

# Transformation of Female Masculinity in Bala Anjani Dance to Webtoon Comics as Gender Education Media

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## ABSTRACT

*Bala Anjani Dance contains a message of gender equality, emphasizing that women and men have equal positions. This social message aims to eliminate gender discrimination and destroy negative stereotypes against women. However, the limitations of traditional art media limit the reach of this message. This study aims to transform masculinity in the choreography of the Bala Anjani Dance, which is full of social values, into a digital comic media based on the Webtoon platform to reach the wider community, especially the younger generation. The research method uses a qualitative-descriptive approach to analyze the art of the Bala Anjani Dance and a design approach to produce comic products. The media transfer process includes several stages: (1) ecranization to transfer the moral message of gender equality into a comic story; (2) reduction, namely simplifying the original story to make it more interesting; (3) additions and variations to the story, setting, and characterization; (4) product testing on 30 students; and (5) implementation, namely the creation of a digital comic to be published on Webtoon. The results of the study produced the character and story of the comic "Bala Anjani" which raises the value of gender equality. Based on the test, 100% of respondents considered the character illustrations attractive, 87% stated that the color composition was harmonious, and 84% considered the storyline easy to understand. All respondents agreed that the story conveys a moral message of gender equality. The final product in the form of comic panels is ready to be published on Webtoon. This study shows that the transformation of traditional art into digital media is effective in conveying social messages to a wider audience. This approach has the potential to be a model for media transfer for other traditional arts to support education and gender equality campaigns.*

## KEYWORDS

Bala Anjani  
Masculinity  
Gender  
Webtoon Comic  
Transforming

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## INTRODUCTION

Indonesia has a variety of arts spread throughout the region. This is reflected in one of the numbers of arts designated as Indonesian intangible heritage until 2023, which is 1,941 objects (Maryanto Rompon et al., 2023). This number is a manifestation of the diversity of local wisdom of the community and the uniqueness of each region in Indonesia (Niman, 2019). These diverse arts have various roles, not only as a medium of aesthetic expression (Anggoro, 2018), but also play a role in representing moral values and messages (Denada & Gusmanto, 2022), one of which is the Bala Ajani Dance (Nahdlatuzzainiyah et al., 2021). Bala Ajani Dance is one of the regional arts originating from Lombok, West Nusa Tenggara. Bala Anjani consists of two words, namely Bala, which means troops, and Anjani, which means Dewi Anjani (Nahdlatuzzainiyah et al., 2021). The Bala Anjani dance depicts a group

of female troops fighting against the invaders. Unlike most other dances that emphasize feminine movements, namely flexibility and grace in their choreography, the Bala Anjani Dance actually emphasizes the masculine aspect, namely strength and spirit. In addition to depicting the Women's Movement fighting against the invaders, the masculinity in the choreography implies a social message related to gender equality (Nahdlatuzzainiyah et al., 2021).

Bala Anjani Dance carries the message that women and men have the same position and cannot be distinguished. If the war against the colonizers, who are very identical to men, can also be carried out by women, then other activities are the same. Bala Anjani Dance implies eliminating all forms of discrimination between women and men. In current culture, women accept stereotypes as second-class humans who must submit to men (Fadila et al., 2023). This is reflected in the Global Gender Gap Report 2022, which shows the low gender inequality score in Indonesia, which is 0.697, or ranked 92 out of 146 countries (Hausmann et al., 2022).

The social message contained in the Bala Anjani dance art can be one way to campaign for gender issues and break down the current stereotypes of women. To achieve this, the social message of the Bala Anjani dance must be able to reach all segments of society. However, in reality, the Bala Anjani dance art as a medium has limitations. First, the social message that is trying to be conveyed is implicit, so it requires analysis and the ability to understand from the audience to digest the message (Rochayati, 2017). Then the Bala Anjani dance is only performed in certain places and times so that it can only reach a limited audience.

In order to respond to these limitations, namely by renewing the media, or what is then called media transfer (Prasetya et al., 2023), Media transfer refers to the activity or process of transforming, changing, or moving from one type of art to another (Suisno et al., 2022). Masculinity in the choreography of the Bala Anjani Dance Art, which is full of social values, is trying to be transferred into a medium that can reach all segments of society, follow the times, and easily convey messages. In accordance with these characteristics and needs, the choice of media types is narrowed down to digital comics on the webtoon platform.

