

# Understanding the visual functions and symbolic meanings in Hero Kadita's design in Mobile Legends: Bang-Bang

Benny Muhdaliha<sup>1\*</sup>, Prof. Dr. I Gede Mugi Raharja<sup>2</sup>, Dr. Alit Kumala Dewi<sup>3</sup>, I Made Pande Artadi<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Budi Luhur University, Faculty of Communication and Creative Design, Visual Communication Design Department, Jakarta, Indonesia.  
[benny.muhdaliha@budiluhur.ac.id](mailto:benny.muhdaliha@budiluhur.ac.id)

<sup>2</sup>Indonesia Institut of Arts Bali, Faculty of Art and Design, Interior Design Department, Denpasar, Indonesia.  
[mugiraharja@isi-dps.ac.id](mailto:mugiraharja@isi-dps.ac.id)

<sup>3</sup>Indonesia Institut of Arts Bali, Faculty of Art and Design, Visual Communication Design Department, Denpasar, Indonesia.  
[kumalaisidps@gmail.com](mailto:kumalaisidps@gmail.com)

<sup>4</sup>Indonesia Institut of Arts Bali, Faculty of Art and Design, Visual Communication Design Department, Denpasar, Indonesia.  
[pandartadi@isi-dps.ac.id](mailto:pandartadi@isi-dps.ac.id)

\*Corresponding Author

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## Abstract

This study investigates the visual functions and symbolic meanings embedded in the character design of Hero Kadita (Ocean Goddess) in the mobile game Mobile Legends: Bang-Bang. It aims to understand how cultural values and symbolic messages are communicated through visual character design. Utilizing a qualitative descriptive approach, the study employs visual analysis as the primary method of data collection, supported by a design anthropology framework and the manga matrix theory developed by Hiroyoshi Tsukamoto. The analysis focuses on three key visual matrices form, costume, and personality, to deconstruct the character's design elements. The findings reveal that Hero Kadita's design is aesthetically compelling and symbolically reflects the identity of Nyi Roro Kidul, a mythical sea goddess from Javanese folklore. The character conveys cultural values and spiritual meanings that resonate with Indonesian audiences through its visual narrative. The study concludes that incorporating anthropological insights into character design can enhance cultural relevance and emotional engagement, offering valuable guidance for game designers in embedding local identity within global entertainment media.

**Keywords:** Design anthropology, Manga matrix, Character design, Mobile legends, Symbolic meaning

## Extended Abstract

**Introduction:** In the rapidly developing world of digital games, various games have been launched in society, so the competition between game developers in gaining user loyalty is increasingly fierce. In the midst of this competition, character visual design has emerged as an important component, having the ability to form a deeper user experience through various approaches, including a cultural approach, with the hope that this approach can foster a sense of belonging

and loyalty from users. This study focuses on the visual design analysis of Hero Kadita, a playable character in a popular mobile game in Indonesia, Mobile Legends: Bang-Bang (Moonton, 2016). Hero Kadita is a unique character whose visual and narrative attributes strongly reflect the legendary figure of Nyi Roro Kidul, Queen of the Java Sea. The study aims to explore the extent to which the Hero Kadita character design approach creates a cultural experience for users, especially Mobile Legend Bang-Bang game users in Indonesia, through an analysis of visual elements and symbols in the visual design of the Hero Kadita character.

**Purpose and scope:** This study departs from the intersection of design anthropology and digital entertainment by exploring how traditional cultural identities are adapted and visually represented in modern digital game character designs. By narrowing the focus to Hero Kadita, one of the heroes in the digital mobile game Mobile Legends Bang-Bang, this study seeks to examine how the approach taken in designing game characters inspired by traditional culture are embedded into character design through elements such as facial expressions, costumes, and gestures. Using visual content analysis, this research focuses on how these visual components reflect symbolic meanings rooted in Indonesian mythology and folklore, offering insights into the ways cultural narratives are visually constructed and communicated within digital game environments.

**Method:** This research adopts a qualitative descriptive method that integrates two complementary analytical frameworks; the design anthropology approach and the manga matrix theory developed by Hiroyoshi Tsukamoto. Design anthropology provides a lens to interpret how cultural symbols, traditions, and values are communicated visually in character design. The Manga Matrix, on the other hand, offers a structured methodology to break down character visuals into three interrelated dimensions: the form matrix, costume matrix, and personality matrix (Tsukamoto, 2006: 13). Data were collected through visual analysis, a qualitative approach used to interpret the meanings and symbolic codes embedded in visual artifacts. The analysis focused on Hero Kadita's visual attributes, including costume elements, facial features, body proportions, color schemes, and animation styles. Both in-game representations and official concept art were examined to explore how visual design communicates cultural narratives and symbolic associations, particularly those linked to Nyi Roro Kidul in Javanese folklore. Visual analysis is particularly suited for studies involving digital media and character design, as it allows researchers to decode how images function as cultural texts (Caton, 2019: 2). This visual analysis also draws on interpretative frameworks from cultural studies and game studies to understand how design elements may shape player perception and emotional connection to the character (Peräkylä, 2011: 289).

