



Designing Character Design in the Illustrated Story Book "The Mystery of Ilange Klambi Si Besut"

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Abstract

Indonesia is rich in cultural diversity, one of which includes local theatrical arts such as Besutan from Jombang Regency. Besutan is a form of traditional folk drama that became the forerunner of Ludruk, yet it now faces challenges due to the lack of younger generations to carry it on and limited educational media to promote it. Therefore, introducing this art form, especially to elementary school children, is essential through educational, engaging, and easy-to-understand media such as illustrated storybooks. To support this effort, the Besutan performing arts are introduced through an interactive picture book specifically designed for children. In Besutan performing arts, there are four main characters involved. These characters represent cultural values while also being visually appealing due to their distinctive costumes and behaviors. The portrayal of each character is adjusted to match their personality traits and the symbolic meanings embedded in their visual elements. This study aims to develop a visual character design that embodies the cultural traits of Besutan in a way that is attractive to children. The character design process includes observing local culture, conducting interviews with Besutan performers, and studying visual traits of stage characters. The outcome supports the development of an interactive and educational storybook that effectively introduces local performing arts to children.

Keywords: Character design, Besutan Jombang, local arts

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1. Introduction

Indonesia is rich in cultural diversity, one of which is in local drama arts such as Besutan art from Jombang Regency, East Java. Besutan art is a form of traditional drama from Jombang Regency which developed from lerok art [1], [2].

Based on the results of interviews conducted by researchers with Mr. Nasrul Illah as a Cultural Expert, researchers obtained information related to the history of Besutan Art and the background of the Besutan story. Besutan is a traditional theater art that contains jokes or jokes that satirize the social conditions at that time. The word "besutan" comes from the word "besut" which has the meaning "mbeto pengertian" or in Indonesian it means "carrying an intention". Besutan is a medium for conveying problems that occur in social life and can follow the development of the times, such as as a means of education. Over time, the existence of Besutan has declined due to the lack of young generations of successors, namely children and the lack of educational media that introduce this art [3].

This art has characters in its performance. There are 4 characters, namely Besut, Rusmini, Sumo Gambar and Man Gondo. Each character has its own character and characteristics. The existence of these characters plays a role in conveying moral and daily values conveyed in the Besutan drama art.

Efforts to preserve Besutan art can begin by introducing art to the younger generation. The younger generation, namely children, have a primary role as the successors of the nation and must also have a spirit of desire to preserve the richness and diversity of Indonesian culture which is slowly being forgotten over time [4], [5]. Therefore, the participation of children in preserving Besutan art in the Jombang Regency area is very important. In the learning process of children such as elementary school students, understanding the cognitive development of children is considered very important. This can be used as a guide in the process of educating and teaching elementary school students. The learning process will run optimally if the material presented is easy for students to understand. This can happen when the level of difficulty of the material is in accordance with the child's thinking ability. In the age range of 10-12 years (grades 4-6 Elementary School), children already have the ability to apply the material that has been learned and can think more deeply and can imagine an object that is depicted [6]. At this age, children are able and suitable to be able to practice and learn art, one of which is drama. One effective method in introducing Besutan art is to start by introducing character figures and costumes in Besutan. Preservation efforts can be carried out with a visual approach in the form of illustrated story media that is adjusted to the characteristics of children aged 10-12 years. One important element in this media is the design of the main

character that is able to attract and build emotional closeness with children [7] , [8] .

Character design plays an important role in creating a work [9] . Character design also plays a very important role in the process of developing an impressive story for readers [10] . Character design is one of the important roles in conveying and introducing art, namely Besutan. Illustrations in character design can build emotional relationships and messages conveyed to children aged 10-12 years. Illustrations help children understand the concepts to be conveyed. Therefore, it is important to design characters that are not only visually attractive but can also represent and convey the values and messages contained in Besutan drama art [11] .

