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## Surjan Jogja Motif in Modern Visual Communication: A Design Thinking Approach

**Abstract.** Traditional culture is a vital part of a community's identity, yet in the era of globalization, cultural elements are often threatened by modernization, which can blur local identities. This study aims to explore the application of the Design Thinking method in integrating the Surjan Jogja motif into visual communication design, focusing on how the design can preserve cultural meaning while remaining relevant in contemporary times. The research employed a qualitative approach, utilizing the five stages of Design Thinking: empathy, problem definition, ideation, prototyping, and testing. Data were collected through in-depth interviews with 15 respondents, including designers, batik artisans, and cultural figures, as well as direct observations of the creative process. The results show that 80% of respondents appreciated designs that integrated the Surjan motif, with many stating that the design offered deeper meaning compared to products without cultural context. The study found that the application of Design Thinking not only produced innovative visual solutions but also strengthened local cultural identity amidst globalization. The conclusion of this study emphasizes the importance of integrating traditional elements in visual communication design as an effort to preserve local culture. The practical implications of this research are significant, as it provides a framework for the development of culture-based design and opens opportunities for further research on the application of this method in other cultural contexts.

**Keywords:** Design Thinking Method, Integration of Traditional Philosophy, Visual Communication Design.

### INTRODUCTION

Traditional culture is essential to a society's identity, reflecting the richness of local philosophies and values. However, in the context of globalization, cultural elements are often threatened by modernization, which tends to blur local identities. One way to preserve culture is by integrating traditional elements into visual communication design. This design approach serves aesthetic purposes and functions as a crucial medium for conveying cultural messages and meanings. For example, the Surjan Jogja motif is a symbol rich in Yogyakarta's artistic philosophy, representing a fusion of aesthetics and spiritual values (Fitriasari & Hares Kaeksi, 2023). Faced with rapid modernization, innovative approaches are needed to maintain cultural elements like the Surjan Jogja motif and ensure their relevance in the contemporary era. An effective approach in this context is the Design Thinking method, which can merge traditional values with modern design needs.

A practical approach in this context is the Design Thinking method, which can merge traditional values with modern design needs. Unlike other methodologies, Design Thinking emphasizes a user-centered approach, allowing designers to deeply understand the audience's needs, perspectives, and cultural contexts. This human-centered focus ensures that traditional elements, such as the Surjan Jogja motif, are visually appealing

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and resonate with the intended audience on a deeper, emotional level. According to Rylander Eklund et al. (2022), Design Thinking enables designers to create solutions that balance functionality, aesthetics, and cultural significance, making it particularly suitable for projects that preserve and adapt traditional values.

The flexibility of Design Thinking is another crucial advantage, as it integrates five iterative stages—empathy, definition, ideation, prototyping, and testing—that encourage collaboration and innovation at every step. For example, during the empathy stage, this method facilitates a comprehensive understanding of the cultural and symbolic meanings embedded in the Surjan Jogja motif through in-depth interactions with stakeholders such as batik artisans, cultural figures, and potential users. This aligns with findings by Mejía et al. (2023), who highlighted the method's ability to incorporate diverse perspectives and expertise, resulting in more holistic and impactful designs.

Furthermore, Design Thinking fosters an iterative process where prototypes are continuously refined based on user feedback. This iterative nature ensures that the final designs preserve the philosophical essence of the Surjan Jogja motif and align with contemporary visual communication standards, enhancing their relevance to modern audiences. As Verganti et al. (2021) emphasize, this dynamic approach allows designers to innovate without compromising the authenticity of traditional elements, making Design Thinking uniquely effective for projects that aim to bridge the gap between cultural preservation and modern design practices. In contrast, other design methodologies often prioritize technical or aesthetic aspects over cultural and emotional connections, resulting in designs that need more depth or honor traditional values. By integrating analytical and creative processes, Design Thinking provides a comprehensive framework for addressing these challenges, making it the most suitable method for adapting traditional motifs like Surjan Jogja into modern visual communication design.

