

Innovative Batik Motif Designs for the *Sekolah Indonesia Makkah* (SIM) Dress Code as Cultural Symbol of Pride for Diaspora Students

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Subject Area: *symbol and creative design*

Abstract

Fostering a sense of love for Indonesia is essential for every citizen, including students of Sekolah Indonesia Makkah who live in Saudi Arabia. This can be achieved with their iconic school uniforms featuring batik decorative motifs that reflect Indonesian aesthetics combined with iconic elements of the local culture and natural environment of Mecca, Saudi Arabia. School uniforms featuring such batik ornaments can also instill a sense of pride among students as members of the Indonesian nation living abroad, particularly in Saudi Arabia. To produce a dress code design featuring these motifs, a creative art-based method is required. The process involves: (a) developing conceptual designs, (b) creating design sketches for batik motifs, (c) applying the designed motifs to textile materials, (d) sewing prototype products, and (e) analyzing the aesthetic outcomes of the dress code that incorporates Indonesian and Saudi Arabian decorative elements. The creative outcome of this research is a prototype of a school dress code design that features decorative motifs inspired by the natural and cultural elements of both Indonesia and Saudi Arabia, developed for three education levels: elementary school, junior high school, and senior high school.

Keywords: Dress code; *Sekolah Indonesia Makkah*; Batik motifs; Design creation; decorative.

Introduction

Cultivating a love for the cultural heritage of the archipelago and strengthening national pride as Indonesians is not only crucial for citizens living within the homeland but also for those residing abroad (Jelantik, 2017). This applies not only to Indonesian citizens living in Indonesia, but also to Indonesians living abroad. They are all Indonesian citizens who should continually nurture their pride as a nation with a unique Nusantara culture, because within that culture lie philosophical values and visual aesthetics that can shape their social behaviour. Indonesians living overseas are equally part of the nation and must continually foster their pride as members of a culturally rich nation (Hariyono, 2017). They remain an integral part of Indonesia's society whose love for their homeland needs to be continuously reinforced. Indonesia's diverse ethnicities and cultural variations across regions highlight the importance of nurturing and strengthening this national pride, which in turn reinforces Indonesia's identity as a country of profound philosophical and cultural diversity (Budi Setyaningrum, 2018). When citizens appreciate, preserve, and develop the potential of their cultural

heritage, both in its physical form and philosophical essence, it helps sustain Indonesia's existence and reputation on the international stage (Hudayana, 2021).

Sekolah Indonesia Makkah (SIM) is a formal educational institution under the supervision of the Education and Cultural Attaché of the Embassy of the Republic of Indonesia in Saudi Arabia. Located in the city of Mecca, this school serves primarily children of Indonesian migrant families living in and around the area (Ponimin et al., 2024). Most students are Indonesian citizens born and raised in Saudi Arabia. Being far from their homeland, these students are naturally influenced by foreign cultures, particularly Arab or Middle Eastern traditions. As a result, their familiarity and appreciation for Indonesian culture may gradually diminish. This decline in cultural connection may reduce their sense of national pride and attachment to Indonesia. Therefore, it is essential to cultivate and strengthen their love and pride as Indonesians. One effective way to achieve this is through the introduction of visual symbols that represent Indonesia, such as a distinct school dress code worn by students during their education (Husen, 2017).

Therefore, this creative art research is important to conduct, because in addition to producing art products that can enrich the culture of the nation today, in the form of batik motif creations that are explored from local potential sources of ideas. Batik motif creations that are applied to school dress codes can strengthen the branding of the school, because the visual aspect of batik motifs depicts Indonesian culture created with local Saudi Arabian potential, which is arranged in a unified batik motif school dress code. The dress code not only strengthens the school's visual image but also reinforces the political aspect that Indonesia exists in the Makkah region. A school dress code with an iconic design can be achieved through the presence of visual elements that represent the school institution.

Visual representations featuring visual icons in the form of batik motif creations will be easily remembered and will be embedded in the memories of those who use the motifs or look at them (Silvanus & Muljosumarto, 2021). A well-designed, iconic school dress code can effectively represent the institution's identity through visual elements such as the school logo, architectural forms, flora, colors, and other visual symbols that distinguish the institution. These elements can be artistically integrated into decorative motifs on the dress code. Moreover, iconic visual symbols play an essential role in reinforcing collective imagination. When visual icons are creatively designed to evoke familiarity and memory, they help strengthen the association between individuals and institutions or communities (Fürst et al., 2012).