**Findings and conclusion:** The findings reveal that Hero Kadita's design elements are deeply rooted in Indonesian cultural mythology and serve functional and symbolic purposes. For example, Kadita's costume closely resembles the kebaya dodotan, a traditional Javanese dress often associated with noble femininity and ceremonial spirituality. Her green and turquoise color palette, shell-based accessories, and fluid movements further reinforce her identity as a water deity. Her trident is a symbolic extension of her mythological power, aligning with traditional representations of sea goddesses across various cultures. Using the form matrix, Kadita's character is analyzed in terms of anatomical features and posture. Her symmetrical facial structure, idealized beauty, and elegant silhouette conform to established archetypes of divinity and authority in visual storytelling. The costume matrix highlights how her attire and accessories not only beautify the character but also signify her royal and supernatural status. Lastly, the personality matrix shows that her behavior in gameplay, like graceful, powerful, and elusive, mirrors the enigmatic qualities often attributed to Nyi Roro Kidul in folklore. Symbolically, Hero Kadita serves as a digital embodiment of Indonesia's intangible cultural heritage. For local players, her visual narrative resonates with familiar cultural motifs, evoking emotional recognition and national pride. For international audiences, Kadita offers an entry point into understanding the richness of Southeast Asian mythology. This dual impact of cultural representation and global engagement demonstrates the value of embedding localized identity in global game design. The study concludes that character design in video games should not be viewed solely through an aesthetic lens but also as a medium of cultural storytelling. Integrating anthropological approaches enables designers to craft characters that are not only visually appealing but also symbolically rich and contextually meaningful. By applying structured frameworks like the Manga Matrix, game developers can systematically construct characters that resonate with diverse user groups while preserving cultural authenticity. This research contributes to the academic discourse on design in interactive media by highlighting the importance of cultural sensitivity, symbolic representation, and methodological rigor in character design. The insights gained can inform future practices in game development, animation, and visual communication, particularly in multicultural markets where digital products intersect with local traditions and identities. In sum, Hero Kadita exemplifies how digital character design can become a vessel for cultural heritage, enabling traditional narratives to persist and evolve within new technological environments. The study encourages further exploration into how indigenous myths and symbols can be respectfully and effectively translated into global entertainment platforms, fostering cultural preservation and creative innovation.

**Keywords:** Design anthropology, Manga matrix, Character design, Mobile legends, Symbolic meaning

## INTRODUCTION

Video games, particularly mobile games, have emerged as a cultural force with global ramifications, influencing entertainment, social dynamics, and even aspects of identity. Within these virtual spaces, communities symbolically construct identities and boundaries, making them powerful sites for exploring how cultural narratives and representations are formed, shared, and visualized through design (Strønen, 2023: 597). In this expansive landscape, one standout phenomenon is the mobile game *Mobile Legends: Bang-Bang*. This gaming sensation has captured the hearts of millions, and a survey conducted by Telkomsel and tSurvey.id shed light on its profound impact on the gaming preferences in Indonesia. The survey unveiled a dominant preference for Multiplayer Online Battle Arena (MOBA) games, constituting a staggering 65% of the surveyed audience. MOBA, characterized by its intense online multiplayer battles set within themed arenas, has become a cornerstone of the gaming world. Within this genre, *Mobile Legends Bang-Bang* has risen to unparalleled popularity, securing its position as the go-to mobile game for 67% of respondents.

*Mobile Legends: Bang-Bang*, a quintessential MOBA game, is a virtual realm where players can immerse themselves in the diverse and captivating world of hero characters. What began with a modest lineup of 10 characters known as “Heroes” upon the game’s release in 2016 has blossomed into a vast array, numbering 70 in November 2018 and an astounding 117 Heroes by December 2021. Each hero in *Mobile Legends Bang-Bang* is not merely a virtual avatar; they are distinct entities with unique abilities, contributing to the dynamism and complexity of the gameplay (Barnett & Coulson, 2010: 167).

This research embarks on an ambitious journey to dissect and analyze the visual character of one of *Mobile Legends: Bang-Bang*’s beloved heroes, Hero Kadita. The selection of Hero Kadita for this comprehensive examination is far from arbitrary; it is rooted in the profound visual resonances observed between her design and depictions from the rich mythology of Javanese society in Indonesia. Hero Kadita, with her intricate visual representation, serves as a conduit to explore the intersection of virtual design and cultural narratives, providing a unique lens into the fusion of digital gaming and cultural heritage. Character design in video games is an art form that extends far beyond aesthetics. It is a strategic tool that plays a pivotal role in not only attracting players but also establishing emotional connections and conveying intricate narrative elements within the game (Barnett & Coulson, 2010: 167). The allure of Hero Kadita’s character design lies in its visual appeal and its potential to evoke emotions, narrate stories, and influence the overall gaming experience. In essence, character design is a multifaceted bridge that connects players to the virtual worlds they inhabit (Lankoski, 2011: 291), and in the case of Hero Kadita, to the cultural tapestry of Indonesia.

