

Environmental graphics in strengthening the branding of Jepara carving city



Agus Setiawan ^{a,1*} , Khamadi ^{b,2} 

^a Program Studi Desain Komunikasi Visual, Fakultas Ilmu Komputer, Universitas Dian Nuswantoro, Semarang, Indonesia

^b Program Studi Desain Komunikasi Visual, Fakultas Ilmu Komputer, Universitas Dian Nuswantoro Kediri, Indonesia

¹ agus.setiawan@dsn.dinus.ac.id; ² khamadi@dsn.dinus.ac.id

* Corresponding Author

ABSTRACT

Various decorative patterns from carving art have become part of Jepara's local culture and wisdom. Cultural identity and traditions are depicted in Jepara ornaments as socio-spatial constructions. By making carved motifs and placing them in various corners of the city, Jepara ornaments become the identity of the city. This research aims to explain the existence of Jepara ornaments as a form of local wisdom of the Jepara people. Creating ornaments to strengthen the identity landmarks of Jepara Carving City and creating a graphic environment based on ornaments to strengthen the city's branding. This research uses descriptive qualitative methods to explain Jepara carving art and a branding approach for environmental graphic analysis. This research produces an environmental graphic design model that uses a system of signs, advertising, typography and landmark ornaments to build the face of Jepara as a carving city.

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1. Introduction

Jepara Carving City is branding that is still relevant for Jepara Regency. The existence of craft of carving has survived and has become an economic force and has even become a favourite for the people of Jepara. Carving culture and its inheritance is inseparable from the furniture industry. Given the existence of the art of carving, Patria *et al.* found that the participation of female leaders and figures in the formation of the Jepara carved furniture crafts is evidence of the relationship between national leaders as motivators, trailblazers, and inspirers to encourage the creativity of artists and craftsmen [1]. An important event that can build the Carving City branding has just been held and is the first time an international exhibition has been JIF-BW 2023. Edy said he was proud that the international exhibition was held *Jepara International Furniture Buyer Week* (JIF-BW) 2023 can be realized and is expected to indirectly support the welfare of employees. The challenge of holding a furniture exhibition every year was simultaneously agreed upon by the attendees, especially the furniture and wood industry entrepreneurs who were participants JIF-BW 2023. Jepara has great potential in the field of carving, which can be seen from the leadership of Ratu Kalinyamat and R.A. Kartini [2], [3]. Carving motif designs are always changing to this day, which clearly cannot be separated from the role of society. Carved motifs that have always been developed by local people can still be found in various forms of carved furniture. It seems that the role of carved motifs for the people of Jepara makes a very significant contribution in the field of crafts as works of art that can support daily life, preservation or development efforts continue to be made. When we come to Jepara to see the work of carved furniture and when we focus on the decoration part of the many various forms of carved motifs, then these carved motifs are applied to add value and quality to the furniture work. Not only in carved furniture, but it can also be seen in buildings such as mosques and pavilions in Jepara Regency and in public spaces such as city parks, monuments at intersections and T-junctions in Jepara Regency, and even in the city's decorative lights, its presence can be considered to beautify the Jepara city.

On the other hand, Jepara carving motifs are also applied to official and school clothing. This carved motif does not stand alone as a whole, its existence is attached to various works of art. Indirectly, it shows that Jepara carving motifs play a very important role and are the favourite of the Jepara people. The carved motifs produced by the people of Jepara can provide an image for the Jepara region and have become the "idiom" of the city of Jepara. The term Jepara as a carving city has become an idiom and we often hear it, even now it has been able to penetrate the export market because of its carved furniture products. Like this expression, the word "Jepara" cannot be separated from the meaning of "Jepara city" as a carving city. So the words of the Jepara carvings seem to be an idiom. Carving activities have survived for centuries in Jepara. This is the factor that often invites immigrants from regions and even countries to come and visit Jepara to get a direct picture of the capabilities of the Jepara people in terms of carving [4]. The interesting thing is that Jepara carving motifs as a form of local wisdom have a distinctive shape, there are indications of the manifestation of the power of development to create works of art that are the pride of the Jepara people. Jepara carving motifs consist of vine motifs, tassel leaves, trubusan, wuni fruit and additional floral forms such as lotus flowers, roses, hibiscus flowers and fauna such as eagles, peacocks, doves, butterflies because they are customized by the craftsman [5]. However, in the development process, it can be assumed that the people of Jepara do not know the creative results of the artists/carving artists or whether the resulting forms are included in the forms that characterize the shape of Jepara carving motifs. Carving motifs are influenced by various cultures that occur in certain ethnicities, but will appear to have similarities in the basic pattern [6]. If you look at the results of his creative work, the resulting forms still reflect the locale. What is meant is that it still forms characters that characterize the visuals of previous forms based on the experiences of the supporting community.

