digital formats. They serve as visual identifiers for the campaign and support audience recognition across various media.

4. Instagram Feeds



Figure 7. Campaign’s Instagram Feeds
(Source: Personal design documentation, 2025)

The “Jadoel Still Cool” campaign includes a series of Instagram posts developed to reintroduce traditional snacks through culturally resonant visual strategies. The content format was informed by user findings indicating short, humorous, and trend-based posts on Instagram were the most engaging for respondents. Each post incorporates familiar digital expressions such as memes, comparison formats, and quizzes to reflect current online communication styles. Visual elements including the mascots used bright yet balanced color scheme, and clear typography to ensure readability and recognition in fast-scrolling environments.

5. Instagram Story



Figure 8. Campaign's Instagram Story
(Source: Personal design documentation, 2025)

The Instagram Story series was developed to promote interaction and user participation, aligning with findings that respondents preferred interactive and reward-based content. The “Coba & Menangkan” story applies gamification approach through a stamp collection challenge, encouraging users to try traditional snacks and redeem themed merchandise featuring the mascots Lepon and Isol. The “Nostalgia” story utilizes the question box feature to invite users to share snack-related memories, drawing on audience insight that link traditional snacks with family and childhood experiences. These features position the campaign within participatory digital culture, fostering two-way communication between brand and audience.

6. Reward Stamp Card (Offline Activation)



Figure 9. Reward Stamp Card
(Source: Personal design documentation, 2025)

To complement the digital campaign, an offline activation titled “Coba-Coba Berhadiah” was developed to address the finding that many respondents were hesitant to try traditional snacks due to uncertainty about taste. The activity applied a reward-based gamification strategy, consistent with the preference for interactive experience identified in the empathize stage. Participants were invited to sample a selection of traditional snacks at the booth and collect stamps for each item tried. Completing all stamps entitled participants to campaign merchandise such as keychains and stickers. The accompanying booklet included stamp spaces, further instructions, and QR Code linked to campaign's Instagram page, integrating offline engagement with online interaction. The design used bold typography and contrasting colors (orange and turquoise) to ensure high visibility and consistency with the campaign's overall visual system.

7. Stamp



Figure 10. Stamp
(Source: Personal design documentation, 2025)

The campaign stamp features simplified outlines of the mascots Lepon and Isol in red, designed for clear visibility when applied to the reward card. Its rounded form and compact size (2 x 2 cm) were created to ensure legibility and ease of use in repeated stamping. The design supports the gamified “Coba-Coba Berhadiah” activity, reinforcing the achievement mechanism that encourages participants to try all the available traditional snacks. This aligns with insights

from empathize phase indicating tangible rewards increase youth participation and willingness to engage with traditional food experiences.

8. Traditional Snack Information Card



Figure 11. Traditional Snack Information Card
(Source: Personal design documentation, 2025)

The information cards serve to educate and engage the audience by introducing each traditional snack through concise description of origin, texture, flavor, and ingredients. This approach not only informs but also builds familiarity, reducing hesitation to try unfamiliar foods. The use of hand-drawn illustrations instead of photos adds a creative and nostalgic touch, aligning with the campaign's youthful visual identity while differentiating it from typical food promotions. From analytical

perspective, these cards embody the Empathize and Ideate stages by addressing audience curiosity and encouraging a deeper emotional connection with traditional snacks through accessible and visual storytelling.

9. Promotional Banner



Figure 12. Promotional Banner
(Source: Personal design documentation, 2025)

The promotional banner serves as an attention-grabbing visual tool to attract visitors to the "Jadoel still Cool" booth. Sized at 150 cm x 60 cm, it features bold typography, snack illustrations, and mascots designed to appeal to target audiences. The main headline, "JANGAN COBA Kalo Ga Mau Ketagihan" adopts a humorous, trend-based tone to reflect youth communication styles. Red and orange tones create urgency, while the emphasized word "GRATIS" strategically highlights the free sampling offer. This is

done purposefully to address the financial problem of trying out new things, as seen in user's insights. Other supporting elements such as event details and QR code ensure clarity and ease of access. This design reflects insights from earlier research, where visual appeal and culturally relevant phrasing motivate them to explore.

10. Poster

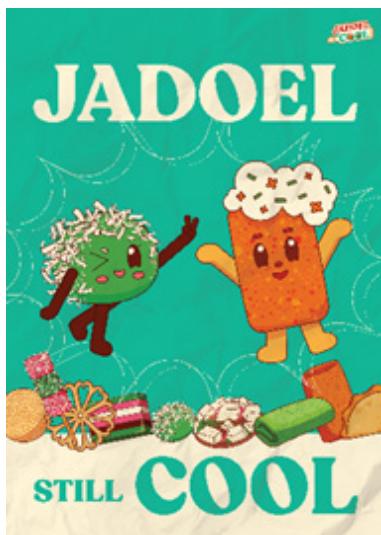


Figure 13. Poster
(Source: Personal design documentation, 2025)

The campaign poster presents the mascots Lepon and Isol as visual representations of traditional snacks. It uses bold retro typography and a turquoise-cream color palette (#18B99B and #FFF2D4) to create a nostalgic yet modern impression. Snack illustrations at the bottom emphasize the campaign's focus on traditional food. The composition is inspired by viral visual formats and aims to catch attention because it will be displayed at the booth.

11. Sticker



Figure 14. Mascot Stickers
(Source: Personal design documentation, 2025)

The sticker set presents mascots Lepon and Isol with varied expressions to support the campaign's goal of increasing recognition of traditional snacks among younger audiences. The use of rounded forms and saturated colors aligns with visual preferences identified during the research phase. Designed as collectible items, the stickers extend engagement beyond digital media by enabling physical interaction.

12. Keychain



Figure 15. Traditional Snacks Keychain
(Source: Personal design documentation, 2025)

A set of keychains depicting traditional snacks was created as a part of the campaign's reward system. Using simplified outlines and consistent style, the designs ensure visual clarity and alignment with the mascots. Based on interview insights, the keychains act as tangible reminders of the campaign, supporting recognition of traditional snacks among younger audiences.

Discussion

The “Jadoel Still Cool” campaign demonstrates how design can be applied strategically to reposition traditional snacks within contemporary youth culture. Insights from the empathy and ideation stages showed that Jakarta’s youth view traditional snacks as less visible on digital platforms and associated them with older generation. In response, the campaign adopts digital-first strategies through Instagram content and video storytelling to align with their media consumption patterns.

The campaign video serves as the main communication medium, connecting nostalgia and modern visual trends in a concise format optimized for Instagram Reels. It introduces mascots and traditional snacks using animated transitions and rhythmic pacing consistent with the audience preferences for brief, visually dynamic content. Supporting media such as logo, mascots, and Instagram post reinforce this narrative through interactive and trend-based formats derived from interview and questionnaire findings.

The offline booth and supporting materials extend audience engagement beyond digital spaces. Since many respondents were hesitant to try traditional snacks due to unfamiliarity, the booth offered a low risk tasting experience supported by free samples and collectible rewards. This strategy directly addressed behavioural barriers identified during the empathize stage while linking physical participation to digital visibility through QR integration.

The campaign illustrates how design may serve as a tool to recontextualize cultural products within globalized consumer culture. The combination of Indonesian visual elements and contemporary digital aesthetics suggests a process of cultural adaptation rather than replacement. From the perspective of participatory communi-

cation, the integration of interactive and hybrid media formats indicates potential for co-creating meaning between audiences and designers. This participatory dynamic may contribute to cultural sustainability by encouraging youth to engage with traditional foods as part of an evolving cultural dialogue, rather than as static heritage.

However, the campaign is not yet being implemented, so empirical evaluation of audience response is not available. The focus on urban Jakarta also limits its generalizability. Future studies should test the campaign’s effectiveness using digital engagement metrics and expanded regional sampling.

Overall, the “Jadoel Still Cool” campaign demonstrates how Design Thinking can inform culturally grounded communication strategies. By integrating digital and physical media, the project suggests that visual communication has the potential to support participatory engagement and contribute to cultural sustainability among youth. Further implementation and audience testing are needed to examine how such approaches might influence perceptions of traditional snacks in practice.

Conclusion

This study examined how visual communication strategies informed by Design Thinking could be applied to promote traditional Indonesian snacks among Jakarta’s youth. The research highlights how globalization and digital media influence snack preferences, often positioning international products as more visible and accessible. The campaign concept developed through empathize, define, ideate, and prototype stages, demonstrates a potential framework for translating audience insights into culturally responsive design outputs.

The “Jadoel Still Cool” campaign proposes that participatory and visually driven communication may serve as an entry point for cultural sustainability and encouraging youth to engage with traditional snacks. While the campaign has not yet been implemented, its design outcomes indicate possible direction for how heritage-based content could coexist with digital consumer practices.

Practically, the study contributes to understanding how creative design processes can address cultural decline through user-centered communication and the role of design in sustaining local food heritage. Future implementation and testing could explore how such strategies perform across different social media platforms and demographic contexts to assess their broader cultural impact.

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AUGMENTED REALITY BOOK DEVELOPMENT FOR ELEMENTARY VISUAL ARTS EDUCATION USING SMARTPHONE-BASED PHOTOGRAHMETRY

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Abstract: This study develops an Augmented Reality (AR) book to support elementary visual arts learning by enabling intuitive interaction with three-dimensional (3D) forms, scale, and perspective. Using smartphone-based photogrammetry, the book integrates realistic 3D assets for visual exploration beyond two-dimensional (2D) illustrations. The prototype was evaluated through the AREA (Augmented Reality for Enterprise Alliance) heuristic framework to assess usability and functional design. Results show that most interface elements align with heuristic principles, though improvements are needed in navigation, layout, and asset optimization. Overall, the study highlights a set of heuristic insights and preliminary design principles for developing AR-based books: emphasizing multimodal cues, clear spatial orientation, and intuitive object manipulation as key factors to support students' comprehension of artistic 3D objects. The results show that most interface features met heuristic principles, with Evaluator I recording 51.60% "Yes" responses, Evaluator II 35.20%, and Evaluator III 37.97%. The "No" category reached 45.38% for Evaluator II, while "Somewhat" remained low overall, with the highest from Evaluator III (8.10%). Future studies should expand user testing with elementary learners to validate these heuristic guidelines and refine the interactive design framework for broader educational application

Keywords: augmented reality, heuristic evaluation, visual arts education, photogrammetry

Introduction

Learning Basic Visual Arts in elementary schools, particularly for Grade 2 students, involves understanding three-dimensional (3D) forms in artistic objects.

3D artwork is a visual work that has length, width, and height that can be viewed from various angles (Anggun et al., 2024). 3D artwork is important to learn because it fosters student's creativity and aesthetics. Unfortunately second-grade

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elementary students often struggle with three-dimensional concepts. Many student's exam grades are still below standard, with daily test scores not exceeding 75, often ranging from 75 to 55 (Fajrie et al., 2024). Students create artwork based on their imagination, their difficulties are evident in their line drawings that do not follow a 3D structure and rely solely on 3D materials, while underutilizing the dimension of depth (Anggun et al., 2024; Devita et al., 2025; Rahman et al., 2019).

Student's lack of understanding of 3D concepts stems from complex material presented in illustrated textbooks. Current textbooks primarily present 3D shapes through two-dimensional (2D) illustrations, which provide incomplete information about the dimensions and structure of objects. This limitation highlights a learning barrier in understanding 3D objects through conventional illustrations, as students often struggle to perceive spatial depth and structure from static images (Bersier, N. M, 2025). Consequently, learning materials such as 3D-based books can be enhanced with AR Area tools to provide interactive spatial visualization, allowing learners to explore 3D forms directly and reduce the dependency on mental reconstruction. However, the information 3D shapes can only be used effectively when there is fundamental human cognitive level of creativity and logic reasoning (Purnama & Hefira, 2025).

The challenge lies in bridging the gap between 2D representations and students' accurate comprehension of 3D forms. Instructional media should act as a bridge to support students in connecting abstract visual concepts with tangible and realistic experiences. Without this bridge, students may struggle with visualization, memory retention, and manipulation of artistic forms. This calls for innovative media designs that reduce to enhancing students'

interactive experiences with art learning materials. Nabil Oktanuryansyah & Anggun Kusumaningtyas (2024) explain that smartphone-based photogrammetry can be applied in designing AR books for elementary school art education. Extending this, Kusumaningtyas & Noviani (2024) demonstrate that interactive AR books can enhance learning engagement and comprehension by enabling students to explore three-dimensional visual information directly, which aligns with the goals of basic visual art education.

In broader context, similar principles have been applied in other domains as well. For instance, Tokopedia's use of augmented reality demonstrates how AR can act as cognitive bridge, by enhancing comprehension by reducing abstract processing and promoting direct interactive engagement (Tirtadarma & Darmo, 2020). Augmented Reality (AR) provides a promising solution, as it overlays physical learning resources with interactive 3D visualizations, allowing students to explore objects more intuitively. Furthermore, AR books have been reported to fulfill essential pedagogical functions, such as drawing attention, facilitating understanding, and compensating for learning difficulties (Elford et al., 2022).

Building on these findings, this study proposes the design of an AR-based book to support students in learning basic 3D forms. The design leverages smartphone-based photogrammetry to create realistic 3D assets, enabling accurate visualization of shape, structure, and texture (Slowiński et al., 2022). This approach reduces unnecessary mental effort by shifting the burden of visualization from imagination to direct interaction with digital content, thereby strengthening students' mental representation of 3D objects (Paas & Sweller, 2012).

This research seeks to answer the following questions:

1. How can AR book features heuristically designed to facilitate intuitive interaction with form, scale, and perspective in visual arts education?
2. What design principles should be recommended for developing AR books—particularly in terms of multimedia principles and interactive 3D visualization—to effectively support elementary students' understanding of artistic 3D objects?

Methodology

This study employed the AREA Heuristic Toolkit (Augmented Reality for Enterprise Alliance). This evaluation is primarily a qualitative method, as it focuses to evaluate the usability of the AR/MR application through heuristic principles, including identifying, describing, and classifying usability problems based on expert judgment. However, the process also incorporates quantitative indicators, such as the frequency of problems, severity ratings, and distribution across heuristic categories, to provide measurable insights into the extent and criticality of the identified issues. Thus, heuristic evaluation can be understood as a qualitative approach supported by quantitative measures. The evaluation conducted by three individual evaluators who identified usability issues that emerged during interaction with the medium. Each finding was documented and grouped according to twelve heuristic categories comprising 109 checklist items. The identified issues were then classified based on the violated heuristics and further analyzed using a severity rating scale. Severity levels were assessed by considering three aspects: the frequency of occurrence, the impact on user experience, and the complexity of the required solution

(AREA, 2021).

The collected data were analyzed by calculating the distribution of issues across heuristic categories, the average rating scores, and the identification of data distribution patterns. This analysis provided a comprehensive overview of critical areas requiring attention and served as the foundation for design improvement recommendations. Through this approach, the Augmented Reality Basic Art Guidebook for Elementary School Students was able to identify priority areas for enhancement, ensuring the development of a more intuitive, effective, and user-centered AR/MR learning medium.

Table 1. AREA Heuristic Scale

| No. | Item Scale |
|-----|--|
| 1 | Unboxing & Setting Up |
| 2 | Instructions |
| 3 | Organization & Simplification |
| 4 | Consistency & Flexibility |
| 5 | Integration of Physical & Virtual Worlds |
| 6 | User Interaction |
| 7 | Comfort |
| 8 | Feedback to the User |
| 9 | Intuitiveness of Virtual Elements |
| 10 | Collaboration |
| 11 | Privacy |
| 12 | Device Maintainability |

The design approach of the Augmented Reality (AR) book followed four main stages: 3D asset generation, refinement, AR integration, and heuristic evaluation.

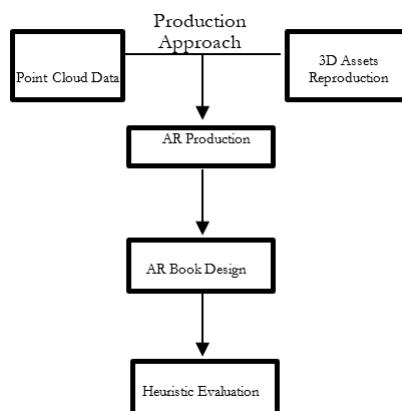


Figure 1. Production Approach

The evaluation process consisted of three steps: (1) testing the AR book through guided interaction, (2) completing a structured questionnaire, and (3) analyzing the questionnaire results to assess the quality of the AR media.

This evaluation provided insights into the effectiveness of the AR book design and its potential as a supplementary learning tool, as well as highlighting areas for future improvement. The final stage focused on evaluating the AR book using a heuristic evaluation method. This was conducted with experts in augmented reality, design, and educational technology, who reviewed the media to identify strengths, limitations, and usability issues (Moran & Gordon, 2023; Nielsen, 2007).

This research subject focuses on the design modeling of an Augmented Reality (AR) supplementary book that develops content from the official Teacher's Guidebook for Visual Arts for Grade 2 elementary school, published by the Indonesian Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology.

The reference is the section Exploration of 3D Forms (Rizki Raindriati, 2021). The original guidebook introduces clay artworks shaped as plants and animals, as well as handicrafts of Betawi houses made from stick materials. These works are presented through 2D illustrations, examples, and procedural explanations.



Figure 2. Subject Buku Panduan Guru Seni Rupa

The AR book supplements this content by converting the same examples into three-dimensional visualizations using smartphone-based photogrammetry techniques. The learning materials from the guidebook are directly adapted and expanded into a more immersive format. The supplementary AR medium provides realistic representations of form, texture, and spatial depth, enabling learners to observe details that are difficult to convey through flat illustrations.

Result

Assets Creations

At this stage, there are four categories of art objects focusing on the sub-chapter of three-dimensional form introduction, namely: stick house artwork, Betawi-style stick house artwork, clay animal figures, and clay plant figures. These assets were produced using smartphone-based photogrammetry with the following specifications:

Table 2. Exif Metadata

| Camera lens | Focal Length | Resolution | Object Distance |
|---|--------------|------------|-----------------|
| Iphone 12 pro-max Rear Camera 12MP, 26 mm lens. | f1.8 | 226 x 4032 | 100 mm |

A total of 120 photos were captured for each object with a 360° angle coverage to be processed into point cloud format. All the photo data were combined through overlapping to form a three-dimensional pattern. This step served as the initial dataset for the mesh generation stage. The captured photos were processed using Reality Capture software to reconstruct them into point cloud format. This format produces a visual representation consisting of interconnected points, forming objects that include elements such as color, texture, structure, and shape characteristics. The point cloud data also offers flexibility for refinement by selecting and removing irrelevant areas or noise.

The raw data generated consist of four main asset categories: one stick house, one Betawi-style stick house, one clay animal artwork, and one clay plant artwork. All of these assets are cultural objects designed to be displayed through augmented reality media. The transformation of photo data into point cloud resulted in high-resolution assets. Texture and color details were successfully displayed with fidelity close to the original physical objects. The point cloud data were then converted into 3D mesh using Blender 3D software. In this process, the object data were transformed into a triangular mesh, where the geometry of the object is constructed using triangles to create a 3D surface. This format

allows direct integration of texture and color into the model, resulting in 3D assets suitable for visualization or further implementation. The following illustrates the results of this reconstruction process.

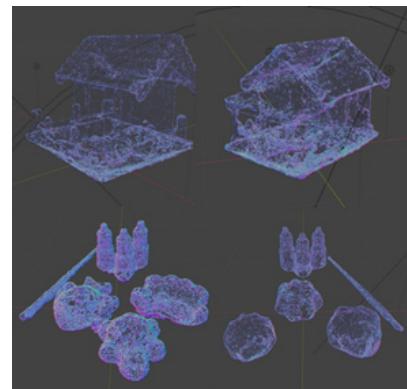


Figure 3. Point Cloud Data Sets

The transformation of photo data into point cloud produced assets with high-resolution quality. Texture and color details were preserved with high accuracy, closely resembling the physical objects. The point cloud data were then converted into 3D mesh using Blender 3D.

The object geometry was represented in triangular mesh format, where the object's form was carefully built to ensure surface continuity. This format enables color and texture mapping directly onto the mesh, producing assets ready for visualization or AR implementation.



Figure 4. Remeshed Data Sets

The resulting models demonstrate well-structured meshes, allowing the geometry of the assets to be displayed in detail. This ensures that shape, texture, and color reflect the physical objects with a high level of realism. Moreover, the 3D assets were optimized in high-poly form to produce smooth resolution.

The 3D materials were designed to replicate the physical characteristics of the objects accurately, incorporating detailed textures and colors using attribute color and the principled BSDF shader. The final visualization achieved proper lighting through the implementation of physically based lighting, enhancing illumination detail and meeting the technical requirements for AR simulation in educational media.

Book Design

The design process begins with creating a conceptualization that organizes sub-chapters or topics. This stage structures the overall layout of the book and serves as an initial guide for arranging pages visually.

Table 3. Book Specification

| No. | Book specification | detail |
|-----|-----------------------|---------------------|
| 1 | Size | 315 x 158 mm |
| 2 | Total page | 32 pages |
| 3 | Book cover material | Splendorgel 270 gsm |
| 4 | Book content material | Magno Silk 150 gsm |
| 5 | Binding | Perfect binding |
| 6 | Finishing | Coating doff |

The flat plan ensures that content elements, illustrations, and text are arranged according to the learning flow. The book content is derived from the *Art Teacher's Guidebook for Grade 2 Elementary School*.



Figure 5. Book Flat Plan

Each sub–chapter introduces fundamental art concepts adjusted to the developmental stage of students, such as tools, basic shapes, and simple applications. The material progresses gradually from basic concepts to practical activities, including collage making, printmaking, and simple craft exercises. This step-by-step approach aims to build a comprehensive understanding and foster creativity from an early age.



Figure 6. Visual reference

The visual style is tailored for children aged 7–8, the target audience of Grade 2 elementary students learning basic art. The design combines a stylized semi-realistic approach, a warm tone of voice, and playful layouts. Friendly illustrations, supportive messaging, and dynamic compositions help students better engage with the material. The concept is guided

by visual references arranged in a mood-board.



Figure 7. Illustration Assets

The key visual highlights 2D assets of characters and art objects. Soft, warm colors are applied to create a friendly mood and positive perception in learning. The cover design features two characters with an expression of excitement, evoking a joyful impression of exploring basic art.

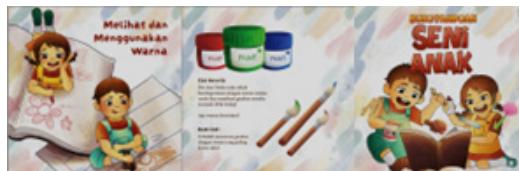


Figure 8. Key Visual

Brush-stroke effects are used in the background to emphasize an exploratory character, aligned with the art curriculum that emphasizes practice and hands-on exploration. The overall book design is developed in Adobe InDesign, applying a multi-column grid system.

