

# Designing Chibi Character Designs for a 2D Animated Video: “For You Who Love to Daydream”

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## ABSTRACT

Character design in 2D animation plays a crucial role in delivering narratives and building emotional connections with the audience. This study aims to design chibi-style characters for the 2D animated video “For You Who Love to Daydream”, which addresses the dangers of parasocial behavior among K-pop fans. The goal is to create characters that capture attention, foster emotional attachment, and enhance message effectiveness. The target audience consists of female K-pop fans aged 18–22 years. The method employed is descriptive qualitative, including observation, online visual data searches, questionnaires with the target audience, and interviews with chibi character design experts. The results show that the characters were designed to align with popular chibi art styles, integrate visual attributes reflecting K-pop fan identities, and effectively convey the video’s message while building emotional engagement. The final character design is expected to represent the target audience and serve as an educational medium that communicates emotional experiences related to the parasocial phenomenon.

## KEYWORDS

Character Design  
Chibi  
K-Pop  
Parasocial

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## INTRODUCTION

According to [Amanda \(2022\)](#), fandom can be understood as a group of fans formed by shared interest in a particular idol. K-pop fandoms consist of various communities such as ARMY supporting BTS, Carat supporting Seventeen, or ReVeluv supporting Red Velvet. Each fandom builds its identity and characteristics through collective activities, both with their idols and with fellow fans ([Amanda, 2022](#)). In Indonesia, the popularity of K-pop cannot be separated from idolization culture, often manifested through active social media interaction, streaming the latest songs, purchasing merchandise, and attending concerts. This phenomenon aligns with the findings of [Valenciana dan Pudjibudojo \(2022\)](#), who highlight that the Korean Wave (Hallyu) has grown rapidly among Indonesian millennials. Teenagers’ enthusiasm is evident from their consumption of Korean cultural products ranging from K-pop music, dramas, to lifestyle, demonstrating how Korean popular culture shapes new cultural consumption patterns in Indonesia.

The culture of K-pop fandom in Indonesia is part of a parasocial relationship, namely a “one-sided” relationship in which fans feel close to their idols even though the interaction occurs only psychologically through media ([Wardani & Kusuma, 2021](#)). Recent studies also show that strong parasocial attachment can encourage collective behavior in digital spaces, such as BTS fandom’s involvement in disseminating public health messages during the COVID-19 pandemic via social media ([Chang et al., 2023](#)). These findings demonstrate that parasocial interactions not only impact fans psychologically but also shape broader social behaviors. Research by ([Triadanti, 2019](#)), shows

that the proportion of K-pop fans in Indonesia aged 15–20 years is 38.1%, while those aged 20–25 years account for 40.7%. This indicates that the majority of K-pop fans in Indonesia are young adults. Therefore, there is a need for educational media that highlights both the positive potential and the dangers of excessive parasocial relationships among K-pop fans aged 18–22.

K-pop fans commonly engage with audiovisual media such as music videos (MV) and fancams. Currently, numerous educational videos adopt 2D animation styles with distinctive narrative techniques to capture viewers' attention, such as those produced by "Kok Bisa" and similar channels. According to [Lionardi \(2022\)](#), the ability of animation to explain various events and topics in an engaging way makes it widely utilized as an educational medium across diverse contexts. However, only a few animated videos specifically address the issue of parasocial relationships. One such example is "You Have an Unhealthy Obsession with Someone, Now What?" by Psych2Go on YouTube. Nevertheless, this video only discusses obsession with individuals in general, with limited animation movements and a single character design, namely the channel's mascot. Therefore, this project aims to develop a 2D animated medium as an educational tool that discusses the dangers of parasocial relationships among K-pop fans in an engaging and effective manner.

Character design is a crucial step in the animation production process, as characters serve as the main agents driving the storyline and delivering messages to the audience ([Fijriani et al., 2025](#)). The character design process typically begins with a series of sketches until a specific character appearance emerges ([Susilo & Sari, 2024](#)). Animated characters also play a role in building emotional connections with viewers, thereby becoming an effective medium of cultural communication ([Anugerah et al., 2025](#)). Creating a character often requires dozens or even hundreds of sketches. To produce an appealing animated video, character designs must align with the storyline and the preferences of the target audience. This study focuses on designing the characters for the 2D animated video "For You Who Love to Daydream." The character designs are expected to match the target audience's demographic, effectively deliver the narrative message, and build emotional connections so that viewers can relate to the characters.

