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THE APPLICATION OF CIAMISAN BATIK MOTIFS TO THE COSTUMES OF THE WEBCOMIC CHARACTER CIUNG WANARA

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Abstract

This study aims to examine the application of Ciamisan batik motifs in character costume design for the webcomic *Ciung Wanara* as an effort to preserve local culture through digital media. The background of this research is based on the low level of awareness among young generations regarding the *Ciung Wanara* folktale amidst the dominance of digital media, this requiring an adaptive strategy that aligns with contemporary visual consumption patterns. This study employs a descriptive qualitative approach using the ATUMICS method (*Artefact, Technique, Utility, Material, Icon, Concept, Shape*) as an analytical framework to transform traditional batik motifs into digital visual forms. The results indicate that the transformation of Ciamisan batik motifs involves simplification, visual reinterpretation, and technical adaptation while maintaining their philosophical values. The Ciung Wanara, Rereng, and floral motifs are applied to characters based on their roles and social status, forming a visual system that represents identity, psychological traits, and social hierarchy within the narrative. The application of batik motifs in character costumes functions not only as an aesthetic element but also as an effective visual communication medium for conveying cultural values. Evaluation results show that character designs integrating cultural elements proportionally are more recognizable and appealing to younger audiences. Therefore, this study contributes to the development of culture-based visual communication design and offers an alternative approach to cultural preservation through digital media.

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INTRODUCTION

The *Ciung Wanara* story is a form of intangible cultural heritage originating from the oral tradition of the Sundanese people, containing significant historical, moral, and cultural values that shape the community's collective identity. This narrative represents a heroic tale within the context of the Galuh Kingdom and also reflects the value system that exists within the community, such as courage, justice, and the legitimacy of power. From a contemporary cultural studies perspective, folklore is understood as a dynamic social construct that serves as a means of transmitting values and cultural identity across generations (Suryadi et al., 2021). Therefore, preserving the *Ciung Wanara story* cannot be done conventionally alone; an adaptive approach is needed that can respond to changing times, particularly in the context of digital technology developments.

The development of digital technology has fundamentally changed information and entertainment consumption patterns, especially among the younger generation, who now prefer to access visual content that is fast, concise, and easily accessible through digital devices. This condition has given rise to the phenomenon of a cultural gap, where local culture experiences decreased exposure due to the dominance of global popular culture, which is more adaptable to digital media (Prasetyo et al., 2021). Folk tales like *Ciung Wanara* face challenges in maintaining relevance amid changing audience preferences. Questionnaire data from 88 respondents showed that 58% had never heard the story of *Ciung Wanara*, and 61.4% did not understand the plot. These findings indicate a decline in cultural literacy among the younger generation, which could potentially disrupt the transmission of cultural values without more contextual intervention.

This problem is also reflected in the condition of the Karangkamulyan site as a historical representation of the *Ciung Wanara story*, which in practice has not been optimally utilized as a medium for cultural education. Fluctuations in visitor numbers and the shift in function to merely a transit area indicate that a physical space-based approach to

cultural preservation has not been able to meet the needs of today's digital society (Widiantie et al., 2025). This shows that cultural preservation cannot rely solely on conventional approaches, but needs to be developed through integration with more relevant and easily accessible digital media.

Adapting folktales into digital media is a strategy to bridge tradition and the needs of today's audiences. This process includes visual transformation and reinterpretation of meaning to suit audience characteristics (Putri & Kurniawan, 2023). Data shows that only 6.8% of respondents learned about *Ciung Wanara* through digital media, indicating limited representation in the digital ecosystem. This situation demands a visualization strategy that can capture attention while preserving its cultural values.

One medium with significant potential in this regard is *webcomics*, a form of digital comic designed for online consumption with a vertical (*scroll-based*) format that allows for a more flexible reading experience via mobile devices. *Webcomics* are able to integrate visual and narrative elements simultaneously, thus conveying stories in a more engaging and communicative manner (Kleefeld, 2020). The popularity of platforms such as Webtoon shows that this medium has become part of the digital consumption culture of the younger generation, thus having strategic potential as a medium to redistribute the *Ciung Wanara folktale* in a format that is more in line with the habits of today's audience.

