

# SUPERHERO COMIC WITH LOCAL CULTURAL IDENTITY FOR THE PRESERVATION OF THE ENVIRONMENT

Tandrie Putra Rahmanda<sup>1</sup>, Syarip Hidayat<sup>2\*</sup>

<sup>1</sup>*Telkom University School of Creative Industries, tandrock12@gmail.com,*

<sup>2</sup>*Telkom University School of Creative Industries, syarip@tcis.telkomuniversity.ac.id,*

---

## **Abstract:**

The environment damage by human activities has become a crucial problem that continuously encouraged. Important value of protecting the environment can be planted to child until become adult. This values of kindness and change the mindset since childhood certainly easier than when fully grown. Superheroes is a fictional character of a person who uses costumes and have a certain ability to do good and fight evil. Children love super hero, super hero Through them absorb the value - the value of goodness contained therein. Superheroes are favored child is dominated by foreign super heroes that also contains the values and culture of foreign countries. Indonesia is a shortage of superheroes with their local cultural identity as a role model for children. Many indigenous peoples such as the Dayak Indonesia and Java have a culture and wisdom in harmony with the environment and have a visual identity that can be developed into a more popular and modern. The story of a new superhero contain of Indonesian local wisdom on the environment, It can be a role model for Indonesian children to protect the environment in addition to the value of local knowledge, visual identity can also be applied in the design of super hero characters as the development of a culture become a popular form that can be enjoyed young generation.

**Keywords:** *Comic, Local Culture, Preservation of the environment, Superhero.*

---

## **1. INTRODUCTION**

The destruction of nature, especially in Indonesia are caused by human activity. One example of the destruction of nature by human activity is human greed exploit nature to eliminate many forests and eroding habitat of animals for example orang utan in addition to the catchment area was reduced to trigger landslides. It is not wise by development that reduces catchment areas and littering so can cause flooding. Children is a successor to the nation that would follow effect on the surrounding environment. Love the nature around is one of the values good manners imparted to children so they can understand the dangers of environmental damage and do things, little things that impact both on the environment and the earth in live their days until they grow up in the community.

Education to love the environment is important to give a child from an early age. It is to form the personality of the children so that the future is able to care for the earth. The simplest action has been very help save the earth from destruction, such as keeping as well as saving energy and planting trees.

The values of keeping the earth and the environment, the local knowledge of culture in Indonesia have long apply, such as: the Dayak, Bedouin, Mentawai, Naga Tribe also Java. They have thought and acted real customs keep our Earth in their local wisdom. In addition to having local knowledge of the environment, culture Indonesia has the form and ornament as their visual identity. The visual identity was developed potentially more popular and transform to modern next generation.

Superhero abroad either from the United States and Japan is emerging to be an idol of children of Indonesia in the form of comics, movies, animation, and games. Superheroes is an advocate and

defender of truth who has superhuman abilities and use his ability to fight crime. Children easily imitate what became his hobby including copying messages or values that exist behind the superhero.

Superheroes have the good message and the values that can be role models for the fans, but superheroes from abroad surely contain many elements of foreign culture, while in Indonesia at this time superhero still fairly small and less popular than the superheroes from the outside, elements of Indonesian culture and moral values can be contains to the comic. Lack of super hero Indonesia is proven with more comics, animation and knick - knacks super heroes overseas market.

Japan have an examples to modify the local culture with uniqueness. One of them by incorporating cultural elements in the series tokusatsu superhero or the original Japanese series. In broad outline, the series is a tokusatsu superhero series that became the idol of the children in Japan. Tokusatsu divided into several genres. However, fairly popular genre of international standard is the series Super Sentai and Kamen Rider. In Indonesia, the second of the series known as the Power Ranger and Kamen Rider Black. Through both of the tokusatsu genre, the children returned introduced to their native culture through cultural elements contained in both the genre.

### **1.1 Reserach Question**

The research question is: How to design a super hero comics with local identity of Indonesia cultural wisdom through visual that loved by children to instill the values for love the environment?

The research objective is the creation of a new super hero in comics medium containing the local culture of protecting the environment so that they can be role models for children. Comic with the characters and story of super heroes that can contain Indonesian local wisdom on the environment must be a role model, Indonesian children to protect the environment because in addition to the values of local knowledge in their content, visual identities can also be applied in the design of super hero characters as the development of a culture become a popular form that can be enjoyed by the younger generation. The super hero can be a new choice for children to know their own national culture amid the dominance of foreign heroes. Among all media featuring superheroes, comics is a medium of visual communication design which is commonly used as an initial introduction to the target audience.