AR Design

The AR development process using Adobe Aero involves several technical stages, including 3D importing, compositing, interaction design, and exporting. The first step is ensuring that the 3D files are in the .glb format, which guarantees compatibility with Adobe Aero. Prior to

importing, objects undergo a UV mapping process to maintain visual quality in augmented reality. The unit scale is standardized to centimeters (cm) to ensure accurate dimensions. For example, a clay flower is designed at a height of 5 cm, while a clay fish is modeled with a length of 15 cm.

Table 4. 3D Assets Dimension

| AR Assets | Dimension (cm) | Image Target (cm) |
|-------------------|----------------|-------------------|
| House miniature 1 | 30 x 25 x 10 | 20 x 20 |
| House miniature 2 | 30 x 25 x 10 | 20 x 20 |
| Clay-Fish | 15 x 8 x 5 | 15 x 15 |
| Clay-Turtle | 10 x 7 x 5 | 15 x 15 |
| Clay-Flower | 8 x 8 x 5 | 10 x 15 |

Once prepared, the objects are imported into Adobe Aero, where they are placed within the main workspace. At this stage, scale adjustments are crucial to achieve realistic proportions. For instance, a miniature house made of ice-cream sticks, measuring 30 cm x 25 cm x 10 cm, must be adjusted to match its real-world dimensions in the AR scene. This ensures proportionality and visual coherence when viewed through AR-supported devices.

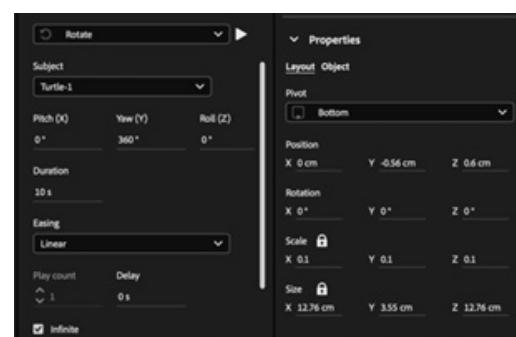


Figure 9. Adobe Aero Presets

The next stage is defining the image target as a reference point for object placement. Each target is designed according to the interaction needs of the user. The house miniature uses an anchor image target measuring 20 cm × 20 cm, while the clay flower, fish, and turtle use image targets of 15 cm × 15 cm. This calibration is essential for objects to appear in the correct position when scanned with an AR device. After placement, interaction behaviors are configured using Adobe Aero's trigger and action features.

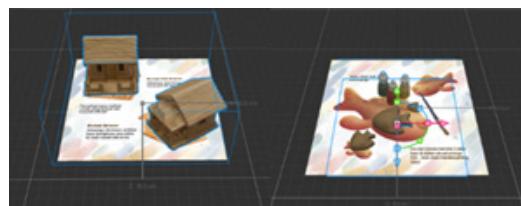


Figure 10. AR Composition

A tap trigger allows users to initiate actions such as rotation and movement by touching the screen. The interaction is designed dynamically to create varied patterns. For example, the clay turtle moves slowly after being tapped, followed by a transformation animation that alters its size. These actions are organized linearly to run in parallel, producing a seamless user experience. Heuristic testing is conducted to ensure that object interactions function as intended and that the displayed dimensions remain consistent with realistic scaling.

The integration of scaling models and image targets represents a connection between digital media (AR) and conventional media (printed book). This hybrid approach enhances both interactivity and learning engagement, bridging tangible and digital experiences.

Discussion

AR Heuristic Tool testing was conducted after the prototype design of the book was completed. This approach was used to assess the usability of an application or system, including in the context of Augmented Reality (AR). The test involved 3–5 respondents who acted as evaluators, each with experience in interface design and user interaction.

Evaluators assessed the strengths and usability of the AR book that had been developed. A total of 12 aspects were evaluated, presented in the validity testing table with a reference value of rTable = 0.878, with N = 3, as follows:

Table 5. Validity Item Scales

| N o. | Item Scale | Evaluat or I ρ correlatio n | Evaluat or II ρ correlatio n | Evaluat or III ρ correlatio n |
|---------|---|--|---|--|
| 1 | Unboxing & Setting Up | 0.886 | 0.966 | 0.887 |
| 2 | Instruction | 0.901 | 0.901 | 0.872 |
| 3 | Organizati on & Simplificati on | 0.894 | 0.930 | 0.897 |
| 4 | Consistenc y & Flexibility | 0.916 | 0.896 | 0.880 |
| 5 | Integration of Physical & Virtual Worlds | 0.895 | 0.890 | 0.887 |
| 6 | User Interaction | 0.890 | 0.930 | 0.895 |
| 7 | Comfort | 0.896 | 0.886 | 0.890 |
| 8 | Feedback to the User | 0.906 | 0.956 | 0.884 |
| 9 | Intuitivene ss of Virtual Elements | 0.890 | 0.976 | 0.963 |
| 10 | Collaborati on | 0.910 | 0.879 | 0.966 |
| 11 | Privacy | 0.956 | 0.886 | 0.855 |
| 12 | Device Maintainab ility | 0.881 | 0.896 | 0.878 |

All items were declared valid, as the Pearson Correlation values were greater than the rTable (> 0.878) across all items. Based on the validity test results, the validated AR Heuristic Tool questionnaire data was then followed by instrument testing in the form of reliability analysis. The results of the reliability test are presented in the following table:

Table 6. Cronbach Alpha

| No | Iteration | Cronbach <i>h alpha</i> α | Description |
|----|---------------|--|-------------|
| 1 | Evaluator I | 0.978 | Valid |
| 2 | Evaluator II | 0.993 | Valid |
| 3 | Evaluator III | 0.991 | Valid |

Based on the reliability test results, the severity rating data obtained was declared reliable, as the Cronbach's Alpha values were greater than 0.6, namely 0.978 for Evaluator I, 1.019 for Evaluator II, and 1.012 for Evaluator III. Therefore, the data was declared reliable and could be further analyzed based on the AR Heuristic Tool calculations.

AREA Heuristic Tools

Based on the AREA heuristic evaluation data, interpretation was conducted by comparing the distribution of responses across categories: Yes, Somewhat, No, and N/A.

Table 7. AREA Tools Result

| Iteration | Yes (%) | Somewhat (%) | No (%) | N/A (%) |
|---------------|---------|--------------|--------|---------|
| Evaluator I | 51.60% | 4.40% | 31.41% | 12.59% |
| Evaluator II | 35.20% | 4.40% | 45.38% | 15.02% |
| Evaluator III | 37.97% | 8.10% | 33.84% | 20.09% |

Evaluator I recorded the highest percentage of "Yes" responses (51.60%), indicating that more than half of the tested aspects fully met the AREA heuristics.

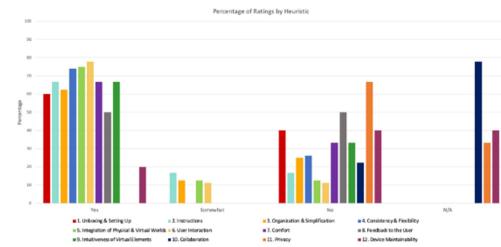


Figure 11. AREA Tools Evaluator I

In contrast, Evaluators II (35.20%) and III (37.97%) presented more moderate assessments, suggesting differing evaluation criteria or interpretations of the heuristic items. The "Somewhat" category remained relatively low overall, with the highest proportion observed in Evaluator III (8.10%).

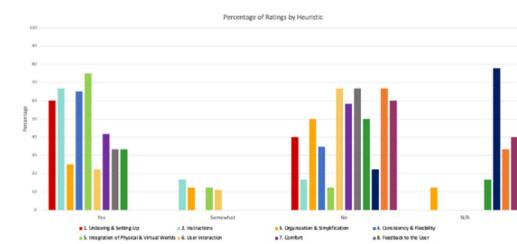


Figure 12. AREA Tools Evaluator II

For the "No" category, Evaluator II reported the highest proportion (45.38%),

demonstrating a more critical stance toward the prototype's compliance with the heuristics compared to Evaluator I (31.41%) and Evaluator III (33.84%). The "N/A" responses were most frequent in Evaluator III (20.09%), followed by Evaluator II (15.02%) and Evaluator I (12.59%), which may indicate differing judgments about the contextual relevance of certain heuristic items.

Overall, the data reveal a noticeable variation among evaluators: Evaluator I tended to emphasize usability strengths, while Evaluator II demonstrated a stricter interpretation of compliance, and Evaluator III reflected a more balanced yet cautious assessment.

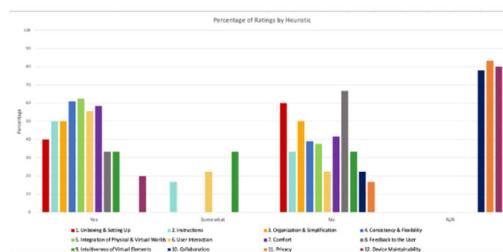


Figure 13. AREA Tools Evaluator III

These variations suggest that the evaluators may have applied different levels of heuristic severity or emphasis on an issue commonly identified in heuristic evaluation studies (Nielsen, 1994; Hertzum & Jacobsen, 2001).

Inconsistency does not necessarily invalidate the findings, but it highlights the subjective nature of heuristic assessment, especially when applied to novel media such as AR-based learning tools. Future iterations of this study could improve reliability by refining the AREA heuristics checklist, providing evaluator calibration sessions, and incorporating consensus-based scoring to mitigate interpretive bias.

Conclusion

The heuristic evaluation using the AREA method reveals that the AR book prototype demonstrates strong functional potential in facilitating intuitive interaction with three-dimensional forms, scale, and perspective within elementary visual arts learning. The integration of interactive 3D assets effectively bridges the gap between two-dimensional illustrations and students' spatial understanding by allowing direct manipulation and observation of visual elements.

Findings suggest that most interface components comply with usability and heuristic principles, particularly in clarity of interaction feedback and consistency of spatial visualization. However, several improvements remain necessary, especially in interface layout, navigation flow, and photogrammetry optimization to ensure smoother interaction and better accessibility across diverse classroom devices.

This study recommends several design principles for AR books aimed at elementary school students: 1) displaying 3D shapes with appropriate scales and proportions, 2) needing zoom-in zoom-out interactions for object details, 3) maintaining balanced photogrammetric realism with visual simplicity so that 3D objects are clear, 4) integrating text, narrative, and visuals in a balanced and easy-to-use manner to facilitate children's limited working memory.

Overall, the study highlights a set of heuristic insights and preliminary design principles for developing AR-based books: emphasizing multimodal cues, clear spatial orientation, and intuitive object manipulation as key factors to support students' comprehension of artistic 3D objects. Future studies should expand

user testing with elementary learners to validate these heuristic guidelines and refine the interactive design framework for broader educational application.

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COMPARATIVE STUDY OF UNIVERSITY MASCOTS IN INDONESIA: ANALYSIS OF VISUAL IDENTITY AND AUDIENCE ACCEPTANCE

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Abstract: This study investigates Indonesian university mascots as instruments of visual identity and branding through a descriptive-comparative qualitative methodology employing Roland Barthes' semiotic analysis. Methodological study conduct used Roland Barthes semiotic framework to examine how visual element represent institutional ideology. The analysis included four mascots: YUCCA (Ciputra University), ROGA (Bandung Institute of Technology), BRONE (Brawijaya University), and CAKRA (Malang State University). Data collection encompassed visual documentation, institutional philosophy analyses, social media monitoring, and surveys involving 50 participants from East Java. The results show that good mascots need three things: a unique look, a philosophy that fits with the values of the institution, and regular activity on social media. Mascots that include elements of local culture, like CAKRA and ROGA, are more real than those that are based on Western culture, like YUCCA. The research demonstrates a dialectical relationship between academic credibility and popular aesthetics, affirming that mascots serve as semiotic agents that construct institutional myths rather than mere decorative components. Visual design alone is not enough, it needs to be strategically activated. This is shown by BRONE's low engagement even though the design was clear. According to the survey, 86.5% of respondents are very familiar with mascots through social media. They like simple shapes, unique personalities, and the ability to tell stories. Recommendations encompass participatory design methodologies, cultural integration frameworks, and ongoing digital engagement initiatives. Subsequent research ought to investigate longitudinal studies, regional comparisons, and quantitative impact evaluations concerning brand equity.

Keywords: mascot; university branding; visual identity; semiotics; social media engagement; Generation Z

Introduction

In the current period of brand rivalry, the quality of product or service or campus experience is only one aspect of the competing in the marketplace. The same is true for competition among universities

which depends on scholarship as well as a certain representation and public image. Among the components of digital marketing on social media, one is visual identity which is significant because they not only recognize the institution's strengths with emotion but also encour-

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age students and collect stakeholders in community cohesion (Perera et al., 2023). Visual identity also distinguishes an institution from its competing institutions.

A visual identity that is becoming more well-known today for its efficiency in marketing and developing an image in the public mind is a mascot. Organizations use mascots to allow an audience or a broader public to communicate the image of an organization to society in a simple and effective way (Rahmadini, 2023). A mascot is a brand representation in a character with qualities and characteristics of the brand (Synakarya & Arifianto, 2024). The mascot represents an opportunity for the university to build a relationship with the audience, especially the audience of younger generations that are more attracted to visual content that is more interactive and entertaining. Therefore, a mascot serves the role of a brand ambassador, safer and more manageable than using celebrities or recognized personalities, because a producer can exercise full control over the actions of a fictional character without losing brand value (Veda Varsha Reddy B & Sathish A.S, 2023).

The use of mascots is also common among universities in Indonesia, especially in the wake of COVID-19, which accelerated digitalization. For instance, Malang State University introduced Cakrawala on October 17, 2019, after a 2019 design competition open to Malang State University students. Pradita University instituted a mascot to reinforce its identity as a new institution, with the mascot being created in August 2017 (Tjhie et al., 2023). These are indicative of mascots now being strategic devices in university branding and having surpassed adjunct roles in relation to university branding in the digital age.

University mascots do not always receive favorable reactions and responses from their audiences. Having a mascot on social media is a valuable way to help in-

duce a university's existence to the audience (brand awareness), however, the social media content and interaction with the audience ultimately have a broader impact on how a university is perceived. A well-thought-out mascot should also account for the target audience demographics, size of the institution, and consistency with brand guidelines in order to be memorable (Fathoni, 2023). Factors that affect a mascot's ability to be a representation of a university include visual quality, connection with the university's values, and activation on social media. This presents the question: what makes a university mascot effective and acceptable?

Furthermore, this study used Barthes' semiotics analysis to learn about the university mascot as a way to communicate institutional mission, institutional and ideological narrative through visuals. This research investigates the visual characteristics and philosophy of college mascots while also gauging the effectiveness of how the mascot is accepted by the audience on social media, specifically Instagram, TikTok, Facebook, and YouTube. The analysis employs semiotic and visual perception methodologies to investigate the visual significations inherent in the mascot's design, alongside audience reactions and the implications regarding the mascot's form and persona. Graphic design is an important part of creating mascots that are both visually appealing and deeply meaningful to colleges. This approach can enhance historical comprehension of the role of mascots in shaping university identity in the contemporary digital era.

Methodology

The researchers in this study utilized a descriptive-comparative qualitative approach to investigate the university mascots' role as a visual and ideological symbol of institutional identity for higher education institutions. The subjects

of this study were four mascots of selected universities in Indonesia, which are YUCCA (Ciputra University Surabaya), ROGA (Bandung Institute of Technology), BRONE (Brawijaya University), and CAKRA (Malang State University)).

Data was collected through three main sources: official social media content during 2025 period, institutional documents from official website and audiences feedback (posts like tweets and comments). This data analysis used semiotic framework that established by Roland Barthes (Chandler, 2022), and was organized around three levels of meaning, denotation (the visual aspects that are explicit, shape, color, gestures and symbols), connotation (symbolic associations connected to values, courage, innovation or excellence) and myth (ideological portrayals of institutional identity, positioning them as superior and competing entities). Semiotics used to interpret visual meaning from university mascot.

Outside visual approach research also collects data through journal studies and surveys as a quantitative approach via Google Form (Mulisa, 2022). This data used as validation of the semiotic approach and enhance the legitimacy of results. Triangulation helped explore the analysis of both institutional intent and audience meaning-making. The survey, a total of 50 respondents, was shared openly with the general public, primarily in East Java (Surabaya).

By employing both comparative visual

analysis and audience interpretation, it anchored triangulation between the institutional intention, visual form, and public perception. In a similar vein to Kress and Van Leeuwen (2020), the mascots were examined as living media of communication, acting as socio-cultural texts in relation to the power relations and collective identity they constructed. This methodological structure brought together visual description, cultural interpretation and ideological critique, in order to uncover how university mascots function as semiotic agents constructing and communicating institutional myths.

Result

According to data collecting results, 86.5% of respondents (Average rate scores 4 - 5) report being very familiar with mascots that are primarily viewed on platforms (Instagram, TikTok, Facebook) when asked to recount their experience with mascots, followed by product packaging and television advertising. The most salient aspects of design written by respondents are shape/figure and the style of illustration. Overall, visual preference especially the simplicity of form and consistency of style are important considerations when determining intended audiences will accept mascots, including youth.

Cheerful, consistent visual style mascots with clear stories rated highest for memorability (4.3), clear messaging (4.18), and storytelling effectiveness (4.42). Respondents especially favored them for being cute, simple, and linked to personality, mascots did not have much of a direct impact on their purchase decision, however, with an average score of 3.82, confirming their primary purpose is brand awareness and emotional connection rather than purchasing.

Table 1. Age Distribution of Respondents

| Age Group | Philosophical/Ideological Values | Percentage |
|-------------|----------------------------------|------------|
| 14-17 years | 8 | 16 % |
| 18-22 years | 28 | 56 % |
| 23-27 years | 12 | 24 % |
| 28-32 years | 2 | 4 % |
| Total | 50 | 100 % |

A. YUCCA (UC): Entrepreneurial spirit, innovation.



Figure 1. Official YUCCA Design
(Source: Personal research documentation)

- Character: An animalistic character as a unicorn. YUCCA name is acronym for Ciputra University for Entrepreneurship. The word Yucca is derived from the Yucca plant, and in Native American culture symbolizes strength, tenacity and the cycle of life. Fundamental characteristics of the entrepreneurial experience.

- The color orange is dominant, as it symbolizes creativity, innovation, entrepreneurial energy, a positive attitude about challenges, courage to take risks, and a character that values action in executing business.

- Expression/ gesture: energetic, innocent, enthusiastic. Depicts a youthful entrepreneur who embodies optimism, is not deterred by failure, and is always ready to learn.

- Symbol: Unicorn - dreams and hopes, Horn - unique and distinct in business, Yucca. Plant - *strength, resilience, sustainable growth*.

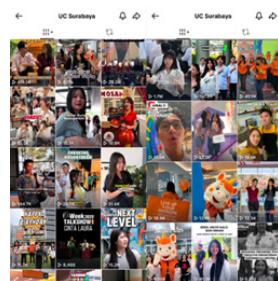


Figure 2. TikTok @uc_yucca , accessed October 4, 2025
(Source: Personal research documentation)

Types of content highest views on TikTok is content that collaborates with or involves influencers, while content about yucca is not as popular. The highest so far for Yucca content is 13,9 k view.

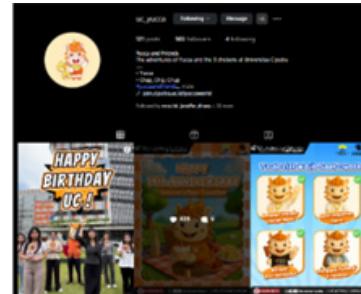


Figure 3. Instagram uc_yucca, accessed October 4, 2025
(Source: Personal research documentation)

Yucca has its own Instagram account, the highest engagement so far only reached below 50k views unlike the UC reels that reached more than 2 M views.

The audience's reception of the YUCCA mascot illustrates the intricate interplay between popular aesthetic values and institutional expectations of academic image. At the semiotic denotation level, YUCCA is represented by a young entrepreneur who is imaginative and willing to dream. At the semiotic connotation level, the unicorn signally represents a marker of uniqueness and differentiation among other businesses, while the philosophy of the yucca plant substantiates the narratives of resilience and sustainable growth as entrepreneurial values.

Positively speaking, junior respondents viewed the concept of unicorn as very relevant to Generation Z attributes and contemporary visual trends like Pop Mart, Labubu, and East Asian "cute culture" (Birlea, 2023). This concept uses an optimistic, aspirational aesthetic capable of generating high engagement on social media, where the advantage of using visuals is very significant for digital communication (Karadağ et al., 2024). In

contrast, some respondents questioned the appropriateness of the unicorn symbol concretely in the Indonesian cultural expression. As a mythological creature from West, the unicorn is assumed to have little connectedness with the local identity (Perera et al., 2023). Additionally, the fantastical visual character seemed to these respondents too light to represent the realities of entrepreneurship in their challenge and risk-taking capacity and might create an impression of fanaticism of pop culture rather than valid representation of the University as an identity.

B. ROGA (ITB): Teknologi, kreativitas sains.



Figure 4. Works - “ROGA” Institut Teknologi
(Source: Personal research documentation)

- Character: The character depicts an elephant hybrid of Ganesh, with the frame of a robot in gear including an ITB alma mater jacket. “Robot Elephant” and its character symbolizes a merging of tradition and the future.
- Dominant colors: White and blue: white depicts the purity of academic vocation, the morality of innovation, blue depicts intellect, technology, and institutional legitimacy.
- Expression/gesture: warm, confident, and approachable.
- Symbol: Broken tusk - wisdom and courage to achieve the impossible, Robotic elements - transformation, advancement, and technologic advancement, Alma mater jacket, identity and belonging, Ganesha elephant and technology - fusing tra-

dition and future.



Figure 5. ITB Instagram, @itb1920 accessed October 4, 2025
(Source: Personal research documentation)

The content of ITB’s official Instagram account shows that the most popular content with more than 3M views is the one featuring professors or lecturers.



Figure 6. official ITB TikTok account, accessed October 4, 2025
(Source: Personal research documentation)

However, the TikTok account doesn’t feature much content with Roga on it. While on twitter we can see some students’ enthusiasm.

ROGA is an object that forges an emotional connection between ITB students and the wider community through its apparent aesthetic appeal and philosophy. It is evidenced by several popular tweets

on social media that highlight the palpable enthusiasm for ROGA's presence: users express that ROGA "is bringing the spirit of the campus to the digital space" and upload pictures of campus activities featuring ROGA as the focus. When ROGA is present at campus and regional events, it is often visually branded, from exhibition stands and new student orientation booths to photos or promotional materials for student activities, so that ROGA becomes immersed in campus life. ROGA is not simply an object, but also an increasingly available entity that is instrumental to a collective identity and provides emotional interaction between members of the campus community through social media postings and actual activities within the life of the campus.

So far, there has been no concrete data regarding criticism of Roga, but potential criticism may arise from the robotic aspect of Roga. The design of Roga does not fully represent the elephant Ganesha in the ITB logo and represents technology more than ITB's values and history (Permana, 2023).

