



DESIGN OF FANMADE MERCHANDISE T-SHIRT WITH COMIC STRIP ILLUSTRATION INSPIRED BY CORTIS MUSIC VIDEOS

Hayyah, Sausan; Arif Fiyanto

Department of Fine Arts, Faculty of Art and Language, Universitas Negeri Semarang

Article Info

Article History
Received: Juni 2026
Approved: July 2026
Published: August 2026

Keywords:

**Fanmade merchandise,
T-shirt, comic strip,
illustration, CORTIS**

Abstract

The growing popularity of Korean pop culture has increased public interest in various K-pop products, including T-shirt merchandise. However, most merchandise designs are still dominated by idol photographs, group logos, or member portrait illustrations, resulting in limited visual variety and creativity. This project aims to design a fan-made T-shirt inspired by the music videos of the boy group CORTIS using a comic strip illustration approach and to evaluate fans' responses to the resulting design. The design process employed the Design Thinking method, consisting of the empathize, define, ideate, prototype, and testing stages. Data were collected through literature review, observation, documentation, and questionnaire distribution to K-pop fans as the target audience. The design concept was developed based on an analysis of fan preferences and a visual study of the "JoyRide" and "Fashion" music videos, which were then translated into manga-style comic strip illustrations. The final outcome is a fan-made T-shirt merchandise design that highlights themes of self-expression, friendship, and teenage life. Feasibility testing using a Likert scale showed highly positive responses from participants. The design achieved an average score of over 81%, indicating that it falls within the "highly feasible" category. These findings demonstrate that comic strip illustrations can serve as a communicative, creative, and relevant visual approach for fan-made K-pop T-shirt merchandise.

© 2026 Universitas Negeri Semarang

✉ Correspondence address: Department of Fine Arts,
Faculty of Language and Arts, Universitas Negeri Semarang
Email: sausanhayyah7@students.unnes.ac.id

ISSN 2252-7516
E-ISSN 2721-8961

INTRODUCTION

The development of the global music industry today cannot be separated from the phenomenon of the Korean Wave, or Hallyu. This phenomenon has expanded the influence of South Korean popular culture across various countries through music, television dramas, and lifestyle trends (I. P. Putri et al., 2019). One of the most influential cultural products resulting from this phenomenon is K-pop, which integrates music, visual elements, choreography, and marketing strategies into a unified form of entertainment.

One of the boy groups that has recently attracted considerable attention is CORTIS. The group consists of Martin, James, Juhoon, Seonghyeon, and Keonho, and officially debuted on August 18, 2025, under BIGHIT MUSIC. Despite being a newly debuted group, CORTIS has achieved remarkable popularity. One of its notable accomplishments was receiving a Silver Certificate from Hanteo Chart Korea after its debut album, *COLOR OUTSIDE THE LINES*, sold more than 400,000 copies during its first week of release (Nunung Munawaroh, 2025).

The popularity of CORTIS is not solely attributed to the reputation of its agency and label, but also to its visual concepts, musical works, artistic identity, and promotional efforts. One of the most important promotional media in the K-pop industry is the music video. Music videos serve not only as a platform for presenting musical works but also as a visual medium that conveys concepts through the use of colors, characters, and atmospheres that represent the identity of both the group and its music. This is consistent with Nurwahyuni and Yuliana (2024), who argue that visual aesthetics play an important role in delivering messages and establishing brand identity, thereby influencing audience perceptions, particularly among Generation Z.

In addition to producing music videos as a promotional medium for CORTIS, the agency also strengthens fan engagement through the release of merchandise. According to Dwi Sapitri and Safitri (2025), K-pop merchandise serves as a means for fans to express their identity and support for their favorite idols. Consequently, for many fans, the cost of purchasing merchandise is not the primary concern as long as they can obtain items that represent their appreciation and support for the

artists they admire.

The strong loyalty of K-pop fans has also created creative and promising economic opportunities. One such opportunity is the production and sale of fan-made merchandise, which allows fans to express their creativity while generating income. According to an article published by UNIKOM (2025), fan-made merchandise differs from official merchandise in that it offers a wider variety of unique designs, enabling fans to create products that reflect their own preferences and interpretations. One common form of fan-made merchandise is the T-shirt.

According to Sima Anditya Kosalatami (2020), wearing T-shirts that feature a particular brand or character can foster a sense of belonging and community because they are easily recognized by others. Beyond serving as a medium for personal style expression, T-shirts can also function as a form of visual communication that conveys messages, values, and identities through design. Therefore, visual elements that effectively communicate these messages are essential. One of the most frequently used visual elements in T-shirt design is illustration, as it can communicate ideas and messages in a more engaging and easily understandable manner.

However, based on observations of various fan-made K-pop T-shirts, particularly those related to CORTIS and marketed through e-commerce platforms and social media, most merchandise designs still rely heavily on idol photographs, group logos, or portrait illustrations of the members as their primary visual elements. This condition presents an opportunity to develop fan-made merchandise designs that employ a more narrative and communicative visual approach.

From the perspective of popular culture, comics are a medium that has a close relationship with various products and phenomena of popular culture that develop within society. Comics feature expressive visual characteristics, making them effective in attracting the attention of younger audiences, particularly fans of popular culture such as K-pop. This phenomenon can be observed in the growing number of collaborations between K-pop agencies and publishers or digital platforms to develop manhwa and comics featuring their artists as the main characters. The presence of

these works not only expands the range of entertainment media associated with idols but also provides enjoyable experiences for their fans (Efendi, 2023).

