

# Cross-Cultural Concepts in Cultural Product Design

(Case Study of Shoe Design with Old Javanese Script)

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**Abstract**—Cultural product design with a cross-cultural approach is currently in high demand by the younger generation. This positive thing increases the respect for local culture. However, the lack of industry player's knowledge of cross-culture principles makes less cultural ideology conveyed. This study aims to determine the process of cross-culture in design using a case study of casual sneaker shoes with ancient Javanese script culture (Hanacaraka) in the design. This research uses a qualitative case study by studying the form, function, and symbolic meaning of the culture in the shoe product design process. The results of this study found that the use of culture in popular products needs to pay attention to the symbolic meaning that represents the local culture. The use of culture in the design of cultural products gives a different look to provide its own identity that results in strengthening branding and strengthening the economy for local brands. Difficult cultural preservation can represent cultural product design with the concept of cross-culture. The implication of this research is to provide steps in the process of cross-cultural methods in industries, especially local brands that carry the cultural locality of their products. Besides, this study also has implications on the cross-culture method for the preservation of Hanacaraka culture.

**Keywords**—culture transformation, cultural creative industry, cross-cultural design

## I. INTRODUCTION

Along the journey of culture history, Indonesia is a trading area which have various culture acculturation [1]. One of the culture acculturations in Indonesia is the old Javanese Script or mostly known as Hanacaraka [2]. At this very moment old Javanese script is vanishing and young generation lost its interest. The uses of Javanese Script are only placed on traffic signs, school signs, and some text in government city campaign program in order to be understood by the public. The use was merely to preserve the Hanacaraka script, so it will not

completely vanish. Since Latin alphabet were introduced by the Dutch in the 19th century, Javanese script was slowly replaced by Latin alphabet [3]. The Hanacaraka script itself has loose its function; young generation could speak Javanese, but they no longer could read Hanacaraka. Few elementary schools have removed the Javanese language lesson which taught students about Hanacaraka, the use of Hanacaraka script is taught in a few public and private national school once a week [4].

Hanacaraka is one of the traditional characters that exist in Indonesia. Javanese character was used by the Java citizens to develop the writing tradition in Javanese language. Hanacaraka is often used to write story scripts, history notes, ancient songs or foretelling [5]. However generally, the application of Hanacaraka in today's life could hardly be found. Some application that could still be found in few cities such as Surakarta and Yogyakarta as one of the main cities which uses Javanese script in public places [4].

Nowadays, cultural product using cross-cultural approach are gaining interest [6]. Chances of local brand to introduce the local culture including Hanacaraka is widely open together with creative industry as the vessel to create something [7]. The same thing goes to flymax.id, a local casual shoe brand in Surakarta City – Indonesia, now tries to present old Javanese script element in their shoe designs. The cross-cultural concept which was adopted by flymax.id is one of the efforts in introducing old Javanese script and preserving culture through product design, in this case shoes design. Shoes are chosen by flymax.id because it has a connection with young generation, the casual shoes are designed with old Javanese script that are usually used by young generation in daily life. Shoes are one of the daily wears that everyone uses. Shoes have a wide variety of type for an occasion, one of the shoes that are used by young generation in their daily life is sneakers. Sneaker is a type of shoes that are usually worn by young generation for casual



2) *Western culture identification*: Sneakers are a pair of shoes originated from America in 1839, where a scientist created vulcanized rubber which results a durable sole. Back then, it was called plimsolls that are used for sports purpose giving name to famous shoes brand. In 1950, teenager in America start the looks of combining sneakers with denim jeans followed by famous actor and actress [14]. As many people said, sneakers are comfortable and casual which makes people move easily. It took around a decade or two, until most people notice sneaker was a good choice of shoes to walk in.

### C. Translation

TABLE III. TRANSLATION PROCESS OF FLYMAX.ID HANACARAKA SHOES

Physical Element	Function Element	Symbolic element
Old Javanese script writing	Preserving the Javanese script	“SALA” or Solo word written in Javanese Script, to remind a connection for people who live in Java. Especially Solo City
Sneaker shoes	Footwear	Casual shoe design, where young generation mostly use for daily wear.
Black and white colour	Printing and embroidery.	School regulation of black and white shoes.

### D. Implementation

TABLE IV. IMPLEMENTATION PROCESS OF FLYMAX.ID HANACARAKA SHOES

Physical Element	Function Element	Symbolic element
Shoes with Javanese Script.	Shoes for teenagers and young adults.	Preserving the Javanese script and a fashionable sneaker shoe.
Javanese Script	Made by printing the script to the rubber surface.	
Shoes	Made by black canvas fabric and white rubber.	
Combination of embroidery and printing.	To give identification on the shoes.	

The idea of connecting each culture gives a new impression that interest young generation toward this cross-culture concept; in order to preserve the local culture which is Hanacaraka script within the sneaker shoes. Therefore, as the Javanese script is implemented in the shoe design (sneakers), this will help the preservation, not to mention people will start to observe the design and take interest. They would start to find out and learn about the culture further. Flymax integrate the word “SALA” from Solo which is written in Javanese script to grasp the emotional bonding with the majority who once lived there. The design was not only made to fulfill the aesthetic needs, but it also connects to the school regulation for shoes which enables teenager to wear this shoes design

### E. Evaluation

The cross-culture concept implemented on flymax.id shoe design which involves old Javanese script and sneaker shoe is one of the great example of a cross-culture product design where it finely combine the three elements of physical, function and symbolic in a harmony. The use of this elements hopefully broadens the user’s knowledge of how cultures in Indonesia starts to disappear one by one. This is one of the cultures which needs to be preserved and therefore becomes an example for other local culture in Indonesia that could be implement cross-culture concept in their product. The design process used in this research could help designers in creating new products that involves cross-culture concepts from Indonesia’s rich culture and tradition.

- Flymax implement the Javanese script culture from cross-culture concept to preserve the culture existence.
- Cross-culture concept from Javanese Script and sneaker shoes culture which are originated from Indonesian and Western Culture.
- This could lead to other cross-culture concept to help other cultures in Indonesia that starts to disappear.
- Cross-cultural concepts for product design need to consider involving three elements: physical, functional and symbolic elements. These three elements can clarify and break down the meaning step by step from implicit to explicit meaning.

## IV. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, this case study carries the three form of element (physical, function, symbolic) that are important in cross-culture concept which goes in harmony. Given the case study which comes from Indonesian culture (Old Javanese script) and Western culture (sneaker shoes), thus creating a design to preserve the fading culture, enabling the public to wear as a daily footwear and fulfilling their aesthetic needs. This case study could be a fine example for other creative industries that applies cross-culture concept in their product design.

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