C. BRONE (UB): Courage, youthful energy.



Figure 7. Official website of Brawijaya University
(Source: Personal research documentation)

- Character: A small robot dressed in university formal wear with a graduation hat, designed as an information-providing companion robot capable of learning and developing, with a robot form to represent innovativeness, and a sturdy appearance representing the institution's competitiveness.
- Dominant colors: Gray/silver, blue, yellow and black. Silver represents modernization, blue represents trust, yellow represents happiness, and black gives a touch of elegance (Brawijaya University, n.d)
- Expression/ gesture: Cordial and supportive, demonstrating the role as a peer who is available to assist the educational community with affable gestures, even though it is through the automated responses of technology.
- Symbols: Robot shape - novelty, power, and competitiveness of the institution, Toga cap - representation of graduation and scholarly success, Formal alma mater dresses -ensuring institutional identity and professionalism.



Figure 8. Official Instagram account of Brawijaya University, accessed on October 4, 2025
(Source: Personal research documentation)

Likes and views from Brawijaya University's official account surprisingly reached its peak when they do collab with Malang State University. It reached more than 1 M views on their TikTok.

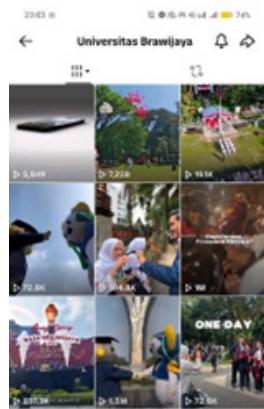


Figure 9. TikTok Resmi Universitas Brawijaya, accessed on October 4, 2025
(Source: Personal research documentation)

A companion robot links well to your digitization of learning, the name is catchy and self-explanatory in its acronym, the silver-blue color scheme conveys a sense of technology and trust, the toga and alma mater characteristics give it an academic identity, and philosophy of “learning and growing” fits uniquely as a reflection on the student experience.

In contrast, according to the findings of Rahmadini (2023), BRONE has only a minor presence on social media, a tiny representation on the online learning site, and in a few Instagram highlights. BRONE does not engage with the students, through interactive content and its minimal robot representation may not have a meaningful distinction compared to other university's robot mascots. It runs the risk of coming off as “stiff” or lacking emotion to engage with the students on a personal level. A limited brand activation allows for BRONE to take on the role of an alternative logo rather than a character that is “alive” and relatable.

D. CAKRA (UM): Educational identity, fighting spirit.



Figure 10. Official Website UM
(Source: Personal research documentation)

- **Character:** A human-shaped figure wearing a Malang State University jacket and a Malangan mask on its head. This character represents a fusion of academic spirituality and pride in Malang's local culture.
- **Dominant colors:** The combination of blue, golden yellow, and green represents the intellect, enthusiasm, and hope of the community. This color combination creates an attractive visual impression of harmony and warmth, while also representing the characteristics of the university.

- **Expression/gesture:** friendly, wide smile, and hand gestures with an open gesture that portray a welcoming attitude. This is a depiction of the friendly, inclusive, and positive character of the university in continuing Malang tradition.

As the mascot of Malang State University, Cakra is represented as a humanoid figure in an alma mater jacket with a Malangan mask. There is a blend of man and academic attributes with local wisdom in Cakra's aesthetics. The color choices of Cakra prompt positive emotional and associative ties of warmth, enthusiasm, and new friendships, correlating with

the university's branding in response to multicultural awareness and engagement fostering an inclusive and youthful image of UM. The welcoming openness shown through body language, along with an inviting, wide smile, expresses the spirit of welcoming collaboration expected from UM's academic community.

Semiotically, the visual denotation of Cakra represents the ideal student as someone intelligent, resilient, and rooted in local culture. At the connotative level, the representation of Malangan masks, which are culturally significant to Malang, establishes a marker of regional identity and pride, and relates back to the university as a key component of Malang's cultural narrative. Furthermore, while this narrative and imagery denotes a regional identity and pride, it also denotes the institution negotiating between local values and a contemporary, competitive global branding of the university in the mythological or ideological sense.

Audiences' Feedback

On the positive side, the public considers Cakra to be visually appealing, a philosophy that represents the character of UM, and the ability to build emotional connections with students. Cakrawala serves as a successful case to utilize a university mascot as a relevant metric for other universities, based on the analysis of literature and social media observations from 2024-2025. The absence of negative findings indicates that the participatory approach was highly effective in the design of the mascot (Unit Hubungan Masyarakat, 2019).

Discussion

The comparative analysis of four university mascots representing institutions in Indonesia will be elaborated upon,

making the connections among visual form, institutional philosophical values, and audience response. This has the goal of understanding how each mascot creates academic identity through aesthetic strategies, color choice, and cultural representations the forms of cultural symbols displayed.

Table 2. Comparative Analysis of College Mascots

| Universi ty | Philosop hical/Ide ological Values | Visual Represe nt & Color | Connote tive Meanin g | Positiv e Respon se | Negati ve Respo nse |
|-------------|---|---|---|--|---|
| UC - YUCCA | Entrepreneurial spirit, innovation, courage to take risks | Energetic, expressive orange unicorn with horns | Creative imagination and business drive | Appealing to Gen Z, imaginative, relevant to digital culture | Too Western, risks being seen as a gimmick |
| ITB - ROGA | Integration of tradition and modern technology | Ganesha-robot in blue and white | Synthesis of scientific tradition and digital progress | A strong symbol, prominent campus identity | Too cartoonish, considered frivolous for academic purposes |
| UB - BRONE | Innovation, strength, coherence, and global competitiveness | Company robot with a graduation cap, blue, silver, and black colors | Technology, continuous learning, and institutional adaptability | Relevant to the digitization of education, memorable name | Robot designs with universality insignia are already widespread |
| UM - CAKRA | Education, openness, collaboration | Cheerful humanoid with Malangan ornaments | Representation of modern educators rooted in culture | Inclusive, easily accepted by the public | Difficult for audiences outside Java to understand |

In summary, the four mascots are generally driven to convey institutional values through a popular-style visual display, which indicates a transition to animated characters instead of fixed symbols. The cross-settings literature findings suggest that most mascots are of small size and are humanoid, animal, or robot in their structure without being whole human figures (Nicolay & Wardaya, 2021).

Most universities highlight aspects of local culture, technology, or campus features in their mascot: ROGA converts ITB's Ganesha into a robotic character suggesting innovative spirit and technology, CAKRA uses the Malangan mask, combined with the UM alma mater, as a public license to advocate local character and educational values, BRONE is a robot character wearing a toga hat and an alma mater dress which foregrounds the educational identity and class, and finally YUCCA features a unicorn symbol from the West that resonates with the aesthetics of Gen Z as well as the philosophy of the yucca plant.

Table 3. Barthes's Semiotic Analytic Result

| Barthes's Semiotic | Findings from the Survey | Meaning / Implication |
|--------------------|---|--|
| Denotation | Audiences value simple shapes, consistent and cute character designs as the most important visual elements. | Audience prefer easy to recognize visual. |
| Connotation | Mascot with strong personality and storytelling are feel more at is for audience. | Visual not the only thing that can attract audience. Background stories also strengthen mascot engagement. |
| Myth | Story help mascot become living and embodied as brand myth. | Mascot became not just as an symbol but also a more approachable part of brand. |

Visual analysis used a semiotic approach to highlight how all mascots connect with the audience through a visual approach. At the denotative level, respondents clearly prefer mascots with simple, consistent, and cute visual forms because they are easy to recognize. At the connotative level, audiences give more responses when mascots express personality and storytelling, indicating that visual appearance alone is not enough and that narrative story gives a more natural connection to the respondent. At the myth level, strong stories enable mascots to function as living symbols of the brand, transforming them from mere illustrations into approachable characters that embody institutional identity.

The more cartoonish a given element, the more likely there could be a perception of a "gimmick," but also the greater the effectiveness of creating mental emotional closeness with students and the public who experienced work within the digital genre. This confirms the dialectic between academic institutional branding and popular visual culture in contemporary university identity communication.

Key Findings:

- Visual Elements: Small humanoid characters with welcoming gestures as a method of establishing emotional closeness.
- Identity Integration: The blend of local culture (Ganesha, Malangan masks) or tech (robots) with institutional attributes (alma mater, gowns). The cross-settings literature findings also support this result, that cultural and personal item make the biggest attraction in design (Wijaya et al., 2025).
- Trade-off: Aesthetic vs. Credibility: Cartoon mascots work well in a digital setting, but they can detract from the academic reputation, mascots with limited activation will not foster relationships even with coherent designs.
- Important Elements in Effectiveness: visual appeal, appropriate philosophy, CAKRA and ROGA activation strategies provide the best balance of these three aspects.

Conclusion

This study uses Roland Barthes's semiotic approach to analyze four university mascots in Indonesia, and finds that mascots, in general, have shifted from being static symbols to becoming active narrative characters, which are mechanisms for the communication of universi-

ty identity. Effective mascots include three essential elements: (1) unique, optimistic and affable visual characteristics, (2) a philosophy consistent with institutional values, and (3) an activation strategy on social media that is consistent.

There is juxtaposition of serious academic requirements and popular aesthetics. The mascots that embrace the local culture, CAKRA, and ROGA carry a deep sense of authenticity while YUCCA appears to be able to woo a digital audience that can result in some potentially justified criticism of its validity to the local culture. Another significant finding shows that visual design does not have strong effects on its own. Through collaborative design in managing social media content, audience engagement can be increased. For example, CAKRA is now a social media mascot for the DKV students to collectively design content. ROGA is also hoping to engage an audience through active pages on several different channels. There is also CAKRA (UM) who collaborates with their digital design team, BRONE (UB).

This research indicates support for the idea that mascots are more than visual decoration, but are semiotic agents that create and convey institutional myth, particularly with regard to the digitization of higher education after COVID-19. The efficacy of mascots resides in their potential to connect serious academic values with popular visual language that is salient with Generation Z.

The implications of these findings are such that recommendations arise for both institutional and future research. Educational Institutions should engage their students and staffs in the design process of the mascot and competition models such as CAKRA have demonstrated their effectiveness at establishing community ownership and acceptance of campus. The integration of local cultural artefacts will add to the authenticity of the mascot while

also being aesthetically contemporary to real youth audiences. Moreover, with mascots having social media engagement, it will need consistent activation of sufficient content as mascots towards public engagement will otherwise just be alternative logos and not living communication agent or tool.

In future studies, several directions should be taken to advance awareness of mascots' role in branding institutions of higher education. Longitudinal studies focused on mascots would address how their perceived effectiveness might evolve over a long period. Comparison would also provide better framing of national mascots outside Java, that might present cultural differences in mascot design strategies. Future work utilizing quantitative studies focused on institutions of pledge and brand equity in promotional leads and student recruitment would further propagate work on mascots as branding and identity.

In understanding a context to the study findings of this study in the wider debate on mascots, it is necessary to address the limitations. This research was bounded by a study of 4 mascots through a qualitative study, and semiotic as the primary analytical framework. Data from engagements on social media were often observational and did not have measure variables or comprehensive quantitative metrics around rounded measures, conversion rate, or sentiment scores. As it stands, study findings present potential perceived effectiveness of mascots, as considered by respondents' point of view. Validation is an important next step for findings where data analytics based studies and further broader survey methods with study samples capturing more respondent participants responsibly, can further flow consider generalizability and robustness.

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SATISFICING IN UI/UX DESIGN: A THEORETICAL REVIEW TOWARDS E-COMMERCE USERS' BEHAVIOR

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Abstract: Satisficing is one of the users' behavioral patterns in decision-making. In which users tend to choose a "good enough" option compared to an optimal one. In the context of e-commerce UI/UX design, which has been facing challenges such as choice overload, it became important to understand this behavior, since the process of satisficing can happen quickly. This process might influence users' perception of interface usability and aesthetics, also affecting users' loyalty to the platform. The aim of this research is to study the characteristics of the user's satisficing behavior and its implications for UI/UX design. This research adopts a qualitative approach through synthesis from literature studies such as scientific articles, books, official reports, and professional articles. The results show that there are two users' satisficing behavior characteristics in the e-commerce UI/UX design context. Interface navigation satisficing, and purchase decision satisficing. However, both characteristics share similar motivations and solutions. An efficient, simple, and straightforward interface design can help both satisficing behaviors, and classic aesthetics and informative visual presentation can reduce the user's cognitive process and elevate usability perception. This research recommends several interface design implementations that help users achieve goals with minimum time and effort, such as recommendation features, clear and intuitive navigation, and consistent visual presentations.

Keywords: aesthetic, UI/UX design, user behavior, satisficing, usability

Introduction

Satisficing is one of the user's behavioral patterns that needs to be considered in the interface design process (The Interaction Design Foundation, 2016; Tidwell et al., 2019; Whitenton, 2024). It refers to a user's tendency to choose a "good enough" option compared to an optimal one, to minimize cognitive effort and decision-making time (Tidwell et al., 2019). Satisficing is a portmanteau,

a word formed by blending both sounds and meanings of "satisfy" and "suffice". This term was originally introduced by Herbert Simon in 1957, in accordance with Simon's bounded rationality theory, in which individual decision-making processes tend to be limited by the available information and sources they have (Soltwisch et al., 2022).

This behavior is also closely associated with users' perceptions of interface

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usability and aesthetics. Past research shows that there is a reciprocal perception linked to the interface aesthetic-usability, in which an aesthetically pleasing interface is considered easier to use and an easy-to-use interface is considered beautiful (Schrepp et al., 2021). This reciprocal perception implies that users have their own "enough" parameter to tolerate the weaknesses of either aesthetic or usability for the preferred aspect. To support this, Schrepp et al. (2021) associated the phenomenon with Fishwick (2004) theory of emotional design, in which it is found that when facing interface difficulties, good mood users tend to disregard the problems by coming up with creative solutions, while bad mood users tend to feel dissatisfied and consider the difficulties as major issues.

Since 2017, Indonesia's e-commerce sector has experienced substantial growth, driven by the digital transformations of retail (Erlyana & Hartono, 2017). According to Direktorat Statistik Keuangan, Teknologi Informasi, dan Pariwisata, (2025), there were an estimated 3,934,981 e-commerce businesses in Indonesia, with the total value of transactions being 1,100,87 trillion rupiah. This shows how competitive the e-commerce market is, and in digital commerce, UI/UX design is considered a strategic tool to stand out in the highly competitive market (Felix & Rembulan, 2023; Hasan et al., 2024). A good UI/UX design can elevate users' satisfaction, loyalty, and engagement, also driving sales and a higher conversion rate. A bad UI/UX design will result in dissatisfying user feedback and lower application installation (Hiu & Erlyana, 2024).

E-commerce users as consumers make decisions based on available information, cognitive limitations, and in the context of situation and time constraints (Hwang, 2025; Shin & Yoon, 2023). When browsing e-commerce, users are presented with information for different products and

their attributes (brand, price, review, and other specifications). This can make the decision-making process difficult, as users have to identify the objectives, collect information, and compare every option (Mushtaq et al., 2020). Choice overload is a challenge that needs to be addressed in e-commerce UI/UX design. The variety of products that come in many choices may cause decision fatigue, a situation where an individual feels overwhelmed, tired, or faces difficulties in making choices, which can reduce the quality of options and the satisfaction after (Zaheer, 2025). According to Shin & Yoon (2023), users who fall into the category of satisficers tend to feel overwhelmed with that many available choices, even for trivial matters. Meanwhile, it is known that users sacrifice because of the need to minimize effort and time in making decisions. A good e-commerce UI/UX design must be able to address these needs. It must help users achieve their goals or do their tasks efficiently through an interface that is aesthetically pleasing, easy to understand, and user-friendly (Andry et al., 2024). A case study by Hiu & Erlyana (2024) about Datascripmall shows that in consequence of a poorly designed UI/UX, users feel dissatisfied with the e-commerce and are not willing to use the platform because of the difficulties in finding products, the checkout process, and the absence of personalized recommendations. Therefore, the UI/UX design of e-commerce must help users find information quickly without feeling overwhelmed, preventing choice overload or information overload, and paying attention to users' expectations of aesthetic and usability.

Users' final decision and experience in e-commerce are influenced by the platform's UI/UX design and bounded rationality. Users' satisficing behavior and its rational constraints might influence the "good enough" perceptions of the interface aesthetic and usability. However, literature exploring the satisficing charac-

teristics in relation to the e-commerce UI/UX design is still minimal. In the past five years, several literatures that can be found in terms of satisficing in human-computer interaction (HCI) context are either only a short section in a book (Tidwell et al., 2019), or focusing more on users' satisficing behavior in purchasing products digitally (Mushtaq et al., 2020; Shin, 2022; Shin & Yoon, 2023).

Prior literature merely studied the behavior or the solutions in the general context of digital interfaces. Therefore, this research aims to study the characteristics of users' satisficing behavior, their challenges in e-commerce UI/UX design, the relations to aesthetic and usability, and their design implications in e-commerce development. Offering broader and deeper insights into the relations between satisficing characteristics in users' decision-making process, necessities in the e-commerce context, and the aesthetic and usability of UI/UX design.

Methodology

This research adopts a qualitative approach with literature synthesis as the main analytical method. This approach is used because it allows exploration of various opinions and explanations, providing a critical overview of where this research topic stands in current literature (Wesner, 2025). The study aimed to examine the concept of users' satisficing behavior within the context of e-commerce UI/UX design and its relationship with design implications such as aesthetics and usability.

The collected data were secondary data. According to Wesner (2024), secondary data are not collected by the researcher themselves. They are collected by others. In this case, the data were from books, peer-reviewed journal articles, industry reports, and professional design publications.

To ensure the quality of data, the selection was conducted through academic databases such as Google Scholar, ResearchGate, Wiley, using keywords in relations to satisficing behavior, UI/UX design aesthetic-usability, and e-commerce interface.

The analysis was carried out through four stages. First is literature screening, in which articles were selected based on relevance to topics and publication date. The second stage is the identification and categorization of findings. Divided into three thematic clusters: users' satisficing behavior, satisficing and interface aesthetics, and satisficing and interface usability. All findings were then cross-analyzed to find patterns, similarities, and gaps. The last stage is synthesizing. Theoretical insights and framework explaining the relationship of users' satisficing behavior, aesthetics, and usability, and the design implications are developed based on findings.

Result

Users' satisficing behavior on the interface is driven by time constraints, the absence of consequences for missed actions, the lack of better results after further considerations, and the possibility of feeling excited after making the right choice at the first try (Krug, 2014). These are the reasons why users only scan pages and select links that appear to fulfill their needs, disregarding the design of the pages (Whitenton, 2024). A prior study by Schwartz et al. (2002) mentioned that to feel satisfied, a satisficer, the term for an individual who satisfies, only needs to find options that fit a certain adequacy scale. This indicates that users are spending only enough time to achieve their goals, and a certain level of impression might be a deciding factor, despite the influence of several other factors.

In general, there are two characteristics of the decision-making process: maximizing and satisficing (Shin, 2022). A simple example of how these two behaviors influenced UI/UX design is in the process of ordering online food. A maximizer will spend more time exploring restaurants and menu options, reading reviews, and comparing costs. A satisficer will choose a restaurant and menu that has been ordered before (Shin & Yoon, 2023). Therefore, as can be seen in Figures 1 and 2, in online food ordering platforms, we can find navigational categories or indicators for restaurants or menus that have been ordered before.

this is different from what is implied by Shin (2022) and Shin & Yoon (2023), that there is another behavior opposite to satisficing. Although both definitions are fundamentally the same, the behavioral implications might be different because of the different contexts of users and consumers. In this case, it may require different UI/UX design strategies to accommodate both behavioral implications. As for the definition in which every user has the tendency to satisfice while looking for information, impressions play an important role. Meanwhile, in terms of satisficing in purchase decisions, users might require additional indicators.



Figure 1. A recommendation menu in the Gojek application, for ordering before restaurants
(Source: Gojek Mobile Application)



Figure 2. An indicator for ordered before restaurants in the Grab application
(Source: Grab Mobile Application)

The definition of satisficing behavior by Krug (2014) and Whitenton (2024) aligns with what is explained in Tidwell et al. (2019) book and an article published by The Interaction Design Foundation (2016), which suggests that all users have the tendency to satisfice. However,

Aesthetic Interface and Users' Satisficing Behavior

In general, Hasan et al. (2024) suggest that to strengthen the market position, an e-commerce platform should have these three aspects: 1) an attractive and unique homepage design that promotes further exploration, 2) easy-to-use navigations that make users comfortable returning to the site, and 3) an attractive and consistent color scheme that helps enhance products, therefore elevating product sales. Prior research suggests that aesthetics also influences perceived usability, users' willingness, and trust to use the platform (Perrig et al., 2023) to the extent of helping users make decisions in a digital interface (Krug, 2014; Shin & Yoon, 2023). Meanwhile, poor interface aesthetics can trigger negative emotions by confusing and slowing down users, to the extent of lowering the user's intentions to reuse the platform (Sulikowski et al., 2022; Rejón-Guardia, 2024).

According to Saltsman et al. (2020), satisficers' tendency to choose sufficiently is a consequence of their inability to choose from many options. This supports the findings from Shin & Yoon (2023), in which satisficers suffer from the over-

whelming number of options, as they also go through the process of searching, reviewing, and comparing alternatives. To assist this, by reducing complexity and elevating consistency (Perrig et al., 2023), aesthetics might have the capacity to reduce the overwhelming effect on the e-commerce interface (Seifi & Moshayeri, 2024).

For example, in the case of food delivery applications, Rejón-Guardia (2024) found that users' feelings of dominance or control over the app might increase if the interface is friendly and well structured. Cai et al. (2008) and Seifi & Moshayeri (2024) found that interface design with classical aesthetics helps users find information and finish tasks in a shorter time and with minimal effort. Classical aesthetics are characterized by clean, attractive, and symmetrical design (Perrig et al., 2023) through the implementation of a simple color scheme and consistent visual elements (Seifi & Moshayeri, 2024).

Information visualization through pictorial presentation can solve information overload in digital interfaces (Mushtaq et al., 2020). Particularly in relation to the fact that the brain part where visual objects are processed is closely connected with other brain parts that can trigger emotional response and informational memory, making it easier for pictures to be interpreted (Robier, 2015). Therefore, in the context of e-commerce, information visualization might help shoppers in comparing and understanding products faster and more easily. Furthermore, this process of visual recognition can be faster through a good design with low complexity and high consistency (Perrig et al., 2023; Ologunobi et al., 2025).

Specifically, in the case of satisficers' behavior when making purchase decisions, they rely on simple rules of thumb, such as impressions, feelings, or product recommendations (Shin & Yoon, 2023).

This underlines the importance of interface aesthetics in building a good impression around regular and recommended products. According to Sulikowski et al. (2022), an aesthetic interface helps users notice the essential elements on the interface and makes users pay more attention to recommendations. Furthermore, the study suggests several aesthetic-related principles that can be considered when designing an e-commerce interface, such as 1) the golden ratio for product photos proportions, 2) contrast color as a border to highlight products, 3) readable navigation font color, and 4) consistent spacing between website elements.