One type of comic used in this design project is the comic strip. Comic strips generally consist of several panels arranged sequentially to depict the flow of a story. Each panel contains character illustrations, backgrounds, and speech balloons or text that help explain dialogue and narration. Due to their limited format, typically consisting of only three to six panels, comic strips require stories to be delivered in a concise, clear, and direct manner. This limitation serves as both a challenge and an advantage, as it encourages information to be communicated more effectively and easily understood. The strength of comic strips lies in their ability to combine visual and textual elements effectively, allowing readers to quickly comprehend the story without losing the intended meaning (Dwy Nurhasikin et al., 2025).

Previous studies have generally discussed merchandise design as a medium for promotion and branding. However, there have been relatively few studies that explore the development of fan-made K-pop merchandise using a comic strip illustration approach that focuses on representing idol visual identity and fan experiences. Therefore, the purpose of this design project is to create merchandise that is relevant to the preferences of Generation Z while possessing a stronger and more distinctive visual identity. The boy group CORTIS was selected as the source of inspiration because of its strong visual identity and concepts that closely relate to the experiences of teenagers. The music videos JoyRide and Fashion present rich visual elements with the potential to be developed into communicative illustrations. The comic strip approach was chosen because it can convey stories concisely through a combination of images and text, making it an effective medium of visual communication for T-shirt design.

The novelty of this project lies in translating the audiovisual narratives and visual identities of CORTIS music videos into sequential comic-strip storytelling for wearable fan-made merchandise. Rather than reproducing idol photographs, portraits, or logos, the design transforms themes, characters, visual cues, and emotional narratives derived from the music videos into an independent



Figure 1. Fan-made CORTIS T-shirt
Source : X (2026)



Figure 2. Fan-made CORTIS T-shirt
Source : TikTok (2026)

visual storytelling system adapted to T-shirt media.

METHODS

This design project employed the Design Thinking method, which focuses on user needs and experiences through a user-centered approach. According to Andi Fatwa Mahdika Candra (2022), Design Thinking is a problem-solving method carried out through iterative and systematic stages to understand user needs, re-evaluate assumptions, and redefine problems in order to generate more appropriate solutions. The Design Thinking process consists of five stages: empathize, define, ideate, prototype, and testing.

The empathize stage was conducted through observation, literature review, documentation, and questionnaire distribution to K-pop fans in order to identify their visual preferences and interest in merchandise. The define stage involved formulating audience needs and determining the design direction based on the analysis of the collected data. During the ideate stage, design concepts were developed using the music videos JoyRide and Fashion by CORTIS as the primary sources of inspiration. The prototype stage included sketching, digital illustration development, coloring, and the application of the final designs onto T-shirts. Finally, the testing stage was carried out by distributing questionnaires to respondents to evaluate the feasibility of the designs and assess audience acceptance of the final outcomes.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The design of fan-made T-shirt merchandise featuring comic strip illustrations employed the Design Thinking approach to understand fans' perceptions and preferences regarding visuals adapted from CORTIS music video concepts. This approach aimed to create designs that not only possess visual appeal but also meet the needs and preferences of the target audience, namely K-pop fans in general and CORTIS fans in particular.

1) Empathize

At the initial stage of the design process, data were collected to understand fans' characteristics, preferences, and perceptions of K-pop T-shirts, particularly fan-made CORTIS T-shirts. Data collection was conducted through an online questionnaire distributed to respondents who met the following criteria: K-pop fans, members of Generation Z aged 14-29 years, and Individuals who were familiar with or interested in the boy group CORTIS.

Based on the questionnaire results, which involved 30 K-pop fans with 29 valid responses, it was found that the concept of a fan-made CORTIS T-shirt featuring comic strip illustrations has considerable potential to be accepted by the target market. Most respondents were already familiar with CORTIS, either as active fans or casual listeners, indicating that the collected data were relevant for guiding the design process.

In terms of product preference, most respondents expressed interest in K-pop-themed T-shirts, particularly as collectible items and fashion accessories. They also preferred T-shirts that could be comfortably worn in everyday situations rather than designs that appeared overly focused on fandom representation. This finding suggests that the designs should be versatile, fashionable, and easy to incorporate into daily outfits.

Regarding visual preferences, respondents tended to favor illustrated fan-made designs over those featuring direct portraits of group members. Stylized and chibi illustration styles were the most preferred because they were perceived as more artistic, unique, and visually distinctive. Furthermore, illustration concepts inspired by music video visuals received positive responses, indicating that the chosen visual approach aligned well with audience preferences.

In terms of color preferences, respondents favored monochromatic and dark or edgy color schemes, as these were considered aesthetically pleasing, simple, and suitable for everyday wear. Therefore, the questionnaire results indicate that the design of the CORTIS comic strip T-shirt should prioritize stylized illustrations, creative visual concepts inspired by music videos, monochromatic or dark color palettes, and a fashionable appearance to attract K-pop fans, particularly fans of CORTIS.