In *webcomic production*, characters play a central role as the primary medium for conveying narratives and building emotional bonds with the audience. Besides being essential elements in the story, characters also serve as visual representations containing symbolic and ideological meanings. Therefore, character design is a crucial aspect that determines the success of a *webcomic* in conveying its message effectively. One important element in character design is costume, which functions as a visual *signifier* that represents the identity, social status, and cultural values inherent in the character (Rahmawati & Lestari, 2022).

In this study, the Ciamisan batik motif was used as the main visual element in designing the character costumes because it has distinctive visual

characteristics and philosophical values that represent the cultural identity of the Ciamis community. Ciamisan batik is generally inspired by natural elements, such as flora and fauna, which reflect the relationship between humans and their surroundings (Herdiana et al., 2020). Furthermore, Ciamisan batik also has a historical dimension related to the social structure of society, where certain motifs are used to indicate social status, such as nobility and commoners. This shows that batik motifs not only have aesthetic value but also contain symbolic meanings related to social and cultural identity.

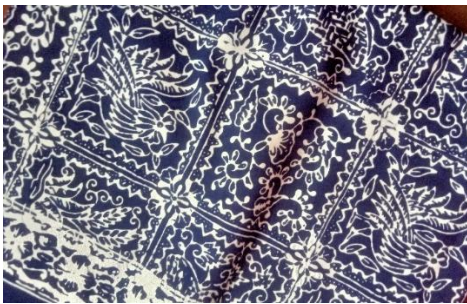


Figure 1. Ciamisan batik with Ciung motif Wanara

Source: personal document

Based on this understanding, this study categorizes Ciamisan batik motifs into three categories: heroes, nobles, and commoners. Each category is then applied to character costume designs, corresponding to their roles in the Ciung Wanara story. This approach is used to create visuals that align with the representation of cultural values through contextual elements.

Numerous studies have addressed cultural transformation in digital media, but they generally focus on the reinterpretation of narratives or characters. The integration of traditional textile motifs into digital character designs is rarely discussed specifically. Studies on the application of Ciamisan batik motifs in webcomic-based character costume designs using a systematic approach are also limited. This research offers novelty through the integration of local culture, visual design, and digital media within a structured design framework.

This study aims to examine the application of Ciamisan batik motifs in character costume designs in

the webcomic *Ciung Wanara* as an innovation in preserving local culture through digital media. This research is expected to contribute to the development of culture-based visual communication design and serve as an alternative strategy for improving cultural literacy among the younger generation through a relevant and communicative visual approach.

While previous studies on cultural adaptation in digital media have largely focused on narrative transformation and storytelling approaches, limited attention has been given to the systematic integration of traditional visual elements, such as textile motifs, into character design as a structured visual communication strategy. In this context, this study offers a distinct contribution by applying the ATUMICS framework to transform Ciamisan batik motifs into a coherent visual system embedded within character costumes. This approach not only preserves the philosophical values of the motifs but also recontextualizes them as visual signifiers of identity, social status, and psychological traits in digital narratives, thereby extending existing studies from narrative adaptation toward visual-cultural system design in webcomic media.

Thus, this study offers novelty in integrating the ATUMICS method into webcomic-based character design, particularly in the context of applying Ciamisan batik motifs as a visual system that represents the identity, social status, and psychological characteristics of the characters. Unlike previous studies that tend to focus on narrative adaptation, this study emphasizes the transformation of cultural visual elements as part of a communication strategy in digital media.

METHODS

Study This use approach qualitative descriptive, which aims for study as well as describe the process of applying Ciamisan batik motifs to in design costume characters in the webcomic *Ciung Wanara*. Approach qualitative chosen Because study This focus on visual meaning, exploration form, and interpretation mark the culture contained in batik motifs, which are not can measured in a way quantitative, but rather analyzed in a way contextual and interpretive.

The data collection method in this study was carried out through several techniques, namely literature study, visual observation, and questionnaires. The literature study was conducted to obtain a theoretical basis related to the *Ciung Wanara story*, character design, webcomic, and the philosophy of Ciamisan batik motifs. Data sources were obtained from scientific journals, books, and relevant previous research. Visual observations were conducted on Ciamisan batik motifs, both in traditional and digital forms, to identify visual elements such as shape, pattern, color, and symbolic meaning contained therein. In addition, a questionnaire was used to determine the level of understanding and interest of the younger generation in the *Ciung Wanara story* as well as preferences for digital media, which became the basis for determining the design media.