In visual communication design, previous research has discussed how traditional philosophy can be adapted into modern design to preserve cultural values. (Xiang, 2022) emphasized that applying traditional philosophy in design plays a significant role in safeguarding cultural identity amidst globalization. Similarly, (Yu-Ming et al., 2023) highlighted that design integrating traditional elements enriches aesthetics and powerfully conveys cultural messages. On the other hand, (Verganti et al., 2021) demonstrated that

the Design Thinking method helps designers create innovative solutions that still honor traditional values. The Surjan Jogja motif, as a case study, has yet to be discussed in studies.

Although substantial research has been done on integrating traditional elements into visual communication design, specific gaps still need to be addressed. (Gao & Jones, 2021) stressed the importance of traditional philosophy in preserving cultural identity but needed to discuss a systematic approach to maintaining the authenticity of this philosophy within modern design contexts. (Li & Li, 2022) acknowledged that traditional elements enrich design aesthetics, but their study needed to explain how these elements can be adapted for an evolving modern audience. (Jamal et al., 2021) pointed out that the Design Thinking method can balance contemporary design needs with traditional cultural values but needs to provide practical guidance for its application to specific motifs such as Surjan Jogja. (Bhattacharjee & Rani, 2023) supported <sup>1</sup> the application of Design Thinking in culture-based design but did not elaborate on how to address the challenges of balancing modern aesthetics with traditional meanings. (Henderson, 2021) Also, the main challenges in maintaining the authenticity of traditional elements while innovating were highlighted, but the solutions presented needed to be more detailed. Therefore, this study focuses on applying Design Thinking to integrate the Surjan Jogja motif into modern visual design, providing practical guidelines for preserving cultural authenticity while meeting contemporary design needs.

Based on these gaps, this research aims to understand how the Surjan Jogja motif, rich in philosophical values, can be effectively adapted into modern visual communication design using the Design Thinking method. With its deep symbolism, this motif presents a challenge in balancing tradition and innovation, requiring a structured, user-centered <sup>2</sup> approach. The primary hypothesis <sup>16</sup> of this study is that the Design Thinking method can effectively integrate traditional cultural elements into modern design without sacrificing cultural values. This approach allows designers to create aesthetically pleasing works and ensures that the motif's meaning and philosophical essence are preserved. <sup>14</sup> This research is expected to contribute to the preservation of local culture through innovative design while providing practical guidelines for designers in addressing the challenges of modernization. The study's findings are also expected to open new discussions on the

development of culture-based design that remains relevant and sustainable in the era of globalization.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

### *A. Integration of Traditional Philosophy*

According to (Spence & Van Doorn, 2022), visual communication design plays a vital role in combining aesthetic and functional elements to convey messages clearly and effectively. One increasingly popular approach in this field is integrating traditional philosophy into design, which aims to create creative solutions that are authentic and respectful of cultural heritage. (Yan et al., 2023) assert that applying traditional philosophy in design can strengthen local cultural identity by preserving inherited cultural values in modern design (Sinclair et al., 2022). Further, this approach enriches aesthetics and enhances cultural relevance. Designs incorporating traditional philosophy often convey deeper meaning for the audience as they engage more personal cultural dimensions. (Wulandari, 2023) exemplifies this with the Surjan Jogja motif, which embodies symbolic solid and aesthetic values and reflects the philosophy of life of the Yogyakarta people. Integrating this motif into modern design through the Design Thinking method allows designers to create works that honor tradition while remaining relevant to contemporary audiences.

The Design Thinking method offers a structured, creative approach through several stages: empathy, problem definition, ideation, prototyping, and testing. (Rylander Eklund et al., 2022) explain that this approach enables designers to deeply understand user needs and consider relevant cultural contexts at every **stage of the design process**. In **the case of the** Surjan Jogja motif, designers must formulate the problem of translating the symbolism of this motif in a way that remains relevant to modern audiences without losing its cultural essence. During the ideation stage, creative concepts are developed to maintain cultural values. Prototyping is then used to test the application of the motif across various media, such as posters, brochures, or digital platforms. The design is tested to gather user feedback, which then informs further refinement. This process ensures that the design meets the aesthetic needs of modern audiences and preserves the cultural values embedded in the traditional motif.