Webtoon is a digital platform that provides digital comic publications owned by the Line technology company (Pratiwi et al., 2022). The webtoon platform is one of the largest digital comic provider platforms in the world (Yu & Park, 2023). The webtoon platform has 35 million active users, 6 million of whom are users from Indonesia (Putri, 2023). This makes Indonesia the country with the highest number of active Webtoon users in the world (Lestari, 2020). This shows that the webtoon platform as a provider of digital comics has a wide reach and is very suitable as a medium for disseminating information. Like North Korean society, which spreads feminist ideology through webtoon comic narratives (Ningsih, 2023) and the webtoon comic "Just a Friend," which tries to convey a message to destroy the culture of orthodoxy values of masculine dominance in men (Putri, 2023). The use of comics as a dissemination of information is also effective because research results show that most people are interested in comics (Murti et al., 2020). Through comics, the message to be conveyed is easier to accept because it is presented in more than one system, namely images and text (Kuttner et al., 2021).

**This study aims** to design a webtoon comic character with responsive gender equality between men and women based on the Bala Anjani dance choreography through a media transfer process. **The novelty of this study** is that, so far, no other art form has been found as a result of the media transfer of the Bala Anjani Lombok Dance art, especially in the form

of webtoon comics. Likewise, only one article or study was found discussing the Bala Anjani Dance art (Nahdlatuzzainiyah et al., 2021), namely:

**Table 1.** State of the Art

Research	Method		Final Result		Information
	Descriptive	Vehicle Transfer Design	Report	Product	
Recently	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	This research focuses on turning the Bala Anjani dance into a webtoon comic character.
	Yes	No	No	No	The research focuses on describing the choreography of the Bala Anjani dance.

Based on Table 1, several conclusions can be drawn regarding the differences and similarities between previous research and the research to be conducted. First, the transformation of the Bala Anjani dance into another form of art is a relatively new concept, as no prior research has explored this aspect. This transformation represents an innovative approach to interpreting traditional art forms, blending them with contemporary artistic expressions. Second, the design of webtoon comic characters based on the choreography of the Bala Anjani dance is also a novel idea that has not been addressed in existing studies. The incorporation of dance movements into visual storytelling through webtoon characters offers a fresh perspective on how choreography can influence digital art. Finally, the integration of gender-responsive moral messages derived from the Bala Anjani dance choreography is an aspect that has not been explored in previous research. This research aims to highlight how the choreography, with its cultural and moral significance, can serve as a medium for conveying messages that are sensitive to gender issues. These three areas of study, while rooted in traditional dance, contribute new insights to the intersection of art, culture, and digital media.

## METHOD

The process of transforming the Bala Anjani dance art into a webtoon comic involves both a qualitative approach and a design approach. The qualitative approach utilizes a descriptive method to collect comprehensive information and study the Bala Anjani dance art. This is crucial for obtaining credible and valid data that will inform the design process and ensure a smooth transition from dance to comic form. Data collection methods include interviews and literature studies, which serve to deepen understanding of the dance's cultural and artistic significance, as well as to gather relevant insights that will guide the transformation process.

The design approach, on the other hand, draws upon an adaptation of the transformation model, which is used to produce a work that reinterprets the Bala Anjani dance art into a series of characters and a webtoon comic. The transformation model, as outlined by Afdhal and Zahrah (2023), consists of four primary steps: ecranization, reduction, addition, and variation. In this study, the model is expanded by incorporating two additional steps—testing and implementation—to assess the effectiveness of the final product and ensure that the transformation process remains both relevant and engaging. Each step of the design process is integral to the successful adaptation of the dance art into a new medium, ensuring that its

core messages and visual appeal are preserved while making it accessible to a wider audience.

Ecranization is the first step in the design process. It involves transferring the moral message embedded in the choreography of the Bala Anjani dance into a different artistic medium—specifically, a digital comic character that will be featured on the webtoon platform. The essence of gender equality, conveyed through the dance's movements, is reinterpreted into visual storytelling, where the characters and scenes are designed to reflect these values. This transfer ensures that the dance's moral message remains intact while being presented in a way that resonates with modern audiences, particularly through the accessibility of digital comics.

The second step, reduction, involves simplifying and trimming down the original form of the Bala Anjani dance art. The purpose of reduction is to enhance the art's appeal by removing elements that might be extraneous or not as engaging in the new format. For example, the original story or synopsis of the dance may be shortened or modified to make it more captivating and attention-grabbing, ensuring that the digital comic remains concise and impactful while retaining its cultural significance.