The analysis and design process in this study uses the ATUMICS method (*Artefact, Technique, Utility, Material, Icon, Concept, Shape*), which is used as a framework in transforming traditional batik motifs into digital visual forms. This method allows researchers to systematically identify and adapt cultural elements to maintain traditional values while still being relevant in the context of modern design.

The first stage in the ATUMICS method is the Artifact, which identifies Ciamisan batik motifs as the primary visual source in the design. This process includes selecting motifs such as Ciung Wanara, rereng, and flora, accompanied by an examination of philosophical values that form the basis for visual development. The *technique stage* focuses on shifting the production process from traditional batik techniques using canting and wax to digital techniques using design software such as Clip Studio Paint. This change allows for a more flexible and efficient motif digitization process.

The next stage is Utility, which focuses on changing the function of batik motifs, originally used as cloth in everyday life, into visual elements in digital character costumes. Next, in the Material stage, the media transformation is carried out from cloth as a physical material to a pixel-based digital canvas, which allows flexibility in the design

process. The Icon stage includes identifying the main visual elements in the batik motif, such as the shape of a rooster, flora, and other symbols that have specific meanings, which are then maintained throughout the transformation process.

concept stage focuses on developing design ideas by transforming the philosophical values of batik motifs into characters. Each motif is selected and applied according to the character's nature and role in the story, creating a connection between the visuals and characterization. The *shape stage* simplifies the motif's form to ensure it remains legible at small sizes. This process maintains the main elements that serve as visual identity markers, ensuring the motif remains recognizable in *the webcomic's appearance*.

The next stage is the character design process, which includes creating alternative sketches, coloring, and applying batik motifs to the characters' costumes. Each character is designed based on an analysis of their nature, role, and social status in the *Ciung Wanara story*, so the batik motifs are tailored to each character's characteristics. This process aims to produce character designs that are not only aesthetically pleasing but also possess strong symbolic meaning.

The final stage of the research involved a design evaluation through an audience preference test using a questionnaire. This evaluation measured the character design's ability to convey cultural values and visual appeal to the target audience of the younger generation. The data obtained was analyzed descriptively to assess the effectiveness of applying Ciamisan batik motifs to the character costumes *of the webcomic* Ciung Wanara. This approach combined the visual design process with cultural analysis that underpins every design decision, resulting in a work with strong visual and cultural value.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Transforming Ciamisan Batik Motifs into Digital Media

The transformation of Ciamisan batik motifs into digital media involves more than simply shifting from traditional to digital forms. This

process involves visual rework, adjustments to meaning, and adaptations to the character design needs of *webcomics*. Batik motifs, as cultural artifacts, possess aesthetic and symbolic values related to social and historical contexts. Each transformation process considers preserving visual identity while simultaneously adapting to the visual needs of digital media. The results of the analysis of Ciamisan batik motif transformation using the ATUMICS method are summarized in Table 1.

Table 1. Transforming motifs with ATUMICS

<i>Technique</i>		
Old Tradition	Modern Traditions	Transformation
Manual batik technique using canting and wax	Digital technique or using image software	Motif production shifts to digital to increase flexibility and efficiency (<i>Modern</i>)
<i>Utility</i>		
Old Tradition	Modern Traditions	Transformation
Used as clothing and cultural identity	-	The function as a cultural identity is maintained in the visual context of the character (<i>Tradition</i>)
<i>Material</i>		
Old Tradition	Modern Traditions	Transformation
Cloth with batik dyeing	Digital canvas / digital	Media is changing to

technique	image material and color	digital to support flexibility of use (<i>Modern</i>)
<i>Icon</i>		
Old Tradition	Modern Traditions	Transformation
Rooster, rereng, galuh motifs ferns, flora as symbol culture	-	Traditional icons are retained with visual adjustments (<i>Tradition</i>)
<i>Concept</i>		
Old Tradition	Modern Traditions	Transformation
Heroic, social and cultural values	-	Cultural values are still used as the basis for character design (<i>Tradition</i>)
<i>Shape</i>		
Old Tradition	Modern Traditions	Transformation
shapes in fabric media	Simplification of forms in digital media	Simplified forms to improve visual readability (<i>Modern</i>)

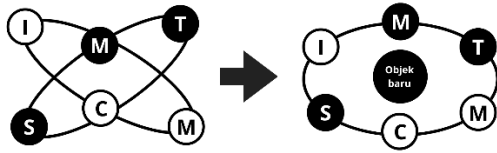


Figure 1Transformation ATUMICS elements

Source: Document personal

Based on the results in Table 1, the transformation of Ciamisan batik motifs shows changes in several elements in the ATUMICS framework.