## **2. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND**

### **2.1 Theory of Comics**

Comics is a time frame and compile them into a story. Photographing the moment - a particular moment and compile them into a narrative story visually. Hikmat Darmawan in the book "How to make comics" (2012: 52) explains the understanding of comics, according to experts the world one of them is Scott Mccloud that define comics as images or in addition to pictures juxtaposed sequences deliberate intended to contain information and / or to produce an aesthetic response in the reader. Comic besides cheaper than audio-visual medium, the comic is also effective as a medium of communication because it is sequential. Virtually any message can be conveyed through language comic (Hikmat Darmawan, 2012: 32).

### **2.2 Story and Characters Design for Superhero in Comics**

Comic story similar to the story in general. The difference comic story is told visually-sequential. The story is a series of events or events of interest and manifested in an interesting anyway (Hikmat Darmawan, 2012: 116). Narrative (storytelling) is a vehicle for telling a story that can be either words or images printed. to facilitate the writing of the story can take advantage of tools for storytelling that is the content, which consists of the narrator, the settings (setting the place and time), characters, suspense (tension element), imagery. Then, rhetoric, consisting of languages (textual) and visual rhetoric (Hikmat Darmawan, 2012: 118).

In designing a super hero characters, unique features are things that must be considered. Hikmat Darmawan (2012: 38) explains that the design is easily recognizable, memorable and meaningful to the story in the comic is more mainstream than a matter of good and bad. In the comic sequences require characters to be easily drawn repeatedly. So, the easiest way is to create a character that is unique like Superman with the logo "S" and curls on the forehead are easily recognizable and easy to draw over and over again. Ferdiana (2013: 44) also elaborated that super hero character must have unique characteristics and specifications to maintain consistency in the drawing.

### **2.3 Reading Comic Books for Kids**

Kids can emulate the values and message of kindness through the characters in the comic and book reading. According to Joko D Muktiono (2003: 22) a character in literature is a good supplement for children. Children are free to choose figures or imaginary friend in a book that will inspire them to build the ideal world in themselves. This idea can be the foundation of their lives in everyday life.

Comics can increase children's interest, many books such as comic made into the film. However, Joko D Muktiono (2003: 156) suggested giving readings of his book before watching the movie promises because the child will usually lazy to read the book if it had been watching the movie. Muktiono (2003: 63-67) also added that the age of 9-12 years are the years when children are more show craze in choosing textbooks. Kids tend to choose books based on their interests and passion like adventure, fantasy, science fiction and detective. Buy books with age above it with the story and the language is more difficult to digest is actually good, because parents can help accompany to read. Later, when the time comes that the child will read the book itself.

### **2.4 Linkage Children with Environment and Superhero**

Children in his life is always interacting with humans and other living things (plants and animals), as well as inanimate objects around it (air, water, and land). In addition to the profession or occupation of man that he knew of the work of parents, teachers, aunts, uncles, grandfathers, and grandmothers. The circumstances surrounding the child can stimulate or foster the ideals he wants to achieve in later life. The introduction of the environment is not just to tell children about the environmental benefits, but the environmental impact if broken so that they do not want anything negative to the environment (Estu Kuncoro, 2010: 6). Besides the parents, other people also affect the child's life. Children will imitate others admired, who loved or close to them. For example: brother, friend, teacher, and the story of the hero (Charles Schefer, 1994: 18).

From the theoretical data superheroes can instill values - positive values that were well received by the children, especially from the age of 8-13 years. How good of protecting the environment and keeping bad if not essential taught to children through reading books. The book reads like a comic that is sequential to communicate a positive message from the super hero story well. Moreover, comics can stimulate children's sense of aesthetics. To stimulate interest in reading them, the story of superheroes better given in reading media before the spectacle. Besides comics are also more economical than the audio-visual media.

## **3. THE RESEARCH METHOD**

### **3.1 Local Wisdom Indonesia to the Environment**

We can learn a lot of local knowledge ancestor about how to treat the environment with good and friendly. Almost all people in the archipelago have thought and local customs that emphasizes harmony with nature. They abstain from doing environmental destruction because it is considered to be a major threat to their culture. Nature is not just the source of life, but also a friend and teacher who has taught a lot of things for them (Akmal Satia, 2010: 2).