Usability and Users' Satisficing Behavior

Usability is achieved when a product helps users to achieve goals efficiently, effectively, and satisfyingly (International Organization for Standardization, 2018). Usability encompasses interface design that is easy to use and navigate, therefore reducing users' cognitive processes. The synthesis of aesthetics interface approaches for users' satisficing behavior suggests several design recommendations that promote easier ways to navigate and understand information on interfaces. This shows how aesthetics can be one of the strategies in achieving usability. However, it does not cover the whole aspect of usability. It may guarantee that the interface is usable, but does not guarantee its user friendliness (Robier, 2015).

The principle of usability itself inherently supports users' satisficing goals—achieving satisfactory outcomes with minimum time and effort. Which means that applying general usability recommendations in UI/UX design -such as clear information hierarchy, straightforward information, consistent interface elements, simple navigation paths, and fast system feedback can be used as an-

other strategy (Hasan et al., 2024; Robier, 2015).

In terms of making purchase decisions, users went through several steps from recognition, searching, evaluating, comparing, and reviewing options (Mushattaq et al., 2020). The stages where users will most likely spend a longer time are evaluating, comparing, and reviewing. In this case, decision-supportive tools such as product suggestions, including recommendations from experts, third parties, or personalized recommendations, are found to help minimize decision-making time and effort for satisficers (Shin & Yoon, 2023).

Discussion

The synthesis of findings indicates that users' satisficing needs might differ when they are looking for information and when they are making purchase decisions. When looking for information, UI/UX principles suggest that every user tends to satisfice. Meanwhile, according to bounded rationality theory, satisficing is a certain decision-making characteristic that can be found only in a certain population. However, both are driven by the need to make good decisions quickly and effortlessly, and in the context of UI/UX design, both can be approached with aesthetics and usability solutions.

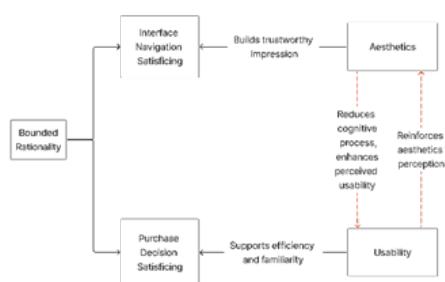


Figure 3. The relationship between aesthetics, usability, and users' satisficing behavior in e-commerce UI/UX design.

(Source: personal research documentation)

The relationship of aesthetics, usability, and different characteristics of users' satisficing behavior in e-commerce UI/UX design is as illustrated in Figure 3.

As illustrated in Figure 3, users' satisficing behavior in the e-commerce context is divided into two characteristics. First is interface navigation satisficing, which represents users' tendencies to satisfice in the information-seeking mode. Second is purchase decision satisficing, which represents e-commerce consumers' tendencies to make purchase decisions based on familiarity and recommendation.

Although both are motivated by bounded rationality, it is understood that the contributing factors are not all the same. Time constraints and a lack of better results after further exploration are the two shared motivations. However, the other two contributing factors, the absence of consequences for missed actions and the possibility of feeling excited after making the right choice at the first try (Krug, 2014), can only be related to interface navigation satisficing behavior. As in purchasing, if consumers make a wrong purchase, then they will have to go through a long process of return and refund. It is not as easy as clicking the back or undo button on the interface.

It is also understood that aesthetics and usability create a reciprocal connection in supporting both satisficing needs. Aesthetics might build trustworthy impressions and enhance perceived usability for first-time users. As individuals tend to infer unknown information based on their evaluation of the entire product (Schrepp et al., 2021). While a good implementation of usability principles proves the first-time users' perception of the aesthetics. Therefore, building trust on the site or app creates a sense of familiarity for returning customers.

Usability can also be enhanced through certain aesthetic approaches to

minimize the chance of information overloading. For example, the repetitive use of red hue on every button element, as shown in Figure 4, may help users find clickable components, a list of options, and learn the interface faster.

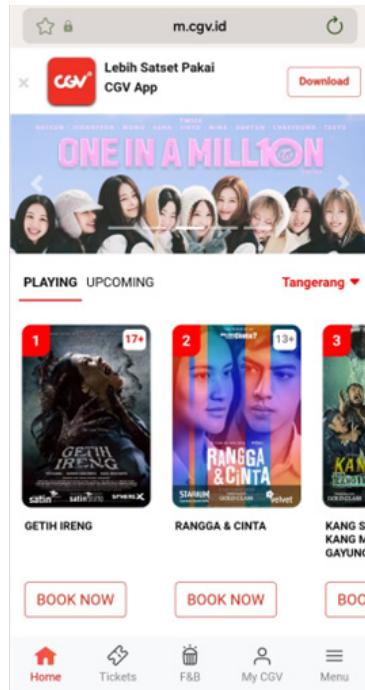


Figure 4. homepage design from the website of CGV Indonesia
(Source: m.cgv.id)

Furthermore, in terms of purchase decision satisficing behavior, satisficers will rely on recommendations to avoid choice overload. To support these needs, aesthetics alone will not be able to solve the problem, as this relates more to options availability. In this case, to fulfill usability, e-commerce platforms are suggested to provide recommendation tools through personalized advertisements or features like the frequently bought together section. Product recommendations can then be highlighted with certain aesthetic approaches to shorten the duration of information processing. For example, as can be seen in Figure 5, Tokopedia implements

several navigational menus based on what users have checked before. This can be helpful for users to find what they want to purchase based on their last unfinished browsing activity. These combined strategies ensure that users find information faster, achieve goals efficiently and effectively, and engage more, therefore elevating users' satisfaction and trust (Ologunebi, 2025).

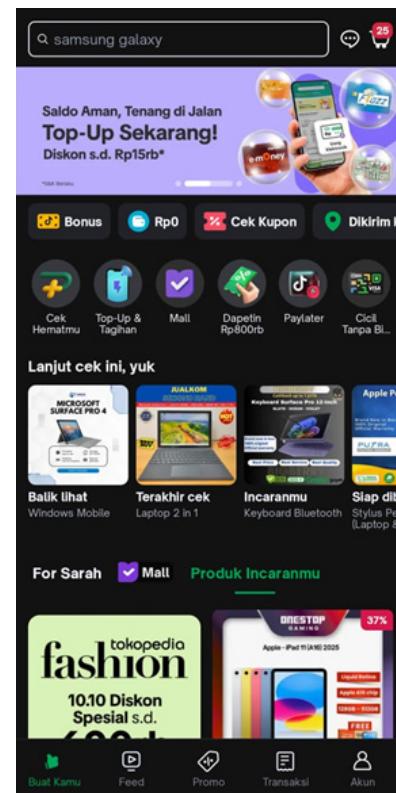


Figure 5. Homepage design from the Tokopedia app
(Source: Tokopedia)

To further clarify the relationship between satisficing theory and its implications in digital interfaces, Table 1 summarizes how the two illustrative examples (Tokopedia and CGV) employ aesthetics and usability cues that support users' bounded rationality.

Table 1. Aesthetics and Usability Features in CGV and Tokopedia Interfaces
(source: personal documentation)

| Platform | Aesthetics | Usability |
|-----------|---|---|
| CGV | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Consistent color palette• Clear visual hierarchy• Structured use of white space and alignment | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Linear booking flow• Highlighted key information• Straightforward action buttons |
| Tokopedia | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Repetitive color use• Clear Visual Hierarchy | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Personalized product recommendations• Category shortcuts for faster navigation• Supports prospective memory (saved items, reminders)• Highlighted rewards and promotions |

Note: the dark theme in Tokopedia depends on users' phone settings.

As shown in Table 1, CGV illustrates how aesthetic implications such as a consistent color palette and structured space strengthen visual hierarchy, therefore enhancing usability. These aesthetic cues guide users more intuitively through the interface, helping them complete tasks efficiently and locate key information with ease. Meanwhile, Tokopedia demonstrates that features such as recommendations and shortcuts support satisficing by helping users make quick decisions with minimal cognitive effort. These functional

elements are further reinforced through repetitive color use for highlighted information and a clear visual hierarchy, creating an interface that aligns aesthetics with decision-making efficiency.

While this study provides a theoretical understanding of the relationship between satisficing behavior, aesthetics, and usability, it is limited by its conceptual nature and reliance on secondary sources. The analysis was built through literature synthesis, which means the findings are interpretive rather than empirical. Most references used were derived from global contexts, which may not fully represent the behavior and preferences of e-commerce users in different geographical contexts.

Future research is recommended to evaluate the conceptual relationships and design implications for satisficing behavior that were proposed in this study empirically. To better understand the users' criteria for a "good enough" interface in terms of usability or aesthetics, it is recommended to conduct user testing, experiments, or usability evaluations. Furthermore, cross-cultural and context-specific studies can also help refine and localize the framework, providing more actionable design guidelines for e-commerce UI/UX practitioners.

Conclusion

This theoretical study explored the definition of users' satisficing behavior, its relationship with aesthetic and usability design implications in the context of e-commerce UI/UX design. Through a synthesis of literature from UI/UX design theory, consumer behavior, and human-computer interaction, this study identified two distinctive satisficing behaviors in the e-commerce context. First is satisficing in interface navigation. This can be found in every user. Second is sat-

isficing in purchasing decisions. This can be found only in a specific population, often referred to as satisficers. Both behaviors are influenced by an individual's bounded rationality.

Through the comparative overview of CGV and Tokopedia (Table 1), the findings highlight that aesthetics and usability play a mutually supportive role in facilitating satisficing behavior. Aesthetic quality builds a trustworthy impression and perceived usability. Therefore, it can be very helpful in attracting first-time customers. Consistent usability reinforces long-term trust and the core needs of satisficing. Although in terms of satisficing in purchase decisions, e-commerce will need additional features such as product suggestions or recommendations to help reduce choice overload. These features can then be enhanced with certain aesthetic implementations, such as aesthetic coherence, to ensure usability and work as a guiding path for users through the interface.

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PRESERVING IDENTITY, EMBRACING CHANGE: THE SURVIVAL OF PEKALONGAN PERANAKAN BATIK

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Abstract: *Indonesia is famous for its cultural heritage. One of the acknowledged heritages is Pekalongan Peranakan batik, a delicate and beautiful craftsmanship influenced by Asia, Arab, and Europe. The Peranakan batik combines Javanese batik-making artistry with the Chinese design planning and trading strategies. This article investigates the survival of Pekalongan Peranakan batik as an endangered culture and how the artisan batik adapts with the modern era. The method used in this study is literature review, interview with the owner of the last producer of Pekalongan Peranakan batik and descriptive-qualitative analysis. The findings reveal that although UNESCO's recognition of batik as intangible heritage, and Peranakan batik holds centuries-old heritage of cross-cultural exchange, this art form now risks extinction. This paper examines its historical development and contemporary challenges, arguing that revitalization through innovation is essential for its survival. Besides that, this research contributes to archiving the process and the portrait of artisan batik Liem Ping Wie in Kedungwuni, Pekalongan.*

Keywords: Chinese Javanese Peranakan Batik; cultural heritage; revitalization

Introduction

Batik is known as a traditional art form, drawn on fabric with wax, then dyed through immersion techniques. Batik is not just documented knowledge in books, articles, or videos; it is a living tradition passed down from generation to genera-

tion, a symbol of cultural identity, and a history woven with philosophy and meaning in its motifs. This skill of batik-making is to be inherited by the next generation.

UNESCO designated batik as a Masterpiece of Oral and Intangible Heritage of Humanity (United Nations Education-

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al, 2009) on October 2, 2009. Following this, the Indonesian government established National Batik Day. Batik is valued, worn with pride, and preserved as a national identity across generations.

Batik in the archipelago has always been shaped by time. It is created through the interplay of dialectics and creativity dialogue between continuity and obstacles, resulting in innovation. In North Coast Java (Pekalongan), batik developed under the influence of Indian, Chinese, Arab, and European cultures. Constantly changing and adapting, batik transformed to meet the needs of its era.

Today, Pekalongan—historically known as the City of Batik, faces an urgent challenge as one of its most unique traditions, the Pekalongan Chinese-Javanese Peranakan batik is on the verge of extinction. Peranakan batik is rich with symbols and meanings, produced, exchanged, and reinterpreted over time. In Peranakan batik, foreign cultural motifs were adopted and adapted, forming a new cultural identity through images, patterns, and colors.

Peranakan batik is recognized as coastal (pesisir) batik with vibrant colors. Its motifs are dominated by:

1. Geometric patterns: triangles (from bamboo shoots) and banji (the swastika-like motif from India symbolizing prosperity and happiness, introduced by Chinese migrants).
2. Botanical motifs: leaves and flowers.
3. Animal motifs: butterflies, birds, dragons, qilin.
4. Human figures.

Designs typically consist of two parts: the head and the body (Vedhuisen, 1993). The head, placed at the fabric's edge, often features tumpal (rows of triangles). In the 1930s, floral motifs (dlorong) became popular, arranged vertically or diagonally

(Sumarsono et al., 2013). The body was filled with flora, fauna, or narrative depictions.

Importantly, Peranakan batik is egalitarian—wearable by anyone, without restrictions of social class or status. Peranakan batik is an evolution that has been diversely influenced by other cultures:

- Indian chintz and patola textiles shaped early patterns such as jlamprang and floral designs.
- Chinese influence introduced banji, dragons, phoenixes, and qilin, symbolizing prosperity, strength, and spiritual harmony.
- Dutch influence in the 19th–20th centuries introduced buketan (floral bouquets) and fairy tale scenes such as Cinderella and Little Red Riding Hood.
- Japanese occupation led to the emergence of Djawa Hokokai batik with pagi-sore (morning-afternoon) dual designs (Ratnadewi et al., 2020; Vedhuisen, 1993).

Peranakan batik became a melting pot of cultures, producing unique motifs and styles through centuries of global interactions. Initially, Chinese traders bought batik from local Javanese artisans and sold it across Java and Sumatra. Gradually, they settled, married locals, and began producing their own batik from the 1920s onwards. Early designs imitated Dutch batik, later evolving with Chinese mythological motifs (Budianto & Sunaryta, 2019).

World War I influenced the decline of Dutch batik fashion. The war disrupted the cotton fabric import from Netherlands which impacted the price of the materials. Because batik price rocketed, buyers could no longer afford it. The change in fashion among Indo-European community worsened the situation. Batik was replaced by long European dresses

(Vedhuisen, 1993).

The batik home industry in Pekalongan was impacted by all these factors. As a result, many workshops went bankrupt.

During the Japanese occupation, Djawa Hokokai batik was created. It was based on the pagi-sore (Morning-Afternoon) batik design, a fabric with two different colors and patterns combined diagonally to be worn in the morning and afternoon (Wulandari, 2011). Djawa Hokokai combined floral patterns like Sakura and Chrysanthemum, with Javanese classic motifs like kawung and parang.

For over two centuries Peranakan batik evolved due to various complex pressures. These changes have given rise to many artisans and producers. Notable producers included Oei Khing Liem, Ny Lie Boen In, Sie Kie Siang, Oey Kiem Boen, and others. Today, only a handful remain. The legacy of Oey Soe Tjoen (OST) spanned three generations before closing in 2025. Meanwhile, Batik Liem Ping Wie, passed down to the third and fourth generations, remains the last surviving Chinese Javanese Peranakan batik workshop in Pekalongan. The craft of batik-making cannot be sustained solely through documentation; it requires years of hands-on apprenticeship. Artisans like Sutinah, who learned from her grandmother and mother, struggle to pass the skill on to younger generations, who often prefer more accessible jobs in retail or services.

Despite the pride, the heritage faces threats of extinction. In 2025, Kedungwuni – a district in Pekalongan – has only one remaining producer of Chinese Javanese Peranakan batik: Batik Liem Ping Wie. In the same year, the finest hand-drawn batik producer of Kedungwuni, Batik Oey Soe Tjoen, ceased its production, marked by the exhibition “Batik Oey Soe Tjoen: Perseverance in Preserving Heritage, an Exhibition of Three Generations over 100 Years” in Jakarta, July 26 – Au-

gust 3, 2025, (Rumah Batik Oey Soe Tjoen, n.d.).

With declining interest from the youth to carry on the tradition, long hours of producing a fine hand-drawn batik, and a diminishing pool of skilled batik artisans, the prospects for Peranakan batik appear increasingly grim (Oey Soe Tjoen, Batik Tulis Alus Peranakan Diambah Kepuhahan, Satu Kain Dibuat Selama 3 Tahun, 2021).. Thus, concrete solutions are urgently needed to prevent its extinction. This paper examines the historical development, challenges and survival opportunities of Pekalongan Peranakan batik, arguing that while this heritage embodies centuries of cross-cultural exchange and rich symbolism, it now faces threats of extinction that demand revitalization through innovation and adaptation in the modern era.

This research focuses on Batik Liem Ping Wie, the last remaining Peranakan batik studio in Pekalongan as a case study to understand how artisans' batik navigates the pressures of modernization while preserving identity. While previous research has examined batik from historical or aesthetic perspectives, few studies analyze the contemporary survival strategies of local artisans after UNESCO recognition.

Therefore, this research will answer the following question: how does Pekalongan Peranakan batik specifically Batik Liem Ping Wie sustain its cultural identity amid social and economic transformation and what adaptive strategies can ensure its continuity in modern era?

The scope of the study will cover challenges: exploring the decline in generational artisanship, competition with batik printing, and opportunities to revitalize Peranakan batik: examining ongoing and potential strategies.

Methodology

This study uses a qualitative descriptive approach to explore the survival of Pekalongan Peranakan batik as a living cultural heritage. Data were collected through a combination of a literature review method, analyzing primary and secondary sources such as books, academic articles, historical archives, and media reports.

As part of this research, a short documentary about Batik Liem Ping Wie was produced to build public awareness of the uniqueness and fragility of artisan batik in Kedungwuni, Pekalongan. The film functions both as a medium of education and as an archival record, documenting the story of one of the last remaining artisan workshops founded in the 1950s. Through visual storytelling and interviews, the documentary aims to inspire appreciation for hand-drawn batik craftsmanship and encourage broader recognition of living heritage preservation. This initiative aligns with the concept of culturally sustainable development, in which creative documentation and community participation serve as practical instruments for sustaining local heritage (Throsby, 2017).

Interviews were conducted with several people including a tour guide from the Pekalongan Batik Museum, senior batik artisans and worker of Liem Ping Wie. The interviews explored themes such as artisan livelihood, market challenges, intergenerational knowledge transfer and cultural preservation. Then, data gathered were transcribed and analyzed to identify key issues and recurring patterns related to the question of why traditional batik producers like Liem Ping Wie struggle to survive. The transcripts also informed the documentary editing process, helping to visually articulate the relationship between cultural heritage, production practice and survival strategies.

The authors conducted field study

to Kedungwuni, Pekalongan, and interviewed Liem Poo Hien, the owner and artisan of Batik Liem Ping Wie. Data are examined using descriptive-qualitative analysis to understand the present-day challenges of Peranakan batik.



Figure 1. Authors (standing with Liem Poo Hien (left front and her sister)
(Source: Personal research documentation)

Result

The research reveals that Pekalongan Chinese Peranakan batik is in critical position, facing complicated threats to its survival that includes production, generational succession, market dynamics, and the irreversible loss of core cultural motifs.

1. The hand-drawn (batik tulis) sector has experienced a catastrophic decline. As of 2025, only one producer remains operational: Batik Liem Ping Wie. The future of this last workshop is critically uncertain, as its master artisan, Liem Poo Hien, is currently in recovery. All other producers have ceased operations, unable to sustain the immense production demands. The core challenges are the high cost of production and the extraordinarily long creation time—requiring between one to three years to complete a single piece of fine hand-drawn batik.

2. The production of authentic Chinese Peranakan motifs—such as floral patterns derived from chintz with Dutch bouquet arrangements, and brightly colored dragonflies or butterflies—has

ceased. These styles were uniquely produced by workshops like Oey Soe Tjoen (now closed) and Liem Ping Wie. For survival, Liem Ping Wie, has shifted to a strategy of artistic diversification, accepting commissions for producing stamped batik and batik's souvenir such as scarves, and men's shirt with special design non-Pekalongan motifs. This indicates that to stay economically viable, the core cultural identity of the craft is being diluted.



Figure 2. Hand-drawn pagi-sore batik produced by Liem Ping Wie
(Source: Personal research documentation)



Figure 3. Batik Liem Ping Wie
(Source: Personal research documentation)

3. Field observations revealed that most artisans and workers at Liem Ping Wie are elderly with limited opportunities to pass their skill to the next generation. Younger people often seek more stable and profitable employment in urban industries. This indicates a fundamental breakdown in intergenerational knowledge transfer, resulting in the likely extinction of these specialized skills.

4. The market for batik is now saturated with mass-produced printed batik, which is significantly cheaper and more readily available than the handmade alternative. Within the context of a current economy, consumers are increasingly opting for this affordable batik. Consequently, the high-value, artisan hand-drawn batik is being marginalized and is unable to compete, further eroding its economic viability and market presence.

5. As part of this research, a short documentary about Batik Liem Ping Wie was produced to build public awareness of the uniqueness and fragility of artisan batik in Kedungwuni, Pekalongan. The film serves as a medium of education and as an archival record- documenting the story of one of the last remaining artisan workshops founded in 1925s. Through visual storytelling and interviews, the documentary aims to inspire appreciation for hand-drawn batik craftsmanship.

Discussion

The vitality of traditional art forms is contingent upon the will of their inheritors across generations. The finely hand-drawn Chinese Javanese batik of Pekalongan currently faces a critical situation. Today, the producers struggle to sustain the tradition amid diminishing resources.

Despite such challenges, Peranakan batik has historically demonstrated resilience through creative adaptation. Its emergence was shaped by eighteenth-cen-

tury global trade monopolies. The British replication of Indian chintz via printing technologies not only decimated India's traditional chintz industry but also created conditions for new local creativity. The scarcity of chintz, once a commodity in the spice trade, stimulated the rise of Chinese Javanese domestic batik production in Pekalongan.

The motifs of Peranakan batik also attest to its hybrid cultural roots. Patterns reveal diverse influences: *jlamprang* from Indian patola weaving, floral designs from chintz, geometric (banji) motifs and mythological creatures (dragon, phoenix, qilin) from China, bouquet patterns and folktale imagery from Indo-European women, and unique wartime designs developed under Japanese occupation. These motifs mark the distinctive identity of Peranakan batik.

Although Peranakan batik is currently in a vulnerable position, it can still become the source of artistic innovation. An example of revitalization is the adaptation of Liem Ping Wie's batik designs to tableware. This innovation is a result of cooperation between PT Nuanza Porselen Indonesia, a Central Java-based tableware producer and Batik Liem Ping Wie. The company proves how tradition can encourage modern craftsmanship by applying these motifs to porcelain products. Integrating aesthetic complexity with technical skill, batik designs are manually applied onto three-dimensional objects, like cups. This adaptation illustrates the potential of Peranakan batik not merely to survive, but to evolve in response to modern creative demand.