Several previous studies emphasize the importance of character design in animation as a means of supporting message delivery and capturing audience attention. [Fitria et al. \(2023\)](#) highlighted the use of 2D animated characters in educational videos for children, which effectively increased comprehension and learning interest through engaging visuals. [Fionarizoca dan Ratri \(2025\)](#) developed a participatory-based activity book for children with intellectual disabilities, demonstrating that interactive visual media can enhance engagement and fine motor skills. [Atamtajani \(2025\)](#) examined the transformation of popular cultural accessories such as the Henshin Belt, which inspired technological innovations in wearable devices, showing how popular visuals can create interactive experiences. [Lemuella dan Chandra \(2023\)](#) emphasized the importance of cohesive visual identity in mobile grooming services to strengthen service value and audience engagement. [Gunalan et al. \(2022\)](#) analyzed the use of visual metaphors in artworks as a powerful tool for communicating social phenomena through design. Meanwhile, [Lubis dan Budiwiwaramulja \(2020\)](#) explored hybrid character designs in the Indonesian comic 7 Wonders, showing how combining visual identities from different cultures can generate unique appeal for audiences. These six studies underscore the significant role of character and visual design in reinforcing messages, enhancing emotional engagement, and creating more meaningful interactive experiences.

Although prior studies have emphasized animated characters for educational and entertainment purposes, few have specifically targeted educational content addressing the dangers of parasocial relationships, particularly for young adult K-pop fans in Indonesia. Furthermore, animation movement and character variation in educational videos remain limited, reducing the potential for optimal emotional interaction with audiences. This research introduces novelty through the design of chibi characters in a 2D animated educational video, "For You Who Love to Daydream," tailored to the demographic preferences of K-pop fans aged 18–22. Accordingly, this study aims to design chibi characters for the 2D animation "For You Who Love to Daydream" as an educational medium on the dangers of parasocial relationships, with a visual approach aligned to the preferences of its target audience.

## METHOD

The character design in this study employed the art creation method, which is commonly applied in design and animation research. This method emphasizes a systematic creative process through four main stages: exploration, design, realization, and evaluation (Suwasono, 2017; Susilo & Sari, 2024).

The exploration stage was carried out to collect data and references as the foundation for character design. Activities included searching for visual references from the internet, observing audience preferences, and conducting in-depth interviews with K-pop fans aged 18–22. In addition, trends in character design and relevant animation styles were also reviewed. The outcomes of this stage served as the basis for formulating the character concepts.

The design stage focused on developing character ideas based on the exploratory findings. This process involved concept formulation, storyline determination, and the creation of initial sketches. Several alternative designs were produced and validated to determine the most suitable form aligned with the audience's identity and the educational objectives.

The realization stage involved transforming the formulated concepts into the final chibi character designs. This process included digitizing sketches, coloring, creating animation assets, and integrating the characters into the 2D animated video "For You Who Love to Daydream."

The evaluation stage assessed the effectiveness of the character designs and animation in conveying educational messages about the dangers of parasocial relationships. Evaluation was conducted through questionnaires and follow-up interviews with the target audience to determine the extent to which the characters could build emotional engagement, attract attention, and support comprehension of the conveyed messages.

Data collection in this research combined both qualitative and quantitative methods to ensure validity. Qualitative data were obtained from observations, visual references, and in-depth interviews, while quantitative data came from questionnaires and design validation. Data analysis employed the 5W + 1H approach (What, Who, When, Where, Why, How), providing a comprehensive overview of the needs, context, and audience characteristics. These analytical results served as the foundation for each stage of the creative process.

