

Character Design for the Illustrated Book “Tukang Pos Pembawa Mimpi”

Brilliant Firdaus Ramadhani^{1)*}, Aninditya Daniar²⁾, Masnuna³⁾

^{1,2,3)} Visual Communication Design, Faculty of Architecture and Design, Universitas Pembangunan Nasional ‘Veteran’ Jawa Timur, Indonesia

*Corresponding Author

Email : 21052010170@student.upnjatim.ac.id

How to cite: Ramadhani, B. F., Daniar, A., & Masnuna, M. (2025). Character Design for the Illustrated Book “Tukang Pos Pembawa Mimpi”. *Gorga : Jurnal Seni Rupa*, 14 (2), 761-766. <https://dx.doi.org/10.24114/gr.v14i2.65122>

Article History : Received: April 29, 2025. Revised: December 30, 2025. Accepted: December 31, 2025

ABSTRACT

Character design is a crucial visual element in media, particularly illustrated books. “Tukang Pos Pembawa Mimpi” is an illustrated book that explores themes of dreams and aspirations for teenagers aged 16-18. The story follows a postman who guides readers on a journey of self-discovery to help them find their dreams. This study aims to develop a character design for a 16-year-old postman to be utilized in an illustrated book. The research methodology employed is a descriptive qualitative approach, utilizing observation, analysis, and interviews. The resulting character design possesses high visual appeal and effectively caters to the target audience’s age, thereby fostering their interest in reading the book’s content. The character adopts a cartoonish style and exudes a friendly demeanor.

KEYWORDS

Dream
Illustration Book
Character Design
Postman

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INTRODUCTION

Dreams or aspirations are desires or hopes that an individual aims to achieve in their future. Having a goal to pursue in life fosters a tendency for individuals to strive toward realizing it. According to [Natalia et al. \(2024\)](#), individuals with aspirations are generally more motivated to achieve their dreams. However, many teenagers still lack a clear life purpose and struggle to understand what they want to accomplish in the long term. Meanwhile, Anna Freud, as cited in [Saputro \(2018\)](#), suggests that during adolescence, there is development encompassing psychosexual changes and shifts in relationships with parents and their aspirations. Forming aspirations during this phase is a process of determining the future direction of teenagers.

Based on a survey conducted by [Putri and Abra \(2018\)](#), Youthmanual, a startup incubated by Skystar Ventures, Tech Incubator Universitas Multimedia Nusantara (UMN), conducted a two-year study analyzing over 400,000 profiles and data of students and university students across Indonesia. The study revealed striking findings: 92% of high school/vocational school students are confused and unsure about their future careers, while 45% of university students feel they chose the wrong major. Additionally, the primary reason for students’ and university students’ difficulty in choosing a major is their lack of understanding of their own talents and potential.

Based on these findings, adolescence is an ideal period for setting aspirations, during which

teenagers begin reflecting on their future goals and recognizing their personal abilities and desires for development. Therefore, in this design project, the primary audience is teenagers aged 16–18 years who face difficulties in determining their future goals, aspirations to achieve, and interests that suit them. Addressing this phenomenon, an appropriate medium is needed to capture teenagers' interest, facilitate comprehension of the conveyed insights, and evoke their empathy to explore further. Consequently, visual media, such as illustrated books, is deemed a suitable choice to meet these needs. This aligns with [Jasmin \(2022\)](#), who states that illustrated books can deliver information in a concise and engaging manner using simple language, integrating text and visuals, which matches teenagers' preferences for creative and practical content. In illustrated books, character design tailored to the target audience is also essential. According to [Khamadi and Senoprabowo \(2021\)](#), as cited in [Ronggowarsito et al. \(2022\)](#), creating character designs requires consideration of the values to be highlighted. However, not all values need to be applied rigidly but should be adapted to the theme and needs of the medium used.

According to [Novica and Hidayat \(2018\)](#), as cited in [Allifia et al. \(2025\)](#), character design plays a crucial role in picture storybooks as a visual representation of human emotions or traits with specific purposes, and in its creation process, characters must be designed to appear lifelike, resembling humans. Character design is rooted in acting principles, where an actor must understand a character's emotions to express them authentically through gestures and expressions.