Additions and variations make up the third step, which occurs during the conversion process from a physical art form (dance) to a digital narrative (webtoon comic). This stage involves enriching the story with new elements, such as background details, additional characters, and altered plotlines, while ensuring the integrity of the original meaning is preserved. The story of the Bala Anjani dance art will be expanded to add dramatic tension and depth without distorting its cultural roots. This stage may also include the introduction of new characters who play a role in advancing the narrative or enhancing the visual appeal, contributing to a more dynamic and engaging comic experience.

The testing phase follows as the fourth step in the transformation model. This phase is crucial for determining the effectiveness of the newly created digital comic. Small groups of approximately 30 users will be asked to read the comic and provide feedback through questionnaires. This trial process will help assess whether the comic successfully conveys the intended messages and if the audience finds it engaging and meaningful. Feedback gathered during this phase will inform any necessary revisions to improve the product before its official release.

Finally, the implementation stage represents the culmination of the design process. The digital comic, after being tested and refined, will be officially published on the webtoon platform. This platform allows the comic to reach a wide audience, enabling the Bala Anjani dance's cultural and moral messages to be shared globally. The comic, now in its final form, will be presented as a series of illustrated story panels that creatively communicate the themes of gender equality and cultural heritage, offering a modern, digital interpretation of a traditional art form.

Through this comprehensive and iterative design process, the transformation of the Bala Anjani dance into a webtoon comic not only preserves its cultural essence but also explores new avenues for storytelling in the digital age. The process ensures that the dance's rich messages of gender equality are communicated effectively to a broader, more diverse audience, making traditional art forms accessible and relevant in the contemporary world.

## RESULT AND DISCUSSION

### *The History of Tari Bala Anjani*

The Bala Anjani Dance is a traditional dance originating from the island of Lombok, located in West Nusa Tenggara. This unique dance was created in 2004 by H. Abdul Hamid,

a renowned dancer and the owner of the Sanggar Tari Tunggal Galih Denggen in Denggen Village, Selong District, East Lombok Regency. The name "Bala Anjani" itself holds significant meaning. "Bala" refers to troops, while "Anjani" represents Dewi Anjani, a revered figure in Sasak tribe beliefs. Dewi Anjani is considered the incarnation of the goddess or queen of the jinns who protect the land of Lombok, embodying strength and guardianship over the region.

The Bala Anjani Dance portrays the physical movements of women engaged in battle, reflecting a theme of strength and resilience. This is particularly noteworthy because, unlike most dances in Lombok that tend to feature graceful and gentle choreography, the Bala Anjani Dance is characterized by more masculine and forceful movements, similar to those of men engaged in combat. This distinctive aspect of the dance showcases the power and vitality of women, challenging traditional notions of femininity in dance forms.

Originally, the dance was created for large-scale, sacred ceremonies and rituals, often performed during significant cultural or religious events. Its powerful movements and symbolism made it a fitting expression for such solemn occasions. However, over time, the Bala Anjani Dance has evolved and adapted to become a popular form of entertainment. While it still retains its cultural and spiritual significance, it is now also performed in more secular settings, continuing to captivate audiences with its unique blend of tradition and strength.

## The Design

### 1. *Ecranization*

Ecranization in this study is to transfer the moral message of gender equality contained in the Bala dance choreography. This process is carried out in two stages, namely first concretizing the moral message of gender equality in the Bala Anjani dance choreography into a complete storyline. The result of this process is a synopsis of the Bala Anjani comic story as follows:

*“Dewi Anjani is a princess from the honorable Sasak tribe. She is known as a wise and strong leader. Anjani not only masters the art of fighting but is also good at dancing. One of the traditional dances of the Sasak tribe is the Bala Dance, depicting the body movements of a group of brave women who are preparing to go to war and showing their agility and courage that depict movements like on the battlefield.*

*Together with her soldiers, Sekar, Warni, Sri, and Ayu, Anjani trains strong female soldiers to protect their land from enemy threats. They are brave women who have been trained to defend their tribe from enemy attacks that threaten peace. On the other hand, Bumi, the leader of the male soldiers, who has a cunning and arrogant nature, does not believe in the abilities of female soldiers. He often underestimates them and thinks that only male soldiers are able to protect the tribe. Bumi, along with other male troops, thinks that the battlefield is too dangerous a place for women.*