To preserve hand-drawn batik requires active involvement from many parties. The Pekalongan local authorities must work together with producers and The Pekalongan Batik Museum to create batik preservation programs that appeal to the younger generation, tourists and researchers who are interested in research-

ing batik. Thus, the Batik Museum not only functions to display the history of batik, but also as a center for education and knowledge transfer. In addition, collaboration with UNESCO could be pursued to organize international events that protect this cultural heritage, ensuring that preservation efforts are promoted not only at the local level but also within international arenas.



Figure 4. Adaptation of Peranakan batik to Cups produced by PT Nuanza Porselen Indonesia
(Source: Personal research documentation)

Conclusion

The evolution of Pekalongan Peranakan batik demonstrates how cultural heritage is shaped by both resilience and vulnerability. Peranakan batik emerged as a form of cultural evolution when the world was losing Indian chintz fabric. This art developed by combining Indian, Chinese, European, and Japanese influences, thus forming a distinctive visual identity. The design created not only represents cross-cultural encounters but also prove the creativity of local artisans in adapting to difficult conditions.

Nowadays, however, this tradition faces critical challenges. The complex skills required for hand-drawn batik, the time-consuming production process, and

high costs make it less competitive than mass-produced printed batik. Changing fashion trends have also weakened its cultural position. Without regeneration and structured support, this tradition is at risk of disappearing.

However, opportunities for revitalization are still open. The rich collection of motifs inspires contemporary applications, as seen in Liem Ping Wie's design on tableware. Local government initiatives, educational programs through the Pekalongan Batik Museum, and potential collaborations with UNESCO offer concrete ways out for protecting and reviving this heritage.

Therefore, the survival of Pekalongan Peranakan batik depends on changing challenges into opportunities. Strategies like creative adaptation, policy support, and cultural pride can preserve this batik not only as a valuable heritage from the past, but also as a form of art that is alive and relevant for future generations.

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EXPLORATION OF EXPERIENCE AND PERCEPTION IN USING GRADIENT MAP FOR DIGITAL COLORING

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Abstract: This study explores the experience and perception of using Gradient Map (GM) compared to the Direct Coloring (DC) method for digital coloring, particularly among learners. The research addresses whether GM provides benefits in four areas, learning curve, speed, ease of use, and satisfaction for users, and compared with the DC method. The research employed a mixed-methods approach involving comparative experiments using a within-subjects design and a post-experiment survey among 19 participants with varying experience. The experiment required participants to color an image using both GM and DC methods. Results show a near-even split in preference (52.6% for GM, 47.4% for DC), with the majority (84.2%) agreeing that GM is useful. However, the DC method scored slightly better on average for perceived learning curve and speed, and significantly higher for user satisfaction. The GM method was only marginally better in ease of use. GM's benefits include non-destructive editing and fast color experimentation, but its perceived drawbacks relate to the technicality, the multi-step process (value-first), and the need for pre-existing knowledge of value and color theory. In conclusion, GM is a powerful, efficient tool for color editing and

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experimentation, but its full benefit is realized when users already understand value and color theory. DC offers greater satisfaction and perceived ease of learning due to its directness. Future research should involve a larger, more diverse sample, and incorporate quantitative usability tests focusing on user experience.

Keywords: gradient map; digital painting; digital colorization; direct coloring; user experience

Introduction

Digital painting is a process using the tools or application that works with color, lines, shape, and various visual elements (Hibit, 2022). While according to Sani et al (2025) digital illustration technique is a process which mimics the traditional painting, it has the characteristic of smooth gradation in color and rich of texture. As noted by Hibit (2022), some software that are used are Adobe Photoshop, Adobe illustrator, and Procreate. The user can begin by starting with a blank canvas or by applying color elements over an existing photograph or image in the process. Yin (2022) described it as paperless painting, a result of modern science and technology. About its relationship with traditional painting, Yin mentions that while it originates from traditional painting methods, it evolves to possess its own artistic charm (2022).

On learning digital painting process, Kennedy (2024) mentions that digital painting tries to mitigate this by assimilating more traditional feels to its feature and user interface. They try to mimic some of the traditional painting methods such as the brush and color palette. In hardware, the introduction of the graphic tablet or drawing tablet gives the user the experience to emulate the feeling of drawing and controlling your art by hand. These technologies later evolved to drawing on screen with tools such as Wacom Cintiq, tablets with stylus, and other similar products. The result can be used in

both digital media using screen as its display, or in printed media. This technique is widely used in various creative projects because of the flexibility, speed, and their ease of use compared with its traditional counterpart. But, in terms of learning it, there is some challenge found especially in the learning curves in software and hardware (Sani et al., 2025). Kikuchi from 21 Drawing mention, the number of hardware, software, brushes, and settings can be overwhelming for learners to navigate (2023).

In the learning process, digital painting drives a demand for digital painting tutorials, often found in online resources and video platforms like YouTube. One of the recurring themes in these tutorials is the focus on color theory and the application techniques. Some digital artists, reflecting on the traditional method of proficiency in value (light and dark) before moving to pigment, follow this method to their digital works by completing their drawing in grayscale first, and then follow it by adding color with layer blending and styles. These value-first strategies are often highlighted in the use of gradient map.

Gradient Map

Gradient map is one of features in various graphic software that can help users with the colour editing or creation of an image or painting by adding a solid color to the shadow, midtones, and highlight

based on the gradient setting (Williams, 2023). It has similarities with traditional underpainting techniques which create a grayscale layer that was created first before colors were applied (Gardner, 2024). This feature allows the creation of a colored image based on grayscale image with the difference only based on value or the brightness. Brunet (2022) mentioned with this, users can work on the value, design, or arrangement first and then give their undivided attention to the colors.

Benefits of using gradient maps were shown in multiple sources. First, the possibility of editing, in Adobe Photoshop, gradient map is a part of the adjustment layer, which allows users to do editing and keep changing it without disrupting the base image created. Combined with other features such as layer blending modes, users can achieve desired color and atmosphere in their compositions (Santos, 2020; Huckleberry Art Academy, 2024; Mohrbacher, 2025; Williams, 2023). Second, its speeds in adding color combination and atmosphere to a grayscale image and process that allow change value to color automatically (Nichols, 2024; Brunet, 2022; Huckleberry Art Academy, 2024; Mohrbacher, 2025). Gradient maps color profile can also be saved in the system and or downloaded from other users, allowing experimental and multiple use of the same color scheme. These advantages in speed and ease of use can provide further help for the creation of digital painting for users.

Disadvantage of Gradient Map

In the topic of coloring itself, not every creator follows the same discourse of using gradient map or underpainting as a coloring technique. Bucci (2018) shares their feeling of disconnectedness, lack of expression, and fun. They also mentioned the feeling of being too technical and prefer to work directly with color. Another

creator, Gardner in their explanation about digital underpainting (2024) talks about using gradient map in underpainting can make you too focused on getting the value and looks right and spending too much time solving an issue that is not yet there. And Heya (2025) in her article about glazing method, even though gradient map is good for experimenting in color, understanding the color expression and layer to use it is crucial, to avoid burnt-out or muddy results if using value and color layer above incorrectly.

For a new learner, gradient map might have its own learning curves as it needs an understanding of not only the layer and adjustment but also the fundamentals of value drawing. Santos mentioned in the making of gradient map achieving a satisfactory result, rather than a loud or tacky, needs an impressive subtlety (2020). It can also take a longer time (Gardner, 2024) which may hinder the painting process. Working with these tools, adjustment, and software can be too technical (Bucci, 2018) and prefer to work with tools that mimic the real world experience like brush and color palette instead. It also needs to be noted that functions similar to gradient map, might not be available to all digital painting software and applications in the market.

This study aims to explore the experience and usage of gradient mapping in users, as well as how the user experiences the learning curves. First, with some claiming gradient mapping as a fast way to colorize and to experiment with color, the research seeks to see whether a learning user experienced this benefit as well. Second, this research seeks to compare on how they perceive gradient map method of coloring with value first and mimicking the underpainting method to color a digital painting composition versus with coloring without gradient map. This research seeks to explore the following questions:

1. How is the learner's experience in working with Gradient mapping as a way to colorize and experiment with color in digital painting?

2. How is their experience compared with using coloring directly without using the gradient map method?

Methodology

This research explored the topic of user experience with the gradient map using mixed methods by doing comparative experiments using within-subjects design and survey about their perceived experience. Within-subjects design method allowed the direct comparison of the response of each participant to examine changes or differences (Kaluza, 2023).

The research was conducted in Bahasa Indonesia with participants of various experiences in digital painting. The comparative experiment was chosen to examine the difference between gradient map and non-gradient map method. After the experiment, participants were asked to complete a comparative experience survey using a Likert scale and open-ended questions to share their experience. A review of media and tutorial about gradient map study was also conducted to learn more about the topics.

The experiments were conducted in one computer lab with computers and drawing tablets of the same specification and Adobe Photoshop as the software. All participants had experience in learning and using traditional drawing techniques on paper with black and white value and pigment. Before the experiments, all participants received an explanation of the gradient map feature in Adobe Photoshop and an example of how to use the feature as seen in figure 1. Then, the participants were asked to choose one outlined image provided by the researcher shown in figure 2 as their coloring base, then

they were asked to spend 45 minutes to coloring half of the images using direct coloring, followed by 10 minutes break, and another 45 minutes coloring the other half of the image using gradient map method, (examples shown in figure 3). This experiment involved 19 participants with various level of digital painting experience within the span of two days. The participants were divided into two batches, first 8 people on 14 October 2025 and 11 people on 17 October 2025. The surveys were done after finishing the experiment.

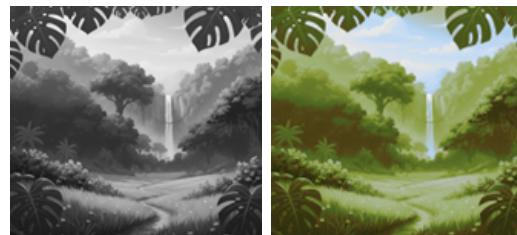


Figure 1. Examples images from the initial explanation to use GM (left - initial grayscale, right- after using GM in Adobe Photoshop version 26) (source: personal documentation)



Figure 2. The choice of images to be the base of the experiment (source: personal documentation)



Figure 3. Examples of finished works (source: personal documentation)

The results were analysed using the help of thematic analysis of Braun & Clarke (2006) via Ahmed, et al method (2025, p. 1) which consist of “familiarization with data, generating initial code, searching for themes, reviewing themes, defining and naming themes, and writing the report”. This method is useful to provide a structured but flexible approach to analyse the dataset, especially with the experience, perception, and opinions (Mc Leod, 2024).

Result

The interview data were translated to English and reviewed to see the comparison and experience in both methods. The study tries to seek some patterns in the experience mentioned by the participants in the research. The results are later compared with the media and literature review.

Preferences and Perceived Usefulness between Gradient Map and Direct Color

The participants were asked to choose which of the methods they prefer after their experience. Between the direct color method and gradient map method, nine people (47,4%) chose direct coloring (DC) and ten people (52,6%) chose the gradient map (GM) method. But, when asked about their perception whether the GM makes digital painting easier, 16 respondents (84,2%) agree and 3 respondents (15,8%) disagree. This result may show that even though they have their personal preference in using the method in their works, gradient map was perceived as useful for working in general. Then, participants are asked about the reason for preference. The result is shown in table 1.

Table 1. Reason to choose DC or GM

| DC Group |
|---|
| Speed and Efficiency Direct coloring is a faster and more efficient process because they do not need to analyze the value and create an underpainting first. “I chose direct color because I think it is faster, no need to analyse which part should be darker or lighter and no need to make black and white drawing first. I can do it faster and more accurately with this.” (RZ) |
| Familiarity, Control, and Simplicity Some users mention that they feel more familiar with direct coloring and that it is easier to master. DC also allows them to directly control their color and contrast, making it clearer, consistent, and simpler. “I chose direct color because I have more experience with them, and for me, it took more time to learn gradient maps until I could do it well.” (HJ) |
| Technicality and Suitability GM needs multiple steps while DC is more direct making it less technical. Some respondent comments that it will be easier to use DC for more complex color while GM will be better for simpler composition and that it will depend on what project they are working with. “Technically, coloring using direct colors feels more efficient because in terms of time management, there is only one process in this coloring stage. If you use the gradient map technique, there are two processes: coloring the black and white values and matching the colors, selecting colors and masking different parts of the image in one stage, so it takes more time.” (ACS) |
| “For me, I find that gradient maps are more suitable for backgrounds or objects with less complex colors, while models such as characters or animals are better suited to manual coloring because they use complex colors. It might be suitable if the entire image uses colors that are not very varied.” (SN) |

| GM Group |
|--|
| Speed and Efficiency It is seen as more efficient especially if working with tight deadlines and simplifies the coloring process and quicker color changes. They also mention they can use it to explore various color changes faster and simplify their decision to choose color. "Because with Gradient Map, everything becomes more efficient and suitable for fast needs, which is very relevant in today's fast-paced world." (JPJT) |
| Control Participants mention GM allows them to use consistent colors to make moods and temperature and ease of control on the shadow, midtones, and highlights. The ability to control the color faster makes them able to try various styles and color combinations to make more harmonious colors. The effects can also be edited anytime without disturbing the original image. |
| "I chose black and white followed by Gradient Map because I think it's exciting to see the tone changes. When it's black and white, I can focus more on the shapes and contrast without being distracted by the original colors. Then, when I use Gradient Map, the result can look more vibrant or have a certain mood, depending on the colors I choose. So it feels like I can control the mood of the photo whenever and however I want. Additionally, I also understand better how colors and light can affect the final result of an image." (RCB) |
| Artistic skill Exercise With multiple steps, GM is beneficial for user to sharpen their understanding of highlight and shadow. Also, it can be used to develop the artist's art style. "I wanted to learn how to adjust the lighting and mood of an image through color. With Gradient Map, I can make black and white photos more interesting with different color tones. When I tried it, I found that this feature helped give the final result a more dramatic and artistic feel. In addition, I also gained a better understanding of how contrast and color can affect emotions in visuals." (MN) |

While both groups mention speed and efficiency, the DC group mentions that they perceive DC as faster since it does not need to analyse and do multiple steps compared with the GM group. GM Group perceived the speed and efficiency as quicker color change setting and exploring the various color schemes. Some DC Group participants mention that yes, it will be more difficult to change color after they finish the composition. Three participants mention less experience in GM to make them choose DC, with one respondent mentioning the experience in both were around the same but they prefer to work directly with color.

Perceived Experience

Participants were also asked to rate their experience from 1-6 with 6 as the easiest, fastest, and positive experience in learning curves, ease of use, speed, and satisfaction in both methods. The result is shown in table 2, figure 4, and figure 5.

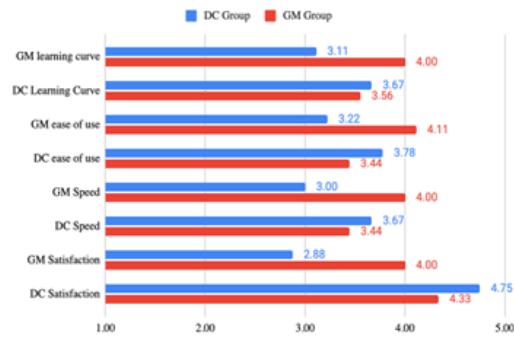


Figure 4. Average perceived experience comparison between DC and GM Group

In the group comparison result, on average, direct coloring group perceived DC as easier to learn, easier to use, faster, and more satisfying. Most significant differences were in satisfaction (1.88), followed by speed (0.56), with learning curves and ease of use having the same difference of 0.56 point.

In the gradient map group, they perceived using gradient map as easier to learn, easier to use, and faster, but using direct coloring was more satisfying. With the difference scores were ease of use (0.67), speed (0.56), learning curve (0.44), and last satisfaction (0.33).

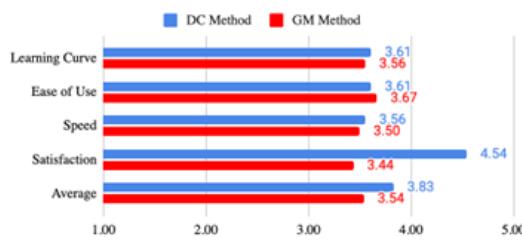


Figure 5. Average perceived experience in all participants

In all participants' average, in terms of learning curves, DC has a slightly higher average meaning it is perceived as has lower learning curves than GM. In Ease of use, GM has the lead, so GM is perceived as easier to use while working. For speed, DC is considered slightly faster. But for satisfaction, the data shows a much higher difference, with users perceived working with direct coloring giving them considerably more satisfaction. In summary, GM has a slight advantage only with ease of use and DC despite having a slight minority (10 versus 9) demonstrate more general advantages.

Table 2. Comparison between perceived learning curves, ease of use, speed, and satisfaction in both method
 (source: personal documentation)

| | DC Method | GM Method |
|----------------|------------------|------------------|
| Learning Curve | 3.61 | 3.56 |
| Ease of Use | 3.61 | 3.67 |
| Speed | 3.56 | 3.50 |
| Satisfaction | 4.54 | 3.44 |
| Average | 3.83 | 3.54 |

Interestingly, participants show a higher average in direct coloring (DC) method in the overall average of perceived experience. Even in the question about which method they prefer to use, GM method has a slight advantage of 10 participants versus 9 participants.

Perceived Learning Curves

The majority of participants (17 out of 19) in both DC and GM Groups agree that learning gradient map will be useful for new learners. However, when asked about the perceived learning curves, the gradient map method averaged slightly less (3.56) than their direct color counterpart (3.61) as shown in table 2 and figure 4 meaning, gradient map is perceived slightly more difficult than direct color to learn. Participants also asked about their difficulties in learning gradient map, shown in table 3.

Table 3. Difficulties in learning GM
 (source: personal documentation)

| DC Group |
|--|
| Color Combination and Balance Participants mention the difficulty in choosing color combination and balance in the setting. They find it difficult to find the perfect balance for their artworks. |
| Technical related with the GM Setting Color stop in the gradient map setting bar, the right location for the right color position, and how the color transition smoothly in the gradient. |
| Early stage of Learning They feel they are not familiar yet or in their early stage of learning gradient map. These reasons also affect their time management and confusion with the technical skill. One participant mentions their difficulties in timing their grayscale layer. |

| GM Group |
|---|
| Color Combination and Balance In terms of color combination, participants feel it is hard to translate the color to the artwork, the balance and the color combination. Especially when the artwork is a complex one. |
| Gradient Map Concept Similar to the early stage of learning, but GM group mention mostly about the concept early on and how the color is not what they expect with the gradient map setting bar mentioned by one of the participants. |
| Working with value First step before the gradient map, the value drawings were mentioned, especially on how to make the value balanced before working on the color. |

In the direct color group, the difficulty primarily lies in the control over the color, related with how the gradient map bar setting works. So it feels harder for them to produce their intended color combination. While gradient map groups mention their difficulties in the overall understanding on how gradient map works, and its implementation to a more complex artwork. So their process was more like an experiment rather than a precise process.

On the positive side, participants mention that gradient map users can also train their value sensitivity and focus while learning, expanding their knowledge in the software features, and make it easier and faster to set up and experiment with color in their composition. But they also noted that users need an understanding of layer, value, and color theory beforehand for effective use and to avoid flatness in the color.

Discrepancy between preference and usefulness of Gradient Map

Based on the result, it is found that there is a discrepancy between the preference of the slight majority (52,6% versus 47,4%), but the majority of the users (84,2%) agreed that GM is useful. While the idea of gradient map and its usage is perceived as useful for the user, it is possible that experiencing it on a digital coloring process might not be perceived as better for them. As indicated by the lower metrics in learning curves, speed, and satisfaction for the GM.

This result, can also be related to its advantages as the adjustment layer for their paintings or designs, with a non-destructive editing, color experimentation, and speed appeal in terms of editing but not in overall coloring process. Because the overall coloring process requires the user to perform multiple steps and have prior knowledge in value, the participants may feel that GM is useful, but not necessarily their chosen coloring method.

Using Gradient Map in Future Projects

Across the interview, participants were also asked about the future use of gradient map in their project. In direct color group (DC Group) participants mention they will be likely to use again because it will be an easier, having a fast and accurate color choosing, especially if the composition is simpler or having less color, but they mention it will depend on the project's needs, if it is more nuanced with specific and consistent color, then maybe they will use it or not use it at all.

Gradient map group (GM Group) also mentioned they are likely to use it again with more positive attitude, citing that it will be beneficial to create a more accurate and specific mood or themes and easily adjusting it and working with it on a tight deadline. They also mention the possibility to use it not only in digital

painting or coloring but also various projects like photography, character design, or any other digital artworks. But a minority of participants mention as not yet or only use it minimally since they are not sure on what project they will use it or only using it if they have a tight schedule.

Discussion

This study explores the experience and perception of learning curves, ease of use, speed, and satisfaction in both methods. The results are drawn from the experience of participants in doing experiments in direct coloring and gradient map and the comparison between their choice of method.

In exploring the use of gradient map in Adobe Photoshop in participants, the preferences are nearly split equally with 52,6% favoring gradient map method and 47,4% favoring direct color method. The participants majority agree (84,2%) agree that gradient map will be useful for the digital painting process. The direct color method demonstrated a slightly higher average across learning curve and speed, along with a considerably greater difference in user satisfaction. In contrast, the gradient map method's average ratings were only marginally better for ease of use. Implying that the gradient map method is easier to use but harder to learn, will take more time, and make them less satisfied.

First, in ease of use, gradient map's consistency of color, efficiency, and speed for specific cases like deadlines and the feature of non-destructive editing can give users easier time when editing composition and explore the color balance and moods. These ideas are in line with Santos (2020), Mohrbacher (2025) and Williams (2023), about the ability to edit after without disturbing the original images and edit it to achieve desired color and atmosphere. This advantage may relate with

the eagerness to learn and explore more, as a feature they can use to learn more about design and make their design faster in the future. Likely, even though they see themselves as less experienced in gradient mapping, user saw the potential for this feature.

Second, the perceived learning curve is slightly lower average for GM may result from their lack of experience in gradient mapping, and not yet having pre-existing understanding about value, layers, and colour theory aligned with Santos (2020) articles about learning and using the gradient maps in their works. This results also in line with Bucci (2018), as it is too technical and Heya (2025) also put this as they need to understand the color expression and layer setting first.

Third, perceived speed. Previously the source mentioned that gradient map can speed up work by helping with colour combination and mood by allowing the color change faster (Nichols, 2024; Brunet, 2022; Huckleberry Art Academy, 2024; Mohrbacher, 2025). In the result, the idea of speed in gradient map is one of the main positive experience, but from the perceived experience, we can conclude that even though they see the gradient map process itself as a fast process, while working with it in the whole composition, it can be slower since they need to do more than just gradient map and need a pre-existing knowledge about the grayscale value like mentioned by Gardner (2024) about user can take longer time due to the focus on the value and its visuals to make it "look right".