2) Define

Following the empathize stage, the process continued with the define stage to analyze and interpret the data collected from the questionnaires. The collected data were examined to identify the main design problem: how to create an innovative fan-made CORTIS T-shirt merchandise design that is capable of attracting fans' interest. The analysis utilized two types of data: primary data obtained from online questionnaires and secondary data gathered from literature reviews, visual references, documentation related to CORTIS, and other relevant information collected through various media sources.

In the process of designing the fan-made CORTIS T-shirt merchandise, data analysis was conducted to understand the position of the design

concept and its potential for development. One of the analytical methods employed was SWOT analysis, which was used to identify both internal and external factors that could influence the design outcome. According to Raeburn (2026), SWOT analysis is a strategic tool used to determine the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats associated with a particular business or project. Although relatively simple, SWOT analysis is a powerful method for identifying competitive opportunities and areas for improvement. Accordingly, the design concept was evaluated based on four key aspects: strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats.

	INTERNAL	
	Strengths (Kekuatan)	Weaknesses (Kelemahan)
EXTERNAL	Opportunities (Peluang)	Threats (Tantangan)
	Strategi (SO)	Strategi (WO)
	Strategi (ST)	Strategi (WT)

Figure 3. SWOT Analysis Results
Source : Hayyah (2026)

Based on the SWOT analysis results, the findings are as follows:

- Strengths:** The design uses a comic strip approach, which is unique and rarely applied in fan-made CORTIS T-shirt merchandise. It is able to represent CORTIS characteristics through expressive visual storytelling. As a fan-made design, it allows greater flexibility and creativity in idea exploration. In addition, it has strong visual appeal that can attract fans' interest.
- Opportunities:** There is a strong interest among fans in fan-made merchandise based on questionnaire results. Moreover, there are still limited CORTIS fan-made T-shirt designs that use comic strip concepts as a visual identity. This also creates opportunities for further development into design variations or series based on CORTIS themes or works.
- Threats:** There are many alternative fan-made

merchandise designs that are simpler and easier to produce. Visual trends among K-pop fans change rapidly, which may affect design relevance. There is also a risk that the design may not meet fandom expectations. In addition, limitations related to CORTIS visual identity (copyright and fan-made ethics) and production techniques (such as printing or screen printing) may reduce illustration quality.

- Weaknesses:** The comic strip style may not suit all fan preferences, and overly detailed visuals may become less readable when applied to T-shirts.

Based on these factors, several strategies can be formulated:

- Strength-Opportunity Strategy:** Utilize the unique comic strip concept to attract fans who are interested in storytelling-based designs.
- Weakness-Opportunity Strategy:** Develop variations of the comic strip style to better adapt to different fan preferences while maintaining storytelling appeal.
- Strength-Threat Strategy:** Strengthen CORTIS characteristics in the design to stand out among other fan-made merchandise.
- Weakness-Threat Strategy:** Avoid overly detailed elements to ensure the design remains clear and competitive with simpler designs.

The results of this analysis were used as the basis for developing an appropriate design strategy, ensuring that the proposed T-shirt designs could address fans' visual preferences while effectively communicating the characteristics and visual identity of the boy group CORTIS.

3) Ideate

During the ideate stage, design concepts were developed based on the analysis of user needs, respondents' visual preferences, fashion trends, and the characteristics of the CORTIS fandom. The questionnaire results indicated that most respondents preferred K-pop-themed T-shirts that could be worn in everyday situations. Therefore, designs that were flexible, not overly conspicuous as fandom merchandise, and easy to incorporate into daily outfits became the primary consideration. In addition, respondents showed a stronger preference for illustration-based designs

rather than logos or direct member portraits, with a particular interest in manga-inspired visual styles and monochromatic color schemes.

Based on these findings, several design alternatives were considered, including typographic illustrations, character illustrations, and narrative-based illustrations. According to the designer, comic strip illustrations were the most suitable option because they could accommodate respondents' visual preferences while conveying stories in a concise and communicative manner through the combination of text and images. In addition, the visual style employed in this design is manga. The selection of this style is based on its visual characteristics, which are capable of portraying character expressions in a more vivid and communicative manner. According to M. T. G. Putri & Purnaengsih (2023), the manga visual style possesses distinctive characteristics in terms of character depiction, expressions, and visual storytelling.

Therefore, the application of this style can support the delivery of narratives in comic strips, making the story clearer and more engaging. The visual concept was developed by drawing inspiration from CORTIS's music videos *Fashion* and *Joyride*. The music video *Fashion* represents self-expression and the search for teenage identity. This interpretation is consistent with statements made by Juhoon and Martin during an interview with iHeartRadio, in which they explained that the album was created to authentically represent themselves as teenagers who are still growing and discovering their individual tastes. Meanwhile, *Joyride* portrays the experience of escaping monotonous routines as a form of self-reflection and energy restoration (Nantari, 2025). Both music videos share common themes related to self-expression and adolescent life experiences that are relevant to the target audience.

