Designing Javanese Costumes and Characters as Transforming Tradition for Cultural Sustainability

Dhara Alim Cendekia*, Lisa Sidyawati, Swastika Dhesti Anggriani
Art and Design Department
State University of Malang
Malang, Indonesia
*dhara.alim.fs@um.ac.id, lisasidyawati.fs@um.ac.id, swastikadhesti.fs@um.ac.id

Abstract—The purpose of this design is inspiring teenagers to be proud to wear Javanese appearance and interest in Javanese philosophical values. In order for the character can be accepted and imitate by teenagers, the clothes and attributes of the character must be in a modern shape and they can wear in daily lives. To achieve that, the Javanese philosophy of the character must be transformed into contemporary shape. The transformation method used the Atumics method which can combine elements of traditional culture with elements of contemporary culture at the level of concepts and visuals. Its hope can be a trigger for young people to wear it first and then found out the Javanese philosophy on objects that they wear. To represent Javanese values in character design, this character is made in endomorph type because there is a philosophy that Javanese is descendant of Semar. But it turns out dislike by teenager. Recommendation to explore the endomorph type to be liked.

Keywords: Javanese values, transforming tradition, atumic method, design costume and character

I. INTRODUCTION

As stated by Wardhani, many young people are less aware of the noble values of the nation’s culture and tend to look for values outside the nation’s personality. Researcher pays particular attention to Javanese generation. When they are compared to the younger generation of Bali, the young generation of Bali loves and knows more about its culture. It is seen by many young Balinese who like to wear their traditional clothes in their daily lives, not just in certain events [1]. So the designer wants to attract the attention of young Javanese to be interested in wearing Java clothes or accessories, and thinking influences them with animated characters. But the costume certainly must be easily imitated in their daily lives, if not it will fail triggering them to wear and starting to find out about Javanese philosophy.

The other research to achieve that it is done by Lin which capture how traditional culture of Taiwan transform to modern shape [2]. And as which as Saleh did in his research to try the formula in designing building city in Riyadh to can still have a sense of tradition characteristic [3]. But the perfect formula to transform tradition to modern shape, is given by Nugraha with ATUMICS method.

So strategy of this research is using ATUMICS method for transforming tradition aspect to modern form to be accepted by young people. Because that method can be sustainability the tradition culture [4]. The ATUMICS method is developed from the previous form “TCUSM” tool [5]. It needs 10 years to perfect that methodology [6].

The aim of this article to described in design view of the costume which published their impact in the article with title Teenager Interest in The Javanese Character Costume Which Was Designed by ATUMIC Method as Tradition Cultural Sustainability in Proceeding of International Conference on Art, Design, Education, and Cultural Studies (ICADECS) 2019 [7].

This exploration of this design would use the ATUMICS Method which used for the needs of transforming tradition widely. Transforming tradition in Indonesia applied in variety of forms [8]. Transforming tradition can be used in two model, analysis and creating. For creating needs, transforming tradition needs breakdown the tradition aspects, as like as Fadly in his comics designing [9], Ahmad in his typeface designing [10], Khamadi in his game designing [11], Walo in his airport designing [12]. For analysis needs, ATUMICS method can be indicator of the successful of the design, as like as Hartanti in her assessment of the AR of the packaging [13], Kurniawan in his analyzing hotel buildings in Yogyakarta [14]. Other than that, for analyzing, the ATUMICS methods can be used for analytical theory, as like as Suriastuti in her analyzing of Bandung city hall [15]. In this article, the ATUMICS method is used just as creating methodologies to develop the character design.

II. DESIGN METHODS

A. Creative Strategy

The creative strategy for achieving the purpose is transforming Javanese clothes and accessories into clothing that can be used in the daily lives of the younger generation. It can be transformed in shape, material, utility, and technique to reachable for young people. The transforming utility change into a form that has a use that can be used in everyday life. That can be used in everyday life is an important thing to trigger young people, because it can be peer pressure young people society to immediately wear Javanese clothes and
accessories like their friends who have worn. In order to be used in everyday life, of course, it is necessary to transform into modern clothing.