In terms of *technique*, the motif creation process has shifted from traditional batik techniques using canting and wax to digital techniques using design software. This change facilitates visual exploration, motif reproduction, and efficiency in the production process. In terms of *utility*, the motif's function as a cultural identity is maintained, although its use is no longer in the form of cloth, but is applied as a visual element in character design. In terms of *material*, the medium used has changed from cloth to a pixel-based digital canvas. This change allows the motif to be modified, adjusted, and reused according to design needs. In terms of *icon*, the main visual elements such as roosters, rereng motifs, and flora are still used as markers of cultural identity. However, their forms have been adjusted to better suit the visual needs of digital media. In terms of *concept*, the cultural values contained in the motif are still used as the basis for character design, especially in representing the roles and characteristics of characters in the story. In terms of *shape*, the shape of the motif is simplified to improve visual readability, especially when displayed in small sizes in webcomic media, while still maintaining the main characteristics of the motif.

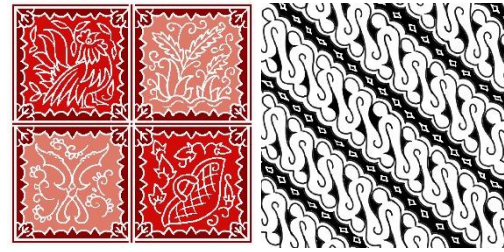


Figure 2The results of the ATUMICS transformation on the Ciung motif Wanara and rereng motifs

Source: Document personal



Figure 3the Kembang Anggrek Sultur motif and the Galuh Pakuan motif

Source: Document personal

All motifs were then digitally developed using Clip Studio Paint and converted into *image materials*, allowing for repeated use in webcomic production, which requires efficiency and visual consistency. Overall, the transformation demonstrates a shift in technical and visual aspects toward digital media, while the cultural values and identity of the motifs are maintained throughout the design process.

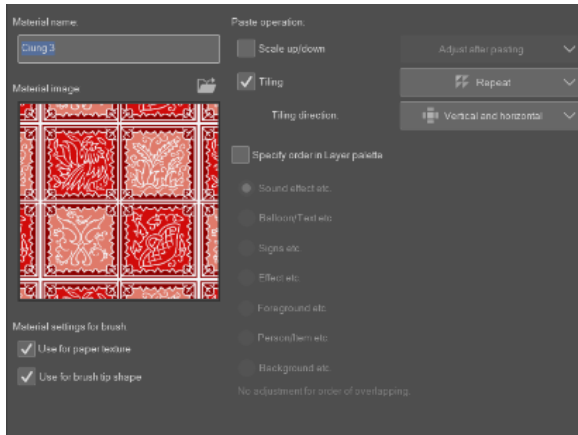


Figure 4 Batik motif material image process

Source: Personal document

Character Design Process and Application of Batik Motifs to Character Costumes

The character design process focuses on developing visuals that represent the narrative, traits, and social identities of the characters in the webcomic. Each character is designed through the use of shapes, colors, and batik motifs to create a communicative appearance that aligns with their role in the story.

The exploration phase involved creating several alternative sketches to test visual legibility, composition, and alignment with cultural identity. The exploration results showed that the complexity of batik motifs impacts character legibility. Overly dominant motifs distract from visual focus, while overly simple motifs diminish cultural identity.

The design approach is then directed at a balance between visual simplification and symbolic representation, so that the motif remains legible without disrupting the character's form.

The main character, Ciung Wanara, is designed with a visual approach that combines heroic and modest aspects, resulting in a character who is physically strong and possesses moral depth. Morphologically, his upright and proportional posture serves as a visual indicator of strength and readiness to face conflict, while his long hair gives a dynamic impression that strengthens the character as an active and free-spirited figure. The use of hot colors such as red contains symbols of energy, courage, and determination, which in color theory

are often associated with strength and struggle.