The development patterns of Hero Kadita’s character design offer a treasure trove of insights into the decision-making processes that contribute to her visual identity. What may initially appear as a mere virtual representation is, in fact, a carefully crafted persona that impacts how players perceive, engage, and derive meaning from the game. Hero Kadita’s design extends beyond the confines of being a visual entity; it influences the player’s journey, emotions, and interactions within the *Mobile Legends Bang-Bang* universe. In pursuit of a nuanced analysis, this research adopts two distinctive yet complementary approaches: The manga matrix and design anthropology. The manga matrix, a theoretical framework developed by Hiroyoshi Tsukamoto, unravels the intricate elements of character design inspired by manga, encompassing facial expressions, body posture, and visual composition (Tsukamoto, 2006: 13). Meanwhile, the Design Anthropology approach provides a cultural lens, allowing us to discern how Hero Kadita’s character resonates with Indonesian cultural nuances and aligns with player preferences.

The manga matrix approach serves as a gateway to delve into the artistic intricacies of Hero Kadita’s design. Inspired by the visual storytelling techniques of manga, this framework enables a granular examination of how facial expressions convey emotions, how body postures communicate strength or vulnerability, and how visual composition contributes to the overall narrative. The intention is to decipher the visual language embedded in Hero Kadita’s character design, unveiling the subtle nuances that contribute to her popularity. Simultaneously, the Design Anthropology approach broadens our perspective, framing Hero Kadita not merely as a digital creation but as a cultural artifact. It prompts us to ask critical questions about how her design reflects and resonates with the cultural heritage of Indonesia. Understanding the cultural and societal underpinnings of

Hero Kadita's character design provides a holistic view, elucidating why certain visual elements evoke strong connections with players in Indonesia.

This research, therefore, transcends the boundaries of typical gaming analyses. It aspires to offer a profound understanding of the role of character design in shaping not just a satisfactory gaming experience but an immersive and culturally resonant one (Sicart, 2009: 2). Beyond the confines of entertainment, Hero Kadita's character becomes a portal through which we explore the intricate interplay of design, culture, and player engagement. As the Indonesian gaming market rapidly evolves, this exploration aims to contribute valuable insights that extend beyond Mobile Legends: Bang-Bang, informing the broader discourse on the intricate relationships between virtual design, cultural identity, and player experiences in the dynamic landscape of digital gaming.

## METHOD

The chosen research methodology, descriptive qualitative research with manga matrix and design anthropology approaches, unfolds as a meticulous exploration into the intricate realm of character design within the popular Mobile Legends: Bang Bang game, with a specific focus on the captivating character, Hero Kadita. This method has been deliberately selected due to its suitability for uncovering nuanced visual adaptations and the symbolic construction embedded within digital character representations (Thorne et al., 1997: 169). In dissecting the visual components of the Hero Kadita character, the Manga Matrix approach takes center stage. This analytical framework is adept at scrutinizing facial expressions, body posture, costume design, and other visual nuances that define Kadita's virtual persona. By employing the Manga Matrix, the study aims to reveal the subtle aesthetic strategies and intentional design choices that contribute to the character's emotional appeal and symbolic resonance (Tsukamoto, 2006: 12).

Complementing the Manga Matrix is the Design Anthropology framework, which introduces a cultural lens into the visual analysis. This approach enables a deeper interpretation of the cultural meanings embedded in Kadita's design, drawing connections between visual motifs and traditional narratives surrounding Nyi Roro Kidul. The framework helps situate the character within a broader cultural discourse, offering insights into how localized mythological elements are translated into the global language of digital media (Blomberg & Darrah, 2015: 172). The data collection technique employed in this study is visual analysis, focusing on Kadita's appearance across various visual sources, including in-game visuals and official concept art. This method allows for a systematic interpretation of visual signs, symbols, and stylistic choices that inform the character's identity. Visual analysis is supported by interpretative tools drawn from cultural studies and media theory, providing a way to understand how design decisions shape user perception and cultural reception (Peräkylä, 2011: 289). Through this approach, the research aims to offer a comprehensive understanding of Hero Kadita's visual narrative and cultural significance within the contemporary gaming landscape.

### Design Anthropology

Design anthropology stands at the intersection of anthropology and design, offering a unique lens to examine the intricate connections between human societies, their cultures, and the artifacts they create (Blomberg & Darrah, 2015: 172). The approach delves into the study of how culture shapes and is shaped by the design process, investigating the profound impact of design on human behaviors, practices, and social structures. Central to design anthropology is the recognition that design is not merely about aesthetics or functionality but is deeply embedded in the social fabric of communities (Drazin, 2021: 10). The discipline explores the cultural significance of designs, ranging from everyday objects to more complex creative endeavors, and seeks to unravel the symbolic meanings and socio-cultural implications intertwined with these artifacts (Gunn, 2012: 12).

Key concepts within design anthropology encompass the examination of symbolic meaning, identity construction, and how designs reflect and influence cultural practices. Researchers in this field employ ethnographic methods, combining participant observation, interviews, and other qualitative techniques to gain rich insights into the cultural contexts that shape design processes and outcomes. In design anthropology, "Function and Symbolic Meaning" refers to how products, objects, or designs play a role in communicating

symbolic messages and conveying cultural meaning within a social or societal context (Blomberg & Darrah, 2015: 172). It involves understanding symbols, values, and meanings embedded in the design and how they can influence human perceptions and interactions.