**B. Design Methods**

To transform traditional cloth and accessories to contemporary or modern form, it needs the method can to mix and match both of that. So the design method used in this costume and character design is ATUMICS method. ATUMICS method discovered Adhi Nugraha while he took doctoring program in Finland. He tried out his theory by holding workshops at Namibia and Indonesia [6]. The method of ATUMICS have simple understanding and easy application to designing. The core of the ATUMICS method is identification of the element tradition and modern of the object which will be transforming, and then exchange it and combine it [6].

Before identification and combination, the purpose of the product must be clear. It can be identified as art or mass production or design. And then, motivation of producing the product must be identified too as economic motivation or cultural motivation or self-expression motivation or survival motivation or social motivation or ecological motivation. And after that, the steps are identified elements of traditional artifact which will be transformed.

That elements are technique, utility, material, icon, concept, and shape. The identification of technique elements scopes production techniques, technology, skills, and tools. The identification of utility elements scopes functionality, usability, demand, and need. The identification of material elements scopes natural materials or synthetic materials or smart materials. The identification of icon elements scopes images, ornamentations, colors, and graphics. The identification of concept elements scopes custom, belief, norm, and value. The identification of shape elements scopes form, structure, size, and gestalt.

And after that, the steps are identified elements of modern artifact which will be changer of transforming tradition. The steps to identify modern elements are the same as the steps to identify traditional elements. For details, the process can be seen in the image below.

![Design Result of Transforming](image)

**Fig. 2.** Male character design result from transforming tradition.

The technique elements of that udeng are traditional and modern elements. Because to produce it, it still follows the way of traditional folding of making East Java udeng, but the next step is it be glued. So it symbolized in yellow and white colors. The utility elements of that udeng are traditional and modern elements. Because it still has demand East Javanese men, it still has usability to show as a man, it still has functionality as head accessories, but the new usability which appropriate with the purpose of this design, it can be worn in daily activities by young people. So it symbolized in yellow and white colors. The material element of that udeng is modern element. Because it still uses batik clothes, but for cheaper and reachable for young people, it can be made of cheaper and reacher materials. So it symbolized in white color. The icon elements of that udeng are traditional elements. Because it still follows **pakem** (rules) of the Gedog batik in color and motif. So it symbolized yellow color. The concept elements of that udeng are traditional elements. Because it still follows the philosophy, norm, value, belief, and custom of traditional udeng. So it symbolized in yellow color. The shape element of that udeng is traditional element. Because it still follows the East Java udeng traditional shape. So it symbolized yellow color.

The technique elements of that Rajah are traditional elements. Because it still follows the traditional way of making Rajah. So it symbolized in yellow color. The utility elements of that Rajah are traditional and modern elements. Because it has the same functionality as the traditional protector from evil spirits and has demand Javanese people, but the new usability is worn as daily neck accessories by young people and it has is needed as lifestyle. So it symbolized in yellow and white colors. The materials of that Rajah are traditional elements. Because it still follows the traditional material of Rajah. It is written in Mori cloth and folded in leather and be sewn with leather strap which is also as rope that is looped around the neck. It was done to be more durable and eye-catching. So it symbolized in yellow color. There is no icon element of that Rajah because original color from leather color. The concept elements of that Rajah are traditional elements. Because it still
follows the traditional belief of Rajah that can protect from evil spirits. So it symbolized in yellow color. The shape element of that Rajah is traditional element. Because it still follows the traditional shape of Rajah that is square. So it symbolized in yellow color.

All elements of that t-shirt are modern elements, so it symbolized in white color. The technique elements of that t-shirt are modern elements. Because it is produced with convention ways. The utility elements of that t-shirt are modern elements. Because it has demand for young people, and it has functionality as daily clothes, and it is needed as lifestyle, and it has usability to show their pride and love as Javanese people. The material element of that t-shirt is modern element. Because it is from cotton cloth as is usually used for shirts. The icon elements of that t-shirt are modern elements. Because it follows the popular words from “I ♥ NY” t-shirt but be adapted. The shape elements of that t-shirt is modern element. Because it follows the usual shape of the t-shirts.