The Ciung Wanara motif is applied to the costume using a visual meaning approach, where the motif is used to signify the character's identity. The rooster element represents courage and victory, in keeping with the character's journey in the story. The addition of the kujang element strengthens the representation of heroism. The motif is applied selectively to avoid disrupting the character's legibility, achieving a balance between motif detail and visual form. This approach supports the conveyance of meaning through visual elements integrated into the character design.

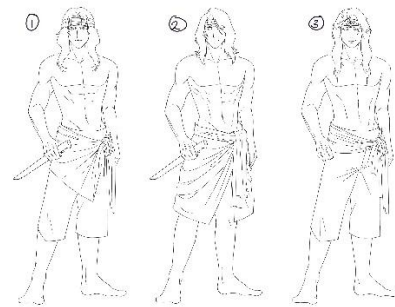


Figure 5 Character sketch of Ciung Wanara

Source: Personal document

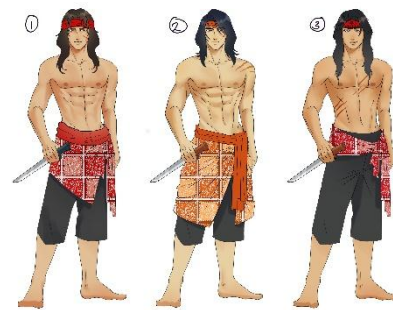


Figure 6. Application of Ciung Wanara batik

Source: Personal document

The character of Prabu Tamperan Brahmawijaya as a king is designed with a visual approach that emphasizes dominance, control, and power. Visually, the use of the rereng motif on the costume not only serves as a marker of social status, but also as a representation of a rigid hierarchical structure. The repeating diagonal pattern creates a stable yet firm impression, which can be

psychologically associated with control and authority. Contrasting colors and complex accessories build an impression of power on the character. The complexity of the costume represents ambition and dominance, while also indicating the social status and psychological condition of the character. From a visual perspective, the complexity of the costume on this character can be interpreted as a representation of the accumulation of power and ambition, which indirectly reflects arrogance and greed.

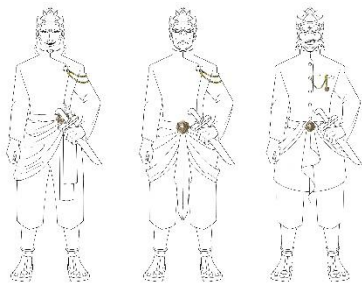


Figure 7. Character sketch of King Brahmawijaya
Source: Personal document



Figure 8. Application of the rereng batik motif
Source: Document personal

The character of Pandita Ajar Sukarsih was designed with an emphasis on simplicity and visual balance. The use of neutral colors and simpler costume compositions create an impression of calm and stability, befitting her role as a wise figure. The motifs used refer to the nobility with lower visual intensity, thus conveying a calmer and more reflective form of power. This approach demonstrates the potential use of visual elements to represent a character's psychological

characteristics.

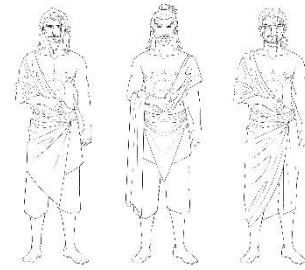


Figure 9. Character sketch of Pandita Ajar Sukarsih
Source: Personal document



Figure 10. Application of the Galuh batik motif
Source: Document personal

The character of Aki Balangantrang, representing the common people, is designed with simple and natural visuals. The use of floral motifs in the costume represents a closeness to nature and a simple life. Visual simplicity is a key strength in creating a warm and thoughtful impression. This approach demonstrates that the quality of the design is determined by its suitability to the

character being portrayed.

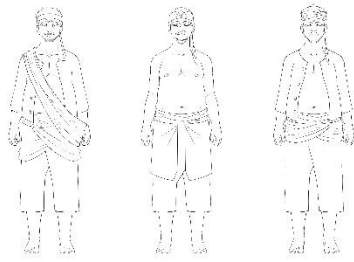


Figure 11. Character sketch of Aki Balangantrang

Source: Personal document



Figure 12. Application of floral batik motifs

Source: Document personal

The design finalization stage ensured visual consistency between characters by evaluating each element. As a result, the application of Ciamisan batik motifs to the costumes created a structured visual system, allowing each character to have a clear and easily distinguishable identity. Overall, this design demonstrates that the use of batik motifs in character design can effectively convey cultural values, identity, and social structure in digital media.