This study focuses on designing a character who will accompany reader for the illustrated book "Tukang Pos Pembawa Mimpi". The Postman character is designed to be 16 years old, based on the perspective of child psychologist Alzena Masykouri, M.Psi, who states that the age of 16 is an appropriate period for children to plan their future, such as determining aspirations and strategies to achieve them. Thus, the character design is created with characteristics suitable for a 16-year-old, aligning with the target audience and incorporating supporting elements closely related to dreams.

Through the design of the Postman character for the illustrated book "Tukang Pos Pembawa Mimpi" it is expected to align with the characteristics of the target audience and evoke a comfortable and friendly feeling to attract audience empathy, thereby facilitating a better understanding of the book's content.

METHOD

This design method involves data collection and visual design stages. In the data collection stage, information is gathered in-depth regarding perceptions, experiences, or perspectives from various sources, such as interviews and articles. The collected data is then analyzed using the 5W+1H technique, which helps break down key points applicable to character design, making them easier to understand. Based on these points, a data synthesis is drawn, summarizing all aspects needed for the character design in the visual design stage.

In the visual design stage, three steps are undertaken. The first is pre-production, which elaborates on the information and concepts gathered from the data collection stage, followed by creating initial designs to serve as references for subsequent steps. The second stage is production, where the previous designs are realized into final outputs using appropriate skills and technology. The final stage is post-production, which involves evaluating the produced results and making improvements if necessary ([Allifia et al., 2025](#)).

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

1. Data Collection

The data collection stage was conducted through observation and interviews with illustrators and the target audience online via Zoom, which will serve as a reference for the character design process to align with the target audience's interests and the story's concept. The first interview was conducted with an illustrator specializing in 2D illustration and AR merchandising. The second interview was conducted with a high school student from Tangerang. The interview data was used to explore audience behavior regarding issues related to dreams or aspirations, their perceptions of dreams, media preferences, and the language style applied.

The design of an illustrated book about dreams/aspirations must utilize an illustration style

that captivates teenagers. Based on interviews with the target audience, it was found that they prefer cartoon or comic-style illustrations because they appear mature, not excessive, and support the fantasy nuance associated with dreams. Additionally, the target audience is less interested in Korean-style illustrations due to their prevalence in the market, making them seem monotonous and less appealing. The creation of this illustrated book utilizes a warm-tone color palette selected based on interview results with the target audience. The use of warm colors aims to create a warm atmosphere and evoke enthusiasm, motivating the audience when reading the book about dreams. Meanwhile, observations were conducted by examining illustrated book designs at the Gramedia bookstore in Galaxy Mall Surabaya and observing character designs with similar concepts online through articles and Pinterest. This data will be used as a reference for the character design process.

Based on the collected data, an analysis was conducted using the 5W+1H technique. This method is an approach to exploring issues in-depth through questions such as what, who, where, when, why, and how (Sahroji et al., 2017).

- *What*, What is the problem? A character design for the Postman in the illustrated book “Tukang Pos Pembawa Mimpi” is needed.
- *Where*, Where is the character design illustration implemented? The character design is implemented in the illustrated book “Tukang Pos Pembawa Mimpi”.
- *Who*, Who is the target audience? Teenagers aged 16–18 years.
- *When*, When can the character design be implemented? The character design is implemented after receiving validation from experts, such as illustrators, and the target audience.
- *Why*, Why is character design needed? Character design is a crucial part of an illustrated book as a form of visualizing the book’s content.
- *How*, How is the character design created? The character design is developed by collecting data related to visual concepts and combining key elements to create a visual character that aligns with the intended depiction.

Based on the previous data collection, a data synthesis was obtained, indicating the target audience’s preference for a cartoon/comic illustration style with a visual concept combining vintage and dreamy themes. The color selection uses a warm-tone combination to create an enthusiastic impression that boosts teenagers’ motivation.