The existing dress code of *Sekolah Indonesia Makkah* was initially designed to enhance the school's branding. However, the decorative elements currently used are dominated by geometric patterns whose conceptual origins are unclear, making them less reflective of Indonesian cultural nuances. The current motifs, which emphasize geometric ornamentation, tend to project a stronger Arab cultural identity (Ponimin et al., 2024). Therefore, redesigning the dress code's decorative motifs is necessary by exploring both Indonesian and Saudi Arabian cultural and natural potentials as sources of creative inspiration. Through this approach, the resulting design will harmoniously blend the local characteristics of Indonesia and Saudi Arabia, reflecting the combined identity of both nations (Avdikos, 2015).



Figure 1 Researcher Conducting Field Observations at *Sekolah Indonesia Makkah* to Examine the Batik Motif Design of the School Dress Code Currently Worn by SIM Students (Source: Personal Documentation, October 25, 2024)

The Indonesian cultural inspiration may include motifs derived from *batik* patterns such as *kawung* designs, floral motifs, and vine-like ornaments (*suluran*), all of which can be creatively adapted into decorative motifs. These can be combined with elements representing Saudi culture and nature, such as the Mecca Clock Tower (*Abraj Al-Bait*), the surrounding hills, and local vegetation like Korma palms. The creation process involves stylization and decorative composition, ensuring both dynamic visual balance and harmonious color schemes. The arrangement of these motifs on the school uniform considers aesthetic and compositional principles. Achieving such a result requires a series of creative actions, including conceptual planning and the application of sound design principles suited for a school dress code (Cooke, 2012).

This research has been deemed important because, even to date, there has been yet to be a dress code design for the Indonesian School in Makkah that explicitly integrates Indonesian and Saudi Arabian cultural icons through an artistic approach based on batik motifs. The uniforms used previously were dominated by geometric motifs that did not adequately represent Indonesian cultural identity, thus failing to optimally foster national pride among diaspora students. Furthermore, there has been no creative study that applies the principles of stylisation, decorative composition, and colour harmony to produce a uniform prototype that is not only aesthetically pleasing but also serves as a medium for strengthening cultural identity and branding overseas educational institutions. Based on this context, this research assumes that a dress code design that combines Indonesian and Saudi Arabian decorative motifs will have a positive impact on (1) strengthening students' cultural identity, (2) enhancing the school's visual image, and (3) aesthetic acceptance of school uniforms. Therefore, this study proposes several working hypotheses regarding the influence of motif design on students' perceptions of identity, aesthetics, and pride in the diaspora.

Literature Review

Literature reviews show that visual symbols such as school uniforms play a strategic role in shaping students' identities and characters, especially for Indonesian diaspora communities living abroad. According to Husen (2017) and Silvanus & Muljosumarto (2021), school uniforms not only have a function as institutional markers but also as a medium for cultural representation that can strengthen national pride. In the context of *Sekolah Indonesia Makkah* (SIM), which operates within the socio-cultural environment of Saudi Arabia, students face significant challenges in maintaining their attachment to Indonesian culture. Most SIM

students are children of migrant workers who were born and raised in Saudi society, where daily exposure to Arab culture, language, social norms, and visual symbols is far stronger than to Indonesian cultural expressions. This condition reduces their opportunities to encounter Indonesian cultural artifacts, including traditional arts, crafts, and visual symbols, which in turn weakens their emotional and cultural connection to their homeland.

As a result, the students' understanding and appreciation of Indonesian cultural identity may gradually diminish. This challenge manifests in several ways:

- (1) limited access to Indonesian cultural learning materials;
- (2) minimal direct interaction with Indonesian traditional arts and symbols;
- (3) stronger immersion in the dominant Arab visual environment; and
- (4) reduced emotional attachment to Indonesian cultural heritage because it is not present in their daily visual experience.

These challenges create an urgent need for visual interventions that reintroduce Indonesian cultural symbols into students' everyday lives. Therefore, creative visual strategies, such as designing a culturally embedded school dress code, become essential to bring Indonesian cultural identity back into the students' everyday environment. A school uniform that integrates Indonesian batik motifs with local Saudi elements can function not only as clothing but also as a daily cultural reminder, strengthening students' sense of belonging to Indonesia while respecting the cultural context of Saudi Arabia. This makes the research relevant and necessary, as it provides a practical solution to support cultural identity formation among Indonesian diaspora students. By embedding Indonesian cultural symbols into compulsory daily worn school uniforms, the research directly addresses the cultural detachment problem experienced by SIM students, ensuring that cultural exposure occurs consistently and meaningfully. Therefore, a dress code design that integrates batik motifs from the Indonesian Archipelago with local Saudi Arabian elements is a relevant visual approach to strengthen students' national identity while respecting the culture of their host country.