## RESULT AND DISCUSSION

### 1. Exploration

Before concept formulation, questionnaires and interviews were conducted. The first questionnaire was distributed to 120 respondents who were K-pop fans, focusing on the video's content and the preferences of the target audience. From observations, interviews, and internet research, it was found that much K-pop merchandise is circulated in chibi form, both official and unofficial, such as BTS's official TinyTAN merchandise. Chibi characters generally feature oversized heads often larger than their bodies with the main characteristics of large eyes, simplicity, and a cute impression. Therefore, the chibi style was considered suitable as the stylization for the character design in this video.

Interviews were also conducted with psychologists and animators specializing in videos for teenagers and young adults from Free Qur'an Education to determine what kind of approach was needed in an animated video addressing the parasocial phenomenon, which can have negative psychological impacts on fans.

A second questionnaire was then distributed to the target audience to identify which chibi art style would best suit the animation's theme. Out of four options provided, two chibi art styles were most frequently chosen by respondents. As a result, the final art style adopted for the character design combined the proportions and drawing style inspired by the first art style with the simple coloring approach inspired by the second.

After determining the most suitable art style, additional online research was conducted to identify visual traits commonly associated with K-pop fans, which would then inform the concept of the main character (MC) in the video. According to Fitriani et al. (2025), K-pop fans typically dress like most people, but they often wear merchandise such as jackets, T-shirts, or accessories featuring logos of their favorite boybands or girl groups. Therefore, the MC in this video is depicted wearing

a piece of K-pop merchandise representing their favorite group.

The collected data were then analyzed using the 5W + 1H technique to obtain a comprehensive understanding of the target audience's needs and characteristics. The "What" question was used to define the type of character design required: a character that could represent the target audience, effectively convey the message, and build emotional bonds so viewers could reflect themselves through the character. In addition, narrative approaches were analyzed, emphasizing the need for an emotional, nonjudgmental perspective so that the storyline about a K-pop fan's experiences would feel relatable.

The "Who" question identified the target audience as female K-pop fans aged 18–22 years. The "When" question referred to the implementation timeline, which would take place after the designs were validated by fans and illustration experts. The "Where" question explained that the animation would be implemented in a 2D animated video uploaded to YouTube and TikTok, since both platforms are widely used by the target audience.

The "Why" question explained the rationale for choosing the chibi art style because it is popular among K-pop fans and is commonly used in merchandise promotion. Finally, the "How" question guided the design process by emphasizing the depiction of traits that characterize K-pop fans, particularly through the use of K-pop merchandise on the character. With this approach, the character design is expected to remain relevant and foster emotional engagement with the audience.

## 2. Design

The narrative concept of the video "For You Who Like to Daydream" is a five-minute animated film that tells the story of Tara, a college student and a devoted fan of Jae from DAY6. At first, Tara enjoys her hobby in a healthy way, but loneliness near the end of her studies drags her into a parasocial relationship with her idol. Tara begins to withdraw from social life, becomes defensive when her idol is criticized, and even steals money from her brother to buy merchandise. After clashing with her brother and confiding in her best friend, Naya, Tara realizes that her obsession has had negative consequences. In the end, she decides to change, keeps her merchandise as a reminder, and focuses on finishing her thesis so that she can buy her favorite items with her own hard-earned money.

Tara's character is designed to represent a young adult woman who, as a K-Pop fan, uses music and entertainment content as a form of escapism to fill the emotional void caused by academic pressure and loneliness. This aligns with the concept of fictional character development proposed by Fitri dan Sahrul (2025) which emphasizes the importance of creating fictional characters that reflect the experiences and social values of the target audience. In this context, Tara is not only a narrative character but also a medium to portray the dynamics of parasocial relationships and their impact on social interactions.

Jae, the idol depicted as a supporting character, serves as a positive and ideal figure in Tara's life. His presence through digital content creates an emotional icon that provides entertainment while simultaneously triggering parasocial attachment. According to Alghonyu et al. (2025) the use of characters in short films allows viewers to connect their personal experiences with visual narratives, making both educational and emotional messages effectively conveyed. Thus, Jae becomes a medium to illustrate how one-sided interactions with public figures can influence fans' behavior and emotional well-being.