In addition to the narrative aspects, the members' appearances, costumes, and supporting visual attributes featured in the music videos were also used as visual references. These elements were selected because they effectively represent the concepts, style, and identity portrayed by CORTIS. Furthermore, concept validation conducted through questionnaires revealed that the majority of respondents responded positively to T-shirt designs featuring comic strip

illustrations inspired by CORTIS music videos.

a) Determining the Design Medium

In this design project, the author used ibisPaint X as the primary digital illustration software. The application was selected due to its ease of use and the author's familiarity with its interface, allowing the design process to be carried out more efficiently. In addition, ibisPaint X provides a variety of features that support the creation of digital comic strip illustrations, including tools for line art, coloring, shading, visual effects, and typography. These features include layers, various brush options, color adjustment tools, a stabilizer function for producing cleaner lines, and text tools with multiple font choices. The application also offers additional materials such as patterns, backgrounds, visual effects, and decorative elements that can enhance the appearance of digital illustrations and comics. Furthermore, its compatibility with smart phone devices provides flexibility, enabling the design process to be completed conveniently at any time and from any location.

b) Determining the Theme and Objectives

The theme serves as a fundamental aspect of comic creation, as it provides the basis for determining both visual and narrative elements. Every component of the comic should be aligned with the theme established at the beginning of the design process. In this project, the author focused on themes related to teenage daily life, particularly common challenges experienced during adolescence and within friendship circles.

Two themes were developed for the designs. The first design, inspired by the music video *JoyRide*, explores the anxiety that teenagers often experience when facing an uncertain future. The second design, inspired by the music video *Fashion*, addresses issues of self-confidence and the process of overcoming personal insecurities. Although the two designs present different narratives, they share the same objective: to communicate meaningful messages through the visual and narrative elements incorporated into the comic strip illustrations.

c) Character Development

According to the *Kamus Besar Bahasa*

Indonesia (KBBI), a character refers to a figure, appearance, or individual who plays a particular role. In comics, characters are individuals portrayed within a story and are defined through their visual appearance, facial expressions, personality traits, and dialogue, all of which contribute to the progression of the narrative. Based on their roles, comic characters can generally be categorized into two types: main characters, who serve as the central focus of the story, and supporting characters, who appear in relation to the main characters either directly or indirectly.

In this design project, five characters were developed based on the members of the boy group CORTIS. These characters are named Ed, Kon, Juju, Sean, and Jamie. All five characters appear in both designs. However, the two designs differ in terms of the costumes worn by the characters and the distribution of their roles, whether as main characters or supporting characters within the narrative.

d) Scenario Development

A scenario is a sequence of events written in detail by a writer or a team of writers that can later be visualized in the form of images (Radliya, 2016). In comics, a scenario contains detailed information regarding scenes, characters, dialogue, settings, and situations, serving as a guide for visualizing the story. Before developing the scenarios for the two comic strip designs, the author first created an overall narrative framework to facilitate the scenario-writing process and ensure coherence between the story, characters, and visual elements. Based on the concepts derived from the two music videos discussed previously, the first design presents the story of a student who experiences exhaustion and emotional fatigue in daily life. Various negative thoughts about the future and questions regarding personal direction frequently occupy the character's mind. However, these feelings are gradually alleviated through the presence of supportive friends who accompany and encourage the character throughout the journey of finding answers to these concerns.

Meanwhile, the second design portrays a young individual who feels isolated within their social environment. This situation initially causes a decline in self-confidence and a sense of

disconnection from others. Over time, however, the character gradually rediscovers their identity and self-worth through the support and acceptance found within a new circle of friends.



Figure 4. Character "Ed"



Figure 5. Character "Kon"
Source : Hayyah (2026)



Figure 6. Character "Juju"
Source : Hayyah (2026)



Figure 7. Character "Sean"
Source : Hayyah (2026)



Figure 8. Character "Jamie"
Source : Hayyah (2026)

e) Panel

Panels serve as the primary visual elements that organize the flow of a story. A well-structured panel arrangement helps readers understand the sequence of events, scene transitions, and emotions conveyed throughout the narrative. The use of panels is particularly important in the design of comic strip T-shirts, as they divide the narrative into smaller segments that are easier to understand while maintaining visual appeal. According to (Nurmana, 2022), a comic panel is a single frame that contains an illustration depicting a scene within a story. In comic strips, panels are not used individually but are arranged in a sequence of multiple panels to create a continuous narrative. Each panel is separated by a space known as a gutter, which functions as both a visual divider and an indicator of scene transitions. Generally, comic strips consist of one to four panels, although some may contain a greater number of panels arranged either vertically or horizontally.

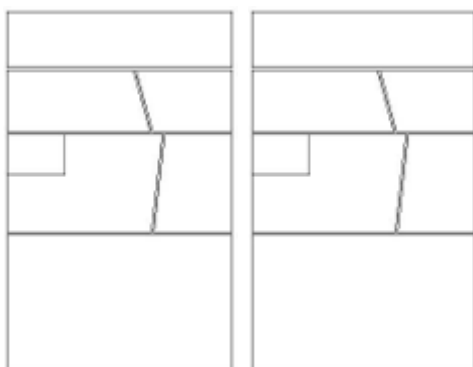


Figure 9. Comic Strip Panel We're On a JoyRide and I Call That Fashion.
Source : Hayyah (2026)

4. Prototype

The ideas that had been developed were subsequently translated into prototype designs in the form of T-shirts featuring comic strip illustrations that combined visual elements, narrative components, and the distinctive characteristics of CORTIS. These prototypes were developed based on the results of the respondent preference analysis, current visual trends, and fandom characteristics that had been identified during the previous stages of the design process.

a) Sketch

In the comic strip design process, sketching plays a crucial role as the initial stage of visual idea development. Sketches enable designers to explore composition, narrative flow, and the placement of visual elements before proceeding to the final design stage. According to Mengenal Sketsa: Dasar Ekspresi Visual Dalam Seni Dan Desain (2025), sketching serves as a fundamental component of almost all visual processes in art and design. Its function extends beyond being a visual aid, encompassing roles such as idea exploration, skill development, rapid object documentation, and visual communication. In the context of art and design education, sketching acts as a bridge between conceptualization and realization. This aligns with the comic strip design process in this study, where sketches were used to translate story ideas and the visual concepts of CORTIS into preliminary forms before being developed into more detailed and structured final illustrations. In this project, sketches were created on A3 paper using basic drawing tools, including pencils, erasers, and rulers.