The previous studies emphasized the importance of preserving and developing cultural heritage through contextual visual design. Lanang Jelantik (2017) and Budi Setyaningrum (2018) asserted that the richness of Indonesian culture lies not only in its physical form but also in the philosophical values it embodies. Batik motifs such as kawung, suluran, and bunga surya are examples of visually rich motifs that can be creatively adapted in school uniform designs. On the other hand, visual elements from Saudi Arabia, such as the Makkah Royal Clock Tower (Abraj Al Bait or Zam Zam Tower), the surrounding hills, and Korma palms, have iconic characteristics that can be harmoniously combined with archipelago motifs to produce visual compositions that represent a dual identity between Indonesia and Saudi Arabia.

In the realm of culture-based design, Fürst et al. (2012) and Avdikos (2015) highlight the importance of visual icons in shaping collective imagination and strengthening emotional attachment to institutions. When visual icons are designed creatively and contextually, they can evoke a sense of familiarity and pride, especially in educational settings. Although many *Sekolah Indonesia Makkah* students were born and raised in Saudi Arabia and have never lived in Indonesia, collective imagination does not require direct physical experience. (Fürst et al., 2012) explain that visual symbols function as cognitive anchors that allow individuals to construct

shared meanings through repeated exposure, narrative framing, and cultural learning. In diaspora contexts, cultural symbols—such as batik motifs, national icons, or indigenous decorative patterns – operate as visual cues that enable students to imagine and internalize the cultural identity of their homeland despite geographical distance.

Pride can be evoked through symbolic representation when individuals recognize themselves as part of a collective group, even without direct experiential memory. In the case of SIM students, the dress code visually affirms their membership in the Indonesian national community. As Avdikos (Avdikos, 2015) notes, institutional symbols strengthen emotional attachment by creating a sense of belonging and continuity, allowing members – even those far from the homeland – to feel connected to shared cultural values. For Indonesian diaspora students, cultural symbols embedded in daily visual environments, such as school uniforms, play a crucial role in shaping emotional and cultural identity. Because these students have limited direct exposure to Indonesian culture in Saudi Arabia, the presence of Indonesian-inspired visual motifs helps compensate for this absence by providing continuous symbolic reinforcement. Over time, these repeated exposures support the formation of emotional attachment and cultural pride, functioning as both educational and identity-building tools.

Thus, even though many students have never physically been in Indonesia, the symbolic integration of Indonesian decorative heritage into their school dress code provides an accessible pathway for developing collective imagination and national pride. The motifs act as daily reminders of their cultural roots and strengthen their emotional connection to Indonesia as their country of origin. The dress code design, which combines local elements from the two countries, not only creates an attractive aesthetic but also serves as an effective institutional branding strategy. This is aligned with practices in various schools in Indonesia that use regional batik motifs as part of their visual identity, as is done in Yogyakarta and Malang (Ponimin et al., 2023); (Raya et al., 2021).

An art and design-based research methodology is an appropriate approach in the development of this dress code. Niedderer & Townsend (2014) and Guntur (2016) explain that creative research methods involve stages of exploring sources of inspiration, visual experimentation, design realization, prototype production, and aesthetic evaluation. This approach allows designers to combine technical and philosophical aspects in a single, comprehensive creative process. In the context of SIM, this creative process produced batik motif designs that not only considered aesthetic and compositional principles but also symbolic values representing Indonesia's presence in the holy land. Thus, this literature review has highlighted that batik motif-based dress code designs integrating the local potential of Indonesia and Saudi Arabia have a strong theoretical foundation in the fields of design, character education, and cultural representation. This research not only contributes to the development of school visual branding but also to the formation of student identity as part of the Indonesian nation living abroad. Through a creative and contextual approach, dress code design becomes an educational and symbolic medium that strengthens students' emotional attachment to their culture of origin.