Fourth, satisfaction can be very subjective for users and they can experience disconnectedness, lack of expression, and fun (Bucci, 2018). Lower scores in average perceived satisfaction may be related with the multiple steps they need to do before working with color. After working with value, the very technical gradin-

ent map setting, they also need to work with the masking process, making it feels more difficult to put intended color in the composition. Coloring with a gradient bar setting and cannot directly sure how to control the outcome may be related with feeling disconnected and lack of expression. Compared with direct color techniques that allow them to put intended color directly into the position and perceived as simpler and all in one process. DC is also closer to mimicking experience in learning direct color in the traditional sense with pigment and paper, making this more familiar with their previous experience and satisfaction when finishing the artwork, making it more expressive and connected.

Gradient map as a tool for learning

The Gradient Map method, which shares a conceptual basis with traditional underpainting (Gardner, 2024), was proposed as a tool to help the learning curve for digital artwork. This approach, however, is not a complete learning solution. The method's effectiveness is often obstructed by a user's own difficulties, such as a poor understanding of value, which can make the process more complex and inefficient. Nevertheless, gradient map can excel as a supplemental feature to help users to learn value expression and depth. The speed and flexibility of editing can also encourage users to experiment with different color schemes, which in turn deepens their comprehension of digital color.

Limitation and Future study

This study try to explore and provide insight about the experience in learning and using gradient map color method in digital coloring. However this research is limited by a small scope of samples with various experience and backgrounds. The software and hardware used is limited to

Adobe Photoshop and drawing tablet in Windows operating system. There is also limited time in the experiment, different time duration might also affect participants' experience. This can lead to a very niche summary and experience, since the majority of the participants are still learning and not a professional digital artist. Additionally, this study mainly focuses on the qualitative perspective and description, and the scale of the user's perceived experience is not analysed with a quantitative measurement.

For future study, a larger pool of participants with various backgrounds will be beneficial to deepen the study study about satisfaction and and more quantitative approach to the usability tests for the overall feature of the user experience and user interface since interface often are crucial to fill in the gap between physical and digital world (Kennedy, 2024). Based on the result from this research, it will also be interesting to study gradient map as part of a larger study about coloring in digital artworks.

Conclusion

In conclusion, this study explores the experience for learners and artists of digital art to learn and use gradient map (GM) in coloring their art and comparing it with direct coloring methods. And put it into two core questions.

About the learner's experience in working with GM to colorize and experiment, 89,4% (17 participants) agreed that it is useful for learners and 84,2% (16 people) agreed that gradient map is useful for digital artwork. The research also found that it is perceived as efficient and flexible since it can add and edit color fastly, but it can be considered as too technical for some who have less experience in value understanding and color theory. The process of gradient map itself is a fast, but

not the whole process of making the art. On the other hand, they found the benefit of using it as a tool to sharpen their value sensitivity and expanding their software knowledge.

In their experience compared with using direct color, the preferences are split near evenly with 52,6% (10 versus 9 people). But in the perceived experience, gradient map is only slightly better in ease of use, might be due to its advantages in editing color process. Whereas direct color is slightly better in perceived speed, and learning curve due to having only one step and need less pre-existing knowledge. And having significantly higher satisfaction because users feel more in-control and more connected.

Gradient maps can serve as a fast and powerful tool to edit color, mood, and atmosphere from a greyscale artwork. While it will be better for new user of gradient map to have an understanding about color theory and value difference in artwork, gradient map can serve as a tool to deepen their learning of value expression, encourage to learn and experiment with various color style, and technical aspect of the digital drawing software, thus maximizing its benefit as a productivity and experimental feature than only a coloring tools.

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ANALYSIS OF VISUAL ELEMENTS OF YOUTUBE VIDEOS AS A MEDIUM FOR TEACHING CHARACTER VALUES IN CHILDREN

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Abstract: *Digital Natives represent the new generation of children exposed early to digital technologies and growing alongside the rapid advancements of the 21st century. Platforms such as YouTube have become digital environments designed for entertainment, play, and learning, providing various visual stimuli characters and gestures, colors and shapes, and narrative backgrounds to construct cohesive storytelling. However, much of the available content has not produced a positive impact due to the lack of purposeful meaning. Premature creative approaches may lead to declining attention spans, negative ethics, and weakened cognitive development in young viewers. This research aims to analyze visual elements and storytelling in YouTube content targeted at children as a medium to implement moral ethics, support cognitive thinking, and help maintain attention spans. A qualitative descriptive method is utilized, supported by Roland Barthes' Semiotics theory. Primary data were obtained through direct interviews with parents and children, complemented by secondary data from observation and documentation. The results show that simple, communicative visual elements and supportive narration can effectively convey emotion, stimulate empathy, and encourage values such as honesty and accountability. However, overly aggressive visual effects and contrasting colours tend to stimulate consumptive tendencies. These findings highlight the importance of communicative design in creating digital content that not only captures interest but also enhances cognitive capacity and supports positive character formation among elementary-aged children in the digital era.*

Keywords: visual elements; YouTube; digital gaming; character; elementary school

Introduction

Students in elementary school are in a vital stage of development that shapes their cognitive abilities and emotional maturity. Childhood experiences, both direct and mediated play a central role in

the formation of logical thinking, ethical reasoning, and social behavior. Children between the ages of 7 and 12 are generally in the concrete operational stage of cognitive development (Mubarokah et al., 2022), during which they begin to think logically, understand sequences, and de-

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velop stable character traits. Additionally, it is within this stage that children form individual personalities. Technological advancements and easy access to the digital realm via mobile phones are creating new environments where children learn, communicate, and develop their understanding of the world (Nastiti et al., 2024). The adaptation to a new environment may enhance cognitive capacity and emotional growth, or it may even deter one's cognitive capacity, attention span, and emotional maturity, in which the resulting growth is degenerate (Choi & Kim, 2024).

Children's activities contribute to their learning and understanding of the world. This method of observation and re-inforced learning leads them to develop long-term patterns of thought, behavior, and morality. However, the execution of digitalization into a child's life has made the developmental process more complicated. For example, a great deal of a child's daily routine may now be taken time spent on digital platforms, and as a result, many children are exposed to unregulated consumption of digital content which risk. Research has shown that excessive exposure to screen time and screen-based media can have a detrimental effect on the child's ability to develop language skills, the ability to solve problems, and to reason within a spatial and temporal context (Denisova et al., 2021).

One prominent phenomenon among elementary-aged children is the habitual use of social media platforms, particularly YouTube, TikTok, and Instagram for entertainment. These platforms attract a young audience with their multimodal combinations of visuals, sounds, and narrative structures (Diyorova, 2025). Research has demonstrated that using multimodal digital stories has increased student/family engagement, positively impacted students' retention of memo-

ries, and aided in promoting reflection, empathy, and creativity (Gürsoy, 2021; Wu & Chen, 2020).

Although the use of digital media can have both positive effects on knowledge acquisition, if used excessively and unmonitored, this may lead to a dependency and result in creating a shallow processing of information, decreasing span of attention, and decreasing ability to critically think (Wang, 2024).

To address the above issues, this research investigates the extent to which children's YouTube gaming video contains visual components and how they may act as a medium for developing characters of children. This study will explore the multimodal aspects (e.g., visuals, audio, symbols) and narrative structure to determine how they influence children's character development through interactions with game-based digital media.

The novelty of this study lies in the multimodal analysis that combines Barthes' semiotic study with observations of children's behavior in the context of YouTube gaming videos. This research will also identify the social and moral messages contained within these forms of digital media and evaluate the potential of these forms of media to positively influence children's emotional intelligence, attitudes, and values through contemporary forms of digital education.

With data that was collected, the aim of this research was to analyze the visual elements (character design, color, symbols/icons, and narrative structure) in YouTube videos with the theme of children's games to determine the extent to which these elements can function as a medium for forming character values in elementary school-aged children (7–12 years). Unlike previous studies that fo-

cus only on screen-time impact or general digital literacy, this research provides a visual-semiotic mapping specific to YouTube gaming videos targeted at children.

Methodology

This research utilized a qualitative descriptive study design to investigate how children experience the use of visuals in storytelling via YouTube as an entertainment medium. The qualitative method is ideal for obtaining detailed insight into children's interpretations of their surroundings along with how they view themselves and the environment based on their experiences (Khoa et al., 2023). By creating specific observations and using an interpretive framework created for this study, the researcher identified how children interpret meaning created through visual storytelling, the symbolic interpretation of visual representations (symbols) by children, and how they experience the visual arts through its aspects one of it is fluidity, textures, colour, etc. (Risna Sari et al., 2025).

The foundation of this study is based on a constructivist–interpretivist paradigm, where the construction of meaning takes place via social experience rather than through an objective process of discovery. This paradigm is important because it provides a way to examine how young children who actively consume multimodal digital media interpret their observations into character values, develop their personal identities, and examine characters and stories within contemporary media (Fodouop Kouam, 2024). The research therefore aims to describe how students internalize values and analyze visual cues within their cultural and developmental contexts.

Six children aged 7–12 and their par-

ents participated through purposive sampling. Data collection consisted of:

- observations during viewing sessions,
- semi-structured interviews via Zoom, and
- visual content analysis of the selected YouTube episode.

Observation conducted while children watched a full-length episode prototype. To get a deeper evaluation of the audience's understanding of the intended meaning of the film, the authors examined the viewers' reactions, emotional expressions, and interpretive behaviors through an analysis of the video via an emotional assessment of the viewers as well as through interviews (Kaczynski et al., 2024). Interviews were conducted live via Zoom and documented.

The data collected were then analyzed thematically with the triangulation method by comparing (1) behavioral observation findings, (2) interview transcripts, and (3) visual content analysis to ensure thematic consistency. This approach was applied to identify patterns, themes, and symbolic meanings in the collected data. Coding, classification, and thematic analysis were conducted to trace recurring indicators of how visual and audio features in children's YouTube gaming content may support value transmission and early character formation.

The researcher interviewed parents in depth to collect data about how children consume media, and how media may change a child's behavior and how much exposure they receive to digital media while they are at home (Taherdoost, 2021). The information that the parents provided along with that of the teachers gave a better understanding of how dig-

ital media influences the development of children's character values.

A visual media analysis was performed on YouTube (Rose, 2022). through digitally developed cinematography systematically using visual composition, colour, shape, symbol, and lighting to analyze how each of these can illustrate narrative meaning and message (the moral). The episode was chosen as an educational resource explaining cognitive development as well as character building principles for elementary age learners (Quintela Do Carmo et al., 2024), therefore it also meets the digital storytelling concepts of accessibility for children.

Result

Through examining the visual characteristics present in the chosen YouTube children's video, this investigation focused predominantly on how the character design, choice of colours, use of symbols/icons and narrative composition influenced the acquisition of moral/cognitive values by elementary-aged viewers. These findings were then combined with interviews with both parents and children to provide insight into how young audiences interpret digital content. The results and discussion of this study can be found below.

Using Roland Barthes' semiotic framework, both the literal (denotative) and symbolic (connotative) meanings of the visual components of this episode are represented (Huang et al., 2023). This layered approach to understanding meaning is important for young viewers, as they are still developing symbolic thought and are very attuned to emotional signals.

1. Character and Characterization

The characters connect the story visually. During interviews, characters are shown to be viewed and assessed by viewers most, forming an emotional bond with these fictional characters. The bond created paves way for the viewer to simulate strong emotional responses to the main character's actions, expression, and conflict during the entire episode. Flora & Susanto (2025) stated that characters create a relationship with the audience through their behavior, which creates an emotional connection.



Figure 1. Main Characters Design
(Source: Personal research documentation, 2025)

Children interpreted the character's struggles and positive behaviors, including but not limited to their hard-working nature, as opportunities to empathize and develop morals. The following events presented forms a storyline which connects between the two main characters. This is analyzed visually but they also imitate the behaviors represented by the characters, thereby demonstrating their understanding of morality in internalized behaviors, such as sharing, apologizing, and helping others (Alfakihuddin et al., 2024).

2. Colour as Emotional Encoding

Children were influenced by the colours which may convey a certain emotion. Of each shade of colour presented in-video lies their emotional engagement

with it. Pastel colours and soft hues created feelings of comfort and approachability while a high degree of contrast between warm and cool tones represented emotional tension or calmness. Interviews indicated that children labelled various scenes “sad,” “exciting” or “happy” purely based on shifts in colour. This suggests that children rely on visual-emotional cues before they are able to articulate their feelings through words.

This supports Barthes’ view that connotation occurs through cultural associations and confirms previous research that has demonstrated how colours can help young viewers to understand emotions and capture attention.

3. Symbols and Icons as Cognitive Signposts

Children exhibited an inherent ability to decode basic metaphors (e.g., hearts, as indicators of emotion and/or health, bones as indicators of death, fireflies as indicators of luminance, and so on) which serve as a vessel to conclude meaning (e.g., positive or negative), in a visual storytelling sequence. The presence of metaphorical cues allowed children to maintain their attention, assist in identifying how to interpret an emotionally charged scene and to reinforce a moral message even without the addition of explicit verbal explanations. Sceneries constructed to convey emotions intended by the storyteller were quickly noticed by young viewers. These scenes utilized visual elements such as composition and color correction to convey a specific emotion during the sequence.



Figure 2. Main Characters Design
(Source: Personal research documentation, 2025)

These findings corroborate multimodal learning theory since they indicate children do not receive their understanding of meaning solely from spoken language. Non-verbal visual (e.g., pictorial) coding creates an enhanced level of engagement with children, increases their use of symbolic reasoning and supports the same process for younger participants (6-8 years of age).

4. Storytelling and Narrative Structure

An exploration of children’s understanding of stories concluded that storytelling is central to their understanding. The structure of conflict followed by resolution helped children understand how to identify cause-and-effect relationships, make predictions and reflect on ethical outcomes. Children 8–12 years of age were able to describe the implicit meaning of stories around concepts like honesty, teamwork and responsibility, which

indicates their capacity to abstract a moral understanding from the story.

Budi (2019) found that these narrative structures provide children with the opportunity to learn moral reasoning through real-life experiences as opposed to learning to be morally righteous via traditional methods (i.e. instruction). No new literature supports Budi's statement, but it is in line with other research on parental mediation as a significant protective factor when children are allowed to view content on their devices without parental guidance. Without these safeguards, children are vulnerable to algorithmically driven content; therefore, children will experience extreme swings in emotion and develop patterns of addiction through continuous scrolling.

5. Parental Interview Findings: Awareness Gaps & Media Influence

Interviews conducted with parents who participated in this study revealed significant deficits in their understanding of both screen time's effect on children's cognitive and emotional growth and about digital literacy and supervision of digital media.

Table 1. Parental Interview Synthesis of their children's Digital media Consumption (Primary Data, developed by researcher 2025)

| Category | Key Findings | Representative Quote |
|------------------------|--|--|
| Digital Media Benefits | Multi-functional medium as a source of entertainment as well as a learning and teaching format | "When we choose the right media to display, it could bring educational benefits" |
| Parental Guidance | Inconsistent guidance on the behalf of parents due to imbalanced time management | "When we're busy we give the phone for them to play on". |

| | | |
|------------------------------------|--|---|
| Literacy in Media Influence | Majority of parents hadn't had complete comprehension and it's consequences of the subject manner | "It is a result of modernization where they need phones and gadgets to access education." |
| Character of Children | Empathy and teamwork may be learnt and developed from daily observation | "Yes, they are taught to be empathetic to whom truly need it." |
| Concern of negative content impact | Concerns surfaced when their children consume content with violent tendencies and/or inappropriate language. | "Our most concern is if they watch a fellow YouTuber with inappropriate language." |

As shown in the data, parents tended to equate "educational" with "safe," even when children consumed entertainment-driven videos.

Key findings include:

- parents have reported using screens (smartphones, tablets, etc., as devices that distract their children when they are busy doing other activities.
- Most parents report relying on content categories such as, "kids channel" instead of being engaged with their child's experience.
- Parents stated that they have witnessed both positive (joining groups, watching movies together) and negative behavior (aggression, swearing) in their children due to their children's exposure to digital media.

Thus, parental mediation is a key factor in protecting children from the adverse effects of exposure to digital media.

6. Child Interview Findings: Attention, Emotion, and Digital Dependency

According to the interviews conducted with the participants, the recent themes that emerged are consistent with previous research about how digital media affects a child's growth and development. Some of the most important themes include: attention span; character development; and improving children's intellectual abilities and cognitive skills.

Table 2. Respondent characteristics based on Age Digital Behavior, Emotional Regulation (Primary Data, developed by researcher 2025)

| Code | Interest in Digital Media | Emotional Regulation & Digital Literacy |
|------|--|--|
| R1 | Use of Digital Devices from an early age, with physical hobbies | Unstable emotion, easily influenced by visual stimuli |
| R2 | Managed use of digital devices, with athletic hobbies. | Emotionally mature, digital interactions being monitored by parents |
| R3 | Video-game play (Minecraft and Roblox), possessing an artistic hobby | Emotionally stable, Understanding the context of digital games and art |
| R4 | Moderate use of digital device and media consumption, possessing a hobby for literature and art. | Emotionally stable, capable of balancing real life activities with digital media consumption |
| R5 | High-intensity Short-form Content Consumption (<i>TikTok, Reels</i>) | Emotionally Unstable Emphasized indication of device addiction. |
| R6 | Interested in a selective and specific parts of digital media | Emotionally stable with the capacity of controlling media consumption |

Interview data from children revealed key behavioral patterns:

- Shortened attention spans among

children who consume fast-paced, short-form content.

- Emotional dysregulation in participants who heavily rely on digital entertainment.
- Cognitive immersion leading to distorted perception of time ("time feels fast"), consistent with the "doom-scrolling" and "brain rot" phenomena described by Wilson et al., (2024).
- Growing but inconsistent moral reasoning older children can identify connotative meanings, while younger children interpret mostly denotative visual cues.

Children with balanced device usage and supportive parenting showed more stable emotional regulation, higher empathy, and better understanding of narrative meaning.

These findings strengthen the relevance of considering developmental psychology when designing children's visual media.

Visual–Narrative Integration as a Tool for Character Education

Findings from visual analysis, parental interviews, and the younger audience interviews collectively show that children's YouTube videos do have the potential to function as informal learning environments but only when visual elements and storytelling are intentionally crafted with educational objectives.

Table 3. Visual & Narrative Analysis (Primary Data, developed by researcher 2025)

| Category Analysis | Contribution to Research | Interview Findings |
|-------------------|---|--|
| Character | Tangible characters have more impact to teach empathy as they allow the viewer to place | Character Design as expressive, yet soft invites a sense of curiosity and joy. |

| | | |
|--------------|---|---|
| | themselves in the story. | |
| Color | Emotion recognition amongst the minds of children. | Colors as an element which spark emotion and ambience in a visual composition |
| Symbol/Icon | Internalize story continuity, expressions and morals in children | Familiar with simplistic symbols and icons of which have |
| Storytelling | Teaching problem solving skills and training cognitive functions (focus, critical thinking, understanding chronology) | Peaked interest in dramatic storytelling providing a positive resolution |

Based on research findings, visual elements that contribute to character values:

- Characters generate identification → empathy → moral reflection.
- Colour encodes emotional meaning → supporting emotional literacy.
- Symbols/icons guide attention → aid memory and moral recognition.
- Plot provides structure → supports logical thinking and moral reasoning.

When these components combine with each other, they form multimodal environments, as described in the theory of visual storytelling, which facilitate both cognitive and emotional engagement. These are necessary for the growth of a character in a positive way.

Nevertheless, the study highlighted an important limitation, in which the role of a parent as well as their supervision is deemed critical. The parent(s) are obligated to partake in digitalization and being literate in digitalization. Unsupervised content consumed by a young audience will more likely lead to negative conse-

quences to their behavior. Issues such as dependence, fragmentation of attention, or instability of emotions. Thus, the educational potential that exists within the content presented on YouTube is not automatic; it is contingent upon whether or not parents monitor their children's consumption of this media and help curate it for them.

The connotative meanings that a narrative conveys can be more easily understood when the audience is able to embody a character's experiential perspective (either as an individual or as a group) and the character's storyline depicts real-life experiences (e.g., authentic experiences that the audience can relate to) (Nasution & Juanda, 2025). Developing characters in this manner allows children to recognize and understand the emotions of other people, which helps them to internalize moral values, including but not limited to, honesty, accountability, and empathy.

Conclusion

Research results of this study have shown the significance of visual elements found in children's video content (e.g., characters, colour schemes, symbols/icons, and narrative structures) have a significant influence on the moral development, emotional literacy, and cognitive skills developed by the young audience within the elementary school age group. Visualization of fictional characters displaying clear emotional signs are important in developing empathy; they also allow young viewers to absorb values like honesty, co-operative effort, and responsibility. Colour and symbolic cues create emotional and cognitive anchors for young viewers, allowing them to interpret the mood, intent, and moral context of each scene. Narrative structures that

include both conflict(s) and resolution(s) provide opportunities for children to develop and practice logical reasoning, make predictions on the consequences, and think through their moral choices.

Moreover, interview data indicate that children's understanding of the video's message is strongly affected by their affinity with the digital realm. Browsing habits and content consumed play a large role in how much parents should be mediating or restricting their children's digital footprints. Large amounts of unsupervised or excessive screen time are likely to create an environment where children do not develop the emotional regulation, have shortened attention spans and consume digital media uncritically, causing the potential benefits of educational visual storytelling to be neutralized or diminished. Conversely, children who use digital media in a balanced manner along with active parental mediation have a greater understanding of connotative meanings and more stable socio-emotional development. This study's findings support the idea that digital visual storytelling has educational benefits, but they are only as effective as the intentional design of the content and the supportive learning situations that accompany it.

The study highlights the importance of developing communicative and ethically sound digital content for the younger audience and improving digital literacy of parents and educators. As a media platform, YouTube has had a reputable history and still holds the opportunity to act as informal learning environment, developing empathy, character values and cognitive growth. Future research should evaluate the long-term influence of digital visual media and explore different types of content as well as develop joint approaches to working with parents, teachers, and content creators. This will help ensure

that children's increased use of digital media positively affects their moral and intellectual development.

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TIME AS EXCHANGE VALUE: POLITICAL ECONOMY OF SIGNS AND SELF–OTHER IN FILM “IN TIME”

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Abstract: This study examines how *In Time* (2011) constructs time as a symbolic economic value within a hyper-capitalist system that organizes social hierarchy. While Western capitalism quantifies time as an exploitable resource, the film extends this logic by transforming time into literal currency that determines life, death, and class position. Using Jean Baudrillard's concepts of sign-value, simulation, and hyperreality, the analysis demonstrates how the film detaches value from material production and reconstitutes time as a coercive sign that governs subject formation. Greimasian semiotics provides the methodological framework for mapping narrative oppositions, particularly the structural divide between surplus time (New Greenwich) and deficit time (Dayton) and tracing the transformation enacted through acts of resistance. The study shows that the redistribution of time disrupts the ideological naturalization of inequality, revealing the system's dependence on symbolic legitimacy rather than economic necessity. By situating the film within broader critiques of temporal capitalism and cultural ideology, this research highlights how visual culture articulates and challenges contemporary power structures that commodify human existence.