The technique elements of that black vest are modern elements. Because it is produced with convention ways. So it symbolized in white color. The utility elements of that black vest are modern and traditional elements. Because it has demand for young people, and it has functionality as daily accessories, and it is needed as lifestyle, but it still has usability to show like a Javanese knight as the black vest traditional usability. So it symbolized in white and yellow colors. The material element of that black vest is modern element. Because it is from black American Drill cloth. It is usually fabric used for vests, stronger, thicker, durable, and cheaper. Cheaper is important thing why it is chosen because it is reachable for young people. So it symbolized in white color. The icon element of that black vest is traditional element. Because it still follows the traditional color of Javanese puppet vest, black. So it symbolized in yellow color. The concept elements of that black vest are traditional elements. Because it still follows the traditional value that black vest is usually worn by people knight or puppet which figures as knight. Its hope, if the young people wear it, they have feelings as a knight. So it symbolized in yellow color. The shape element of that black vest is traditional element. Because it still follows the Javanese traditional black vest that has curvature at the end of the vest. So it symbolized in yellow color.

The technique elements of that handband are modern elements. Because it is produced by modern technologies to produce handband. So it symbolized in white color. The utility elements of that handband are modern and traditional elements. Because it has demand for young people, and it has functionality as daily accessories, and it is needed as lifestyle, and it still has usability to show like a Javanese knight as the Kana bracelet usability. So it symbolized in white and yellow color. The material element of that handband is modern element. Because it is from stretchy cloth towels. So it symbolized in white color. The icon element of that handband is modern element. Because it still follows the color of Kana bracelet, yellow. So it symbolized in yellow color. The concept elements of that handband are traditional elements. Because it still follows the traditional value that Kana bracelet is usually worn by puppet which figures as knight. Its hope, if the young people wear it, they have feelings as a knight. So it symbolized in yellow color. The shape element of that handband is modern element. Because its shape has deformed from Kana bracelet’s shape to handband shape. So it symbolized in white color.

The technique elements of that batik pant are modern elements. Because it is produced with batik print ways and convention ways. So it symbolized in white colors. The utility elements of that batik pant are modern elements. Because it has demand for young people, and it has functionality as daily pants, and it is needed as lifestyle, and it has usability to show to love Javanese culture. So it symbolized in white color. The material element of that batik pant is modern element. Because it is from batik print. So it symbolized in white color. The icon elements of that batik pant are traditional elements. Because it still follows pakem (rules) of the Parang Pancing batik in color and motif. So it symbolized in yellow color. The concept elements of that batik pant are traditional elements. Because it still follows the philosophy value of Parang batik. So it symbolized in yellow color. The shape element of that batik pant is modern element. Because it follows the usual shape of the pants. So it symbolized in white color.

Result of Transforming

Fig. 3. Female character design result from transforming tradition.

The technique elements of that Chunduk Mentul are modern elements. Because it is not produced by handmade iron casting like traditional making Chunduk Mentul ways, but it is produced by plastic printing factory. So it symbolized in white color. The utility elements of that Chunduk Mentul are traditional and modern elements. Because it still has demand for Javanese women, it still has functionality as hair accessories, but it has new usability to be worn as daily accessories by young women, not on weeding only. And it is needed as lifestyle. So it symbolized in yellow and white color. The material element of that Chunduk Mentul is modern element. Because it is from plastic, not iron like traditional Chunduk Mentul material. So it symbolized in white color. The icon element of that Chunduk Mentul is traditional element. Because it still follows the original color of Chunduk traditional mentul made from gold, so its color is yellow. So it symbolized in yellow color. The concept elements of that Chunduk Mentul are traditional and modern elements. Because it still follows the traditional values of Chunduk Mentul that belief women who wear it can be blessed by God. But the new
value is the number of that is only two pieces, not seven pieces like the custom number of Chunduk Mentul which wear in wedding. So it symbolized in yellow and white color. The shape element of that Chunduk Mentul is traditional element. Because it still follows the original shape of traditional Chunduk Mentul. So it symbolized in yellow color.

