

DESIGNING DIGITAL COMIC STRIP INTRODUCING THE CITY OF SURABAYA TO HELP OUT-OF-TOWN STUDENTS COPE WITH CULTURE SHOCK

Michelle Amarta Devi / 21420100011 / michelleamarta16@gmail.com



BACKGROUND

Many Indonesian students from different regions such as West Java, East Nusa Tenggara and North Sumatra come to Surabaya to study at university. As the second largest city in Indonesia, Surabaya recorded a significant inflow of newcomers, with **77,068 migrants** entering the city in 2022 alone (Dispendukcapil, 2023). Due to cultural differences and limited knowledge about the city, these students often face challenges in adapting. Moving to a big urban area like Surabaya can lead to culture shock, resulting in feelings of stress, confusion, and difficulty adjusting to new surroundings.

GOAL

Help out-of-town students studying in Surabaya to adapt more easily and reduce the impact of "culture shock" that they experience. This comic is designed as an educational media that is light, interesting, and easily understood by generation Z, by presenting information about the culture, habits, and lifestyle of the people of Surabaya, as well as providing adaptation tips visually and narratively.

FINDINGS

Regional students in Surabaya experience culture shock due to differences in language, climate, and lifestyle. Comic strips are an effective and light medium to support their adaptation through relatable stories and peer support. This is reflected in early Instagram posts, which received positive responses. Many students related to the stories and liked the funny, well-represented characters. However, likes remain low due to limited reach, and no comments have been made, indicating that engagement still needs improvement through better promotion.

DESIGN PROJECT

The project designs a digital comic strips titled *Pantau Sebelum Merantau*, telling the story of three regional students adapting life in Surabaya, based on real experiences, each of 12 episodes highlights a different culture shock theme, using relatable narratives and expressive visuals to help students adapt more easily.

EMPHATIZE

Conducting observations of the environments of out-of-town students, such as their places of residence and student communities, while also carrying out interviews with them.

DEFINE

This stage processes interview data to define core student struggles in Surabaya, guiding the comic's purpose: helping newcomers understand, relate to, and gradually adapt to local culture.

IDEATE

The Ideate stage explores how to convey culture shock through storytelling. Keyword, characters, and colors were developed using observation, literature review, and color psychology research.

PROTOTYPE

The Prototype stage creates a draft comic with characters, colors, layout, and story to show how the final product will communicate the message.

TESTING

Test the comic strip with university students to evaluate and improve.