Integrating traditional philosophy into visual communication design enhances aesthetic aspects and deepens understanding and appreciation of local culture. The case study of the Surjan Jogja motif demonstrates how traditional elements can be translated into meaningful and relevant modern designs. The primary challenge in this process is balancing conventional aesthetics with contemporary design needs. Designers must be sensitive in presenting cultural values to ensure they remain relevant to today's audience. According to (Magistretti et al., 2021), maintaining this balance is critical to ensuring that designs rooted in tradition remain innovative and functional. Overall, the Design Thinking method provides a comprehensive approach that allows designers to address this challenge. As a result, they can create creative, relevant, and meaningful designs for a global audience while preserving local culture.

### *B. Visual Communication Design*

According to (Travere, 2023) <sup>9</sup> visual communication design is a strategic process that uses <sup>9</sup> visual elements such as images, typography, and color to efficiently and persuasively convey messages to a targeted audience. These elements serve an aesthetic function and play a crucial role in ensuring that the audience clearly understands the message. (Yu et al., 2022) adds that visual communication design integrates art, technology, and communication theory to create visual materials that can deliver messages clearly and effectively. Effective design is visually appealing and crafted to meet functional needs in communicating specific information. By combining aesthetics and functionality, visual communication design enhances the audience's understanding of the message. The alignment between visual elements and the communication objectives <sup>17</sup> is a critical factor in the success of a design.

The fundamental elements of visual communication design include typography, color, imagery, and layout, all of which create a harmonious and coherent design. Typography, which encompasses the selection and arrangement of type, significantly impacts the readability of text and the effectiveness of message delivery. <sup>13</sup> On the other hand, color plays a vital role in setting the tone and influencing the audience's emotional perception of the message. (Bian & Ji, 2021) state that the layout organizes visual elements to make the conveyed information more apparent, structured, and easier to understand. Additionally, imagery serves to clarify the message, particularly when complex



information needs to be communicated in a more accessible manner. (Liu, 2021) argues that design principles such as balance, contrast, and alignment are applied to create a harmonious and visually engaging composition, ultimately supporting the effectiveness of the conveyed message.

Ultimately supporting the effectiveness of the conveyed message, the layout plays a crucial role in ensuring that visual elements are organized logically and cohesively. An effective layout guides the viewer's attention, emphasizing key aspects such as the Surjan Jogja motif and associated messages. By employing principles of balance, alignment, and hierarchy, the layout enhances the clarity and readability of the design, ensuring that the audience can easily interpret the intended message. For instance, balance ensures that the distribution of visual elements, such as images, text, and white space, creates a harmonious, visually appealing composition without overwhelming the audience. Alignment contributes to a professional and organized appearance, enabling a seamless flow of information from one element to another. Hierarchy, established through variations in size, color, or placement, directs the viewer's attention to the most critical components, such as the symbolic Surjan motif and its explanation.

Furthermore, using grids and consistent spacing ensures structural consistency across various applications, whether in digital or print formats. By prioritizing readability and accessibility, the layout enhances the design's aesthetic appeal and supports the effective delivery of the cultural and philosophical values embedded in the Surjan Jogja motif. Technological advancements have driven the evolution of visual communication design, particularly in its application across various digital media. <sup>11</sup> Technologies such as Virtual Reality (VR), Augmented Reality (AR), and Artificial Intelligence (AI) have transformed how design is utilized, enabling more immersive and interactive interactions across different platforms. Furthermore, visual communication design is central to building and reinforcing brand identity through consistent visual elements such as logos, color palettes, and typography that the audience recognizes. According to (Borthwick et al., 2022), ethical considerations in design are increasingly becoming an important focus, with designers needing to account for their work's impact, including accessibility and social responsibility. As design trends continue to evolve, designers must constantly adapt to ensure that their work remains relevant to the needs and preferences of modern audiences.

Ultimately, good design is not solely about aesthetics but also about responsibility to the audience and society.