Keywords: hyperreality; sign-value; semiotic analysis; temporal capitalism; class hierarchy

Introduction

Studies of economy and culture reveal that conceptions of time differ across ideological and geographical contexts. Western capitalist modernity frequently frames time as an economic resource that can be quantified and exploited for production efficiency (Thompson, 1967; Harvey, 1990). This logic is crystallized in dystopian visual narratives such as *In Time* (Niccol, 2011), where time becomes literal currency and thereby produces radical class stratification. By contrast, Eastern and Indonesian cultural perspectives, as illustrated in Gadjis Kretek (2023), regard time within the

ethical and relational fabric of life, where moments “lost” through love or relational bonds gain cultural meaning instead of being treated as economic waste (Kurniawan, 2023). This contrast foregrounds how Western capitalist ideology reduces time to exchange value, while Eastern perspectives sustain time as a qualitative and spiritual dimension. The present study analyzes *In Time* to understand how modern capitalism constructs time as symbolic value within a hyperreal economic system (Debord, 1994; Jameson, 1991). Rather than adopting an excessively broad theoretical apparatus, this study focuses on Jean Baudrillard's critique of

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sign-value and hyper reality (Baudrillard, 1981; 1993) and uses Greimasian semiotics as the primary methodological tool to dissect the film's narrative and visual systems. Marx's conception of class and value (Marx, 1859; 1885) is retained only as a benchmark to map class hierarchy, not as the central analytical backbone. So the research questions follow, how does *In Time* construct time as a symbolic and economic sign that legitimizes social inequality? How do Greimasian semiotic structures reveal the narrative and visual mechanisms through which the film naturalizes and contests capitalist class hierarchy?



Figure 1. Posters for Insights
(Source: Research documentation & Netflix, 2023)

Methodology

Capitalist systems impose an abstract standard of value that erases qualitative differences by reducing them to equivalent, quantifiable units, an insight foundational in Marx's analysis of commodity fetishism (Marx, 1859; Ricci, 2024; Baker, 2025). Money, as Davies (2002) and Starr (2019) argue, functions as medium

of exchange, store of value, and unit of account, while its efficacy depends on actors' perception of its stability (Bagus & Howden, 2016). These economic abstractions become more pronounced in an era of dematerialized digital money (Guttmann, 2003), where symbolic exchange is intensified through technological mediation (Ren, 2024). Baudrillard extends these insights by showing how objects and economic systems operate within a symbolic logic detached from material labor (Baudrillard, 1981). Under hyper reality, value becomes a simulation without stable referent (Baudrillard, 1993), reinforced by media and algorithmic systems (Oku Essien, 2024; Genosko, 1994). The symbolic system of capitalism therefore produces hierarchical social relations disguised as natural economic order. Previous cultural analyses of dystopian narratives, such as those published in Critical Survey from Berghahn Journals (Matrix, 2013), demonstrate how cultural texts mediate political economy and ideology. This study positions itself within that tradition while contributing a focused integration of Baudrillardian theory and Greimasian semiotics.

This research employs qualitative visual semiotics with Greimas's analytical apparatus as the core methodological framework. The method is operational, transparent, and replicable, addressing reviewer concerns. Units of Analysis are Narrative Scenes (Dayton wage and survival scenes, New Greenwich Casino sequence, Redistribution sequences), Visual elements, specifically Color palettes (Damajanti, 2015), Analytical Procedures with Greimasian mapping to Identify actants (subject, object, helpers, opponents), Construct semiotic squares for oppositions (rich/poor, surplus/deficit time) and track transformation semantics (e.g., Will's transition from Dayton subject to system-disrupting agent). Sign coding used to evaluate denotation and connotation of props, colors, spaces, and

gestures. Baudrillardian interpretation can interpret signs as elements of symbolic exchange, hyper reality, and economic simulation.

While Marxian benchmarking Map class dynamics (bourgeoisie/proletariati), without extending Marx into full theoretical analysis. Validity measures of each interpretive step is tied directly to textual and visual evidence. This study analyzes purposively selected key scenes rather than conducting a complete frame-by-frame content analysis.

Result

In *In Time*, time is not merely a medium of exchange but becomes the supreme signifier that structures all social relations (Niccol, 2011). The time-chip (Figure 2) implanted into each individual's arm embodies the dematerialized economy (Guttmann, 2003). Its visible countdown literalizes capitalist abstraction, transforming biologically embodied lifespan into exchange value.



Figure 2. Chip in Arm's Concept.
(Source: *In Time*, 2011)

The elite of New Greenwich possess surplus time, granting perpetual youth, while Dayton's working class struggles under chronic temporal scarcity. This reproduces a hyperreal class hierarchy where time's symbolic form becomes more real than human life, an expression of commodity fetishism (Marx, 1859), now transmuted into Baudrillard's sign-value logic.

The binary opposition structuring the film's narrative is Surplus Time (New Greenwich) vs. Deficit Time (Dayton).



Figure 3. Greimas Semiotics Analysis.
(Source: Personal Documentation, 2025)

Greimas's semiotic square (Figure 3) reveals further relational permutations about Rich (Subject of Power), Poor (Other), Non-Dayton (Will after temporal acquisition), Non-Greenwich (Weiss after systemic disruption). The narrative transformation occurs when Will Salas disrupts the semiotic economy by redistributing time valued in millions of years, he collapses the binary and produces a reversal of social structure. This transformation follows Greimas's model of actantial shift, where the oppressed subject temporarily acquires the attributes of the dominant class.



Figure 4. Existing Printed Information Media
(Source: Personal research documentation)

Based on the color palette as visual elements, the film's mise-en-scène reinforces this symbolic economy as New Greenwich (elite) with Cool palettes, gold and blue (figure 4), large open spaces, green landscaping, and luxury materials. These signify stability, abundance, and temporal control. While Dayton (working class) uses Brown, gray, and muted tones (figure 5), narrow streets, barred windows, industrial decay. These signify scarcity, vulnerability, and temporal pressure. These spatial and color contrasts function as ideological signs, not mere aesthetic choices.

The antagonistic figure Philippe Weiss naturalizes this system by invoking Darwinian capitalist ideology (Frey, 2024). He portrays temporal inequality as "the next logical step," echoing the ideological superstructure that legitimizes domination (Marx, 1885; Williams, 1977). The film's architecture, media, and institutional designs produce a hyperreal world in which temporal capitalism appears inevitable.

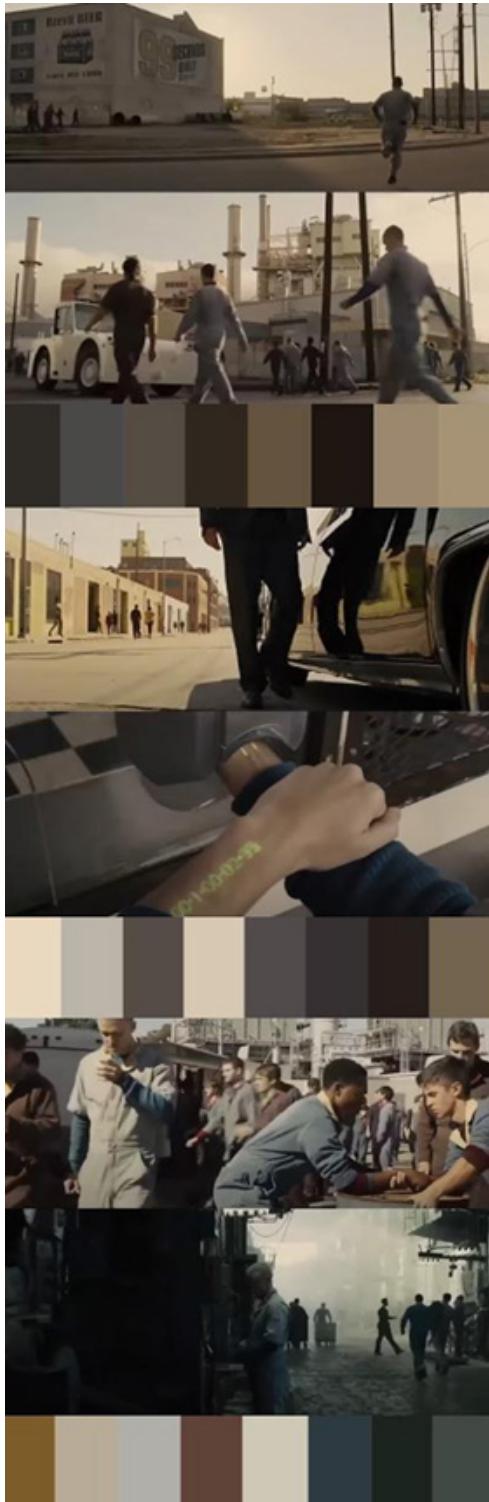


Figure 5. Color Scheme of Dayton.
(Source: *In Time*, 2011; Personal Docs, 2025)

Discussion

The film's narrative and visual logic express a mature capitalist order where value has been entirely divorced from material production (Baudrillard, 1993). Time operates as pure sign-value, dictating social worth and survival. Commodity fetishism evolves into existential fetishism, time itself becomes desirable beyond its use-value. Dayton's workers must remain hyper-productive, mirroring critiques of global capitalism where a few minutes of lateness are penalized as economic loss. This aligns with Harvey's analysis of time and space compression, where time becomes the ultimate disciplinary mechanism. Greimas's semiotic model reveals that the ideological conflict in *In Time* does not merely portray economic inequality but dramatizes the collapse and reversal of binary oppositions through resistance. The redistribution of time symbolically dismantles the hyperreal hierarchy, revealing that the system is ideological and therefore contestable. Expanding this argument further, *In Time* presents a society in which the conceptual abstraction of value has reached its peak, not only is labor transformed into quantified units, but life itself is absorbed directly into the logic of exchange. This development resonates with Baudrillard's claim that late capitalism no longer trades in commodities anchored in use-value, instead, it operates through the

circulation of signs that refer only to other signs. Time, in the world of the film, no longer indexes productive labor or social contribution, it becomes an empty, yet coercive, measure of value detached from any material origin. This detachment exemplifies what Baudrillard identifies as hyper reality, in which social relations are mediated entirely by symbolic constructs that masquerade as natural and inevitable.

In this symbolic regime, the aesthetic and architectural presentation of New Greenwich, clean, static, and frozen in perpetual youth, constructs a visible manifestation of hyperreal stability. The residents of New Greenwich embody the myth of the capitalist subject who has transcended material vulnerability, a condition long promised by consumer culture but unattainable in actual social life. By contrast, the residents of Dayton live in a perpetual crisis of time scarcity. Their bodies are visibly oriented toward survival, rushing, bargaining, running, mirroring the frantic temporality Harvey describes as characteristic of modern capitalism's constant acceleration. Yet *In Time* pushes this dynamic further, in Dayton, acceleration is not simply occupational or economic, it becomes existential. The "race against time" is no longer metaphorical but literal, as every tick of the clock is directly inscribed on the body through the luminous display on each individual's forearm. This bodily inscription

of time illustrates another dynamic central to Baudrillard's theory, the internalization of the system's logic at the somatic level. Rather than experiencing time as a natural rhythm, subjects come to understand their own mortality exclusively as a quantitative metric. In Baudrillard's terms, the body becomes a screen on which the symbolic economy projects its demands. The time display is simultaneously a measurement device, a disciplinary apparatus, and a status indicator. In effect, the body becomes a commodity whose "worth" can be seen instantly, echoing Marx's insight that in capitalism, human value is often reduced to the value of the commodities one possesses (Marx, 1859). Here, however, commodity value no longer represents embodied labor, instead, it directly determines the possibility of biological existence.

From a Greimasian perspective, this bodily quantification creates a distinct actantial arrangement in which the subject's life-object (time) is constantly undermined by systemic opponents that structure the narrative conflict. The elite act as institutional opponents to the proletarian subjects, controlling the conditions under which time circulates and establishing obstacles to its acquisition. Meanwhile, the helpers in the narrative, various characters who assist Will Salas, operate within a contradictory relationship to the system, they participate in the cir-

culation of time but also challenge it. These actantial roles are not fixed, rather, the film demonstrates the fluidity of narrative functions, showing how subjects in Dayton may become partial agents of resistance through small acts of solidarity or sabotage.

The film's emphasis on the circulation of time also reflects broader global shifts in digital and financial capitalism, in which value increasingly takes the form of intangible flows rather than material commodities (Guttmann, 2003). Time in *In Time* behaves similarly to digital currency or algorithmically produced financial instruments, manipulated, redistributed, hoarded, and speculated upon. The casino scene serves as a symbolic crystallization of this parallel, the high-stakes poker game involving centuries of time functions as an allegory for speculative markets where fortunes are gained or lost in seconds. Philippe Weiss's calmness during the game, contrasted with Will's desperation, highlights the asymmetry of risk that characterizes real world financial systems. Weiss can afford to lose time, whereas Will gambles with literal life.

This asymmetry indexes Baudrillard's argument that late capitalism produces an illusion of choice while reinforcing systemic domination. In the film, the working class technically "chooses" to work for time, but in practice, the structural conditions force them into constant temporal debt. Their freedom is simulated but

not real. Through Greimas's semiotic square, this dynamic becomes clear: the opposition between "having time" and "not having time" extends into a deeper structural relation between "being allowed to live" and "being fated to die." The redistribution of time at the film's conclusion represents a temporary inversion of these categories, demonstrating the reversibility of the structure but not necessarily its destruction.

The political implications of this inversion are significant. Through its narrative of resistance, *In Time* interrogates the ideological naturalization of inequality. Williams's understanding of culture as a dynamic arena where hegemony is contested is especially relevant here, the film positions culture, visual systems, narrative structure, symbolic codes, as the site where capitalist ideology is both reproduced and challenged. The elite's justification of the temporal system as "Darwinian Capitalism," delivered by Weiss, exemplifies how ideological superstructures attempt to rationalize exploitation as natural, inevitable, and even morally justified. The film then demonstrates how this ideological veneer can be disrupted when subjects refuse to accept the categories imposed upon them. Furthermore, the film's depiction of temporal scarcity resonates with contemporary labor practices in which productivity is monitored at increasingly granular scales. Bagus and Howden's dis-

cussion of the perceived “quality” of money finds an analogue in the perceived quality of time within the film. For the elite, time is abundant, stable, and secure qualities traditionally associated with strong currencies. For the working class, time is volatile, fragile, and perpetually at risk qualities associated with unstable or depreciating forms of money. This differential “quality of time” reinforces the class divide and reveals how symbolic value systems embed economic power relations.

The concept of hyper reality (Baudrillard, 1993) also emerges through the media representations within the film’s world. Public screens, official announcements, and law enforcement communications frame the temporal system as beneficial and necessary. By controlling the narrative, the elite manage public perception and suppress dissent. The Time-keepers, as agents of institutional control, serve as narrative opponents who enforce the illusion of fairness while protecting the interests of New Greenwich. Their presence illustrates the super structural enforcement mechanisms that Marx associates with capitalist domination. Yet the film suggests that these mechanisms are not infallible, rather, they rely on the compliance or passivity of the dominated subjects.

The transformation of Will Salas into a systemic threat can be read through Greimas’s model as a shift from “subject lacking the object” to

“subject possessing the object,” enabling him to challenge the structure from a position of relative power. However, this transformation is precarious, Will’s access to time remains unstable, emphasizing that individual agency cannot permanently overturn systemic inequality without collective action. It is only when he redistributes time to the broader population that the structure begins to destabilize. This act signifies a symbolic intervention in the hyperreal economy of signs, undermining the illusion that the elite are inherently superior due to their possession of time. In addition, the film raises questions about the nature of resistance under hyperreal capitalism. If systems of domination rely on the manipulation of symbolic value rather than material production, then resistance must operate at the level of signification. Will’s redistribution of time is not merely a material act; it is a symbolic challenge to the legitimacy of the system. It disrupts the visual code of scarcity that governs Dayton and temporarily collapses the semiotic distance separating Dayton from New Greenwich. This collapse illustrates Baudrillard’s argument that systems of signs are vulnerable to symbolic disruption, even when they appear materially invincible.

Moreover, the film’s visual economy reinforces this process of othering. As Damajanti notes, color carries symbolic meanings that shape

audience perception. The muted, desaturated tones of Dayton function not simply as indicators of poverty but as signs of diminished symbolic worth. The lush, stabilized tones of New Greenwich signify abundance, purity, and legitimacy. Through these visual codes, the film constructs a semiotic environment in which inequality appears not only normal but aesthetically justified.

Finally, the technological apparatus in the film particularly the time-transfer mechanism, embodies the convergence of digital capitalism and bio political control. Ren's observation that contemporary media technologies reinforce the symbolic attributes of commodities is relevant here, the time-transfer gesture, performed by pressing arms together, visually resembles both intimate contact and violent extraction. It symbolizes both cooperation and domination, capturing the ambivalence of capitalist exchange. The gesture's dual nature demonstrates how symbolic forms can simultaneously humanize and dehumanize economic interactions. Piliang's critique of capitalism's contradictory nature is exemplified in the film's portrayal of a system designed to maintain equilibrium through controlled scarcity. The elite justify the system as necessary for preventing overpopulation, yet the film reveals this rationale as ideological rather than biological. Baudrillard's notion that systems hide their artificiality

through the production of signs that simulate natural order is evident here: the "naturalness" of inequality is produced through a shared symbolic code rather than any material necessity. In sum, the discussion demonstrates that *In Time* provides a multilayered critique of temporal capitalism by exposing how symbolic structures, narrative systems, and visual codes collaborate to naturalize inequality. Through the interplay of Baudrillard's theory of sign-value and Greimas's semiotic framework, the film reveals the ideological operations that sustain the temporal hierarchy and gestures toward the possibility of resistance through symbolic disruption.

Conclusion

This study demonstrates that *In Time* visualizes the symbolic and political economy of time through a system of hyper reality where time functions as sign-value. By applying Baudrillard's theory and Greimas's semiotic method, the analysis shows that the film critiques capitalist temporal regimes that reduce human life to exchangeable units. While Western capitalist logic equates time with money, Indonesian cultural narratives such as *Gadis Kretek* foreground relational and moral dimensions of time (Kurniawan, 2023). As global capitalism increasingly infiltrates local cultures, the commodification of time risks reinforcing hierarchical domination (Piliang, 2004).

This research underscores the necessity of critically interrogating temporal ideology to resist the naturalization of inequality in contemporary visual culture.

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CURATING AS BRANDING: CRAFTING INSTITUTIONAL IDENTITY THROUGH EXHIBITION CIPTA! KAPITA SELEKTA CIKINI RAYA 73

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Abstract: *With the increasing competition between cultural institutions including art spaces such as museums galleries, branding for these institutions has shifted from visual identity to strategic construction of meaning and symbolic authority. One of the most important touchpoints in art space's branding is in its exhibition, which was produced through curatorial practice. While branding in Indonesian art spaces is typically examined through promotional or visual identity, its relationship to curatorial practice remains underexplored. This study investigates how curatorial strategies can function as institutional branding. Drawing from Aaker's concept of brand identity, this study analyses the exhibition "Cipta! Kapita Selektta Cikini Raya 73", organized by the Jakarta Arts Council as part of revitalization of Taman Ismail Marzuki in 2022, as a case study. This study examines thematic grouping, exhibition text, selection of works, and other curatorial outputs of the exhibition to look at how the curatorial process can be utilized as a branding mechanism. The findings indicate that curatorial practice operates as a form of soft branding to articulate institutional identity beyond visual branding, which positions exhibitions not only as artistic display but as an active instrument of brand construction within the Indonesian art ecosystem.*

Keywords: brand identity; institutional branding; curatorial practice; exhibition

Introduction

In today's experience-driven creative economy, art spaces such as museums and galleries are no longer evaluated solely by their collections, exhibits, or facilities, but increasingly by their narrative power, symbolic value, and ability to project a distinctive identity. With the proliferation of the creative economy, these institutions now compete not only for visitors and fundings, but also for intangible resources such as public trust, reputation, and visibility. In this sense, institutional branding becomes increasingly important for cultural institutions to assert their identity

and to position themselves in the cultural landscape.

Tracing back to Aaker's idea of multidimensional brand, today's branding extends beyond visual identity and incorporates more intangible elements such as emotional and symbolic construct (Aaker, 1996). He distinguishes the concept between brand identity, which is a set of associations the brand aspires to maintain, while brand image is how the brand is perceived by its audience. In this sense, art spaces need to leverage curatorial strategies and narrative strategies in their exhibitions, as one of its most significant

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touchpoints, to project their missions, values, and authority, in which ultimately construct their brand identity.

Studies about branding in art spaces remain primarily focused on visual branding such as in Wallace (2016). Similarly, in Indonesian context, art spaces branding is primarily studied for its visual and promotional aspects such as in Haswati, Kifli, & Ilhamsyah (2023) and Hereyah & Kusumaningrum (2019). On the other hand, studies in Indonesian curatorial practice tend to focus on artistic discourse such as history (Hujatnika, Pradipta, Mukmin, & Respati, 2017), artistic medium (Jeon, 2020), and socio-cultural context (Flores, 2008). Several studies have examined the role of curatorial practice in branding such as in Street (2016) and Nixon, Pitsaki, & Replie (2014), focusing on leveraging curatorial practice in commercial brands. However, studies that link curatorial practice and institutional branding, especially in Indonesia art spaces remain limited.

One of the key studies that correlates between Aaker's concept of brand identity in museum context was done by Pusa & Uusitalo (2014). This study concluded that while, art museums utilize various dimensions of traditional brand identity such as products, persons, symbols, and organization, a museum's curatorial strategies function as the core product dimension of its brand identity by using the scope and focus of their exhibitions to differentiate the museum's personality, employing a proactive strategy to "surprise" visitors with unique art experiences, and leveraging the reputation of exhibited artists (or lending credibility to new ones) to enhance the perceived quality and distinctiveness of the museum brand.

Building upon the conceptual framework that positions curatorial practice as one of the most important branding touchpoints in art spaces, the primary purpose of this study is to contribute to the discus-

sion that links institutional branding and curatorial practice. This study examines how curatorial strategies in an exhibition can be utilized as branding mechanisms in constructing institutional brand identity by using the exhibition "Cipta! Kapita Selektta Cikini Raya 73" as a case study. Organized by the Jakarta Arts Council as part of Taman Ismail Marzuki revitalization and its reopening in 2022, the exhibition presented archival materials and historical collections that illustrate the venue's history and the council's contribution to Jakarta's cultural landscape since its founding in 1968.

Methodology

This study adopts a qualitative approach grounded in practice-based critical reflection, positioning the curatorial process itself as both the subject and method of inquiry. It draws from the author's dual role as the curator of the examined exhibition "Cipta! Kapita Selektta Cikini Raya 73" as well as the researcher. This reflexive approach acknowledges the author's positional influence on interpretation and decision-making during the curatorial process.

The data used in this study are taken from two points: the curatorial process and the exhibition outputs. This study analyses the author's direct observation, curatorial notes, selection criteria, and conversation with the members of the Jakarta Arts Council as the organizer during the curatorial process and the exhibition outputs including displayed artworks, thematic grouping, exhibition text, and spatial layout. While no interviews, surveys, or focus groups were conducted at this stage, the reflective practice lens enables a critical reconstruction of the curatorial process to identify its branding implications.