2. Visual Design

The visual design stage begins with the pre-production phase, preparing several cartoon/comic illustration styles preferred by teenagers for use in the illustrated book. Three different illustration styles were provided through a questionnaire, still within the cartoon/comic style that appears more mature for the target audience, as shown in Figure 1. Style A has a rounded, cute proportion with simple coloring. Style B has a more mature proportion with watercolor-style coloring. Style C has more detailed coloring with a semi-painting style.



Figure 1. Alternative Illustration Styles
(Source: Ramadhani, 2025)

Based on the questionnaire results shown in Figure C, 62.9% of the audience chose Style C as the reference illustration style to be used in the illustrated book.

Gaya ilustrasi mana yang paling kamu sukai?
35 jawaban

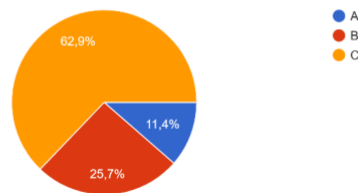


Figure 2. Illustration Style Questionnaire
(Source: Ramadhani, 2025)

The production stage begins with brainstorming in the form of creating a mind map containing elements related to the illustrated book's concept. Brainstorming is a creative thinking technique where participants freely share all ideas and thoughts about the issue at hand, with evaluation of opinions postponed until all ideas are collected (Kartoni & Alinurdin, 2021).



Figure 3. Mind Mapping for Character Design
(Source: Ramadhani, 2025)

During the brainstorming process, key points needed for the character design were identified, such as the teenage age range of 16–18 years, message delivery, letters, and dreams/aspirations. Based on these points, character design sketches were created, incorporating elements that represent each required aspect of the character design.



Figure 4. Alternative Postman Sketches
(Source: Ramadhani, 2025)



Figure 5. Comprehensive Design
(Source: Ramadhani, 2025)

In the comprehensive design process, coloring was applied after refining the sketches and completing the line art process. Simple coloring with basic colors was used to easily observe color contrast. The color selection was adjusted based on the reference to the Postman's clothing, maintaining the warm-tone concept of the illustrated book. After coloring, the design validation process was conducted.

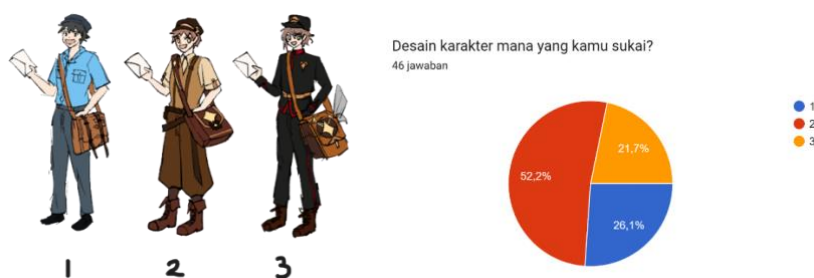


Figure 6. Selected Character Design
 (Source: Ramadhani, 2025)

Character design validation was conducted with the supervising lecturer and an illustrator to ensure the design aligns with the adopted concept and described characteristics. Subsequently, data collection was conducted through a questionnaire to determine the final character design with the target audience, teenagers aged 16–18 years. Based on the questionnaire results, 52.2% of 46 respondents chose Alternative 2.

The post-production stage involves implementing the selected character design on the designated medium, namely the cover of the illustrated book. The following is an example of the character design application on the cover of the illustrated book *The Postman Who Delivers Dreams*.



Figure 7. Implementation Example
 (Source: Ramadhani, 2025)

The results of the entire design process were re-evaluated with the illustrator, ensuring all essential aspects such as color tone, theme, alignment with the target audience, and other visual elements. After further evaluation by the illustrator and validation of the character design implementation, it was deemed suitable for the requirements of the illustrated book “*Tukang Pos Pembawa Mimpi*”.

CONCLUSION

The Postman character design for the illustrated book *The Postman Who Delivers Dreams* adopts a cartoon/comic style that aligns with the target audience’s preferences, based on data analysis and adapted to the book’s concept, which combines letter delivery/vintage and dreamy themes. The Postman character design has been tailored to these criteria to vividly depict a cheerful nature and the characteristic representation of the Postman, enabling the target audience to clearly understand the character as described and attracting their interest in reading the illustrated book, as it represents the entire concept of the book’s content.

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