*Symbolic Function:* Symbolic function relates to an object or design's ability to convey symbolic messages or carry meaning through visual representation or form. In the design process, designers consider how the designed object can function as a symbol or icon with cultural meaning. The designed object or product can become an expression of values, identity, or specific concepts within a society.

*Symbolic Meaning:* Symbolic meaning is tied to the interpretation or understanding given by a society to a symbol or icon. Symbolic meaning can vary among different cultural groups or societies (Gunn, 2012: 15). Designers also consider and pay attention to the symbolic meanings inherent in their designs to understand how society interprets and assigns value to the object or product. By understanding and considering the meanings given by the target audience, designers can create more effective designs.

*Relationship with Identity and Culture:* Design is often closely linked to a group's identity and culture. Symbols and specific cultural meanings embedded in design can shape or reflect that community's identity. Design anthropology observes how design can portray, celebrate, or represent cultural identity. Designers need to understand the cultural context to create designs that respect and reflect the diversity of societal identities.

By understanding the function and symbolic meaning, designers can create products or designs that are more relevant to the target audience, respect cultural values, and convey meaningful symbolic messages.

### Matrix System

A method developed by Hiroyoshi Tsukamoto for designing new characters using mathematical principles. The character creation system is deconstructed into its constituent elements, which are then simplified into a diagram that serves as a guide in the process of creating a character.

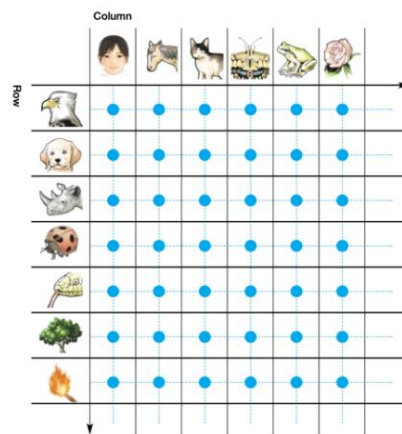


Figure 1. Manga matrix

The character design method within the matrix system theory involves three variables that serve as the foundation for creating a character.

### Form Matrix

The process of designing a character's structure and body shape involves a systematic deconstruction of the anatomical elements that constitute the character's physical form. These elements, such as the head, torso, limbs, and posture are analyzed and categorized to identify their distinctive visual characteristics. Tsukamoto design methodology (Manga Matrix) begins with organizing character body components into a matrix or tabular format, which this modular approach to recombination. Through this framework, designers can experiment with various permutations and combinations, ultimately generating a new character type that reflects both visual coherence and creative variation.



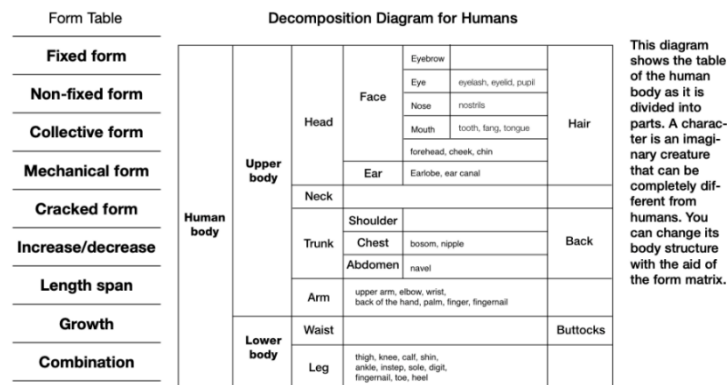


Figure 2. Form matrix

Subsequently, the development of a character's body type according to Tsukamoto Manga Matrix is guided by diverse morphological parameters that allow for creative variation and conceptual depth. These parameters include: fixed form (a stable and unchanging structure), non-fixed form (a transformable or fluid shape), collective form (a composite body formed from multiple entities), mechanical form (integrating mechanical or robotic features), cracked form (fragmented or deconstructed body shapes), increase/decrease (variations in size or proportion), length span (extension or contraction of body parts), growth (evolution or progression of form), and combination (a hybridization of multiple form attributes). Each parameter provides a framework through which designers can experiment with symbolic and visual interpretations, leading to the creation of unique and contextually meaningful characters.