This study does not seek to measure

audience perception or brand image as conceptualized by Aaker. Instead, it emphasizes the strategic dimensions of curatorial practice as strategies in constructing institutional brand identity. As such, the methodology prioritizes interpretive reading over empirical measurement.

Literature Review

David Aaker distinguishes the concept of brand identity and brand image as how a brand is portraying their identity as aspire to be and how a brand is being perceived by its audience (Aaker, 1996). Aaker further elaborates that brand identity is a set of unique associations that the brand aspires to create or maintain, which represent the value and the brand implied to promise its audience. It consists of four perspectives: brand as a product, brand as a person, brand as an organization, and brand as a symbol. Aaker's concept of multidimensional brand was further expanded by Chang (2008) through the concept of soft branding. Rather than relying on visual attributes and spectacle, institutions can build their identity through the construction of meaning by evoking memory, pride, and identification. Herézniak and Anders-Morawska (2015) emphasize that brand values lie beyond surface-level visibility but in intangible factors such as emotional connection and symbolic relevance. Though primarily focused on visual branding, Wallace (2016) acknowledged that in the competitive cultural climate, exhibition text serve as crucial branding tools that communicate not only the content and themes of the curated offering, but also the authority and distinctive vision of the institution that organized it, thereby reinforcing the museum's mission and value in a competitive cultural environment. In this sense, branding is not utilized as traditional marketing practice but as an ongoing process of constructing institutional identity.

This understanding of branding as the construction of institutional identity through intangible factors like culture, memory, and symbolic relevance is particularly pertinent to cultural institutions like art spaces. These institutions embody this concept as they are inherently involved in curating and communicating shared narratives and values. Bennett (1995) conceptualizes museums and cultural organizations as "civic technologies," spaces where histories, values, and identities are curated and communicated to the public through exhibition. As Greenberg (1996) stated, exhibitions are not neutral displays but discursive structures that frame memory and confer authority. Through selection, contextualization, and amplification of cultural objects, institutions project not only artistic narratives but also their own institutional identity.

In their study, Pusa & Uusitalo (2014) applied Aaker's brand identity concept for art museum context. As a product, the museum brand is defined by its core outputs such as collections, exhibitions, scope, and focus, as well as its augmented outputs seen in their educational or public programs. As a person, museums rely on how key individuals such as artists, curators, critics, and museum's founder or director can contribute to their brand identity. Museum's organizational culture, values, and leadership, which collectively deliver overall customer experience contribute to how the museum's brand is constructed as an organization. Meanwhile, as a symbol, museums focus on its ability to become an icon that provides intangible benefits such as heritage transfer, intellectual capital, and emotional well-being. This branding framework applied to art museums can also be applied to other art spaces including art galleries, art fairs, biennials, or art exhibitions in general.

The above framework illustrates that

the function of branding, particularly of cultural organizations, operates beyond traditional marketing strategies towards the continuous multidimensional construction of institutional identity. It provides the foundation for the understanding of cultural institutions and art spaces not merely as venues for art but as active brand constructors.

Result

Curatorial Rationale

The exhibition Cipta! Kapita Selekta Cikini Raya 73 marked a key moment in the history of the Jakarta Arts Council (DKJ) and Taman Ismail Marzuki (TIM) following its revitalization. Bringing together more than sixty rarely seen artworks in the DKJ's collection from the 1960s–1990s and over one hundred archival materials, the show retrieved and reframed cultural memory while highlighting artistic tendencies in Indonesian modern and contemporary art. The exhibition employed three main curatorial devices: thematic grouping, which structured artworks and archives into seven interrelated sections; exhibition texts, which framed institutional narratives; and spatial design, which guided visitor experience through a dialogue between archives and artworks. Together, these devices formed curatorial strategies that are employed to construct the institutional image of the organizing institutions.

The curatorial rationale of Cipta! Kapita Selekta Cikini Raya 73 is to commemorate and pay tribute to DKJ's contribution in Indonesian art landscape while at the same time marks the new era of DKJ and TIM to continue its founder's legacies in developing artistic discourses, ecosystem, and artistic dissemination (Nugeraha & Putra, 2022). The curatorial presentation was designed to balance archival activation with contemporary relevance, creat-

ing an exhibition that was both historically grounded and forward-looking. By interconnecting thematic grouping, interpretive texts, and spatial design, the exhibition sought to position canonical works with overlooked artistic voices, situate artistic practice within wider socio-political contexts, and invite critical engagement from the public. The approach emphasized storytelling as a framing device, while juxtaposing past and present practices to highlight the continuity and transformation of Jakarta's cultural identity.

Key implementation of these strategies includes foregrounding archival materials along with collection-based display to frame curatorial narratives about the history and roles of DKJ and TIM within the larger Indonesian art context. The exhibition presents renowned Indonesian artists alongside dominant artistic tendencies between 1960s to 1990s while intentionally including works from underrepresented artists, styles, and artistic ideologies. It also deliberately presents the mainstream artistic practice alongside experimental and provocative works. To ensure thematic clarity, the exhibition employs the use of narrative framing through exhibition text and spatial design.

Thematic Grouping

The exhibition "Cipta! Kapita Selekta Cikini Raya 73" was organized into seven thematic sections. Each section was structured around specific tendencies in Indonesian modern and contemporary art, presented through a selection of works from the Jakarta Arts Council (DKJ) collection and supporting archival materials. Rather than presenting these tendencies as linear art historical survey, the curatorial framework emphasized on the nuance around these themes, highlighting how different styles, ideologies, and mediums

were produced within a broader social, political, and cultural context.



Figure 1. Exhibition view of Cipta! Kapita Selektta Cikini Raya 73
(Source: Jakarta Arts Council)

The first section is the “Archives and Posters”, displaying DKJ’ archival collection including exhibition posters, audio recording, news clipping, and photo documentation from various art programs held at TIM between 1970s-1990s. “Dari Sudut-sudut Kota” (From the Corners of the City) featured landscape paintings by Indonesian modern artists in the 1970s-1980s. In addition, this section also features a series of paintings commissioned by Pertamina in the 1970s depicting various mining facilities across the country. “Tentang Manusia” (About Human) focuses on figurative works that span across generations of artists, artistic styles, and themes. In the “Gambar tanpa Gambar” (Image without Image), the exhibition highlights the abstract art collection, looking at the emergence of abstract art in Indonesia while expanding its discussion beyond the predominant Bandung School artists. A special section was dedicated to the work of Jakarta-based artist Nashar, whose works radically challenged the dominant artistic discourse in the 1970s through his “three-non” credo (non-thematic, non-concept, non-technique), which can be seen as an “anti-art” artistic ideology. Nashar, who served as a member of DKJ’s committee, was also a central figure in developing the council’s strategic direction in the 1970s. “Grafis: Seni/Desain” (Printmaking: Art/Design)

focuses on print works that emerged in the 1970s along with the proliferation of print technology, mass media, graphic design, and pop culture. Lastly, “Seni yang Baru” (The New Art) highlights the emergence of the Indonesian New Art Movement in 1975 as reaction to predominating non-political painting and sculpture in artistic practice by experimenting on different mediums, political imageries, and multidisciplinary approach.

Table 1. Thematic Grouping

| Section Title | Key Artists | Narrative |
|---|---|--|
| Archives and Posters | - | DKJ’s Art Committee programs at TIM in the 1970s-1990s, reframe archives as artistic objects and living records; positions DKJ and TIM as cultural hub in Jakarta for the last 50 years |
| Dari Sudut-sudut Kota (From the Corner of the City) | Trisno Soemardjo, Nunung WS, Tribus, Oesman Effendi, Zaini, Batara Lubis, Srihadi Sudarsono, Sudarso. | Landscape as one the oldest artistic subject; Shift from colonial idealization of nature to portrayal of urban landscape; Illustrates how artists began to shift their landscape subject from colonial gaze to reflection of urban experience; introduction of corporate patronage from Pertamina commissioned works; tied to socio-political context of the |

| | | | | | |
|---|---|--|---|--|--|
| | | 1960s-80s in Indonesia | | | establishment of DKJ; Highlights Nashar's artistic freedom and individuality that challenges dominant narratives in Indonesian art discourse during 1960s-1980s |
| Tentang Manusia (About Human) | Agus Djaja, Baharudin Mara Sutan, Basuki Resobowo, Hendra Gunawan, A.D. Pirous, Jeihan. | Portrayal of human body as one of the most popular artistic subjects; Exploring identity, politics, and expression; Expands figurative art beyond the colonial gaze and open to multi-interpretation across expression, form, and socio-cultural identity | Grafis: Seni/Desain (Printmaking: Art/Design) | Ahmad Sadali, Rita Widagdo, Sunaryo, Kaboel Suadi, Joesoef Effendi, Priyanto Sunarto, Dido Kusnidar, G. Sidharta, T. Sutanto, Tisna Sanjaya. | Printmaking as artistic medium; influence of mass media, pop culture, and graphic design industry in the artistic practice; Illustrates the rise of printmaking as artistic media in the 1970s-80s; blurring the boundaries between high art, design, and pop culture; intersection of art and applied art in the artistic discourse |
| Gambar tanpa Gambar (Image without Image) | Mochtar Apin, Ahmad Sadali, Umi Dachlan, Oesman Effendi, Zaini, Nashar, Rusli, Abas Alibasyah, Fadjar Sidik, Amri Yahya | Abstract art in Indonesia and its emergence; intellectual and ideological discourse around abstract art; Expands the discussion of abstract art in Indonesia beyond Bandung School by including artists that are not associated with it; reframe abstract art in Indonesia as lyrical and emotive beyond the formalistic and analytical Western abstract art | Seni yang Baru (The New Art) | Jim Supangkat, Bonyong Muni Ardhi, Hardi, Priyanto Sunarto, Dede Eri Supria, others. | The emergence of the New Art Movement in 1975 as an artistic protest against conservative values in Indonesian art discourse; the use of experimental media such as installation, collage, and political imagery; Mark the contemporary turns and break from the mainstream and |
| Nashar oleh Nashar (Nashar by Nashar) | Nashar | Focus on Nashar, an outsider artist rejecting mainstream movement and a central figure of early | | | |

| | | |
|--|--|---|
| | | dominant artistic tendencies in Indonesia; illustrates DKJ openness to critique and experimentation |
|--|--|---|

Taken together, these curatorial choices reveal how *Cipta! Kapita Selektta Cikini Raya 73* was designed not only as an art-historical exhibition, but also as an institutional narrative. The thematic groupings foregrounded inclusivity, plurality, and memory, while the integration of archives emphasized continuity and stewardship. These findings form the basis to interpret how such strategies operated as mechanisms of institutional soft branding.

Exhibition Text

To provide contextual and visitor experience guidance, the exhibition *Cipta! Kapita Selektta Cikini Raya 73* was accompanied by a set of curatorial texts. The main curatorial text was placed in the entrance and served as introduction, explaining the rationale of the exhibition and its objective. In each exhibition section, the curatorial text was employed to provide general understanding of the thematic grouping and the significance of the works displayed in the corresponding section. These texts, placed as a large wall introduction, served not just as contextual aids but as discursive framing devices. They articulated how each set of works could be understood in relation to broader narratives of Indonesian art history, the institutional legacy of the Jakarta Arts Council (DKJ), and the symbolic significance of Taman Ismail Marzuki (TIM) as a cultural hub.

Table 2. Exhibition Text

| Section | Key Narratives | Curatorial Framing |
|---|---|--|
| Curatorial Introduction (main exhibition text) | Renewal of TIM and its role for future discourse and ecosystem; DKJ's role and legacy in the development of Indonesian art; Artworks and archives presented as selected snapshots of historical development | Frames the exhibition as both homage and projection of institutional continuity; Positions the exhibition as reflexive reading of Indonesian art development |
| Archives and Posters | Archival materials as living records of DKJ's initiatives, collaboration, and discursive significance | Uses of archives to evoke institutional memory and evidence of institutional role |
| Dari Sudut-sudut Kota (From the Corner of the City) | Landscape as popular subject in artistic practice and shift from idealized portrayal of nature to depiction of urban experience | Landscape paintings as mirror of socio-cultural change |
| Tentang Manusia (About Human) | Figurative art as central subject across different period, styles, and artistic ideologies | Portrayal of human figures to illustrate various ideological and stylistic tendencies in Indonesian art |
| Gambar tanpa Gambar (Image without) | Abstract art emergence in Indonesia; influence of Western art and | Frames abstraction as negotiation between international |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Image(s) | its tension with local artistic ideologies | influence; Jakarta art the third platform for ideological debate outside the mainstream discourse of Bandung vs Jogja |
| Nashar oleh Nashar (Nashar by Nashar) | Nashar's biography and his artistic statement of "tiga-non" emphasizing on artistic freedom and experimentation against dominant artistic discourse | Frames Nashar's radical figure as representation of DKJ's institutional spirit |
| Grafis: Seni/Desain (Printmaking: Art/Design) | Emergence of printmaking as artistic medium tied to the emergence of mass media, popular culture, and design industry | Highlight DKJ's openness to artistic media diversity, blurring the boundaries between art and design |
| Seni yang Baru (The New Art) | Emergence of the Indonesia New Art Movement in 1975 as a protest of predominant artistic tendencies | Frames DKJ and TIM as an open platform and enabler of contemporary breakthrough |

The introduction positioned the exhibition as both a commemoration of DKJ's historical contribution and a projection of its future relevance, stressing TIM's role in sustaining critical discourse and artistic ecosystem-building. Each subsequent section text, while contextualizing specific artworks, also carried an implicit institu-

tional message—foregrounding memory, continuity, openness, and reflexivity as part of the Council's cultural identity.

Spatial Design

The spatial design of the "Cipta! Kapita Selektta Cikini Raya 73" employed an open layout with two main elements: archives section along its main corridor and thematic chambers on the side. The archival display acts as conceptual anchor to historical context, while each chamber presents distinct artistic themes and tendencies.

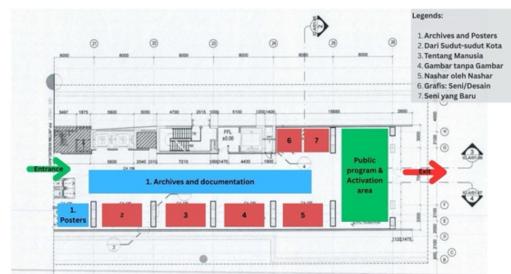


Figure 2. Exhibition floorplan design
(source: personal documentation)

The exhibition layout follows a linear spatial progression that guides visitors through a structured journey. Upon entering the gallery, visitors are immediately introduced to the Archives and Posters section. This display of archival materials and documentation establishes the historical foundation of the exhibition.



Figure 3. Visitor interacting with the displayed archives
(Source: Jakarta Arts Council)

From this point, the exhibition moves into the main gallery, with the first three thematic chambers displaying landscape, figurative, and abstract works. These three sections showcase the mainstream artistic styles and tendencies within Indonesian art in the 1970 to 1990s. The fourth section, dedicated to the works of Nashar, whose radical approach provides antithesis of the three previous sections. Nashar's works also bridge the curatorial framing to the two concluding sections across that displayed printmaking and works from the Indonesia New Art Movement, highlighting the emergence of artistic experimentations, disruption, and expansion of artistic vocabularies. Adjacent to these end chambers is the public program & activation area that provides an open space for discussions, performances, and interactive programming, reinforcing the discursive and participatory dimensions of Taman Ismail Marzuki as a cultural venue.

Discussion

By using the concept of brand identity (Aaker, 1996; Pusa & Uusitalo, 2014) as a theoretical framework, this study positions curatorial practice not merely as a process of exhibition-making and artwork presentation, but as a branding mechanism for institutional identity construction. This strategy aligns with the view that exhibition is not neutral and cultural organizations act as producers of discourse and meaning (Bennett, 1995). Within this context, Cipta! Kapita Selektta Cikini Raya 73 functions beyond historical documentation or artistic showcase. The exhibition intentionally constructs a narrative about DKJ as the organizing institution and TIM as its venue. By presenting the DKJ collection and archives materials, which incorporates the history of the organization and the exhibition venue, this exhibition projects what the hosts value and preserve as part of their identity.

As a brand-as-product, the selection of works from DKJ's collection established its core institutional product as cultural custodian of Jakarta's artistic development from the 1970s onward. The inclusion of works from artists outside of Jakarta implies that DKJ's institutional scope expands to the national scale. However, this projection of national scope remains suggestive rather than explicitly communicated. The thematic grouping that presents varying, and often contradicting, artistic tendencies along the historical development of Indonesian artistic landscape positions DKJ and TIM as facilitator of diverse discourses rather than authoritarian cultural narrators. While this strategy communicates plurality, it may simultaneously challenge the articulation of clear institutional identity.

In terms of brand-as-person, the curatorial framing in the exhibition text utilizes a neutral and informative tone. It constructs an intellectual and reflective personality that is rooted in discursive dialogue rather than offering entertaining spectacle. The presence of works from well renowned artists in the exhibition asserts DKJ and TIM cultural alignment with the broader established cultural narrative and landscape of Indonesia and reinforces institutional credibility. On the other hand, the inclusion of works from underrepresented artists, exemplified in the dedicated section on Nashar, signal an openness to reinterpret the dominant cultural narratives.

The brand-as-organization dimension is seen not through direct display of objects, but through the contextualization of archival materials that documents DKJ and TIM programming such as past exhibitions, discussions, and publications. These archival materials not only communicate the breadth of DKJ and TIM programming but also institutional ethos centered around discourse production and critical engagement. Presenting

established artistic tendencies such as the mainstream landscape, portrait, and abstract artworks alongside experimentation in subjects and mediums such as in the works of Nashar and The New Art Movement assert organizational culture that values accommodates across different segments. It illustrates that DKJ and TIM facilitate mainstream artistic tendencies, while at the same time willing to challenge it. Yet, this balanced organizational identity risks creating ambiguous institutional stances if not carefully articulated.

Lastly, brand-as-symbol is communicated through spatial design, contextual timing of the exhibition, and the interpretative reading of the institutional history through archival materials. The opening of this exhibition that was intended to officiate the reopening of the newly renovated TIM complex implies a symbolic value that positions the institutions in the intersection of decades of historical legacy and future possibilities after renewal. The interpretation of archival materials on display anchors DKJ and TIM with Jakarta's cultural memory but its significance relies on the viewer's historical knowledge. This symbolic message may not translate to the broader public or future generation. In this case, symbolic value in this exhibition is potent but remains as subtext.

Table 3. Brand Identity Dimensions

| Brand Identity Dimension | Curatorial Outputs | Branding Implication |
|--------------------------|------------------------------------|--|
| Brand as Product | Selection of collection on display | Position DKJ/TIM as cultural custodian of artistic productions; inclusion of artists from outside Jakarta signals national scope |

| | | |
|-----------------------|--|--|
| | Thematic grouping | Frames DKJ/TIM as facilitator across diverse artistic tendencies |
| Brand as Person | Exhibition text | Communicates intellectual authority and discourse oriented personality |
| | Highlight on renowned Indonesian modern artists | Assert institutional alignment with the broader established cultural narrative |
| | Inclusion of lesser-known artists | Signal openness and willingness to challenge dominant cultural narratives |
| Brand as Organization | Range of programming shown in the archival materials | Portrays DKJ/TIM as a platform for discourse and dissemination of diverse artistic products; Presents organizational ethos that centered on dialogue and critical engagement |
| | Presenting mainstream artistic tendencies alongside experimental works | Signals organizational culture that accommodates both continuity and experimentation |

| | | |
|-------------------------|---|---|
| Brand as Symbols | Spatial design | Signals historical context to anchor thematic exploration; symbolic message depends on audience's interpretive capacity and may not translate similarly across different audience |
| | Exhibition coinciding with the reopening of the renovated TIM complex | Acknowledges legacy while marking institutional revamp; leveraged through context rather than direct curatorial output |
| | Archival interpretation as narrative tools | Positions DKJ/TIM as discursive hub that builds institutional authority but may rely on nostalgic resonance |

Although the curatorial outputs of this exhibition align with Aaker's concept of brand identity, this exhibition may also challenge it in its emphasis on plurality and fluidity. Whereas conventional branding favors singular, memorable identity propositions, the curatorial strategy of this exhibition intentionally favors complexity and contradiction to encourage audience reinterpretation of the curatorial narrative.

Taken together, Cipta! Kapita Selektta Cikini Raya 73 demonstrates that curatorial strategy can serve as a branding mechanism for institutional identity. However, this study also acknowledges the constraints of curatorial practice as a branding tool. While brand identity can be projected through curatorial narrative and objects display, the reception remains beyond the scope of this study and contingent on audience knowledge, interpretive ability, and willingness to engage. While this research does not assess audience reception, the findings indicate that narrative-driven curatorial branding enables complex identity expression but introduces ambiguity that institutions must address when aligning exhibitions with broader branding goals.

Conclusion

The findings in this study illustrate that curatorial practice, especially in institutional context, functions not only as an exhibition-making process but also as a form of institutional branding. In the context of cultural institutions, where exhibitions are its main branding touchpoint, curatorial strategy functions as the primary branding mechanism. This study shows how exhibition can have the capacity to construct (and reconstruct) the public image of an art institution by strategically framing the narrative of the institution's origin, legacy, and future intent. Cipta! Kapita Selektta Cikini Raya 73 illustrates how narrative and curatorial framing operate as forms of identity articulation that shape how an institution understands itself and wishes to be understood. By activating archives as symbolic capital and positioning plurality as an intentional stance rather than an indecision, the exhibition frames DKJ and TIM as both custodian and critic of Indonesia's cultural landscape. In doing so, the study shifts the positions of collection

and archival material from passive documentation into active branding assets in communicating institutional continuity, legitimacy, and discursive authority.

The utilization of curatorial strategy as branding mechanism implies that curator also serves as brand intermediaries where the curatorial narrative becomes the branding instrument and exhibitions become sites to project and negotiate brand identity. Branding through curatorial strategy relies on critical alignment between institutional vision and exhibition making process, which provides subtle but deeper brand identity projection to the audience. This model challenges the traditional branding model that relies on visual identity systems or promotional messaging. Therefore, in cultural institutions, branding is embedded in curatorial decisions long before the exhibition's visual identity is designed.

This study acknowledges a number of practical limitations. First, it does not measure audience reception or perception of the projected brand identity. Therefore, it cannot make claims about brand image or how the intended identity is actually perceived by the public. Second, the analysis is based on a single exhibition, which cannot represent the entirety of the institution's branding strategy. Future research should address this gap through audience-based studies, comparative analyses across institutions with diverse curatorial models, and examinations of branding through serial or iterative exhibitions such as biennials, festival, or art fairs to examine how the brand identity constructed from curatorial strategies are being perceived by the audience as brand image.

As Indonesian art institutions navigate evolving cultural, political, and market expectations, branding should be seen not only as a corporate strategy but as an ongoing cultural strategy enacted through curatorial practice. Exhibitions like Cip-

ta! Kapita Selektta Cikini Raya 73 reveals that institutional identity is neither fixed nor inherited, but curated, contested, and continuously rewritten.

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