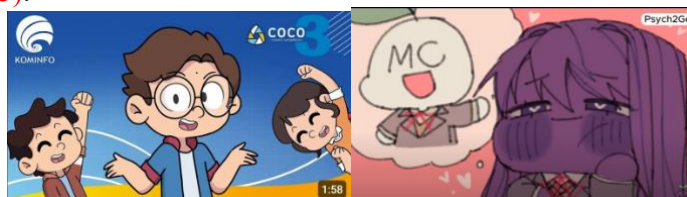
Naya, Tara's best friend, is positioned as a caring and realistic supporting character. Her presence is crucial to demonstrate positive social intervention, helping Tara realize that her parasocial relationship has become unhealthy. Fitri dan Sahrul (2025) emphasize that interactions between characters in fiction can create learning narratives, where audiences understand social norms and ethical behavior through dialogue and character actions.

Agus, Tara's older brother, functions as a symbol of the real consequences of Tara's obsessive behavior. His reaction when Tara secretly uses his ATM card highlights that obsessive fandom behavior not only affects oneself but also those around them. This supports the theory of fictional character development, which underscores the need for conflict and resolution as a means of learning and reflection for the audience (Fitri dan Sahrul, 2025).



Overall, the character concepts in this video are designed not only for entertainment but also as an educational medium that integrates emotional experiences, social values, and behavioral norms of the target audience. This narrative demonstrates how short films can serve as a tool to build critical awareness and emotional literacy for young adult viewers (Alghonyu et al., 2025).

Based on the first questionnaire results, the most preferred illustration style among the target audience was two different chibi illustration styles, both considered cute. Therefore, the illustration style to be used will be a combination of the two references, with the chibi style resembling the first picture and the coloring style similar to the second. This approach aligns with visual storytelling theory, which emphasizes visual consistency and character appeal as effective communication media (Fitri dan Sahrul, 2025).



**Figure 1.** Selected Illustration Style  
 (source: Sekarayu, 2025)

Character design references were obtained through internet research and target audience observation. The determination of the character was carried out by considering identity, social interaction, and visual appeal as a medium for teaching ethics and interpersonal communication to Generation Alpha (Fitri dan Sahrul, 2025).

Tara is portrayed as a K-Pop fan whose identity is expressed through the use of headphones featuring Day6 merchandise design and a color palette characteristic of the band. Tara's physical design was inspired by one of the questionnaire respondents, Sindi Wibowo, a K-Pop enthusiast who idolizes Mark Lee from NCT. This approach aligns with the principle of character identification, in which audiences are able to recognize themselves in fictional characters, thereby enhancing engagement (Fitri dan Sahrul, 2025).



**Figure 2.** Visual Reference for Tara's Character  
 (Source: Sekarayu, 2025)

The character of Idol Jae was designed with reference to the real figure Park Jae-hyung, former vocalist of the K-Pop group Day6. The character design was adapted based on the concept of authentic representation, which emphasizes fidelity to the original identity of the figure as a medium for social learning (Fitri dan Sahrul, 2025).



**Figure 3.** Visual Reference for Jae's Character  
 (source: Sekarayu, 2025)

The character of Naya was adapted from Tara Kanti, a friend of Sindi. Naya is portrayed as a supportive best friend, representing the value of social support in the social interactions of Generation Alpha (Fitri dan Sahrul, 2025).



**Figure 4.** Visual Reference for Naya's Character  
(source: Sekarayu, 2025)

The character of Agus was inspired by Caleb from the otome game Love and Deepspace. Agus is portrayed as a caring and supportive older brother, thus reflecting the principle of role modeling, in which fictional characters can serve as examples of ethical and social behavior for the audience (Fitri dan Sahrul, 2025).



**Figure 5.** Visual Reference for Agus's Character  
(source: Sekarayu, 2025)

### 3. Realization

The character design process began with the creation of three alternative character designs for each figure in accordance with the established concept. This stage aligns with design thinking theory, particularly the ideation phase, in which visual exploration is carried out to identify the forms and aesthetics most suitable for the target audience (Fitri dan Sahrul, 2025). The creation of these alternatives aims to provide visual variety while also facilitating the selection process based on audience preferences and narrative needs. Previous studies have also shown that the use of visually appealing animated characters can increase the learning interest of Generation Alpha, especially when presented in audiovisual media (Fitria et al., 2023).