### C. Implementation of the Design Thinking Method

According to (Vinni, 2021) Design Thinking is a human-centered methodology that drives innovation through a creative and systematic approach. (Kim & Park, 2021) explain that this methodology provides a framework to help organizations solve complex problems through five key stages: empathy, definition, ideation, prototyping, and testing. Each stage is designed to maximize innovation by placing the user's needs at the core of the entire process. (Fridman et al., 2022) add that the flexibility of this method allows it to be applied not only in product design but also in fields such as management and education, thus broadening its cross-disciplinary impact. By combining analytical and creative thinking, Design Thinking produces innovative and practical solutions that can be applied widely across various contexts. Additionally, (Randhawa et al., 2021) emphasize that successfully implementing this method depends heavily on effective team collaboration, focusing on continually adapting solutions based on ongoing user feedback.

Applying Design Thinking begins with the empathy stage, where designers must gain a deep understanding of the users' needs and desires. This allows them to view the problem from the user's perspective rather than merely from a technical standpoint. (Yeung & Ng, 2024) assert that empathy is a crucial component, as it provides deeper insights into users' daily challenges. Once this understanding is achieved, the team clearly and specifically defines the problem, creating a solid foundation for developing relevant and targeted solutions. During the ideation stage, various creative and innovative solutions are developed through brainstorming, where no ideas are off-limits. The team then creates prototypes to test the concepts in tangible forms, whether physical or digital, to verify the potential of the solutions. Finally, testing involves real users to gather valuable feedback, which is used to iterate and refine the solutions until they align with user needs.

The main advantage of Design Thinking lies in its ability to integrate various disciplines and expertise within a single team, resulting in more holistic and diverse solutions. (Mejía et al., 2023) emphasize that cross-disciplinary collaboration enriches the innovation process, as combining different perspectives can generate more comprehensive and profound solutions. Furthermore, this method encourages experimentation and a



tolerance for failure, where failure is seen as an essential part of the continuous learning process. However, implementing Design Thinking often requires a cultural shift within organizations, with strong commitment needed at all levels, from top management to the execution teams. Challenges such as integration into traditional hierarchical business structures and the costs and resources required can present obstacles. Despite these challenges, the long-term benefits of improved product quality, better service satisfaction, and continuous innovation make Design Thinking a powerful and flexible tool for application across various industries.

#### *D. The Surjan Jogja Motif*

The Surjan Jogja motif reflects the depth of Yogyakarta's cultural values, which are characterized by rich philosophical and aesthetic meanings and are filled with symbolism. According to (Sundari, 2022), this motif is a significant element in various artistic products, such as batik and architectural decorations, serving as ornamentation and a representation of the local community's cultural and spiritual identity. Its use in visual arts and textile products illustrates how the people of Yogyakarta value and integrate traditional values into their daily lives. (Wulandari, 2023) add that this motif contains moral and ethical symbols that function as educational tools, making it visually appealing and instrumental in cultural learning, which can be passed down to future generations. (Sundari, 2022) emphasizes that the Surjan motif results from a complex cultural interaction in Yogyakarta, reflecting centuries of cultural adaptation and assimilation. By depicting the balance between humans and nature and between the physical and spiritual worlds, this motif reflects Javanese life philosophy that underscores the importance of harmony in every aspect of life.

<sup>6</sup> As a symbol of cultural identity, the Surjan Jogja motif is frequently used in various traditional ceremonies and spiritual activities in Yogyakarta, including religious rituals and other significant celebrations. Every element in this motif holds meaning related to moral teachings, such as simplicity, honesty, and social responsibility, considered foundational principles in Javanese society. The dominant geometric shapes, along with the flora and fauna patterns that adorn this motif, symbolize the cycle of life and the harmony of nature, conveying both aesthetic beauty and profound spiritual messages. The uniqueness of this motif is also reflected in the diverse variations of its designs, each with

its narrative and meaning, further enriching Yogyakarta's cultural heritage. The creation of these designs has been passed down through generations, requiring specific skills and knowledge to craft them by Javanese philosophy. Thus, the Surjan motif is a beautiful work of art and serves as a medium for cultural expression, connecting people with deeply rooted ancestral values.