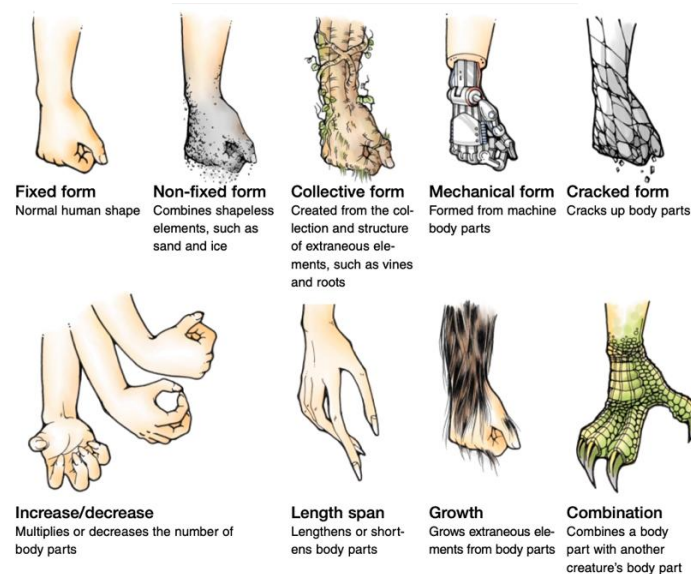


Figure 3. Form matrix parameters

### Costume Matrix (limitless costumes)

Once the character's physical form has been established, it is conceptualized as a blank canvas, comparable to a newborn human, ready to be imbued with identity through costume design. Costumes function not merely as decorative elements but as critical visual tools that reinforce and articulate the character's identity, role, and narrative context. Within the framework of the matrix system, designers are encouraged to consult a predefined set of costume parameters. These parameters guide selecting appropriate elements—ranging from headgear to footwear—that align with the intended personality, cultural symbolism, or thematic attributes of the character. Through this structured approach, costume design becomes an intentional and meaning-driven process, contributing to the overall coherence and distinctiveness of the character. The classification of costume parameters includes: Body wear, covering/footwear, ornament, makeup, wrap/tie, carry-on items and costume material classification: heaven, earth, water/fire, inorganic matter, image (Tsukamoto, 2006: 30).

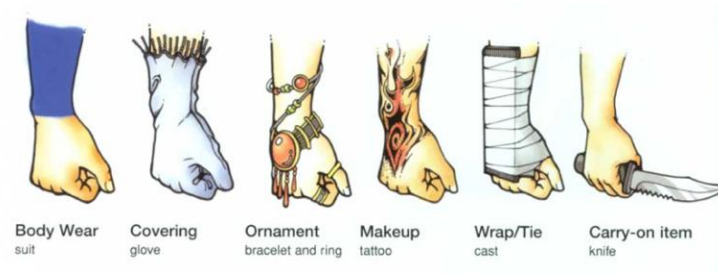


Figure 4. Costume matrix parameters

### Personality Matrix (limitless personalities)

Upon completing the character's physical form, the figure remains devoid of a fixed personality comparable to a blank canvas awaiting definition. At this stage, the character's identity is open to flexible interpretation, allowing designers to construct personality traits that align with the intended narrative and functional context. Within the matrix system, personality development is guided by parameters that help articulate the character's psychological and contextual dimensions. These parameters include behavior, status, profession, position, biological environment, special attributes, weaknesses, and desires. Each serves as a conceptual tool through which designers can systematically define the inner dynamics of a character, ensuring depth, coherence, and relatability in its overall portrayal

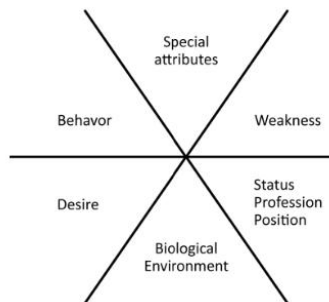


Figure 5. Personality matrix parameters

### FINDINGS

Hero Kadita is visually characterized by a confident facial expression, complemented by design elements that convey elegance and authority. Her long, flowing hair and symmetrical features contribute to a stylized representation often associated with divine or noble figures in character design. The green costume incorporates wave-like motifs, referencing oceanic themes consistent with her in-game persona as an ocean goddess. Additional elements, such as necklaces, bracelets crafted to resemble seashells, and a crown on her head, reinforce symbolic cues associated with regality and leadership. Her weapon, a trident, aligns with traditional representations of sea deities and visualizes indicator of her magical capabilities and combat role as a mage.



Figure 6. Hero Kadita, Mobile Legend Bang Bang

Hero Kadita has the unique ability to control the power of water and waves. She also has the passive ability “Thalassophobia” ability, making it very difficult for the enemy to catch her. Apart from that, Hero Kadita also has three more abilities, namely the “Breath of the Ocean” ability, which is an ability that allows her to absorb the power of enemy attacks and immediately produce quite a powerful counterattack and the ability “Ocean Oddy”, which can make him release attacks and slow down enemy movements, as well as his ultimate ability called “Charged Wave”, which can produce large waves that paralyze enemies and give massive attacks to enemies (Moonton, 2016).