Methodology

Artistic and design-based creative activities involve both imaginative and technical actions to produce works that embody functional and aesthetic value. This study adopts a creative research approach aimed at generating product designs that adhere to design principles. Therefore, conceptual considerations, technical execution, and analytical evaluation of the resulting artwork are integral components of this creative research method (Niedderer & Townsend, 2014). Referring to Guntur's concept of "artistic research methods", the creation of artistic and practical products requires several creative stages, which include: concept formulation, form exploration, technical exploration, production processes, and analysis of artistic results.

Based on these principles, the creative research process for designing the *Sekolah Indonesia Makkah (SIM)* dress code followed several stages as outlined below: (a) Exploration of Cultural Sources of Inspiration, the first stage involved identifying potential sources of inspiration from Indonesian and Saudi Arabian local cultures as creative references for designing decorative motifs for the *SIM* dress code. (b) Visual Exploration of Decorative Motifs, the second stage focused on visual experimentation, developing stylized decorative patterns inspired by natural and cultural elements from both nations such as the hills of Mecca, Korma palm trees, the Mecca Clock Tower, Indonesian *batik* motifs, vine (*suluran*) patterns, and other symbolic visual forms. (c) Design Realization and Application, the third stage was the realization of these designs by applying the hybrid motifs (Indonesian and Saudi-inspired) onto textile materials, structured according to the pattern layout of the school dress code. (d) Prototype Production Process, the next stage involved creating a physical prototype of the designed dress code through garment sewing and tailoring.

The prototype was later evaluated through a *product exhibition* to assess its visual and functional qualities. (e) Analytical Evaluation, the results of the creative process were analyzed in terms of aesthetics, cultural symbolism, and functional aspects to ensure that the dress code effectively represented both Indonesian and Saudi Arabian local values (An & Youn, 2018) (Guntur, 2016). To carry out these creative processes, various tools and materials were required. The tools used in this study included a computer set for digital motif design, manual drawing equipment, a studio workspace, sewing machines, and a product exhibition area for evaluating the prototype outcomes.

Results and Discussion

The Batik-Inspired Dress Code of Sekolah Indonesia Makkah, Saudi Arabia: Integrating Indonesian and Saudi Local Potentials to Strengthen School Character

In many educational institutions, particularly in Indonesia, visual branding plays an important role in strengthening the school's institutional identity. Such branding is expressed through improvements to physical environments, buildings, classrooms, and visual icons that represent the school (Karl et al., 2013). A key component of this visual identity is the school uniform, which is often designed with distinctive characteristics that communicate cultural values and institutional uniqueness (Ciptandi & Arumsari, 2024); (Chatelain, 2015). Across different regions in Indonesia, schools express their local visual identity through student dress codes featuring batik motifs that represent regional cultures. For instance, schools in Yogyakarta encourage students to wear batik patterned after Surakarta, Cirebon, or coastal (*pesisiran*) styles (Ponimin et al., 2023); (Raya et

al., 2021). Similarly, in Malang known for its Malang mask tradition schools have creatively adapted the Malang mask motif into their students' and teachers' batik uniforms. These uniforms, promoted through school social media channels, function not only as apparel but also as cultural and promotional tools (Silvanus & Muljosumarto, 2021). The intention of this discussion is to establish that school uniforms are widely used as strategic visual instruments for institutional identity and cultural representation, thereby supporting the relevance of redesigning the SIM dress code.

To operationalize this integration, the design process involved comparing the visual characteristics of Indonesian motifs and Meccan natural, cultural forms to identify their formal similarities and complementary qualities. For example, the repetitive geometric rhythm of the *kawung* motif was compared with the vertical structural rhythm of the Mecca Clock Tower, allowing both to be harmonized within a single composition. Likewise, the organic curves of the *suluran* (vining) ornament were juxtaposed with the silhouettes of the Meccan hills and the forms of Korma palm leaves. These comparative analyses helped determine which visual elements could be stylized, simplified, or deformed so that they could coexist cohesively while still retaining their cultural identities. Through this method, the motifs from both countries were not merely combined, but systematically aligned based on contour similarity, directional flow, scale proportion, and color harmony. The integration works through a sequential stylization process: (1) identifying essential shapes from each cultural source; (2) simplifying these shapes into stylized decorative forms; (3) comparing their visual rhythms, line directions, and structural weights; (4) combining them through compositional principles such as balance, repetition, and symmetry; and (5) applying the hybrid motifs to the fabric layout according to the pattern of the school uniform. This workflow ensures that each motif from Indonesia and Mecca retains its visual identity while forming a unified decorative language appropriate for a school dress code.