Jepara carved motifs once experienced a peak in popularity when carved motifs were applied to carved furniture products produced by craftsmen. Almost all of the carved furniture products produced are filled with ornate carved motifs. This is a small role of carved motifs in fulfilling people's desires to support the beauty of their homes with all carved furniture products. It can be described that Jepara carving motifs play a major role in advancing the city of Jepara in the process of adapting to changing times which continue to develop. The development of carved motifs in reaching the peak of their popularity also reminds us of the role of the government which often promotes the beauty of carved motifs. In this case, the government has made efforts to strengthen Jepara's identity as a carving city. Efforts that have been made include designing three-dimensional and two-dimensional visual communications. Three-dimensional visual communication design is placed in buildings, monuments, monuments, and gates which are located throughout the city of Jepara. Two-dimensional visual communication design is applied to magazines, websites, banners, posters, billboards, etc. Departing from the background above, there are interesting things, including the existence of the art of carving which has resulted in various ornamental patterns which have become cultural products of the Jepara people and become a form of local wisdom. Jepara ornaments are a social-spatial construction of cultural identity and tradition. Ornaments are used as the city's identity by creating carved motifs and placed in various corners of the city. Underlining the things explained above, it is representative of a more in-depth study to be carried out with the title "Environment Graphic Design in Strengthening the Branding of Jepara Carving City".

2. Method

This research is descriptive. Descriptive research, according to Kim *et al.*, is a study done to guarantee and make it possible for researchers to characterize the features of the problems of concern in a setting. The goal of descriptive research is to provide an overview or full picture of all the pertinent details surrounding an intriguing occurrence that affects a person, an organization, a sector of the economy, or other entities [7]. Research with a descriptive presentation involves observing the cultural activities of the Jepara community, implementing the placement of carving art, as well as taking notes on identifying the forms of Jepara carving motifs and the media used to strengthen Jepara's identity as a carving city. Regarding the explanation of the descriptive research method above, the descriptive method was chosen

because in this study efforts were made to get a picture of the existence of Jepara ornaments as a form of local wisdom which was then used to develop an environmental graphic design with the hope of being able to create the identity of Jepara, Carved City. Fig. 1 is the Research Method Stages.



Fig 1. Stages of Research Methods

3. Results and Discussion

3.1. Carving Motifs and Identity

According to Jespersen, motifs serve as the foundation for ornament decoration [8]. Riegl thinks that decorative motifs are basic ideas and forms in the embodiment of ornament or decoration [9], which include all natural forms of God's creation (animals, plants, humans, mountains, water, clouds, rocks, etc.), and also the result of human creativity or imagination (shapes, lines, decorative motifs of *kinara-kinari* and other magical creatures). Reiterates that decorative motifs are part of an ornament that forms a series of patterns or creates patterns. Decorative patterns are basic elements that can be used as a guide to compose a decoration. Pattern contains the meaning of an arrangement of certain decorative motifs in a certain form and composition [10], for example, kawung decorative motifs, Majapahit decorative patterns, Pajajaran, Mataram and so on. Mohamed *et al.*, added that about the grouping of motifs, there are three types, namely plant, animal and geometric [11]. Meanwhile, Tukiyo and Sukarman differentiate motifs into five types, namely geometric, plant, animal, human and imaginary decorative motifs [12]. Cities are inhabited artifacts in the interim. A city is an artificial setting created by humans that showcases intricate and substantial works of art. It is made up of a group of buildings (as well as other physical components) and individuals arranged in a specific way to create a unified physical space entity [13].