Figure 10. Sketch of We're On a JoyRide Comic.
Source : Hayyah (2026)



Figure 11. Sketch of I Call That Fashion Comic.
Source : Hayyah (2026)



Figure 13. Line Art of I Call That Fashion Comic.
Source : Hayyah (2026)

B. Line Art

Line art is a visual representation of an object that reflects the artist's distinctive style and is constructed primarily through the use of lines. According to (Widyokusumo, 2013). a line is a series of connected points that functions as a visual tool for interpreting and representing forms or objects in art. Line art typically utilizes straight, curved, or bold lines and emphasizes the simplification of forms, focusing on clear outlines without the use of gradients or complex shading. In this project, the *Dip Pen (Soft)* brush was used during the line art stage. Throughout the digitalization process, several elements of the design were modified to improve its overall visual quality and effectiveness.



Figure 12. Line Art of We're On a Joyride Comic.
Source : Hayyah (2026)

c. Color

Color is a spectrum of electromagnetic light waves reflected by an object, perceived by the human eye, and interpreted by the brain. Its presence is inseparable from everyday life and technological development. Color is also associated with the interpretation of meaning, as it can convey symbolism, philosophy, and emotions, which are closely related to the concept of color psychology (Fajar Paksi, 2021).

Color functions as an indicator of identity, atmosphere, and temporal characterization. It contributes to the creation of a visual mood within a work; for example, blue is often associated with a cool atmosphere, while red can evoke a sense of warmth or intensity. In this comic strip design project, light blue and bright orange were used as the dominant colors in the *We're On a Joyride* design to create a balance between a subdued and warm atmosphere. Meanwhile, the *I Call That Fashion* design employed dark blue and purple tones to convey a cool yet elegant impression.

Based on the questionnaire results regarding color preferences, most respondents preferred monochromatic color schemes, particularly black and white, as the primary colors in the design. This finding suggests that monochromatic colors are considered more suitable for the desired visual character. However, the color selection process was not based solely on

respondents' preferences but was also adapted to the concepts and visual references found in the music videos that served as the primary sources of inspiration. Therefore, the chosen color palette was not limited to black and white but was expanded while maintaining a monochromatic aesthetic that remained consistent with the overall visual concept of the designs.



Figure 14. Color Palette of We're On a Joyride Comic.
Source: Hayyah (2026)



Figure 15. Color Palette of I Call That Fashion Comic.
Source : Hayyah (2026)

d. Typography

Typography plays an important role in comic strip design because it not only functions as a medium for conveying verbal information but also helps establish the atmosphere, character, and visual identity of a work. In comic strip design, the selection of appropriate typefaces can influence how audiences interpret the message and narrative being communicated. Typography is defined as the art and practice of arranging letters

and text to ensure readability, clarity of meaning, and aesthetic quality (Iswanto, 2023). In line with this concept, the typography used in this project was selected based on both readability and its suitability for the teenage-oriented theme and the visual characteristics of CORTIS.

For the first design, entitled *We're On a Joyride*, the author combined several typefaces to create visual variation and establish a clear information hierarchy. The Toony Sans typeface, which belongs to the Sans Serif category, was paired with the Mermaid typeface from the Serif category to produce a more dynamic and visually engaging appearance. The title was designed using a larger font size and bold styling to ensure that it became the primary focal point of the composition. Supporting information, such as the date, was displayed in a smaller size without bold emphasis to prevent it from competing with the title. For the body text, the author used Coolvetica Cond, a Sans Serif typeface, at a smaller size than the other textual elements. These differences in size, weight, and typeface were intended to create a structured reading flow, allowing information to be communicated more clearly.

In the second design, entitled *I Call That Fashion*, typography was also varied to establish visual hierarchy and improve information delivery. The title utilized the Bebas Neue typeface, whose bold and condensed form creates an elegant appearance while effectively attracting the viewer's attention. Additional information, such as the date, was presented using the Roboto typeface at a smaller size than the title to maintain readability without detracting from the main visual focus. Roboto was also used for the body text in a medium weight to ensure reading comfort. Both typefaces belong to the Sans Serif category and were selected because of their high level of readability, enabling information to be communicated clearly and effectively.

Furthermore, the official CORTIS logo was not used directly in this design project. Instead, the author developed a typographic approach based on the phrase *Color Outside The Lines*, which serves as the full form of the name CORTIS. This phrase was transformed into a custom typographic design adapted to the comic strip concept, allowing the group's identity to be represented in a more creative and contextual manner. The

SansSerifBldFLF typeface was selected for this purpose due to its high readability, ensuring that the customized lettering remained legible and easily understood despite stylistic modifications.