The natural and cultural sources from both nations are stylized by considering the unique visual characteristics of each form, ensuring that the resulting motifs continue to represent their respective visual identities. These visual sources are then stylized and transformed into decorative two-dimensional motifs applied to the surface of fabric designed for the *Sekolah Indonesia Makkah (SIM)* dress code. This creative exploration forms the conceptual foundation of the SIM dress code's visual motif design a batik composition that symbolically represents both countries in a unified and decorative visual expression. At the same time, the resulting design is expected to foster a sense of pride and belonging among SIM students, reinforcing their identity as students of *Sekolah Indonesia Makkah* and as representatives of Indonesia abroad (Cui, 2020).



Figure 2 An Example of an Alternative Design Creation Intended for Application on the Batik Fabric of the *Sekolah Indonesia Makkah* Dress Code, Developed from a Combination of Cultural and Natural Inspirations from Indonesia and Mecca, Saudi Arabia, and Stylized



Figure 3 Alternative Batik Motif Design Applied to a Mock-Up of the *Sekolah Indonesia Makkah* Dress Code for Male and Female Students. The Design was Created from Cultural and Natural Elements of Mecca and the Indonesian Archipelago (Nusantara), Featuring Visual

Creative Design of Batik Motifs Inspired by Nusantara Culture for the Sekolah Indonesia Makkah (SIM) Dress Code

Designing batik motifs for school uniforms is not merely a technical process but a cultural act that shapes the institution's identity. A distinctive uniform becomes a visual marker that strengthens public recognition of the school and fosters pride among students as members of their alma (Febriani et al., 2023). In the context of SIM, motifs inspired by Indonesian cultural heritage serve as a symbolic reminder of the students' national roots, thereby reinforcing their emotional attachment to Indonesia even while living in Mecca (Widagdo et al., 2021). Building such cultural confidence requires a carefully structured creative process (Dyah Poespita Ernawati, 2020). To produce a school dress code that carries strong cultural meaning and visual identity, a structured creative process is required. Therefore, the development of the SIM batik motif followed several interrelated artistic stages that ensure conceptual clarity, cultural accuracy, and aesthetic coherence. These stages included: (a) exploring Indonesian archipelago sources as the foundation of cultural inspiration, (b) formulating conceptual designs that translate these cultural characteristics into batik visual language, (c) creating motif compositions through iterative design experimentation, (d) realizing the motifs on textile media using appropriate printing techniques, and (e) applying the finalized motifs to the actual school uniform patterns (Ponimin & Widodo, 2020). These stages ensure that the resulting design not only reflects Indonesian identity but also functions effectively as a school visual icon that instills pride and cultural awareness among students.

The creation of school uniform batik motifs began with selecting local natural and cultural elements from both Indonesia and Saudi Arabia that possess strong visual identities suitable for stylization. For instance, the hills surrounding Mecca were stylized as decorative batik motifs positioned along the lower section of the uniform. The vining ornament (*suluran*), a traditional Nusantara batik motif, was adapted into horizontal border

patterns adorning the front and back of the shirt. The kawung motif, a classic Indonesian batik pattern, was recreated as the lower trim design (Kuzinas et al., 2024). Meanwhile, the Mecca Clock Tower a prominent architectural icon was used as a central visual motif, reinforcing the identity of the location where the school is situated. These major motifs were arranged horizontally across the front and back sections of the uniform. Supporting motifs included the school logo and Korma palm motifs. The Korma palm design was placed within pentagonal frames, the outer edges of which were decorated with *Surya* flower motifs (*bunga surya*). Each pentagon was filled with three Korma palm trees, while its border was embellished with blooming flowers arranged in a rhythmic sequence. These pentagonal floral compositions, containing Korma palm trees and the school logo, were repeated in regular horizontal and vertical alignments across the middle and upper areas of the fabric, covering both the front and back surfaces of the uniform. The sleeves were also decorated with the same bunga surya motifs arranged in vertical and horizontal sequences to maintain design harmony (Avianto et al., 2024).

The finalized batik motif designs were applied to fabric using digital printing techniques, following the pattern layout commonly used in school uniforms. Digital printing was chosen to simplify the application process while ensuring high-quality color accuracy and motif clarity. The designs were adapted for both short-sleeved and long-sleeved student uniforms, printed on fabric sheets measuring 2.10 meters by 1.5 meters. During tailoring, the fabric patterns were carefully aligned with the existing uniform templates to ensure that the main decorative motifs remained intact and visually coherent when worn by both male and female students.