*Once, when a great war hit their tribe, Bumi led his troops with arrogance and confidence that they would easily defeat the enemy. However, he and his troops were conquered by the enemy and taken prisoner. News of this defeat was heard by Anjani and his female soldiers. They then decided to devise a rescue strategy. With movements inspired by the Bala Anjani Dance, which teaches beauty and strength in war movements, they finally managed to infiltrate and free Bumi and the other troops from captivity.*

*This battle changes Bumi's view of female warriors. He realizes that the strength and intelligence of Anjani and her friends, as depicted in their dance, is as great as the physical strength of male warriors. They finally come together and work together and respect each other to defend their land.”*

The second is to realize the synopsis of the Bala Anjani story into a comic character with traits and characteristics that support the delivery of the moral message of gender equality. The process of creating this character uses the Procreate and Corel Draw 2024 applications. The characters that have been created are as follows:

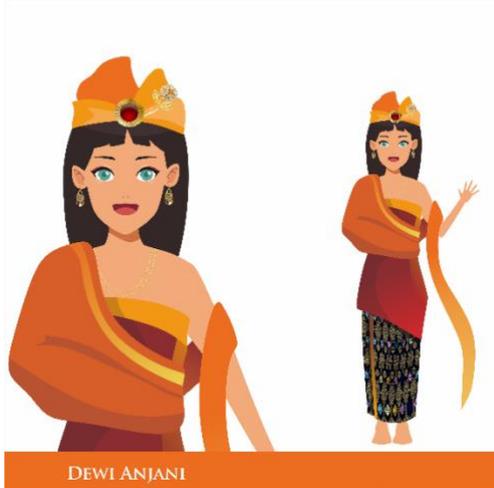


Figure 1. Dewi Anjani Characterization

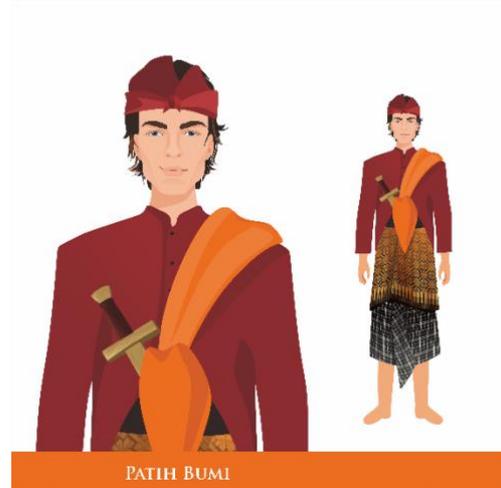


Figure 2. Patih Bumi Characterization

Dewi Anjani is the protagonist and main character in this story, she is a princess from the Sasak tribe with a good, wise nature and does not discriminate against people. Patih Bumi or familiarly called Bumi is the antagonist in this story. He is the leader of the Sasak tribe's male warriors who has a cunning and arrogant nature, does not believe in the abilities of female warriors. He often underestimates women and assumes that only male warriors are able to protect the tribe.