Figure 16. Custom Typography using the phrase “Color Outside the Lines”
Source : Hayyah (2026)

e. Design Outcomes

The design process resulted in two main T-shirt designs, namely *We're On a Joyride* and *I Call That Fashion*. The first design was inspired by the music video *JoyRide*, which presents themes of adventure, friendship, and togetherness. Meanwhile, the second design was inspired by the music video *Fashion*, which emphasizes self-expression and self-confidence. Both designs were developed by incorporating comic strip illustrations that combine narrative elements and visual storytelling to communicate the intended messages while reflecting the visual identity of CORTIS.

1) Design *We're On A JoyRide*



Figure 17. Comic Strip Design We're On a JoyRide Source: Hayyah (2026)

a. Artwork Description

The comic strip design *We're On a Joyride* was created using ibisPaint X and employs an anime-inspired illustration style. This visual style was chosen because of its ability to portray character expressions in a communicative manner while supporting the delivery of the narrative. The design was developed using the CMYK color mode to ensure compatibility with T-shirt production requirements. The color palette is primarily dominated by baby blue and orange. Baby blue was used to establish a melancholic atmosphere that reflects the main character's feelings of anxiety and uncertainty, while orange introduces a sense of warmth, cheerfulness, and energy. The combination of these colors creates an emotional contrast that supports the progression of the story.

From a visual perspective, the design utilizes a combination panel layout with varying panel sizes to create a dynamic composition and guide the reader's visual flow. The use of Sans Serif and Serif typography in the title and dialogue helps establish visual hierarchy and improve readability. In addition, the design incorporates several symbolic elements, including yellow roses as a symbol of friendship, doves representing hope, and a backpack symbolizing school life and the responsibilities faced by teenagers. Halftone and sparkle effects are also applied to enhance the emotional atmosphere of each scene, allowing the intended message to be communicated more effectively to the audience.

b. Artwork Analysis

The *We're On a Joyride* design explores the theme of adolescent anxiety during the process of self-discovery and uncertainty about the future. The visual narrative illustrates the emotional transformation of the main character, progressing from feelings of pressure, doubt, and insecurity toward a more positive state of mind. This transformation is represented through the presence of supportive friends who provide companionship, encouragement, and a sense of belonging, ultimately becoming a source of motivation and hope for the protagonist.

Through the integration of illustrations, color schemes, and symbolic visual elements, the design seeks to communicate the message that the challenges and uncertainties commonly

experienced during adolescence can be navigated more effectively through positive social relationships and meaningful support systems.

2. Comic Strip Design *I Call That Fashion*



Figure 17. Comic Strip Design We're On a JoyRide
Source: Hayyah (2026)

a. Artwork Description

Visual composition of *I Call That Fashion* comic strip design is dominated by a combination of dark blue, pink, and purple tones, creating an emotionally expressive atmosphere. Dark blue is used to represent the feelings of sadness and insecurity experienced by the main character, while pink and purple convey a sense of self-expression, confidence, and energy. The varied panel compositions and the use of different perspectives help establish the narrative flow and enhance the emotional expression of the characters. The design is further supported by symbolic elements, such as broken chains representing freedom from social pressures and musical elements symbolizing a space for self-expression and emotional release among teenagers.

b. Artwork Analysis

The Comic strip design titled *I Call That Fashion* explores the themes of self-discovery and freedom of expression during adolescence. The

artwork portrays a main character who strives to overcome the fear of being judged by others. In the narrative, this fear is visualized as an alternate version of the protagonist, appearing in the first panel as a symbolic representation of the character's internal struggle.

Similar to the first design, the protagonist is consistently accompanied by a friend figure who serves as a symbol of social support and acceptance. The presence of this supporting character represents a friendship environment that provides safety, comfort, and a space for individuals to express themselves freely. This emphasizes that overcoming anxiety, discovering one's identity, and building self-confidence are not always individual processes but are often influenced by the support of those closest to us.

Through its visual symbols and narrative elements, the design highlights the importance of embracing oneself and expressing personal uniqueness as an essential part of growth and the journey toward maturity.

c. Development of Additional Artwork

In addition to the two main designs that were previously developed, the author created an additional artwork as a form of further visual exploration. This artwork was developed based on concepts that had been applied in the previous designs, particularly those related to the dynamics of adolescent life, the process of self-discovery, and the importance of freedom of expression. However, the work differs in its visual approach and composition.

3. Design *To Be Cringe Is To Be Free*

a. Artwork Description

The comic strip design titled *To Be Cringe Is To Be Free* was created using the same dimensions, resolution, visual style, and color mode as the previous comic strip designs. This artwork was developed by considering feedback gathered from respondents during the feasibility testing stage, particularly suggestions regarding the addition of texture variations and the use of high-intensity colors to enhance visual appeal.

Visually, the design is dominated by purple, neon green, and pink tones, creating an expressive, energetic, and dynamic atmosphere. A varied panel composition is employed to establish a more

engaging narrative flow, while visual elements such as halftone effects, grunge textures, and urban backgrounds reinforce the city-inspired setting that reflects contemporary teenage life. The presence of five characters running together in the main panel serves as a symbol of friendship, mutual support, and the courage to express oneself without fear of judgment from others.

a. Artwork Analysis

The title *To Be Cringe Is To Be Free* was derived from a statement made by Martin, the leader of CORTIS, during an interview on the youtube Sang (2025). The phrase reflects CORTIS's perspective on the importance of embracing individuality and expressing oneself honestly without being constrained by restrictive social standards. This concept was translated into a visual narrative that emphasizes freedom of expression, self-acceptance, and the courage to be authentic.