The technique elements of that Gelungan are traditional elements. Because it still follows the traditional technique and skill to swirl up the hair. So it symbolized in yellow color. The utility elements of that Gelungan are traditional elements. Because it still has demand for Javanese women, and it still has functionality as daily hairstyling, and it still has usability to show as a woman, and it is needed as hairstyling as lifestyle. So it symbolized in yellow color. The material element of that Gelungan is traditional element. Because it is form real hair, no toupee. So it symbolized in yellow color. There is no icon element of that Gelungan because of its color from real hair. The concept elements of that Gelungan are traditional elements. Because it still follows the value philosophy of traditional Gelungan. So it symbolized in yellow color. The shape element of that Gelungan is traditional element. Because it still follows the original shape of Javanese Gelungan. So it symbolized in yellow color.

The technique elements of that tunic are modern elements. Because it is produced with convection ways. So it symbolized in white color. The utility elements of that tunic are modern elements. Because it has demand for young Javanese women, and it has functionality as daily clothes, and it is needed as lifestyle, and it has usability to show as a woman, and it is needed as hairstyling as lifestyle. So it symbolized in yellow color. The material element of that tunic is modern element. Because it is from cotton cloth as is usually used for tunics. So it symbolized in white color. The icon elements of that tunic are modern and traditional elements. Because it follows the motif and original color of Kemben which is usually in black color with a slightly yellow color line (the part of the jarir that sticks out a little). But another color in tunic is the usual color which used in t-shirt. So it symbolized in white and yellow color. The concept element of that tunic is traditional element. Because it still follows the custom of traditional Javanese Kemben. So it symbolized in yellow color. The shape element of that tunic is traditional element. Because it still follows the traditional Javanese Kemben shape. So it symbolized in yellow color.

The technique elements of that batik skirt are modern elements. Because it is produced with convection ways. So it symbolized in white color. The utility elements of that batik skirt are modern elements. Because it has demand for young women, and it has functionality as daily skirts, and it is needed as lifestyle, and it has usability to show to love Javanese culture. So it symbolized white color. The material element of that batik skirt is modern element. Because it is produced by shoe factory, not handmade as producing traditional Selop. So it symbolized in white color. The utility elements of that Selop are traditional and modern elements. Because it still has demand Javanese people, and it still has functionality as footwear as traditional Selop usability, but the new usability is that it can be worn in daily activities by young people, although not paired with traditional Javanese clothes. So it symbolized in yellow and white color. The material of that Selop is modern elements. Because it is released from any material, the important thing is comfortable to wear and eye-catching and popular in present. It can from jeans cloth, leather, or rubber. So it symbolized in white color. The icon element of that Selop is traditional element. Because it still follows the original color of traditional Selop, it is black color. So it symbolized in yellow color. The concept elements of that Selop are traditional elements. Because it still follows the norm of traditional Selop that it is removed if entrance the Keraton or house. So it symbolized in yellow color. The shape element of that Selop is traditional element. Because it still follows the original shape of traditional Selop. So it symbolized in yellow color.

C. Visual Messages

1) Bejo

The male character is named Bejo. Bejo is chosen as the name of the male character because it usual name of the men's names of Javanese. The meaning of Bejo is lucky. Bejo is created in endomorph shape because there is a belief that Javanese people is descendant of Semar [16]. Semar is one of the puppet characters who the wisest and belief as the incarnation of the god Sang Hyang Ismaya who guardian spirit of Java [17,18]. And Semar is usually visualized in endomorph shape.
Bejo has a gentle personality. Although he is a gentle person, Bejo can be firm if he is protecting something, for example, his family or the truth he believes. Bejo represents the processing of young people to be wise like Semar. Although Bejo is processing to be wise, of course naturally, Bejo still felt happy, sad, angry, shock, disgust, and fear [19]. But his feelings expressed with gentle expressions. Expression of that feelings of Bejo show by the picture above.

The type of udeng used in this character is east java udeng with perforated in the middle. Udeng only used by males. The philosophy of why men wear udeng because men are considered to know more (mudeng in Javanese language) about life. Men's thoughts are also stretcher (mulur-mungkret in Javanese language) in overcoming all the problems of life [16]. Mulur-mungkret (stretchy) is also a symbol of the authenticity of men when having sex with women [16]. Male genitals will be sharp and hard when used but also able to become paralyzed when not in use.

The necklace used by Bejo is called rajah. Rajah is a traditional necklace that serves as protection from black magic [23]. Rajah is usually made from Arabic writing wrapped in Mori cloth or leather. When folding the leather covering the rajah, the fold will usually be square and sewn and given a rope to be worn around the neck. Arabic writing in the rajah is believed to protecting from evil spirit.