In the modern era, the Surjan Jogja motif remains relevant and continues to evolve as part of the creative and fashion industries, demonstrating its ability to adapt to changing times. Contemporary artists and designers often blend traditional elements of this motif with modern styles to create works that respect tradition while also appealing to contemporary tastes. This innovation keeps the Surjan motif engaging for modern society and reinforces its position as a dynamic and enduring symbol of Yogyakarta's cultural identity. The motif plays a crucial role in cultural promotion, nationally and internationally, and frequently appears as a cultural icon of Indonesia in tourism and arts events. Nevertheless, the challenges of globalization and the influence of foreign cultures necessitate collaborative efforts among the government, cultural institutions, artists, and the community to preserve and promote this motif sustainably. Through education, innovation, and cultural campaigns involving various stakeholders, it is hoped that the cultural identity embedded in the Surjan motif can continue to be passed down, preserved, and adapted to the changes of time.

Through education, innovation, and cultural campaigns involving various stakeholders, it is hoped that the cultural identity embedded in the Surjan motif can continue to be passed down, preserved, and adapted to the changes of time. Compared to other traditional motifs such as Surakarta Batik, Kawung, Lurik, Sasak, and Ulos, the Surjan Jogja motif stands out due to its deep philosophical roots and representation of Javanese life harmony. While the Kawung motif emphasizes simplicity and the interconnectedness of life through its symmetrical circular patterns, the Surjan Jogja motif focuses more on the balance between the physical and spiritual realms, represented by its geometric shapes and symbolic elements.

Similarly, the Lurik motif, often associated with humility and protection, relies on its repetitive linear patterns to convey meaning. In contrast, the Surjan Jogja motif incorporates more diverse visual elements that reflect spiritual teachings and moral

values. On the other hand, Sasak and Ulos motifs, originating from Lombok and North Sumatra, respectively, showcase regional diversity with their bold, intricate designs and vivid colors, emphasizing familial and communal bonds. These motifs differ from the Surjan Jogja motif in their visual style and cultural context but share a similar goal of preserving and communicating cultural identity.

## **METHODS**

This study employs a qualitative approach using the Design Thinking method to explore integrating traditional philosophy into visual communication design, specifically focusing on the Surjan Jogja motif. The primary goal of this approach is to understand the creative processes, design techniques, and adaptation of traditional cultural principles into a modern, relevant design context. This method is applied through a case study to provide in-depth insights into using the Surjan Jogja motif in visual communication design, utilizing the five critical stages of Design Thinking: empathy, problem definition, ideation, prototyping, and testing. Data were collected using various techniques to gather rich and diverse information.

In-depth interviews were conducted with 15 informants, including batik artisans, designers, artists, and cultural figures in Yogyakarta. These informants were selected based on their expertise and active involvement in preserving and promoting traditional Javanese motifs, particularly the Surjan Jogja motif. These interviews aimed to uncover the philosophical meanings embedded in the Surjan Jogja motif and its application in conventional art. This diverse group of informants provided comprehensive insights, ensuring the study captured various perspectives on the cultural and artistic significance of the motif. Additionally, direct observation was undertaken to witness this motif's creative process and application in multiple art and cultural events. The literature review involved an examination of relevant references on traditional philosophy, the Surjan Jogja motif, and the Design Thinking method to reinforce the theoretical foundation of the research.

Data analysis was conducted using a thematic approach to identify patterns and themes related to traditional values and the outcomes of visual communication design. This analysis highlights how the philosophy behind the Surjan Jogja motif influences both the design process and the final product. Each stage of Design Thinking was systematically

applied to ensure that the resulting designs were not only aesthetically pleasing but also retained their essential cultural meaning. During the empathy stage, the researcher delved into the perspectives of users and the cultural values associated with the Surjan motif through interviews with experts and field observations. This provided insight into how the motif functions as a symbol of identity and spirituality for the community, rather than merely serving as decoration. Based on these insights, the central issue was formulated: how to adapt the Surjan motif in modern visual communication design without losing its cultural essence. The main challenge was to create designs that could be appreciated by younger generations and a global audience, while still preserving the moral, ethical, and spiritual values embedded in the traditional motif.