### 3.2 Local Wisdom Dayak

Forest in Borneo is the source of life and livelihood of the Dayak people. The forest is the "mother" to them. With local knowledge, they protect the forest from various damages. (Sugih Biantoro, 2011: 211).

According to the Dayak community, nature as a creation of the Almighty have the power or spirit. Nature can be friendly if we treat it wisely, and vice versa could be upset if we ruin it. Natural and Dayak community is a unity that can not be separated and both give each other mutual influence. Since the time of our ancestors first, Dayak people look at nature is the source of life and livelihood from one generation to the next. None of the sides of their lives that are not related to the natural surroundings. They are looking for food and drinks from nature. They are farming, gardening, hunting, boat building, concocted medicines, and others derived from nature. Ceremonial rituals and also in touch with nature, either dancing or singing (Marthin Billa, 2005: 43).

It can be said practices Dayak people's lives are at one with nature has become a habits and culture which they then pass on hereditary basis for subsequent generations. As a creation of the Almighty, the Dayak people do not dare to utilize excess natural as doing so will damage the ecosystem, including their neighbor. Natural (forest) are damaged and exploited it out it will threaten their survival and the other creatures that depend on the nature (Marthin Billa, 2005: 44). For this reason, the Dayak people always thinking how to save forests.

### 3.3 Local Wisdom Java

The concept of unity between man and nature embodied in the Java community view that there was a relationship between humans and nature. This is interpreted as part of the knowledge of local wisdom. Sri Sultan Hamengkubuwana explain the philosophy of man "hamemayu Hayuning Bawana" which is divided into three runway: Hamengku Nagara, Hamengku Earth, Hamengku Buwana. The philosophy is most related to environmental preservation is Hamengku Earth. Hamengku Earth is defined that a man shall keep, maintain and develop the natural environment because nature has provided a source of life for humans to be able to continue the descent from generation to generation (Nasruddin Anshory, Sudarsono, 2008: vii).

### 3.4 Nusantara Ornament as Visual Identity

Ornaments come from bahasa Yunani ie ornare meaning of the word ornaments or jewelry. Ornaments are art components are added or intentionally made to decorate or embellish a product (Aryo Sunaryo, 2009: 1). In use there ornament in the form of motifs, two motifs, there is also a distillation or stylized. Aryo Sunaryo (2009: 3) outlines the basic motifs consisting of: Motif geometric form straight lines, broken lines, parallel lines, circles and curves, and Motif naturalist form of plants and animals.

### 3.5 Observations at Bandung Toys and Kids Expo 2015 and Toyzibit Bandung

The observations were made at the exhibition associated with the object of superheroes with visitors children in accordance with the object of research. The first exhibition is Bandung Toys and Kids Expo 2015 held at Graha Manggala Siliwangi Bandung. At the exhibition contains many stalls that sell action figures, T-shirts and trinkets foreign superheroes both Japan and America. Children and the elderly seem very enthusiastic about shopping for trinkets superheroes. In this event also held a drawing and coloring superhero for grades 1-3 and 4-5. The dominance of foreign superheroes highly visible from action figures, t-shirts, and a picture drawn by a competitor who all come from overseas, even this event poster also contains a collage of characters Marvel super hero. With so many embodiments of superheroes foreign media such as t-shirts, action figures, posters are easy to find and dominate events like this make the children more easily know and are familiar with the figures of these heroes. There is only one super hero action figure Indonesia, Bima-X which is a toy produced by Japanese toy company Bandai as part of the cooperation with Ishinomori and RCTI. The second exhibition is 'Toyzibit' on Citylink Festival held in Bandung. At the same even this exhibition with an exhibition at Siliwangi housekeeping with superheroes foreign domination of any trinkets are sold and posters on display.

Observation further in the Scholasticat front of Bandung Indah Plaza, at book store is a book-themed superheroes foreign dominated by characters Marvel just like the Avengers and Spider-man found in books such as activity books coloring, books puzzles, comic, encyclopedias, comics import and magazine 'Marvel superheroes magazine' and 'Marvel Spider-man magazine' containing the comic series and games. Comic Superheroes Indonesia contained herein is only comic Volt and Garuda is a comic adaptation of the film.



Figure 1 Bandung Toys & Kids Expo and Toyzibit  
Source : Tandrie Putra & Neo Organizer, 15 Maret 2015

#### 4. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Cultural visual identity developed into a super hero character design, concept of wisdom is tailored to the cultural environmental phenomena present in the data maintenance and damage to the environment and be the concept of this super hero story. The concept of super hero stories are delivering bad impact when destroying the environment and goodness when we keep the environment as well as environmental wisdom in the Dayak culture and Java.