Creative Process and Aesthetic Development of the Sekolah Indonesia Makkah Dress Code Prototype as a Reinforcement of School Character

The design of the *Sekolah Indonesia Makkah (SIM)* batik motif, once finalized and transferred onto fabric according to the pre-established garment pattern, was followed by the process of fabric reproduction through digital printing. This reproduction stage ensured that the motif placements aligned precisely with the uniform pattern sizes assigned to each school level, thus preventing the decorative elements from being unintentionally cut off during sewing (Dombrowski, 2024). For example, the lower border pattern of the shirt incorporated kawung motifs in predetermined sizes and colors, followed by the suluran motif and stylized representations of the Meccan hills above it. These motifs were designed as repeating border elements extending along the length of the fabric. The primary motif, featuring the Mecca Clock Tower, was composed of four towers placed symmetrically on the front right and left sections of the shirt and two towers on the back section, centered along the spine. The size and positioning of these motifs were carefully adjusted for each student level to ensure that the clock tower motif aligned precisely across the chest area above the pocket. Supporting motifs, including the bunga surya design combined with the *Sekolah Indonesia Makkah* school logo and the three-Korma-palm composition, were arranged rhythmically in a repeated pattern across the fabric to maintain visual balance and continuity (Brück, 2021).

Once the digitally printed fabric was produced, the uniform construction process began. The first step involved measuring and drafting pattern templates according to each student group's body size. These templates included the back panel, front panel, sleeves, collar, and pocket areas. Each section was carefully cut following the designed motif layout to preserve the visual flow. The next stage was the sewing process,

where the cut fabric pieces were assembled into a complete garment according to the predetermined design. The shirts were tailored with a concealed button model, meaning the buttons were covered by a flap on the left front side for a cleaner aesthetic appearance. Finally, all seams were finished with overlock stitching to ensure neatness and durability across the joined sections of the fabric.



Figure 4 The Selection Process for the Most Appropriate Batik Motifs to be Used for Each School Level Uniform



Figure 5 The Outlining of Garment Pattern Templates on Printed Fabric Prior to Cutting.



Figure 6 The Cutting of Each Garment Section According to the Measured Templates



Figure 7 The Sewing Process Assembling All Garment Parts Into the Final School Dress Code Product



Figure 8 Examples of Completed Prototype Products of the *Sekolah Indonesia Makkah* Dress Code, Featuring Batik Motifs Inspired by the Local Natural and Cultural Elements of Indonesia and Saudi Arabia

Cultural Meaning and Symbolic Rationale Behind the Selection of Visual Elements

While the technical stages of creating the batik-designed dress code are essential to understanding the production process, the deeper significance of this research lies in the cultural rationale behind the selection of visual elements integrated into the *Sekolah Indonesia Makkah* (SIM) uniform. Each motif incorporated into the design carries symbolic meanings that represent cultural identity, collective memory, and national pride, functions that go beyond aesthetic considerations. The Indonesian motifs chosen, such as kawung, suluran, bunga surya, and other classical batik patterns, were selected not merely for their visual appeal but because they embody philosophical values embedded in Nusantara cultural heritage. The kawung motif, for example, symbolizes purity, self-control, and the balance of life; while suluran represents growth, continuity, and interconnectedness. These meanings are significant for students living abroad, as the motifs serve as daily reminders of their cultural roots and the moral principles associated with Indonesian identity. In the context of diaspora education, such symbolic reinforcements become essential cultural anchors for students who have limited direct exposure to Indonesian traditions.

Similarly, the Saudi Arabian visual elements included in the motif design, such as the Mecca Clock Tower, Meccan hills, and Korma palm trees, represent the geographical and cultural environment where SIM students live. Their inclusion acknowledges students' lived realities while symbolically harmonizing Indonesia and Saudi Arabia within a single visual narrative. This dual representation creates a meaningful bridge between the students' origins and their current socio-cultural environment. The Mecca Clock Tower, for instance, is not merely an architectural form but an icon of the sacred city where the students spend their formative years. Integrating it into the design honors the significance of their surroundings while reinforcing the school's cultural diplomacy role abroad. By intentionally selecting and combining these culturally charged visual elements, the dress code design becomes a symbolic medium for constructing and strengthening students' emotional attachment to Indonesia. As Hester and Hehman (Hester & Hehman, 2023) suggest, visual symbols serve as cognitive anchors that allow individuals to build collective imagination, even without direct experiential memory of the homeland. This is particularly relevant for SIM students, many of whom have never lived in Indonesia. The uniform thus functions not just as clothing but as a daily site of cultural learning – one that reinforces identity, pride, and belonging through visual symbolism.