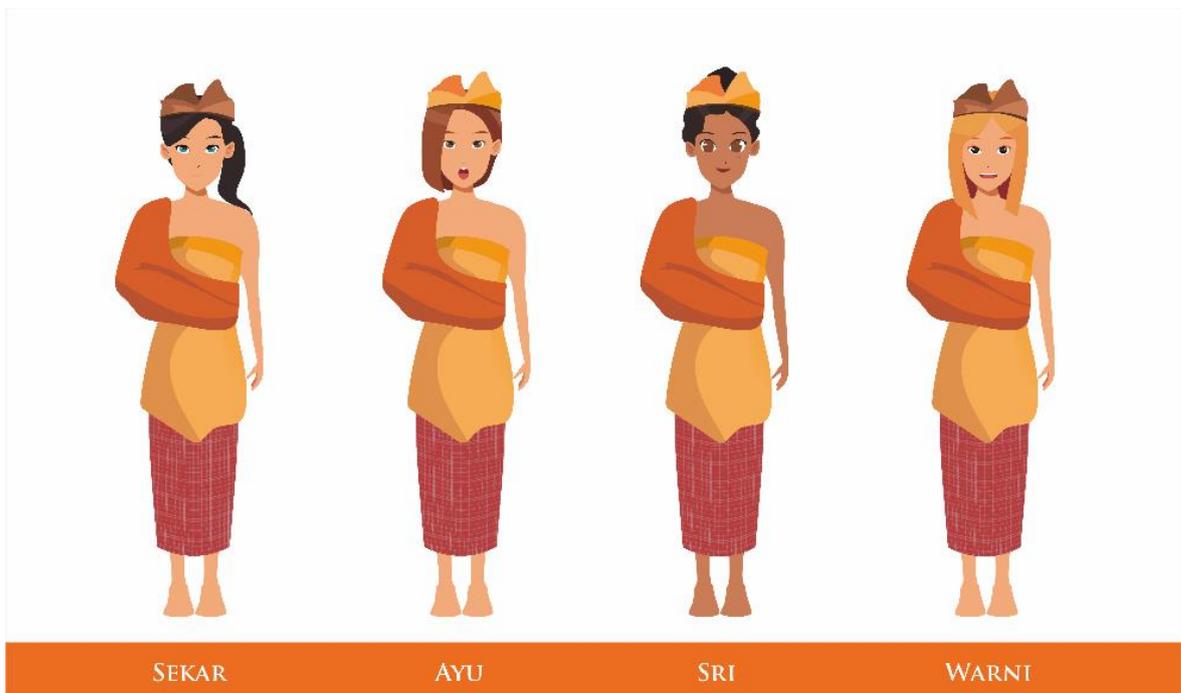


Figure 3. The Soldiers

The soldiers of Bala Anjani, namely Sekar, Ayu, Sri, and Warni, are Dewi Anjani's friends who have been considered family. Since childhood, they have played and trained together. They are very obedient to Dewi Anjani's orders. Sekar has a firm character, doesn't talk much, but is very caring towards her friends. Ayu has a humorous character and is talkative and cheerful. Sri has a motherly character and often mediates when there is a debate. Warni is the youngest member; she has a good character but lacks self-confidence.

## 2. *Reduction*

In the transformation process of the Bala Anjani dance into a digital webtoon comic, the reduction phase plays a crucial role in streamlining the original content to ensure that it remains captivating and focused for the new medium. The reduction process involves condensing and simplifying the original story or synopsis of the dance art, ensuring that it retains its core message while becoming more engaging for a broader audience. One of the key aspects of this reduction is the exclusion of certain elements that are inherent to the original dance choreography, which may not directly contribute to the narrative or thematic focus of the comic.

Specifically, the reduction in this study was carried out by omitting the detailed physical movements from the original choreography of the Bala Anjani dance, which include the Bejonjong Movement, Ngampeh Movement, and Ngampet Movement, as outlined by Nahdlatuzzainiyah et al. (2021). These movements are integral to the physical performance of the dance and are a significant part of the original art form. However, for the purposes of the webtoon comic, these movements are not directly translated into the visual storytelling medium. Instead, the focus is shifted to the dance's moral message, particularly the theme of gender equality, which is central to the dance's original meaning.

By removing the specific choreographic elements and instead emphasizing the underlying message of gender equality, this transformation process ensures that the comic is not constrained by the limitations of representing physical movements but can instead explore the deeper, more universal themes of the dance. The resulting comic will center on conveying the essence of the moral lessons from the Bala Anjani dance, reinterpreted through characters and narrative arcs, while still honoring the original intent of the dance as a cultural expression of empowerment.

This reduction phase allows the new form—digital webtoon comics—to attract and engage a contemporary audience by presenting a simplified yet powerful version of the original content, with a focus on the symbolic aspects rather than the literal choreography. Through this approach, the moral message of gender equality is communicated in a way that is accessible and relevant to today's readers, transcending the boundaries of traditional dance performance and making the message resonate in a modern, digital context.

## 3. *Additions and Variations*

Additions and variations in this design process are carried out in terms of story, background, and characterization. The story in the Bala Anjani dance art will be developed in order to get a dramatic impression without damaging the meaning contained in the art. Additions were also made to the background and characterization of characters. For the sake of the storyline, there will be the addition of several new characters to the comic from the vehicle adaptation. In detail, the additions or variations made are: First, for a dramatic impression, the story is developed by varying the plot. The plot used in this story is a forward plot. A forward plot is a series of events that start regularly from the beginning to the end of

the story (Aulia Kartikasari, 2022). This is to make it easier for readers to understand the moral message being conveyed.