The Javanese black vest used by Bejo is usually also used in warrior and Javanese puppets [24]. Characteristic of the black Javanese vest is the curvature at the end of the vest [25]. Black vest is chosen because the basic design of Bejo inspired by Semar as knight.
The white t-shirt used by Bejo represents that Bejo loves Javanese culture and is proud to be a Javanese person. The word “I ♥ Java” follow the style writing of “I ♥ NY”. It shows Bejo as young people because “I ♥ NY” is popular cloth in young people now. The combination t-shirt with traditional attributes other shows that Bejo is young people like ordinary young people but he also loves his traditional culture as Javanese.

Handband used by Bejo is transforming shape and materials from Javanese bracelet which usually wear as puppets attribute. The bracelet is called Kana bracelet. Kana bracelet is usually worn by puppet who figure as knight [26]. Kana bracelet is chosen as attributes of Bejo because of the basic design of Bejo from wayang figures. It shows that Bejo represents figures like knight.

Batik used as Bejo pants is called Parang batik. Parang motif is related to the philosophy about keblat papat kalimo pancer (four wind directions with one center in the middle which is related with the occurrence of human life that formed circle shape with power center in the middle [27,28]. In the middle symbolized as king and four wind directions as his knight [28]. Parang motif formed from two circle power of two kings which meet and fight [28]. The meetings of the knights of two kings create a diagonal motif which symbolized as a flow movement of the swords [28]. The name of Parang also refers to a kind of traditional sword (Parang) [27]. Because of that, Parang batik has meaning about agility, strength, supernatural power, toughness and safety [28]. Parang batik wear usually by aristocratic Keraton, but now Parang batik increasingly allowed to be used by common people with append other symbol [29]. The type of Parang used by Bejo is Parang Pancing [29]. The symbol added is the Pancing (fishing) motif in between of Parang motif.

The female character is named Siti. Siti is chosen because of its usual name of the women's names of Java. The meaning of Siti is earth or land. Siti is chosen as the name of the female character because there is a belief that women are field to produce offspring [16]. Visualized Siti is designed to give the impression of tenderness and beauty of Javanese women.

Character Siti has a gentle personality. Although he is a gentle person, Siti can be firm if she is protecting something, for example, her family. Siti represents the beauty of Javanese women. Although Siti is a gentlewoman, of course naturally, Siti still felt happy, sad, angry, shock, disgust, and fear [19]. But her feelings expressed with gentle expressions and looks pretty. Expression of that feelings of Siti show by the picture above.

The hairstyling of Siti is called Gelungan. Gelungan only used by females. The philosophy of why women decorate their hair in Gelungan shape because the Gelungan which has swirling inward shape represents feelings of the women which
is always spinning and having a deep sense [16]. Gelungan also represents a woman’s genital which can be widened-narrowed [16].

![Image of Chunduk Mentul used by Siti.](Fig. 16. Chunduk Mentul used by Siti.)

The hair accessories used by Siti is called Chunduk Mentul. Chunduk Mentul is usually used by Javanese bride [27]. Chunduk Mentul has meaning as a man’s male genital that sticks in the woman’s genital [19]. Chunduk Mentul is usually from gold, so although Siti’s Chunduk Mentul is not from gold, it takes the color of gold, yellow. The total of Chunduk Mentul which is worn by the bride is usually seven pieces. Its meaning is expected blessings from God every day [27]. But Chunduk Mentul which Siti wear is only two pieces. The designer wants to give meaning for that Siti can be blessed in both of her footsteps.

![Image of Long-short tunic used by Siti.](Fig. 17. Long-short tunic used by Siti.)

The tunic used by Siti is long-short tunic type. It has a long shape on the back of the shirt and a short shape on the front of the shirt. It is being popular lately. The tunic has a motif inspired by Kemben. Kemben is worn as a woman’s upper torso [30]. Kemben is worn by bandaging the upper part of the body, starting under the armpit with the lower edge slightly covering the upper part of the Jarit (Batik which is worn for skirt) [30]. The type of Kemben is inspiring for Siti’s tunic is Kemben Tengahan. Kemben Tengahan is Kemben with the middle part in the form of an empty field without decoration and shaping in rhombus shape [30]. Kemben Tengahan motif in this tunic does not take rhombus shape because of aesthetic decision for the tunic. The Kemben has a modern shape in long-short tunic to be liked and can be used every day by young people.

