

Illustration Book Design As a Media for Introduction to Traditional Snacks East Java for Children

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Abstract

This research focuses on the design of an illustrated book titled "Let's Get to Know Traditional East Java Snacks," aimed at children aged 7-12 years. Traditional snacks are a significant cultural product of a region, yet, over time, younger generations have become less familiar with traditional East Javanese snacks. The purpose of this study is to create an engaging and informative book that introduces these traditional snacks to children. A qualitative approach was employed, with data sourced from interviews, literature reviews, and content analysis. The design process involved conceptualization, illustration creation, and layout design. The book features information about 10 traditional East Javanese snacks, presented in a visually appealing and easily understandable format. Bright colors and simple visuals were used to captivate the target audience. This book aims to preserve cultural heritage and spark children's interest in local culinary traditions. The findings contribute to the field of children's literature and provide a valuable resource for parents, educators, and children seeking to learn more about traditional East Javanese snacks.

Keywords: *Illustrated books, Traditional snacks, Children's illustrations*

Introduction

Traditional food represents the unique culture of Indonesia, especially the traditional cuisine from East Java, known for its distinctive appearance and flavor. However, the influence of global culture has led to lifestyle changes in Indonesia, impacting the popularity of traditional foods in East Java. Many traditional dishes have been overshadowed by fast food and Korean cuisine, which are perceived as more convenient and visually appealing. This shift poses a threat to the sustainability of traditional foods and could lead to their eventual disappearance. To combat this, cities in East Java such as Surabaya, Malang, and Gresik hold annual traditional food festivals to preserve the region's culinary heritage.

According to Winarno in Alamsyah (2006: 7), traditional snacks are part of Indonesia's cultural heritage and may be forgotten if not preserved and introduced to the younger generation. Without active efforts to raise awareness, traditional foods risk being replaced by modern, more globalized options. Additionally, Indonesia faces challenges in literacy rates, contributing to children's limited knowledge of traditional foods. UNESCO reports that Indonesia's reading interest rate is only 0.001%, meaning just one person in every 1,000 enjoys reading. A 2016 study by Central Connecticut State University ranked Indonesia 60th out of 61 countries in terms of reading interest.

One way to preserve East Java's traditional food is by introducing it to the next generation through engaging media. This illustrated book, with its vibrant visuals and captivating stories, aims to spark children's interest in traditional East Javanese snacks. By familiarizing children with these foods, the cultural heritage of Indonesia can be safeguarded. The design of both physical and digital books offers an opportunity for children to explore the history, values, diversity, and traditions represented by East Java's traditional cuisine.

Research Method

This research adopts the Visual Communication Design method (Safanayong, 2006), which involves a systematic process from planning to prototype development. According to Rizky (2011: 140), design is a process that defines what needs to be accomplished using various techniques, including architectural and component descriptions, while considering potential limitations during the engineering process. Sommerville, as cited in Agus Mulyanto (2009: 259), adds that the design process often involves developing multiple system models at different levels of abstraction. The design phase follows the system analysis stage, focusing on describing key elements to produce a design that meets the identified needs.

The Visual Communication Design method used in this research begins with the planning stage, followed by analysis, synthesis, and the development of creative concepts, culminating in the production of a prototype. This method ensures that the design is well-researched and effectively meets the goals set during the analysis phase.

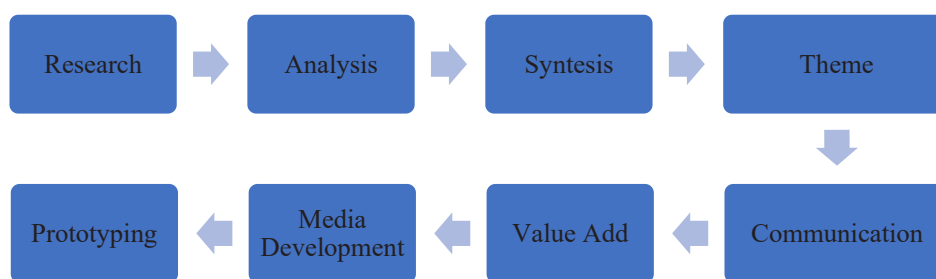


Figure 1. Visual Communication Design Process (Safanayong, 2006)

As part of this research, the main media produced include an illustrated book and an e-book that introduce 10 traditional snacks from East Java. These stories are presented using a storytelling approach to engage children effectively. Additionally, secondary media such as posters, t-shirts, stickers, banners, keychains, brochures, drinking bottles, pencil boxes, lunch boxes, children's bags, and mugs are developed to complement the main media and further promote the traditional snacks.

The research employs the Visual Communication Design method (Safanayong, 2006), which consists of several stages: research planning, analysis, synthesis, creative concept development, and prototype production. The design process is centered around creating engaging, child-friendly content that uses visuals and storytelling to capture the interest of the target audience. By utilizing both physical and digital platforms, this research aims to increase children's awareness of traditional East Javanese snacks and contribute to cultural preservation.