In the ideation stage, various creative concepts were developed, including adaptations of the Surjan motif in digital infographics and physical products like paper souvenirs. These concepts were explored to find effective visual approaches for conveying the meaning of the Surjan motif. The prototyping stage involved creating initial versions of the designs, such as infographics and paper craft models, which were then tested to evaluate their visual effectiveness and the appropriateness of the message delivery. Testing was conducted on target groups, including local communities familiar with the Surjan motif and audiences less familiar with this cultural symbol. Feedback from these tests was used to refine the designs until optimal acceptance was achieved. The study also ensured validity through data triangulation, comparing the results of interviews, observations, and the literature review. Additionally, member checking was conducted by asking participants to verify the findings, ensuring accuracy. This qualitative approach using the Design Thinking method provides a holistic framework for integrating traditional cultural values into visual communication design, resulting in works that are aesthetically pleasing and meaningful and relevant to contemporary needs.

## **FINDINGS**

The Surjan Lurik is a traditional Javanese garment first introduced by Sunan Kalijaga. This attire was designed to symbolize religious devotion, embodying simplicity and obedience in daily life. More than merely serving as clothing, the Surjan Lurik represents a deep commitment to religious teachings and the principles of a modest lifestyle. In the context of Javanese culture, the Surjan Lurik features a unique and distinctive design.

Despite its simple appearance, every element of this garment holds profound philosophical significance. The Surjan serves as a medium for expressing spiritual values such as humility and sincerity. Sunan Kalijaga's teachings, which emphasize the harmony between the physical and spiritual realms, are reflected in this clothing. Thus, the Surjan functions as attire and a medium for conveying messages about balance in life and religious devotion. The Surjan Lurik plays an important role in preserving and sustaining Javanese cultural identity. This garment continues to be preserved as part of a cultural heritage rich in moral and spiritual values. Its introduction and continued use demonstrate the Javanese people's respect for traditions passed down through generations, even amid changing times. As an illustration, Figure 1 displays the Surjan Lurik in its original form. This garment functions as clothing and embodies the identity and values of Javanese tradition, which remain alive and relevant to this day.



Figure 1. *Surjan of Sultan Hamengku Buwana, Museum Karaton Ngayogyakarta Hadiningrat*

#### A. Visual Study

The development of Surjan icons encompasses six designs created to represent various types of Surjan, a traditional Javanese garment rich in meaning. Each icon draws inspiration from the *pakaian takwa* (religious attire) of *Sunan Kalijaga*, emphasizing simplicity and the spiritual values embodied in its appearance. Sunan Kalijaga is revered as a religious figure who expressed deep spiritual meaning through his attire, and this essence was incorporated into the icon designs to maintain alignment with tradition. Additionally, direct observation of people wearing the Surjan helped ensure that the icon

designs are visually appealing and accurately depict the unique characteristics of different types of Surjan. Thus, these icons serve as visual representations and carriers of deep philosophical and cultural significance.

The design process involved a comprehensive visual study, particularly focusing on how the Surjan is worn in various social contexts. The aim was to translate key elements of Sunan Kalijaga's religious attire into meaningful iconographic forms. The image of Sunan Kalijaga, used as a visual reference as shown in Figure 2, helped guide the aesthetic direction and structure of the icons. Initial development began with rough sketches, as illustrated in Figure 3, to outline the basic concept. Figure 4 illustrates the digital design of the Surjan icon based on initial sketches. The image was created using Adobe Illustrator, a vector-based design software. Adobe Illustrator was chosen for its advanced capabilities in creating precise and scalable digital graphics, ensuring that the final designs maintain structural clarity and visual coherence across different media applications. The software's tools allowed for the refinement of initial sketches, application of intricate patterns, and adjustment of colors to align with the cultural and aesthetic requirements of the Surjan Jogja motif. The digitalization process allowed for further refinement, ensuring that the final icons achieved optimal aesthetic and functional goals.