The story of the new super hero is expected to instill values to virtues of the environment on children's childhood and embedded until they are big so they will not perform actions that damage the environment. New super hero can also be a new selection of superheroes from the culture Indonesia amid superheroes foreign domination. Design of super hero characters also take a visual reference of superheroes who favored the current target audiences such as armor, masks combined with the visual identity of Borneo and Java. With this comic and superhero will be able to compete with foreign countries in the super hero of children a role model.

Title comic superheroes takes the name of the main character, namely 'Jagara'. Jagara an acronym of various possible words, 'Jaga' can mean guard, guard, hero, universe, and rangers that can mean a forest ranger. While the 'Ra' can mean Terra means earth, Archipelago, nor Rimba. Visual character and comic using semi-realist style full color commonly applied in various American comics superheroes and comic book super heroes of modern Indonesia 'Bima' and 'Volt'. Costume design superheroes using the styling and the elements - the visual elements of superheroes that are currently popular with the target audience in accordance with the results of observations as costume armor tech, tight costumes, and design a helmet or a mask inspired by the character of Iron Man, Spider-man, Kamen rider, and Power rangers were then combined with the cultural identity of Indonesia representing Borneo and Java. In addition to using the element - element superhero tech armor favored child, super hero characters will also use elements of impressive organic or natural forces of nature which represent the environmental wisdom that became a source of strength, so create the concept of super hero characters blend of technology and nature.

Visual identity represents Kalimantan and Java was chosen as ornament Dayak, Dayak traditional clothes, and visual elements such as batik Javanese wayang Ghatotkacha slope and shape. The visual identity chosen because it is easily developed and modified as a modern shape in accordance with the data and observations. The developed into visual armor costumes and masks of superheroes that are popular target audiences.



Figure 2 Final Character Design of Jagara  
Source: Tandrie Putra, Juni 2015



Figure 3 Comic Cover of Jagara volume 1  
Source : Tandrie Putra, Juni 2015



Figure 4 Comic of Jagara volume 1  
Source : Tandrie Putra, Juni 2015

## 5. CONCLUSION

The environmental damage is mostly caused by humans, is important for children to instilled good values about the environment for the future become a man who can keep the environment, Indonesia lacks a super hero identity of local culture as a model for children.

Super hero with armor, tech, full costume, sophisticated and wearing a helmet or mask such as Spider-Man, Iron Man, Kamen Rider and Power rangers is a popular children today. Local Dayak culture and Java in addition to having environmental wisdom that should be taught also have a visual identity that can be developed into a modern for the children, through the design of super hero characters.

Through the medium of comic book, super hero with local cultural identity that has environmental wisdom, the child will have a new super hero of Indonesian local culture that instills values like kindness on the environment, adverse impact if the environmental damage so that they will not perform actions that damage the environment.

## REFERENCES

Anshory, N., 2008. *Kearifan Lingkungan dalam Perspektif Budaya Jawa*, Jakarta: Yayasan Obor Indonesia.

Biantoro, S., 2011. *Buku Kearifan Lokal di Tengah Modernisasi*, Departemen Kementerian Kebudayaan dan Pariwisata Republik Indonesia Jakarta: Puslitbang Kebudayaan Badan Pengembangan Sumber Daya Kebudayaan dan Pariwisata.

Billa, M., 2005. *Alam lestari dan kearifan budaya Dayak Kenyah*, Jakarta: Pustaka Sinar Harapan

Darmawan, H., 2012. *How to Make Comics*, Jakarta:Plot point.

Ferdiana, M., 2013. *Mendesain Karakter Pahlawan dan Penjahat Super*, Yogyakarta: Taka.

Kuncoro, E., 2010. *Buku Kegiatanku: Lingkungan Alam dan Sekitar*, Jakarta: Grasindo.

Muktiono, J., 2003. *Aku Cinta Buku Menumbuhkan Minat Baca Pada Anak*, Jakarta: Elek Media Komputindo

Satia, A., 2010. *Bijak Mengelola Lingkungan Hidup*, Jakarta: Dastika.

Schaefer, C., 1994. *Bagaimana Mempengaruhi Anak*. Semarang: Effhar Offset Semarang.

Sunaryo, A., 2009. *Ornament Nusantara*, Semarang: Dahara Prize.