Discussion

This research was conducted with 20 students from the fourth and fifth grades at SDN Keboananom Sidoarjo and random children aged 7-12 years from Sidoarjo and Lamongan. Respondents were given 20 questions about traditional East Javanese foods. Based on the survey results, the researcher selected 10 traditional foods that were least known by the respondents. These foods include bolu jubada, kue bikang, kue lumpur, getuk pisang, madumongso, cenil, pudak, matabagong, kue blinjo, and wingko babat.

According to Kusrianto (2015: 780), illustrations are visual elements used to describe or complement content. Illustrations play a vital role in graphic design, ranging from simple sketches to complex drawings. In this project, illustrations serve as the primary tool for engaging young readers with traditional snacks.

The illustrated book, titled “*Ayo Mengenal Jajanan Tradisional Jawa Timur*” (Let's Get to Know Traditional East Java Snacks), employs a naive illustration style combined with informative text about each snack, including its history, cultural significance, and preparation process. The illustrations were created using digital painting techniques with Procreate and Adobe Photoshop, based on original photos of the snacks, which were digitally redrawn and modified to suit the book’s style.

The design of the book focuses on key visual elements such as composition, color, and typography. The composition ensures the proper placement of both visual and textual elements, creating a balanced and appealing layout for children. Bright colors and playful typography are used to make the book visually engaging, while the naive style of illustration simplifies the depiction of each snack, making the content accessible and enjoyable for the target audience.



Figure 2 Digitalization Process of Illustration Book “*Ayo Mengenal Jajanan Tradisional Jawa Timur*”

Color is a crucial element in the design of an illustrated book, as it has the ability to convey mood, emotion, and the overall tone of the story visually. The right selection of color palettes can capture attention and provide an enjoyable experience for children. It helps distinguish characters, backgrounds, and important elements within the illustrations. Additionally, color plays an essential role in communicating messages, such as differentiating between happy and sad scenes or emphasizing key objects.

By carefully selecting a color palette, as illustrated in Figure 3, designers can create visual harmony that enhances the overall aesthetic of the book. The appropriate use of color not only makes the illustrations more engaging but also influences the mood and stimulates the creativity of young readers. This thoughtful application of color can greatly enhance the storytelling experience and make the book more memorable for its audience.



Figure 3 Color Palette of Illustration Book “Ayo Mengenal Jajanan Tradisional Jawa Timur”

Layout principles are essential in arranging elements on a page to create visual harmony, ensuring a pleasant reading experience. A well-executed layout helps readers navigate the content more easily and enhances their appreciation of the story. In the design of the illustrated book “*Ayo Mengenal Jajanan Tradisional Jawa Timur*,” the layout concept is crucial for organizing text, images, and other elements in a way that is both engaging and easy to follow, as shown in Figure 4.

The proper use of layout ensures that each page is visually balanced, guiding the reader’s eye through the story while maintaining clarity and flow. This approach not only improves readability but also supports the storytelling process, making the book more enjoyable for children.

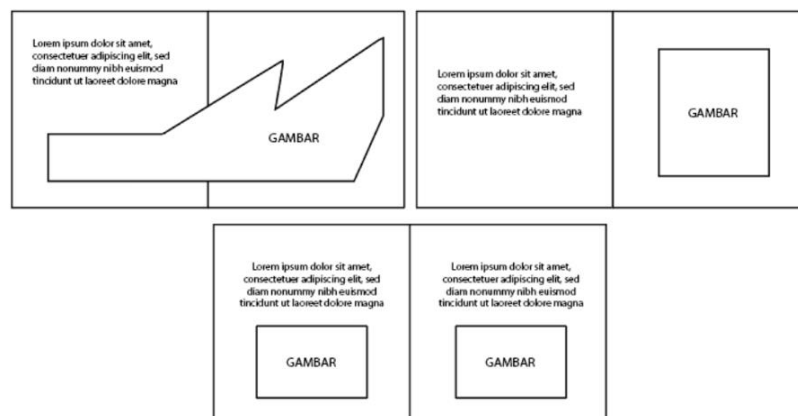


Figure 4 Layout of Illustration Book "Ayo Mengenal Jajanan Tradisional Jawa Timur"

Main Media: Illustration Book “Ayo Mengenal Jajanan Tradisional Jawa Timur”

The structure of the illustrated book “*Ayo Mengenal Jajanan Tradisional Jawa Timur*” follows a narrative arc divided into introduction, rising action, climax, falling action, and resolution. The story begins with an introduction to two children, Andi and Lala, who are feeling bored during their school break. To lift their spirits, their mother decides to take them to a traditional market. This introductory scene, depicted in Figure 5, sets the stage for the children's journey of discovering traditional East Javanese snacks.

This narrative structure allows the story to develop naturally, engaging young readers as they follow the characters' exploration of local culinary heritage. Each stage of the story is supported by vibrant illustrations that capture the excitement and curiosity of the children as they learn about traditional snacks.