Through the combination of visual elements, symbolism, and narrative storytelling, the design communicates the message that the freedom to be oneself is an essential part of adolescent identity formation.



Figure 19. Comic Strip Design To Be Cringe is To Be Free.
Source : Hayyah (2026)

Design Application on the Medium

After completing the design process, the final artworks were applied to T-shirt mockups as the final stage of product visualization. The use of mockups aims to provide a realistic representation of how the designs would appear when applied to

actual T-shirt products. In addition, mockups help evaluate the suitability of the design composition, illustration placement, color application, and readability of visual elements when displayed on a fashion product.

Through mockup visualization, the design outcomes can be presented in a more representative and realistic manner, making it easier to assess the overall appearance and effectiveness of the final designs before production.



Figure 20. Mockup Design of We're On a JoyRide T-shirt.
Source : Hayyah (2026)



Figure 21. Alternative Color Design of We're On A JoyRide T-shirt.
Source: Hayyah (2026)



Figure 22. Mockup Design of I Call That Fashion T-shirt.
Source: Hayyah (2026)



Figure 23. Alternative Color Design of I Call That Fashion T-shirt.

Source: Hayyah (2026)



Figure 24. Mockup Design of To Be Cringe is To Be Free T-shirt.

Source : Hayyah (2026)



Figure 25. Alternative Color Design of To Be Cringe Is To Be Free T-shirt.

Source : Hayyah (2026)

5) Testing

The testing stage was conducted to determine the feasibility level of the design based on evaluations from the target audience. The test involved 30 respondents who were Generation Z K-pop fans aged 14–29 years and familiar with CORTIS. Data collection was carried out using a Likert scale questionnaire, which was then analyzed descriptively to measure the level of acceptance of the resulting designs.

The selection of respondents was aligned with the intended target audience of the project,

ensuring that the feedback obtained could be used as evaluation material for visual aspects, conceptual clarity, and the overall attractiveness of the developed fan-made merchandise design.

A higher score indicates a more positive evaluation from respondents toward the assessed aspects. Conversely, a lower score reflects a lower level of acceptance or evaluation of the tested variables.

The data analysis in this study was carried out using a percentage calculation formula to determine the level of feasibility of the design based on respondents' evaluations.

Table 1. 5-point Likert Scale

No	Score	Remarks
1	5	Strongly Agree
2	4	Agree
3	3	Neutral
4	2	Disagree
5	1	Strongly Disagree

Table 2. Percentage Feasibility Scale for Data

No	Feasibility Level	Qualification
1	81-100%	Highly Feasible
2	61-80%	Feasible
3	41-60%	Fairly Feasible
4	21-40%	Less Feasible
5	0-20%	Not Feasible

The formulas used are as follows:

Total Score = Σ (respondents' answer scores)

Maximum Score = Number of respondents $\times$ Number of items per aspect $\times$ Highest score (5)

Percentage = $(\text{Obtained Score} \div \text{Maximum Score}) \times 100\%$. These formulas were used to convert the Likert scale results into percentage values, which were interpreted to determine the level of acceptance of the designed product.

The evaluation results showed that the design received a very positive response from respondents. The visual quality aspect obtained a feasibility percentage of 92%. Furthermore, the readability aspect achieved 91%, the concept suitability aspect reached 91.67%, the design creativity aspect obtained 95.3%, and the attractiveness and product feasibility aspect reached 87.73%. These results indicate that the comic strip approach is considered capable of

representing the visual identity of CORTIS while also meeting the visual preferences of K-pop fans.

These findings strengthen previous studies stating that illustrations in merchandise can function as a visual identity and enhance product attractiveness. However, this study introduces novelty through the use of comic strips as a narrative medium that is not merely decorative but also capable of conveying stories and group characteristics visually.

Table 3. Percentage Calculation of Feasibility per Aspect

No	Assesment Aspects	Total Score	Max Score	Percentage	Qualifications
1	Visual Quality	415	450	92%	Highly Feasible
2	Readability	273	300	91%	Highly Feasible
3	Concept Suitability	270	300	90%	Highly Feasible
4	Message and Narrative Delivery	275	300	91.67%	Highly Feasible
5	Design Creativity	143	150	95.3%	Highly Feasible
6	Attractiveness and Product Feasibility	658	750	87.73%	Highly Feasible

Consumer Purchasing Power

This section presents the analysis of consumer purchasing power toward the merchandise product, aiming to determine the suitability of the product price for the target audience. The test involved 10 respondents who were Generation Z K-pop fans aged 14–29 years and familiar with CORTIS. The author set the unit cost of the T-shirt merchandise at IDR149,000, which was calculated based on several components, including design, material, printing costs, packaging, and other related expenses.

Table 4. Price Suitability Percentage Calculation

No	Assesment Aspects	Total Score	Max Score	Percentage	Qualifications
1	Price Suitability	45	50	90%	Highly Feasible

Based on the evaluation results, the purchasing power aspect of potential consumers obtained a percentage of 90%, which is categorized as highly feasible. Therefore, the designed T-shirt merchandise product has strong potential to be accepted by the target market in terms of price suitability.