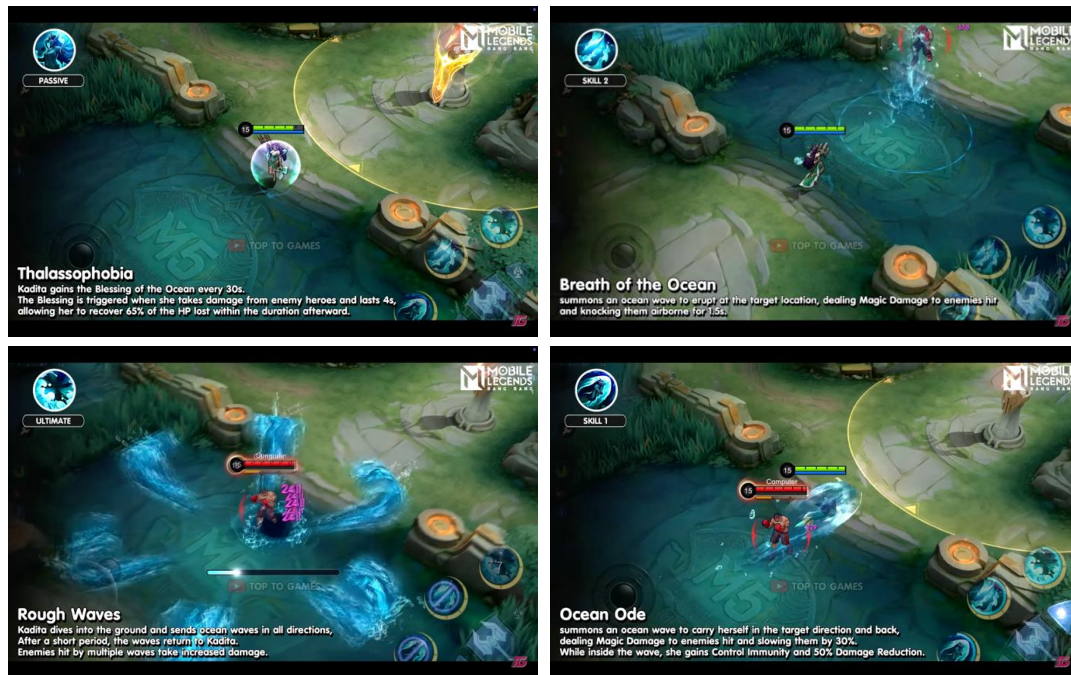


Figure 7. Mobile Legends: Bang Bang [Video Game]. (2016). Moonton.

The visual appearance of the character Hero Kadita strongly reminds Indonesians of the legendary figure Nyai Roro Kidul, a mythical character believed by the coastal communities of Java as the ruler of the ocean waves and all sea creatures. In many versions of the story, Nyi Roro Kidul is depicted wearing a golden crown and necklace symbolizing her grace and power as the ruler of the southern seas. Her physical appearance is often associated with green and blue, reflecting her connection to the sea and nature (Andayani & Jupriono, 2019: 28). The functional and symbolic meaning approach in the anthropology of design can help draw a connection between the design of the Hero Kadita and the description of Nyai Roro Kidul. In design anthropology, understanding cultural symbols and societal values can help elucidate the symbolic meanings embedded in visual design.

**Symbolic Function:** From a symbolic function perspective, Hero Kadita’s visual design elements are not merely decorative; they operate as visual signifiers that evoke deeper cultural and spiritual associations. Her trident, for example, functions symbolically as an extension of divine authority and dominion over water, commonly attributed to sea deities across various mythologies. Her crown and flowing gown reinforce her sovereign and sacred status, aligning her with regal or supernatural archetypes in Southeast Asian folklore. The deliberate use of the green and turquoise palette, often associated with the sea and nature, echoes traditional depictions of Nyi Roro Kidul, widely recognized in Indonesian culture as the Queen of the Southern Ocean. These visual cues both encode cultural memory and establish symbolic continuity between myth and modern media representation.

**Symbolic Meaning in Cultural Context:** In Indonesian society, Nyi Roro Kidul is not just a mythical figure but a living symbol of nature’s power, femininity, and spiritual mystery. By referencing her image through Hero Kadita, the character transcends fantasy to become a cultural signifier within the digital landscape. For Indonesian players, these symbolic associations evoke a sense of cultural familiarity and pride; for global players, they provide an entry point into understanding local mythologies. Hero Kadita’s long, flowing hair,





sea-themed ornaments, and semi-formal Javanese-style costume (closely resembling a modified kebaya dodotan) further reinforce this alignment with traditional ideals of beauty and mysticism. These elements collectively construct a symbolic narrative that blends spiritual femininity, oceanic power, and cultural heritage.

**Identity Construction and Cultural Representation:** Design anthropology stresses the importance of identity construction in design. Hero Kadita's design functions as a medium through which Indonesian cultural identity is expressed and reinterpreted within a global entertainment platform. Her character articulates a syncretism of traditional mythology with digital aesthetics, positioning her not only as a game avatar but also as a representation of Indonesian cultural heritage in a contemporary context. This identity construction is deliberate; by adapting folklore into a modern, playable character, designers contribute to the revitalization of cultural narratives that might otherwise be marginalized in the fast-paced digital age. Kadita becomes an ambassador of intangible cultural knowledge, making heritage accessible through interaction and play.