Figure 5 Introduction Scene of Illustration Book "Ayo Mengenal Jajanan Tradisional Jawa Timur"

The *rising action* of the illustrated book, depicted in Figure 6, takes place in a traditional market where Andi and Lala become fascinated by the traditional snacks being sold. Curious, they ask their mother to buy some. Later, when their mother serves the snacks at the dining table, she asks Andi and Lala if they recognize the snack. Both children admit that they do not know the name or taste of the traditional food.

This scene serves as a pivotal moment in the story, sparking the children's interest and setting the stage for their exploration of traditional East Javanese snacks. It highlights the generational gap in knowledge about local culinary heritage and sets up the educational journey that follows.



Figure 6 Rising Movement Scene in Illustration Book "Ayo Mengenal Jajanan Tradisional Jawa Timur"

In the *climax* of the story, depicted in Figure 7, the mother invites Andi and Lala to learn about the various traditional snacks they purchased at the market earlier that morning. She introduces each snack, explaining its name, ingredients, and significance. This moment marks the peak of the children's journey, where they actively engage with their cultural heritage and begin to appreciate the traditional foods of East Java.

This scene is crucial, as it not only satisfies the children's curiosity but also serves as the educational core of the story, reinforcing the book's purpose of preserving and promoting local culinary traditions.



Figure 7 Climax Scene in Illustration Book "Ayo Mengenal Jajanan Tradisional Jawa Timur"

The *falling action* in this illustrated book is spread over five pictures across ten pages. In this part of the story, Andi and Lala's mother guides the readers through an introduction to various traditional snacks from East Java. Each snack is accompanied by a brief explanation, detailing its origin from different cities in the region. This educational segment, depicted in Figure 8, continues the children's discovery by deepening their understanding of East Javanese culinary traditions.

This scene plays a critical role in reinforcing the educational aspect of the story, providing readers with valuable cultural information while maintaining the narrative's flow.



Figure 8 Falling Down Scene in Illustration Book "Ayo Mengenal Jajanan Tradisional Jawa Timur"

After completing the illustration process, the book moves into the pre-printing stage. The illustrated book "Ayo Mengenal Jajanan Tradisional Jawa Timur" has the following specifications: (1) The book is printed in a 17x17 cm square format, chosen for its child-friendly size, making it easy to fit into a bag; (2) The pages are printed on 210-gram Copenhagen paper, using Canon printing to maintain high illustration resolution during printing; (3) The cover is made with a hardcover to ensure durability, especially for young readers; and (4) The printed books are packaged in a canvas bag, making them easy to carry. The design of the illustration book is shown in Figure 9.

These specifications are carefully selected to enhance the book's functionality and appeal, ensuring both durability and a visually engaging experience for children.



Figure 9 Printed Illustration Book "Ayo Mengenal Jajanan Tradisional Jawa Timur"

Secondary Media for the Illustration Book “Ayo Mengenal Jajanan Tradisional Jawa Timur”

The secondary media developed to complement the illustrated book include flashcards, bottles, pencil boxes, and children's bags, as shown in Figure 10. The flashcards are designed as an interactive tool to help children learn about traditional snacks in a fun and engaging way. These cards can be used in games, either played with friends, teachers, or parents, to reinforce knowledge about East Javanese snacks. The flashcards will be bundled together with the book in a convenient canvas bag, making it easy to carry and store.

These secondary media aim to extend the learning experience beyond the book, encouraging children to interact with the content in different ways while fostering a deeper connection to their cultural heritage.



Figure 10 Secondary Media of Illustration Book "Ayo Mengenal Jajanan Tradisional Jawa Timur"

The selection of a children's bag as secondary media is important for the 7-12 year-old target audience. The bag is produced using a printing technique and designed to complement the overall theme of the project. Additionally, the pencil box, measuring 20x10 cm, is made from canvas material and printed with designs that align with the book's theme. The tumbler is designed to carry a child's lunch to school and features illustrations of traditional East Javanese snacks, reinforcing the educational theme in a practical, everyday item.

These secondary media not only serve functional purposes but also enhance children's engagement with the content by integrating the theme of traditional snacks into their daily routines.

Conclusion

Based on the research conducted in designing the illustrated book “*Ayo Mengenal Jajanan Tradisional Jawa Timur*”, the following conclusions can be drawn:

1. The book is intended to introduce traditional East Javanese snacks to children aged 7-12. Through this book, children can explore the cultural diversity of East Java and gain a deeper understanding of their valuable cultural heritage.
2. The illustrations are designed with an appealing visual style, accompanied by a fictional storyline as an introduction to engage young readers. This approach aims to make learning about traditional snacks enjoyable and interactive, sparking children's curiosity and encouraging them to explore traditional foods further.
3. This book also contributes to the development of children's soft skills, such as reading, observation, and identifying traditional snacks. Children can learn the names, ingredients, and cooking processes of various snacks, enriching their knowledge while fostering an appreciation for local culinary traditions.

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