Characters must be well designed from the visual and personality. In Besutan there are 4 character figures in Besutan. Starting from the actor Besut, who over time the appearance of Besut's face was made up by showing a face smeared with thick white powder and thick eyebrows to look cute. This is adjusted to Besut's character which is friendly, cheerful but firm. The actor Rusmini who is depicted with a beautiful appearance and cheerful nature by wearing green and red clothes with bright skin. Man Gondo with his fickle nature and striped clothes and the character Sumo Gambar who is considered an antagonist has an arrogant and arbitrary nature. Sumo Gambar who wears a headband with a green belt and his clothes are like Madurese lerek clothes. The clothes or costumes used by Besutan art are explained that only Besut's costume has standard clothes, the clothes of other players are adjusted to the story they want to convey . The Besut costume consists of a white bebet, black pants, red sampur, red Turkish hat, and white lawe rope at the waist [12] , [13] . For that reason, the design of character designs for figures in Besutan art is adjusted to the original stage appearance of the Besutan drama performance to be used as a reference in the visuals of clothing, character, and stature in making Besutan character designs. Through the design of characters in interactive picture story books about "Besutan Jombang" it is hoped that children will not only be able to get to know local arts but also as an effort to teach the values of life and local cultural heritage [14] .

2. Research methodology

In designing the character design for the character Besutan Jombang, the author applied a mixed research method. Mixed research is a form of research that is carried out systematically by combining or combining techniques, methods, perspectives , concepts, and languages of quantitative and qualitative research approaches in research [15] . The purpose of using this mixed research method is to find information in as much detail as possible, because the more information is collected, the more data is obtained. Some of the methods used are:

- A. A questionnaire with 105 respondents aged 10-12 years in the initial study to find out the existence of Besutan Jombang in the younger generation and as many as 80 respondents for validation of alternative Besutan characters for the final design and selected for designing illustrated story books.
- B. Interviews with cultural figures regarding the origins of Besutan, history, character depictions, costumes, and detailed information on Besutan art performances.
- C. Interview with a children's book illustrator to find out the illustration style and character design that is suitable for children aged 10-12 years as well as good visuals in character design for children's books in terms of color and character.
- D. Observations at several bookstores in Jombang and online shopping sites to determine the availability of illustrated storybook media about Besutan Jombang with characters that are adapted to children or the target audience.
- E. Literature study from journals and books

Then the data obtained will be analyzed using the 5W + 1H analysis technique and become the basis of reference at the character design stage. At the design stage, the process is carried out through several stages involving the design thinking method, namely *empathize*, *define*, *ideate*, *prototype*, and *test* . The character design process for the illustrated story book about Besutan Jombang is the design concept, design process, design results, and media implementation.

3. Discussion Results

3.1 Design concept

The first character design process through the *empathize process* to find problems and *the define process* by analyzing the problems and describing the design problems of the illustrated story book about Besutan Jombang. Then at the ideate stage, *brainstorming is carried out* to explore the character. Then at the *prototype stage* , namely creating a character design concept. After collecting data through the method and analysis results, an initial concept of character design will be developed that is adjusted to the target audience, namely children aged 10-12 years. The character design is designed to be adjusted to the original cast references in the performance and adjusted to the characters that are close to their daily lives. After going through the prototype process, the next step is to go through the test process where to validate and test the results of the character design design to the target audience which will

then be implemented in the children's illustrated story book media [16], [17].

Based on the analysis results, it was found that children prefer characters with cartoon drawing styles with the use of diverse and busy colors with gradient coloring techniques and line art and the use of textures on its elements. See Figure 1 below.



Figure 1. Illustration drawing style

Children also tend to like story books with character demonstrations in conveying information. In addition, the use of color palettes in books is predominantly based on the colors of the original Besutan clothing, namely the Besut character [18]. The dominant colors are red, black, and white. In addition, the color tones used use contrasting and bright colors and are diverse. See picture 2 below.

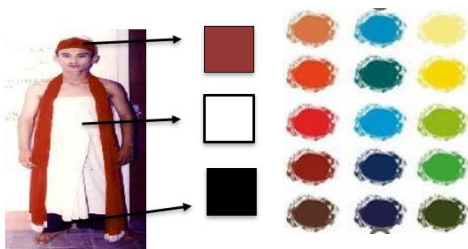


Figure 2. Applied colors

This picture story book about Besutan Jombang tells the story of a character named Besut and his friends in searching for Besut's lost stage costume. There are 4 characters in the design of the children's picture story book about Besutan Jombang including:

A. Besut Character Design Concept

Besut is a character who plays the character "Besut" in the drama performance besutan. Besut has a character who is brave, firm, friendly, and easy to make friends. The character of besut here is made with a role posture that is adjusted to the posture of an elementary school child, but for the stature and appearance of the body refers to the original appearance of the actor of the character Besut in the original Besutan stage performance. However, for what cannot be changed and

is fixed, namely the clothing or costume of the character Besut uses a red cap with short black hair, wears a white tube top, and black pants. Based on the description of the character and the reference to the original appearance of the character in the Besutan stage, the following visual reference is obtained: see picture 3.