Using design anthropology as an analytical framework reveals that Hero Kadita is more than a fictional digital entity; she is a cultural artifact crafted at the intersection of myth, design, and interactive media. Hero Kadita's character reflects and communicates Indonesian cultural identity, spiritual values, and aesthetic traditions through the function and symbolic meaning of her visual elements. Her design exemplifies how digital game characters can act as vessels of cultural memory, and how culturally informed design can enrich user engagement by grounding fantasy in the real-world symbolic systems of the audience. By Tsukamoto's manga matrix theory, the design of Hero Kadita's physical form exemplifies a highly stylized yet coherent synthesis of anatomical elements, constructed to evoke elegance, divinity, and supernatural presence. The form matrix in this context provides a modular system to classify and combine bodily features to define a distinctive character archetype.

**Table 1.** Hero Kadita's form matrix


|   |   |
|---|---|
|  | <p><b>Head and Facial Structure</b><br/>Kadita's facial features are symmetrical and idealized, with a sharp jawline, high cheekbones, and almond-shaped eyes. These characteristics fall within the fixed form parameter, emphasizing classical beauty and stability often associated with characters of high status or divine origin. Her serene yet intense expression suggests confidence and authority, aligning with her mythical identity.</p>   |
|  | <p><b>Torso and Body Proportions</b><br/>The character's torso is elongated and narrow, conforming to idealized female body proportions often used in fantasy genres. This supports the growth parameter within the matrix, where the body is stretched vertically to evoke a graceful, ethereal presence. Her exposed shoulders and structured upper-body design accentuate femininity and power.</p> <p><b>Arms and Limbs</b><br/>Kadita's arms are slim and extended, matching the overall elegant silhouette. The arms serve both aesthetic and symbolic functions—visually supporting the regal and fluid qualities associated with water deities. The inclusion of shell-like ornaments and elongated fingers emphasizes delicacy while maintaining control, fitting within the non-fixed form when animated for in-game spellcasting.</p> <p><b>Posture and Legs</b><br/>Her posture is upright, symmetrical, and composed—exhibiting poise. The pose, along with her extended left hand and grounded stance with the trident, communicates dominance and readiness, which blends the fixed form (stability) and position-based expression, an implicit trait of the form matrix. Her legs are partially covered by a dress that splits to reveal the motion beneath, combining fixed form in structure with visual implications of movement and fluidity.</p> |

The design of Hero Kadita character is quite unique, representing a combination of characteristics. While at rest, Hero Kadita can be categorized as a hero with an unchanging body (fixed form). However, when using skills, Hero Kadita's body undergoes a transformation into a non-fixed form. This is due to her ability to merge with water or waves produced by the skills she employs.

**Table 2.** Hero Kadita's costume matrix

|  |   |
|--|---|
|   | <p>The type of clothing worn is synonymous with the traditional attire of the Javanese people known as "kebaya dodotan," which reflects a combination of grace and beauty. Kebaya dodotan typically features natural colors such as white, cream, or pastel hues and is often worn for special events like weddings, receptions, or other official occasions in Indonesia, especially in Java.</p> <p>The kebaya worn by Hero Kadita has gold accents with a fish scale motif. This clothing choice can create an impression of softness and spirituality, aligning with the legendary theme of Hero Kadita often associated with supernatural or magical powers.</p> <p>The ornaments not only mirror her regal stature as the ruler of the sea but also serves as a reflection of her in-game identity. The crown, resembling a peacock in full display, symbolizes her majestic authority, while the intricately designed necklace and bracelets adorning her upper arms signify her connection to the mystical powers of the ocean. As players navigate the battlefield with Hero Kadita, the green scarf gracefully wrapped around both hands become a visual testament to her prowess and the enchanting fluidity of her skills in summoning waves and wielding water magic. These accessories not only enhance Hero Kadita's in-game aesthetic but also contribute to the overall impression of her as a hero exuding both grace and elegance on the virtual battlegrounds of Mobile Legends: Bang-Bang.</p> |
|  | <p>Hero Kadita's footwear preference extends beyond mere aesthetics, the high-heeled boots, accentuated with a hint of gold, not only contribute to her regal appearance but also enhance her agility on the battlefield. As she gracefully maneuvers through the chaos of combat, the boots symbolize both her commanding presence and her ability to navigate the ever-changing tides of conflict with precision.</p> <p>Hero Kadita's choice of a trident as her carry-on item transcends mere mythological homage; it becomes a crucial element in defining her role as a formidable hero on the battlefield. The trident, reminiscent of the legendary weapons wielded by sea deities in Western myths (Peterson, Dunworth, 2004). serves as both a symbol of her dominion over the waters and a practical tool for unleashing devastating skills. With every swing of the trident, Hero Kadita channels the power of ancient sea gods, inflicting chaos upon her foes and solidifying her reputation as a commanding force in the game. This iconic weapon not only pays tribute to classical mythology but also reinforces Hero Kadita's standing as a Mobile Legends Bang-Bang hero who skillfully navigates the currents of battle with her mastery over the seas.</p>   |