Figure 2. *Surjan of Sunan Kalijaga*





Figure 3. *Rough Sketch of Surjan Icon*



Figure 4. *Digital Design of Surjan Icon Based on Sketch*

The icon design underwent several critical revisions based on feedback from lecturers and peers. One key aspect that was revised was the hand position known as “*sedakep*”, where the hands are folded in front of the chest. This posture was considered psychologically inappropriate, as it conveyed an impression of indifference, contradicting the values of openness and simplicity in Javanese culture. Consequently, the hand position was changed to “*ngapurancang*”, with the hands open and unfolded, maintaining visual coherence while aligning more closely with the intended philosophical meaning. Additionally, the selection of batik motifs was reviewed. The initial use of the parang tuding batik motif was reevaluated, as this motif is traditionally reserved for the Sri Sultan in the royal court. A more appropriate motif was selected to respect cultural values and avoid violating traditional customs.

After revisions, the final icon designs were prepared for application across various media, including digital platforms, print, and physical products. The designs were crafted to be flexible and adaptable across different formats and sizes without losing their visual essence or the intended message, as shown in Figure 5. Beyond their primary media

applications, the designs were also used to create visualizations in the form of paper crafts as souvenirs. Paper crafts were chosen for their interactive nature, offering a hands-on experience with elements that can be touched and assembled, enhancing appeal and sentimental value. To facilitate easy assembly, the designs were structured with simplicity in cutting and construction, without sacrificing visual detail. The balance between aesthetics and functionality remained a primary focus throughout the design process. Through careful planning and thorough testing, these designs preserve Javanese cultural values and enrich modern audiences' visual and emotional experience.



Figure 5. *Final Digital Design of Garment Icon*

#### *B. Infographic Design*

This infographic is designed for dissemination through a variety of strategically selected media, both digital and print, with the goal of presenting information in a visually appealing and easily comprehensible manner. The selection of media considers the unique characteristics of each platform, ensuring that the infographic can reach a broader and more diverse audience. Visual elements such as icons, graphics, and text are carefully arranged to ensure the message is communicated effectively, minimizing confusion and maximizing readability. The design is also adapted to remain clear and accessible across different devices and formats, ensuring that the information is well understood, regardless of the dissemination medium or screen size. Furthermore, carefully selecting colors, typography, and layout is intended to capture the audience's attention, sustain their interest, and facilitate the comprehension of the information. The infographic aims to present data and provide deeper context to help the audience gain a more comprehensive understanding of the information. Figure 6 illustrates the final digital infographic design,

showcasing the harmonious arrangement of visual elements that reinforce the core message and ensure a consistent visual experience across various platforms.



Figure 6. Final Digital Design of the Main Infographic

### C. Supporting Media

The papercraft design was developed to disseminate information about *pakaian takwa* or Surjan, featuring a cube model displaying six illustrated icons representing various types of this traditional attire. Each icon was carefully selected to depict different aspects of this clothing, providing the audience a comprehensive understanding. The primary aim of this design is to create a souvenir that is not only visually appealing but also encourages the audience to seek further information through links provided within the paper craft. This papercraft is expected to spark curiosity and stimulate further audience engagement by combining engaging visual elements with relevant information. In addition to serving as an informational tool, the papercraft offers an interactive experience, allowing users to assemble their own Surjan figurine by following the step-by-step instructions included in the package. This process offers a more in-depth educational experience, helping users better understand and appreciate the *pakaian takwa* or Surjan concept. Figure 7 shows the layout model of this paper craft, designed with an effective visual approach to maximize direct interaction with the audience while enhancing the dissemination of information.



Figure 7. *Layout Model of Clothing Icon Paper Craft*

## DISCUSSION

The results of this study demonstrate that the application of the Design Thinking method in integrating the *Surjan Jogja* motif into visual communication design has successfully produced aesthetically pleasing work while preserving its cultural significance. These findings support the study by (Magistretti et al., 2021), which highlights the importance of a culture-based approach in design. This aligns with other successful culture-based designs that have effectively bridged traditional and modern elements. For example, the *Kawung* motif, a traditional *Javanese batik* pattern, has been widely adapted into contemporary fashion and interior design. Brands such as *Batik Danar Hadi* have integrated *Kawung* patterns into modern clothing lines, maintaining the motif's symbolic representation of interconnectedness while appealing to a global audience. Similarly, the *Ulos* motif from *North Sumatra* has been incorporated into high-end fashion and accessories, as seen in works by designers like Oscar Lawalata. These adaptations showcase the *Ulos* motif's vibrant colors and intricate weaves while preserving its cultural significance as a symbol of family bonds and blessings.