According to Raymond *et al.*, focusing on the need to form city character starts with environmental perception, identification marks and then the city image [14]. According to Montgomery, a city is a place made up of buildings and people (cities are places made up of buildings and people) [15]. According to Bacon, the city is an articulation of space that provides a certain spatial experience to participants. Therefore, the scope of attention of urban designers will be more complete if it includes buildings, settings and city character [16]. Based on the definition above, it can be understood that every city in its design cannot be separated from efforts to understand the city's character so what is meant by character is an issue involving identity. Epistemologically, the word identity comes from the word identity, which means: (1)

the condition or reality of something being the same, a situation that is similar to one another; (2) conditions or facts about something that are the same between two people or two objects; (3) conditions or facts that describe something that is the same between two people (individuality) or two groups or objects; (4) At a technical level, the definition of epistemology above only shows a habit of understanding identity with the word "identical", for example stating that "something" is similar to another [17]. Identity is the something that person aware it. In other words, identity of person is not something that delegated to him in more social actions, but is something that one must makes continuously and routinely and should support and protect in his reflective activities. Identity is character and truth of object, person or city that included its essential traits and characteristics [17].

The term identity has various meanings and relates to the purpose for which the concept of identity is used. Tilaar in his book entitled "Indonesian Ethnicity and National Identity", describes the relationship between individual identity, and ethnic identity is formed into national identity. Explains that there are at least four concepts that can develop: (1) identity means being identical with another. This leads to similarities between individuals and other individuals; (2) identity means being oneself, being born as an individual who has one's soul which is connected to the process of liberation; (3) identity means being identical with an idea. Ideas that relinquish individual power, and ideas in this context are transcendental; (4) identity means a realistic individual who lives with other individuals. Identity in this sense is more than just being oneself which cannot be separated from the cultural and natural environment [18]. The identity above suggests that identities born from historical "products" can be constructed and state that their nature can change, form and be formed based on space and time. Kaplan emphasizes this in his view of identity attached to ethnicity, saying that ethnicity is a complex concept, having different characteristics and views in defining oneself. Usually associated with cultural behaviour, for example, language, customs, beliefs, history, clothing and culture. Based on the meaning of carving motifs and identity above, it can be understood that there is an affirmation of the importance of carving motifs in reflecting identity in the form of inheritance and creation of carving motifs as a city identity that exists in public spaces. Understanding that carved motifs are valuable cultural heritage based on local wisdom and an invitation to continue to appreciate and preserve carved motifs as part of our identity.

3.2. Design as Cultural Heritage

According to Amoateng *et al.*, the term graphic design refers to the process of planning, projecting, coordinating, selecting, and organizing a series of textual and visual elements to create visual communication [19]. The term design is also used for objects created by that process. Graphic design is a creative visual art that covers many fields of science, including art, typography, page layout, information technology and other creative aspects. The wide scope of these fields of science means that designers can specialize and focus on certain subfields in the field of graphic design. The term visual communication design is a development of the word design by connecting it with a medium that aims to communicate a certain message. Each part of the visual communication design appears to be a means of communication that carries a certain message, and to get the desired response. This is why one cannot judge the quality of a design solely based on its visual appearance. Aesthetic aspects that influence a design work should not distort the main aim of visual communication design, which is centred on producing a certain response from a certain society [20]. In creating a good design that meets the desired goals, it is necessary to pay attention to the arrangement of design elements and the use of appropriate design principles. Design elements refer to "what" is used and design principles refer to "how" the design elements are used. Design elements include Line, shape, negative space, volume, value, colour, and texture. Design principles include Harmony, Proportion, Rhythm, Balance and Emphasis [21]. The use of each principle is specific to the individual problem that must be solved. Once the problem is researched and well-defined, elements can be selected, and principles can be applied.