![Image of Bracelet used by Siti.](Fig. 18. Bracelet used by Siti.)

Bracelet used by Siti represents bracelet which usually wear as puppet’s attribute. The bracelet is called Kana bracelet. Kana bracelet is usually worn by puppet who figure as princess [26]. Kana bracelet is chosen as attributes of Siti because Siti is a couple of Bejo and Bejo figures Semar puppet. It shows that Siti represents figures like princess.

![Image of Skirt used by Siti.](Fig. 19. Skirt used by Siti.)

The motif of skirt used by Siti is Kawung batik. The type of Kawung batik used as Siti’s skirt motif is Kawung Ceplokan. The meaning of Ceplokan is one piece of flower [27]. Ceplokan motif is related to geometric motif within the square of one box that can be repeated and connected [27]. The philosophy of the Kawung motif is related to the philosophy about keblat papat kalimo pancer (four cardinal directions with one center in the middle which is related with the occurrence of human life) [27]. Kawung takes also Kolang-Kaling (sugar palm) fruit as motifs because it has the meaning always eling (to remember) God in life [27]. Two that philosophies are combined and applied with space center in the middle is surrounded by four sugar palm fruits diagonally to precepting forming wind directions. The name of Kawung has also meant that life will come alam suwung (death life) [27].

![Image of Selop used by Siti.](Fig. 20. Selop used by Siti.)
Footwears used by Siti is called Selop. It is a Javanese traditional footwear. Selop is usually in the daily activity of Javanese people in ancient times. But now, Selop is usually worn in wedding and complementary when dressing Java in events. Selop must be removed in Keraton, but outside the Keraton it can be used [27].

D. Media Planning

The character is aired in the film Tembang Macapat titled Bejo Si Sinom. It is shared in YouTube and social media. In that film, the character Bejo and Siti can persuasive young people to attract them, to love them, to imitate them. The venue chosen was also considered as the preferred media for young people. So it can impact massively.

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

When designing the most difficult transformation is determining the new utility. Because it must be in accordance or minimize not crash with rules that follow traditional artifacts. Because the derivatives of these artifacts must still have traditional philosophical values. Because indeed the main purpose of the initial magnitude was for young people to find out about the philosophy related to the artifacts in these accessories.

The things derived from traditional artifacts that have not been changed much to keep the traditional philosophical values are the concepts, colors, motifs, icons, and shapes. The thing that changes a lot from it is technique and material. And the things can combine a lot of both is utility.

IV. CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

Refer from the article with title Teenager Interest In The Javanese Character Costume Which Was Designed By ATUMIC Method As Tradition Cultural Sustainability in Proceeding of International Conference on Art, Design, Education, and Cultural Studies (ICADECS) 2019, it can be claimed that the design using the ATUMICS method successful to attract young people to wear this appearance like the character of the film [7]. Because the paper showed that the score of the desire of the young people, the men and the women who be respondent of the research, to wear clothes like worn the character is amounted to 2,22 from scale 1-3. Refer to the article, the suggestion for this design character is better not design in the endomorph shape even though there is a philosophical foundation of Javanese people from Semar. Because it turns out teenager do not like fat people.

Suggestions for further design are to better known and explore the material and technology of modern production methods in order to explore new forms of traditional artifacts. Even more, research can create materials or new manufacturing technologies that can accommodate the needs of the tradition of artifacts, but also that can explore a new form. Suggestions for other research, so that a lot of digging about traditional artifacts as a source of transforming tradition information. And not only examines the philosophy or usefulness of these traditional artifacts but also how they are made and their materials, especially for traditional Javanese accessories. And it is written indeed as an ATUMICS elements analyst in artifacts. So it will be comprehensive.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

We are grateful to the Universitas Negeri Malang for funding this research. And we are also thankfull Universitas Negeri Malang for their participation in data collection.

REFERENCES