Character Design Evaluation on Target Audience

Character design evaluation was conducted through audience preference testing using a questionnaire for target respondents from the young generation aged 18-25 years with a background of students to workers.

The results showed that 78.3% of respondents

chose the first design alternative for the Ciung Wanara character. This design was considered to have clearer visual readability and a more balanced motif composition compared to the other alternatives. This choice was related to the application of batik motifs that were not too dominant, so as not to interfere with the main shape of the character. The simplification of the motif shape also helped clarify the silhouette and body proportions of the character when viewed at a small size. In addition, the main color red was able to strengthen the representation of the character as a main character with heroic values. The combination of motif detail and visual simplicity produced an appearance that maintained cultural identity without reducing the character's readability. These results indicate that designs with a balance between visual detail and clarity of form are more easily accepted by the audience in the context of *webcomic media*.

Karakter Ciung Wanara memiliki sifat seperti berikut: anak hutan yang pemberani, percaya diri, tidak mudah menyerah dan selalu menegakkan keadilan.
115 jawaban

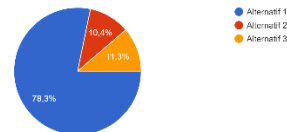


Figure 13. Results of the alternative questionnaire for Ciung Wanara's character

Source: Document personal

On the alternative design character of King Brahmawijaya the result show that 42.6% of respondents choose alternative design third For The character of Prabu Brahmawijaya . This design features a more complex costume with the use of brown batik cloth and a gold scarf. This choice indicates that respondents tended to choose visuals that could represent high social status through costume details. The complexity of the visual elements strengthens the impression of the character as a powerful and dominant figure. The grinning facial expression in this alternative also provides a stronger character affirmation, thus helping to build the image of a character with an ambitious and authoritative nature. These results indicate that the use of richer costume details and

assertive expressions is more effective in representing a character with a kingly role.

The character of Pandita Ajar Sukarsih shows that 53% of respondents chose the second design alternative for the character of Pandita Ajar Sukarsih. This design uses a dominant green color with the addition of a shawl hanging from the shoulders, thus creating a wise and calm appearance. This choice leads to a more stable and less exaggerated visual preference in representing a wise character. The details of the gray hair also emphasize the impression of age and experience, making the character more easily understood as a figure of wisdom. Overall, the design with a simple and directed visual processing is considered more appropriate to depict a character with a calm and reflective nature.

The findings of this study indicate that the application of batik motifs in character design functions not only as a decorative element but as a visual semiotic system that conveys layered meanings related to identity, hierarchy, and personality. From a visual communication perspective, the balance between motif complexity and character readability reflects fundamental principles of character design, particularly clarity, silhouette recognition, and symbolic coherence. The successful integration of cultural motifs demonstrates that visual elements rooted in tradition can be adapted into contemporary media without losing their semantic depth. This suggests that character design in digital media can operate as a cultural translation mechanism, where visual forms act as mediators between traditional values and modern audience perception, reinforcing both aesthetic engagement and cultural literacy.

Meanwhile, the evaluation results showed that 38.3% of respondents preferred the first design alternative for the character of Aki Balangantrang. This design features a pangsi outfit with an open top and the use of batik cloth draped over the shoulders. This choice indicates a preference for simple and close-to-everyday visuals, so that the character feels more down-to-earth. The use of cloth draped over the shoulders also strengthens the impression of a warm and wise father figure. Overall, this design is

considered capable of representing the character's role as a protector with a simple and communicative visual approach.

CONCLUSION

Study This show that the Ciamisan batik motif can adapted to in design webcomic characters through ATUMICS approach with still maintain identity Visually . The application of motifs to character costumes creates visual differentiation of roles and social status, making the characters more easily recognized by the audience. Proportional motif integration has been shown to increase readability and visual appeal based on audience evaluations. These findings suggest that a culture-based design approach can be used as an effective visual strategy in digital media.

This research contributes to the development of character designs based on local culture and opens up opportunities for utilizing webcomics as a medium for preserving culture that is relevant for the younger generation.

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