Figure 3. Visual reference for Besut's character

B. Rusmini's Character Design Concept

Rusmini is a character who plays the character "Rusmini" in the drama performance. Rusmini has a shy, quiet, loving, caring and peaceful nature. The character of Rusmini here is created with a role posture that is adjusted to the posture of an elementary school child with a physical stature that is adjusted to suit the role of the original character of the character "Rusmini" when performing the drama on stage. The character of Rusmini wears a green scarf, with a red kebaya and hair that is tied up and has bangs. Her face uses beautiful makeup with bright red lips. Based on the description of the character and the reference to the original appearance of the character in the Besutan performance, the following visual reference was obtained: see picture 4.

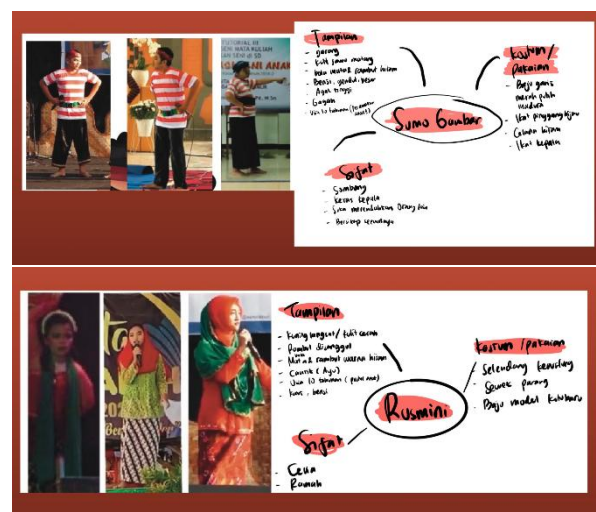


Figure 4. Visual reference of Rusmini's character

C. Man Gondo Character Design Concept

Man Gondo is a character who plays the character "Man Gondo" in the drama performance made by Besutan. Man Gondo has a funny nature, is fickle, tends to appear calm. The character of Man Gondo here is made with a role posture that is adjusted to the posture of a school child and the stature of the original character in the delivery of Man Gondo in the performance. The character of Man Gondo uses a blangkon or batik tie on the head and a naju with a black collar and stripes. Based on the description of the character and the reference to the original appearance of the character in the Besutan performance, the following visual references are obtained:

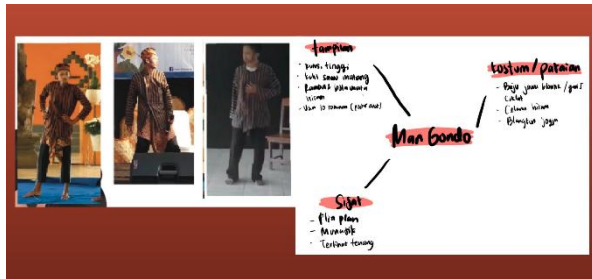


Figure 5. Visual reference for the Man Gondo character

D. Sumo Character Design Concept Image

Sumo Gambar is a character who plays the character "Sumo Gambar" in the drama performance made by Besutan. Sumo Gambar has a firm, selfish, provocative, and emotional nature. The character of Sumo Gambar here is made with a role posture that is adjusted to the posture of elementary school children with a reference to the stature of the original actor in the Besutan performance. The character of Sumo Gambar wears a red and white striped shirt and black pants, a blangkon or batik tie on the head and a shirt with a black collar and stripes. Based on the description of the character and the reference to the original appearance of the character in the Besutan performance, the following visual reference was obtained: see picture 6.

Figure 6. Visual reference of the Sumo character Image

3.2 Design process

After obtaining the visual reference of the character design, the next prototype process is to develop it into a rough sketch and alternative design coloring. Then the test stage is carried out, namely design validation by conducting trials on several alternative character designs designed for children aged 10-12 years in the Jombang area, totaling 80 respondents by distributing questionnaires. The following are the results of alternative designs for four Besutan characters in a children's picture book about Besutan Jomban entitled "The Mystery of Ilange Klambi Si Besut": see pictures 7 to 10 below.