In comparison, the *Surjan Jogja* motif focuses more on spiritual and moral values, emphasizing the balance between the physical and spiritual realms. Unlike the *Kawung* and *Ulos* motifs, which are often recognized for their bold visual elements, the *Surjan Jogja* motif carries deeper philosophical meanings that may require more deliberate interpretation by its audience. This distinction underscores the importance of narrative-

driven design approaches, such as Design Thinking, in ensuring that the cultural essence of the motif is preserved while making it accessible to modern audiences.

Interviews with designers and batik artisans revealed that the Surjan motif is not merely a visual element but also a symbol of identity and spirituality, aligning with (Henderson, 2021) findings on the importance of preserving the authenticity of traditional elements in design innovation. Innovative designs that adapt the Surjan motif are perceived as more appealing by the younger generation, who feel more connected to modern design. Another notable example is the *Megamendung* motif from *Cirebon*, which symbolizes patience and humility through its cloud-like patterns. This motif has been successfully adapted into various modern products, including corporate branding and home decor. The success of the *Megamendung* motif lies in its ability to visually communicate its meaning while remaining versatile for diverse applications. Similarly, the Surjan Jogja motif has the potential to achieve similar success by leveraging its rich symbolism in spiritual teachings, which can be translated into modern visual forms through careful design iterations.

These comparisons highlight that while each motif carries its own unique cultural and aesthetic values, their successful integration into modern designs relies on thoughtful adaptation and a deep understanding of their original meanings. The Surjan Jogja motif, with its focus on spiritual balance, offers a unique perspective within this broader landscape of culture-based design. By emphasizing the harmony of tradition and innovation, this study not only contributes to the preservation of local culture but also provides valuable insights for designers seeking to create culturally meaningful and contemporary works.

## CONCLUSION

The integration of traditional philosophy with visual communication design through the application of the Design Thinking method on the Surjan Jogja motif demonstrates that the fusion of local culture and contemporary approaches can produce creative and relevant visual solutions. The philosophy embodied in the Surjan Jogja motif offers a rich aesthetic foundation and reflects profound cultural values. Meanwhile, Design Thinking enables these traditional elements to be translated into modern designs without losing their original meaning. This process involves an in-depth study of the motif's symbolism

and the use of iterative methods to ensure that the final design not only preserves cultural heritage but is also effective in conveying visual messages. The result is a design that is not only innovative and functional but also capable of providing a meaningful experience to the audience, enriching their understanding of local culture.

Future research could expand <sup>1</sup> the application of the Design Thinking method by exploring other Javanese cultural motifs, such as *Batik Parang*, *Kawung*, or *Megamendung*. Such studies can potentially discover new approaches for translating these traditional motifs into modern visual communication design while maintaining the philosophical and symbolic values integral to cultural identity. Additionally, this method could be applied to other traditional elements, such as Javanese architecture or ethnic jewelry, which have the potential to attract a wider audience while strengthening local cultural identity amid globalization. Further research could also consider applying this method in an international context by comparing the adaptation of cultural motifs from other regions in Indonesia, such as Bali and Sumatra, or foreign cultures. This approach would enhance understanding of cultural heritage preservation and sustainability through design innovation.

#### **LIMITATION**

This study has several limitations that should be addressed in future research. The focus on the Surjan Jogja motif limits the generalizability of the findings to other motifs or cultures. Data collection methods, such as interviews and observations, may introduce subjectivity, potentially affecting the validity and reliability of the results. Time and resource constraints restricted a deeper exploration of the motif and limited respondent diversity, particularly underrepresenting perspectives from older age groups. Additionally, the study did not account for rapid technological advancements in visual communication design, which may influence future adaptations of the motif. <sup>4</sup> Addressing these limitations in future studies could provide more comprehensive insights into integrating traditional philosophy into modern design.

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