**Table 3.** Hero Kadita's personality matrix

|   |   |
|---|---|
|  | <p>Behavior: Refers to how Hero Kadita responds to player input, moves, uses abilities, and interacts with the game environment. It encompasses the actions and mechanics associated with a particular character, and for Hero Kadita, it imparts an impression of grace and elegance, yet at the same time can swiftly transform into agility and lethality.</p> <p>Desire: Protecting her territory and conquering her adversaries</p> <p>Biological environment: Ocean</p> <p>Special Atribut:</p> <p>Ocean Oddity (Passive): Provides additional magic damage to her basic attacks and abilities.</p> <p>Thalassophobia (Skill 1): Releases a water wave that deals damage to enemies in a line and reduces their movement speed.</p> <p>Galaxy Wave (Skill 2): Sends a wave forward, dealing magic damage to enemies in its path. If the skill hits an enemy hero, it will reduce the cooldown of Thalassophobia.</p> <p>Ocean Oddity (Ultimate): Dives into the ground and creates a water explosion, dealing magic damage to enemies in the area. This skill has a knock-up effect on enemies hit.</p> <p>Weakness: Hero Kadita endurance in receiving physical attacks is very low.</p> <p>Status, Profession, position: Mage</p> |
|---|---|

## CONCLUSION

The research on the visual character of Hero Kadita in Mobile Legends Bang-Bang underscores the significance of adopting an anthropological approach in character design, particularly in the mobile gaming. By applying the “Function and Symbolic Meaning” approach from design anthropology and the Manga Matrix theory, the study offers a comprehensive analysis of visual elements, encompassing costume design, facial expressions, and body proportions, to understand their impact on the gaming experience. This investigation highlights the need to integrate anthropological perspectives into character design for video games, emphasizing the importance of cultural symbols and societal values in shaping character identities.

Simultaneously, the quality of graphics and visual presentation is paramount, as it is the initial aspect players notice, influencing their decision to engage with a game. Consequently, game development must involve meticulous visual concepts to align with the creator’s objectives. Visual appearance is the primary sensor perceived by the senses, playing a pivotal role in captivating users and immersing them in the gaming experience. Therefore, the design and development of a game’s visual concept necessitate a profound understanding of the anticipated user base. This understanding is achieved by recognizing how users interpret visual displays, known as visual perception. Game designers can mold the user’s visual perception by developing visual concepts.

An analysis of elements such as color, motifs, and character attributes facilitates an understanding of how design creates a profound visual narrative, communicating the identity and characteristics envisioned by a designer. In crafting a hero character in a game, symbols and design elements are not haphazardly arranged; they carry meanings that influence player perceptions and convey characteristics and narratives within the game. Consequently, this research suggests that designers and developers in the gaming industry should incorporate anthropological perspectives into their character design processes, fostering culturally resonant and immersive gaming experiences.

### Authors’ Contributions

The authors contributed equally to the study.

### Competing Interests

There is no potential conflict of interest.

### Ethics Committee Declaration

This study does not require ethics committee approval.

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#### Figure References

**Figure 1-5:** Tsukamoto, H. (2006). *Manga matrix: Create unique characters using the Japanese matrix system*. Harper Collins.

**Figure 6-8:** Mobile Legends Bang Bang. (n.d.). *Hero Kadita*. Mobil Legends. <https://m.mobilelegends.com/en/hero/75> (26.12.2023).

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#### Authors' Biography

**Benny Muhdaliha** is a Doctoral student in the art studies program at Indonesia Institute of the Arts Bali, Indonesia. He graduated from Bandung Institut of Technology with a bachelor's degree in 2006 and received his master's degree from Bandung Institute of Technology Fine Art program in 2011. He currently works as a lecturer at Department of Visual Communication Design at Budi Luhur University. Her academic interests focus on Visual Communication design, character design, and the phenomenology of Visual Design.

**I Gede Mugi Raharja** is a Professor at the Department of Interior Design Faculty of Art and Design, lecturer at Doctor of Arts and Design Program at Indonesia Institute of the Arts Bali.

**Alit Kumala Dewi** completed her bachelor of Fine Arts and Design majoring in Visual Communication Design in 2007 at ISI Denpasar, then appointed as a lecturer in 2008 at the DKV-FSRD Study Program ISI Denpasar. Continuing her master's in design studies at the Bandung Institute of Technology and obtaining a degree in 2011. In 2017, she took a Doctoral Program in art studies at the Doctoral Program of the Postgraduate Art Study Program ISI Denpasar. She is still actively teaching at the DKV Study Program, and the Design Study Program of the master's Program ISI Bali, involved in research and community service, creation/exhibition of works of art, as well as being a judge, journal reviewer, seminar speaker especially in the fields of promotion and advertising.

**I Made Pande Artadi** completed his bachelor's degree at Udayana University, his master's degree at Bandung Institute of Technology, and his Doctorate at Udayana University. From 1999 to 2003, he worked as a lecturer in the Design Department, Fine Arts and Design Study Program at Udayana University. He has been a lecturer in the Interior Design Study Program at the Indonesian Institute of the Arts Bali since 2003. He has also been teaching in the Design Study Program at the master's level and supervising final projects in the Arts Study Program at the Doctoral level at the Indonesian Institute of the Arts Bali since 2023. He is active in various professional organizations and previously served as Chairman of the Indonesian Interior Designers Association (HDII) Bali Chapter from 2016 to 2018.