According to Pearson, cultural heritage is the tangible culture derived from many traditions and spiritual accomplishments in the form of historical values that are fundamental to a group's or country's identity [22]. From this idea, cultural heritage is the result of physical culture (tangible) and cultural values (intangible) from the past. Physical cultural heritage

(tangible heritage) is often classified into immovable cultural heritage and movable cultural heritage. Immovable cultural heritage is usually in the open and consists of: sites, historical places, land and water landscapes, ancient and/or historic buildings, and statues of heroes [23]. Movable cultural heritage is usually located indoors and consists of cultural heritage objects, works of art, archives, documents and photographs, printed written works, audiovisuals in the form of cassettes, videos and films [24]. Article 1 of The World Heritage Convention divides physical cultural heritage into 3 categories, namely monuments, building groups and sites [25]. Cultural heritage is material in the form of Cultural Heritage Objects, Cultural Heritage Buildings, Cultural Heritage Structures, Cultural Heritage Sites and Cultural Heritage Areas on land and/or in water whose existence needs to be preserved because they have important value for history, science, education, religion, and/or culture through a determination process (Law Number: 11 of 2010).

One of the efforts to inherit culture is preservation [26]. According to Tanudirjo, preservation is an effort to give new meaning and in a pluralistic society the meaning can vary, so the preservation of cultural heritage must be able to be discussed together, negotiated and also needs to be mutually agreed upon through an open dialogue. and balanced [27]. Cultural inheritance (transmission of culture) is the process of passing on culture (cultural elements) from one generation to the next generation of humans or society through a civilization process (cultural learning process). By the nature and nature of culture as a common property of society, the elements of culture are socialized among individual members of society by being inherited or cultivated through the process of cultural learning. The process of cultural inheritance is carried out through the process of enculturation (culturing) and the process of socialization (studying or studying culture). Cultural inheritance is generally carried out through family, community, school, government institutions, associations, official institutions and mass media channels. Through the process of cultural inheritance, humans will be formed who have personalities that are in harmony with their natural, social and cultural environments, in addition to personalities that are not in harmony (deviate) with their natural, social and cultural environments.

3.3. Environmental graphic design

Environmental graphic design which can be defined as the graphic communication of information in the built environment, is one of the world's oldest professions [28]. Environmental Graphic Design is a new design profession that embraces also interior design, landscape design, industrial design, city planning, and behavioral psychology. It is concerned with the visual aspects of wayfinding, exhibition design, entertainment environments, retail projects, information design, and brand identity to develop a complete sense of place. It can be also initiated as the relation of art and science by using signs, symbols, maps, sculptures, fixtures, light, walkways and all architectural and graphic elements [29]. Environmental graphic is a knowledge in which discussed and studied about how use different kinds of forms, colors, figures, and various pictures in a skillful, systematic, and planned way in order to making better and more simple relations, informing, and orientation, and also making beautiful the urban spaces such as public spaces [28]. Environmental graphic design addresses the complex communication needs of these areas by focusing on three main areas: signage and wayfinding, interpretation and placemaking [30].

3.4. Ornament-based Environmental graphic design model

Based on theoretical studies regarding environmental graphic design, design in the study of cultural heritage, carving motifs and identity, a comprehensive view is obtained regarding the formation of identity and local wisdom. Based on identity formation and local wisdom, the stages carried out are as follows: (1) Identify the internal and external environment regarding the local wisdom of Jepara Regency; (2) Identify initial studies related to local wisdom of Jepara Regency which includes forms of Jepara ornaments in the furniture industry; (3) Identify the environmental graphic design mix of Jepara Regency; (4) Develop a Jepara ornament-based graphic design environment development model; (5) Develop and create a graphic design environment. The general research flow framework can be described in a complete research Table 1.

Tabel 1. Research flow framework

Aspects studied	Channel	Outcome targets achieved
Identity of Jepara Regency	➡	Identify local wisdom of Jepara Regency
Local wisdom of Jepara Regency	➡	local wisdom includes cultural heritage (architecture, carving and culture) Jepara ornaments were found
Development of Ornament-based Graphic Design Environments.	➡	1. Implementation of the Graphic Design trial environment. Results achieved from the research 2. Found the concept of aesthetics 3. Environment Graphic Design Jepara Regency 4. Muck up Environment Design Graphic design district

The creation of public spaces is one way to create a city's identity that is by the development of society without abandoning its history. The design of public spaces is very important, because public spaces create a background for communication and higher social relations for society, and can also become a place for society's collective memories so that people who use public spaces full of collective memories can communicate with past cultures. Achieving local identity and wisdom becomes capital in building and developing public space into a social identity regarding the present and the past. In producing a graphic environment based on local wisdom and achieving identity, the development model can be seen in the [Fig. 2](#).