Second, to create friction in the Bala Anjani comic plot, a main character, Patih Bima, who is crafty and arrogant, is introduced. Finally, variations in character clothes or apparel based on traditional Sasak clothing with certain modifications or combinations. For example, the character Dewi Anjani wears conventional Sasak clothes from Bayan, North Lombok, known as jong bayan, with adaptations such as sapuk or bongot on the head and songket from Central Lombok on the bottom. Then jewelry was added to identify and highlight Dewi Anjani as the main character from the other characters.

#### 4. Test

The test aims to determine the product assessment and obtain input from users. In this study, the test phase was conducted to obtain input from users regarding the comic characters that have been developed and the story synopsis. The test involved users in small groups of 30 people, namely students majoring in Visual Communication Design at Bumigora University. They will be asked to read the synopsis of the digital comic of the Bala Anjani dance art and review the comic characters, and then ask them to fill out a questionnaire related to the product. The following results were obtained:

**Table 1.** Test results

No	Indicator	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree		Total	
		n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
1.	Attractive character illustration design	30	100	-	-	-	-	-	-	30	100
2.	Harmonious character color composition	26	87	4	13	-	-	-	-	30	100
3.	The synopsis is easy to understand	25	84	5	16	-	-	-	-	30	100
4.	The story synopsis contains a moral message	30	100	-	-	-	-	-	-	30	100
<b>Total</b>		111	92,5	9	7,5	-	-	-	-	120	100

According to the test, for the illustration design indicator, all students said that the comic character illustration design is very interesting; for the color indicator, 26 students, or 87%, strongly agree that the color composition of the character design is harmonious, and 4 students, or 13%, agree that the color composition of the character design is harmonious. The summary flow indicator was then rated by 25 students (84% strongly agree) and 5 students (16% agree). The students then unanimously agree that the description of the Bala Anjani story contains a moral message.

#### 5. Implementation

The final stage in this transformation process is implementation, which involves the realization of the completed product—the digital comic character design—ready for public presentation. After going through the various stages of ecranization, reduction, and additions, this stage represents the culmination of the design process. Here, the abstract ideas

and concepts are fully realized into a tangible, visual form that will be shared with a wider audience. The digital comic, now composed of carefully crafted character designs and story panels, is prepared for publication on the webtoon platform, a popular platform for digital comics that reaches a broad, global audience.

At this stage, the designs that have been developed throughout the research are brought together in a cohesive format. The characters, which were initially conceptualized and developed based on the Bala Anjani dance choreography, are illustrated in full detail. These characters, embodying the themes of gender equality and the spirit of the original dance, are placed within the narrative of the webtoon, allowing readers to engage with the story and its moral messages. The story is presented through a series of digital comic panels, each designed to capture the attention of the reader while communicating the core values and lessons derived from the Bala Anjani dance.

Once the digital comic panels are finalized, the product is ready to be published on the webtoon platform. This platform provides a unique opportunity for the comic to reach a global audience, allowing people from diverse backgrounds to access and enjoy the work. The webtoon format, with its digital accessibility and interactive nature, enables readers to experience the story in a dynamic and engaging way. The publication on this platform not only serves as a way to showcase the transformation of the Bala Anjani dance into a new art form but also helps to preserve and promote the cultural message of gender equality that the dance embodies.

By publishing the final product on the webtoon platform, the research ensures that the message of the Bala Anjani dance—along with its powerful themes of empowerment and equality—reaches a modern, digital audience. This implementation phase marks the transition of the work from a concept in development to a publicly accessible, fully realized artistic piece, ready to engage, educate, and inspire readers around the world.



Figure 4. Last Product

## CONCLUSIONS

This vehicle transfer method is carried out in various stages: (1) Ecranization to communicate the moral message of gender equality inherent in the choreography of the Bala Anjani dance. (2) Shrinking, that is, decreasing the original plot or synopsis of the Bala Anjani dance art in order to make it more engaging. (3) Additions and alterations in this design process are made in terms of story, story background, and characters. (4) The test or trial stage is designed to determine product evaluation and gather feedback from users. Based on the test results, it is known that for the illustration design indication, all students felt that the comic character illustration design was extremely engaging; for the color indicator, 26 students with an 87% strongly agreed that the The color composition of the character design was harmonious, as agreed upon by four students (13%). The summary flow indication was then rated as easy to comprehend by 25 students (84% strongly agreed) and 5 students (16% agreed). The students then unanimously agreed that the description of the Bala Anjani story carries a moral message. (5) Implementation, which entails creating the final product in the form of a digital comic character design to be published on the webtoon platform.

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