**Figure 6.** Three Alternative Character Designs  
(source: Sekarayu, 2025)

After the sketching stage, the design was validated through questionnaires and interviews with chibi illustration experts. The questionnaire results indicated that each character had one selected

design based on the highest number of votes. This validation aligns with the principle of user-centered design, in which input from both the audience and experts is used to improve the effectiveness of the design as a medium of visual communication (Fitri dan Sahrul, 2025). In this context, it is important to note that design students in the early stages tend to seek visual inspiration from platforms such as Pinterest or Behance before refining their concepts through narrative (An Nur & Kholida, 2023).



**Figure 7.** Tara's Character Design Questionnaire  
(source: Sekarayu, 2025)



**Figure 8.** Naya's Character Design Questionnaire  
(source: Sekarayu, 2025)



**Figure 9.** Jae's Character Design Questionnaire  
(source: Sekarayu, 2025)



**Figure 9.** Agus' Character Design Questionnaire  
(source: Sekarayu, 2025)

The expert interview results confirmed that the selected designs were adequate, with suggestions to use brighter colors to enhance visual appeal. This step reflects the application of visual engagement theory, which states that visually attractive characters can increase audience involvement and understanding, particularly among Generation Alpha (Fitri dan Sahrul, 2025). This approach also aligns with research emphasizing the importance of integrating social and cultural values into visual design so that it is not only aesthetic but also communicative (Martono et al., 2025).

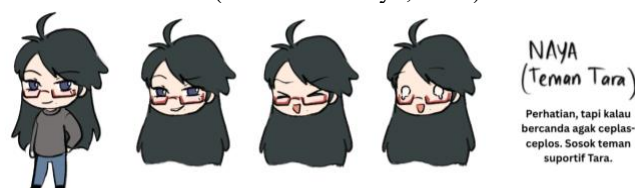
Based on validation results, each character was then finalized. The final design focused not only on aesthetics but also on incorporating social and ethical values through the representation of character behavior. This approach aligns with Fitri dan Sahrul (2025) who stated that fictional characters can serve as a medium for social learning, introducing manners, ethics, and proper social interactions to Generation Alpha children (7–10 years old).



**Gambar 11.** Final Design of Tara  
(source: Sekarayu, 2025)



**Gambar 12.** Final Design of Jae  
(source: Sekarayu, 2025)



**Figure 13.** Final Design of Naya  
(source: Sekarayu, 2025)



**Figure 14.** Final Design of Agus  
(source: Sekarayu, 2025)

The final character designs also support literacy-based visual storytelling, where characters function not only for entertainment but also as a medium for teaching cultural values and interpersonal communication (Alghonyu et al., 2025). Consequently, each character becomes an educational and communicative tool aligned with the goal of creating an instructive and enjoyable fictional narrative for children.

#### 4. Evaluasi

The evaluation phase assessed the effectiveness of the chibi character designs in the 2D animation “Buat Kamu yang Suka Halu” through questionnaires administered to audiences aged 18–22 and interviews with expert illustrators. The results indicated that the designed characters matched visual preferences, could build emotional attachment, and conveyed messages without reinforcing excessive fantasies about idols.

These findings highlight the importance of integrating visual aspects with audience needs



(Alghonyu et al., 2025), the role of collaboration in maintaining creative relevance (Martono et al., 2025), and the relevance of digital media in the creative processes of young generations (Ayuningtyas & Sari, 2024). Thus, the chibi character design was successful not only aesthetically but also functionally as an educational medium that promotes emotional and social literacy.

## CONCLUSION

The study on the design of chibi characters in the 2D animation “Buat Kamu yang Suka Halu” concludes that a combination of chibi artstyle, audience visual references, and real-life figures can produce characters that are both relevant and effective in conveying narrative messages. The integration of questionnaire data, interviews, and theories such as character identification, user-centered design, and literacy-based visual storytelling resulted in characters that are not only visually appealing but also represent the emotional experiences and social norms of the audience. The characters Tara, Jae, Naya, and Agus function as representations of parasocial relationships, social support, and the consequences of obsessive behavior. Thus, these character designs serve as an educational medium that promotes emotional and social literacy among Generation Alpha and young adults.

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