CONCLUSION

This design project resulted in two fan-made T-shirt designs based on comic strip illustrations inspired by music videos of the boy

group CORTIS, namely *We're On A JoyRide* and *I Call That Fashion*, as well as a development design titled *To Be Cringe Is To Be Free*. The design process was carried out using the Design Thinking method, which enables a user-centered development process based on the needs and preferences of the target audience. The comic strip approach was chosen because it combines narrative and visual elements, allowing the messages, atmosphere, and values derived from the music videos to be communicated more effectively through T-shirt media.

The test results showed that the designed works received positive responses from respondents. Therefore, it can be concluded that comic strip illustrations have the potential to serve as an alternative visual approach in developing fan-made K-pop merchandise that is more creative, expressive, and narrative-oriented.

Based on the findings of this study, the development of fan-made merchandise using a comic strip approach still offers opportunities for further exploration. Future research may further develop visual concepts based on music works, music videos, or other idol groups, as well as apply different illustration styles and media. In addition, testing with a larger number of respondents is recommended to obtain a more comprehensive understanding of audience preferences regarding narrative-based merchandise design.

REFERENCES

- Andi Fatwa Mahdika Candra. (2022). Penerapan Metode Design Thinking Dalam Rancang Prototipe Aplikasi Berbasis Web Sistem Peminjaman Dokumen Arsip Di Dinas Komunikasi Dan Informatika Provinsi Jawa Timur. Penelitian Administrasi Publik, 2 (8 . 5 . 2 0 1 7) , 2 0 0 3 – 2 0 0 5 . <https://www.aksiologi.org/index.php/praja/article/view/810/488>
- Asyhari. A., & Silvia. H. (2016). Pengembangan Media Pembelajaran Berupa Buletin dalam Bentuk Buku Saku untuk Pembelajaran IPA Terpadu. Jurnal Ilmiah Pendidikan Fisika Al-Biruni, 5(1), 1 – 3 . <https://media.neliti.com/media/publications/137012-ID-pengembangan-media-pembelajaran-berupa-b.pdf>
- Efendi, F. (2023). 9 Manhwa Hasil Kolaborasi dengan Boy Group KPop, Menarik Dibaca! IDN TIMES. <https://www.idntimes.com/korea/kpop/manhwa>

- [wa-hasil-kolaborasi-dengan-boy-group-kpop-c1c2-01-qwkqj-2rlhb5](#)
- Fajar Paksi, D. N. (2021). Warna Dalam Dunia Visual. IMAJI: Film, Fotografi, Televisi, & Media Baru, 12 (2), 90 – 97. <https://doi.org/10.52290/i.v12i2.49>
- Iswanto, R. (2023). Perancangan Buku Ajar Tipografi. Nirmana, 23 (2), 123 – 129. <https://doi.org/10.9744/nirmana.23.2.123-129>
- Mengenal Sketsa: Dasar Ekspresi Visual dalam Seni dan Desain. (2025). UNESA. <https://slpsr.fbs.unesa.ac.id/post/mengenal-sketsa-dasar-ekspresi-visual-dalam-seni-dan-desain>
- Nurmana, A. H. B. (2022). Menyusun Paneling Komik yang Baik dan Menarik. UNIVERSITAS STEKOM. <https://desain-komunikasi-visual-s1.stekom.ac.id/artikel/menyusun-paneling-komik-yang-baik-dan-menarik>
- Putri, I. P., Liany, F. D. P., & Nuraeni, R. (2019). K-Drama dan Penyebaran Korean Wave di Indonesia. ProTVF, 3 (1), 68. <https://doi.org/10.24198/ptvf.v3i1.20940>
- Putri, M. T. G., & Purnaengsih, I. (2023). GAYA VISUAL NUSANTARA DALAM MEDIA COVER KOMIK SANGKURIANG KARYA R. A. KOSASIH. 10(3), 605 – 613. https://www.journal.lppmunindra.ac.id/index.php/Jurnal_Desain/article/view/16890/5688
- Radliya, N. R. (2016). Pengantar Penulisan Skenario (Scriptwriting). Jurnal Ilmiah: Profil, 45–82. <https://indonesia.sae.edu/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/Pengantar-Penulisan-Skenario-Scriptwriting-pdf>
- Raeburn, A. (2026). No Title. ASANA. <https://asana.com/id/resources/swot-analysis>
- Sang, Z. (2025). Cortis Talks GO!, FaSHioN and Debut EP “COLOR OUTSIDE THE LINES.” In Youtube. <https://youtu.be/8aaSIZTjXSo?si=PaXrEo6pxzG4H3t>
- Sima Anditya Kosalatami. (2020). Perancangan Merchandise Fashion Mengangkat Tema Musik Disko. Institut Teknologi Sepuluh Nopember
- UNIKOM. (2025). Merchandise K-Pop Fanmade: Mengubah Kegemaran Menjadi Penghasilan. UNIKOM. <https://web.unikom.ac.id/merchandise-k-pop-fanmade-mengubah-kegemaran-menjadi-penghasilan/>
- Widyokusumo, L. (2013). Fungsi Garis Pada Desain dan Sketsa Hasil dan Pembahasan Peranan elemen Garis dalam Desain. Humaniora, 4(1), 339–347.