A. Alternative sketches and character designs of Besut



Figure 7. Besut character design

B. Rusmini's alternative sketches and character designs



Figure 8. Rusmini's character design

C. Alternative sketches and character designs of Man Gondo



Figure 9. Man Gondo character design

D. Alternative Sumo character sketches and designs Image



Figure 10. Sumo character design Figure

3.3 Design results

After the design of the selected character design, the next step is to validate the design to the target audience. Then one character design is selected to be used as the final character design for the children's picture book. See pictures 11 to 14 below.

A. Final design of Besut character

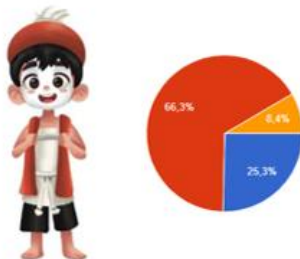


Figure 11. Selected Besut character designs

Based on the results of the questionnaire distributed to children aged 10-12 years as many as 80 respondents, the results obtained were that 66.3% liked alternative 2 of the Besut character.

B. Final design of Rusmini's character

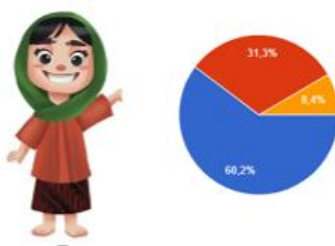


Figure 12. Selected Rusmini character design

Based on the results of the questionnaire distributed to children aged 10-12 years, as many as 80 respondents, the results obtained were that 60.2% liked the Rusmini character design with alternative 1.

C. Final design of Man Gondo character

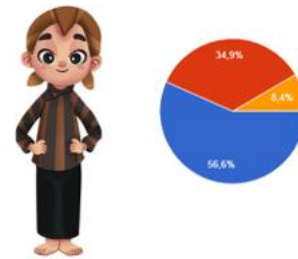


Figure 13. Selected Man Gondo character designs

Based on the results of the questionnaire distributed to children aged 10-12 years as many as 80 respondents, the results obtained were that 56.6% liked the Sumo character design. Alternative image 1.

D. Final design of Sumo character Image

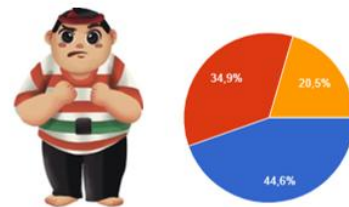


Figure 14. Sumo character design Selected image

Based on the results of the questionnaire distributed to children aged 10-12 years as many as 80 respondents, the results obtained were that as many as 44.6 5 liked the alternative Man Gondo character design 1.

3.4 Media implementation

The final stage of character design is the implementation of the character design results that have been made. The design of this character design aims to fill in the design of a children's picture story book, so the results of the media implementation can be in the form of a cover or a page section in the book. The following is a sample of the results of the implementation of character design in the media of a children's picture story book about Besutan Jombang entitled " Misteri Ilange Klambi Si Besut ": see picture 15.



Figure 15. Character Design Implementation

4. Conclusion

This design shows that the attractive character design in the illustrated story book media for children can increase interest in local drama art Besutan Jombang. The character design created is adjusted to the original appearance of the Besutan character actors. This is because there are no rules for body posture and clothing other than for the Besutan character's clothing which remains like white cloth (bebet). Long pants, red peci, lawe rope, and sampur (red scarf) and white Besutan makeup. The test results showed that children preferred design results that had visual closeness to the original characters in life such as skin color, body posture, and use of stage clothes/clothes and attractive drawing styles. In further research, it is hoped that it can further explore the potential of character design in children's illustrated story book media in increasing interest in the younger generation in introducing and learning other local arts.

Author Contributions Statement

Name of Author	C	M	So	Va	Fo	I	R	D	W
Azizah	✓	✓			✓	✓		✓	✓
Wibowo									
Masnuna		✓				✓			✓
Aninditya	✓		✓	✓	✓		✓		
Daniar									

Conflict of Interest Statement

Authors state no conflict of interest.

Informed Consent

We have obtained informed consent from all individuals included in this study.

Data Availability

The data that support the findings of this study are available from the corresponding author, [M], upon reasonable request.

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