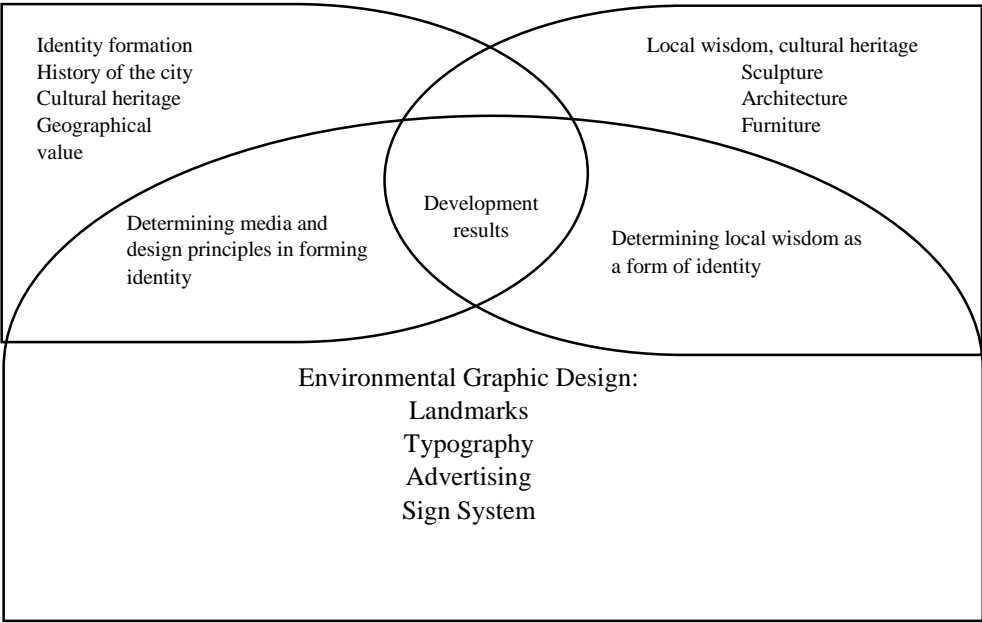


Fig 2. Environment Grapich Design Development Results

Local wisdom as a design element of visual communication can create an identity and image through the embodiment of landmarks, typography, advertising and sign systems. the role of media, control of meaning, and aesthetic expression in the scope of communication design can be broadly referred to as a sense of design [31]. The scope of the visual communication design in question is recognizing the environment, needs of the environment and, purpose of an environment which results in identification and its modification based on local wisdom.

4. Conclusion

Environmental graphics are part of a strategy that can be implemented to strengthen Jepara's branding as a carving city. Through the use of graphic elements inspired by Jepara

carvings, such as distinctive motifs and colors that reflect local cultural identity, Environmental Graphics can create a distinctive and impressive visual experience for visitors. In this way, Jepara can be better known as a cultural tourist destination rich in its sculptural heritage. involves graphic design elements inspired by the beauty of cultural heritage, which can be seen in historical architectural heritage and community activities as carving artists. The process of inheritance from generation to generation in the field of carving results in the creation of visual elements called decorative motifs presented in the form of lunges, trees, flowers, and birds. Visual elements in the form of carved motifs can be a source of inspiration for developing environmental graphics to create a strong visual identity for the city of Jepara. In addition, using bright and contrasting colors that reflect the rich cultural heritage of the Jepara people can increase the visual appeal of Jepara city branding. Environmental graphics can be an effective tool in strengthening Jepara's branding as a carved city in the form of landmarks, advertising, sign systems, and typography. By using graphic design elements inspired by Jepara's traditional carving art, the development of environmental graphics can create a visual experience of the face of the carved city and depict Jepara's unique identity as a center for carving art. Apart from that, the application of environmental graphics can increase public awareness about Jepara's cultural heritage and support the local craft industry.

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