Integrating motifs from both nations also represents a cultural harmony that reflects the students' dual engagement with Indonesia and Saudi Arabia, making the dress code a meaningful representation of their hybrid identity. Therefore, the importance of this research does not lie solely in documenting the technical stages of motif creation, but in demonstrating how cultural symbols are strategically selected and artistically synthesized to strengthen students' national identity. Through this culturally embedded design approach, the SIM dress code becomes a powerful visual instrument that supports character formation, diaspora identity development, and institutional branding in an international setting.

Exhibition of the Dress Code Prototype Creation of Sekolah Indonesia Makkah to Strengthen Students' Pride

Every product of artistic creation is important to be presented in a public space. This is not only to gain appreciation but also to receive criticism from prospective users or art observers (Ponimin et al., 2024). Presenting an artistic work of value to the public also allows the artist or designer to obtain responses or critiques of what has been achieved through the creative process. Through such evaluations, artists can refine their work based on the principles of product design aesthetics, including visual character, composition, harmony among design elements, and visual contrast within a single field (Brück, 2021). Design aesthetics also consider the aspect of user comfort, particularly in practical functional products such as clothing. In this case, the comfort of the school dress code, when worn, must be consistent with its aesthetic visual appearance. During the presentation process, product creators paid close attention to both the visual presentation and the direct feedback received from the intended users. The presentation of the *SIM* school dress code product was carried out directly by involving male and female students at *Sekolah Indonesia Makkah*. This approach was also intended to cultivate students' pride in the newly created dress code design, which would later serve as a symbolic representation of themselves and their school identity (Hester & Hehman, 2023).

Therefore, the presentation process was conducted through two types of creative showcases: an exhibition of the prototype products and a fashion show event. In the exhibition showcase, the prototype

products were displayed in the school's exhibition room, where students could directly observe the new *Sekolah Indonesia Makkah* dress code designs and provide their comments and feedback. Meanwhile, the fashion show was held by involving male and female students from each grade level, selected as models to display the new dress code designs during the event in the school auditorium. Students who were not involved as models attended the event and observed the fashion show, appreciating the design outcomes and the creative process behind them. The results of both presentation methods showed that students were very enthusiastic and happy, expressing excitement to immediately own and wear the newly created school dress code. In general, they believed that the new dress code would strengthen the school's identity and increase their motivation to study at *Sekolah Indonesia Makkah* (Lanang Jelantik, 2017).



Figure 9 Exhibition of the Dress Code Prototype Products at the *Sekolah Indonesia Makkah* auditorium, Allowing Students to Provide Direct Appreciation and Feedback



Figure 10 Fashion Show Event Featuring *Sekolah Indonesia Makkah* Students as Models Presenting the New School Dress Code Designs

Testing the Outcome of Batik Dress Code Pattern Development at the Sekolah Indonesia Makkah

This stage was implemented to ensure that the batik patterns created fulfilled aesthetic, iconic, and functional criteria. The testing involved students from the *Sekolah Indonesia Makkah* as potential users of the product. The testing was conducted to obtain feedback that could be used as a guideline for further development of the batik dress code patterns. On the other hand, product testing also aims to determine whether the developed batik motifs encourage students to take pride in the local Indonesian culture. These trials are

conducted on a medium scale, with product testing participants including students from elementary schools, junior high schools, and high schools. The total number of students in the school was 150. The number of students in each school level was 50, and then 30 students were selected and determined for each level. In creative arts research, product testing or product validation is important. This is to obtain feedback from the public about the creative results in order to obtain criticism or input from potential product users as well as a basis for revising the creative results (Ponimin, Satriya Nugroho, et al., 2023). The testing instrument was a questionnaire consisting of 10 questions using a rating scale of 1 to 5, with the rating levels being “Not Suitable” worth 1 point, “Less Suitable” worth 2 points, “Sufficiently Suitable” worth 3 points, ‘Suitable’ worth 4 points, and “Very Suitable” worth 5 points. The following are the assessment results obtained.

Table 1. Assessment Results for Batik Motif Creation Dress Code at *Sekolah Indonesia Makkah*

Number	Assessment Item	Total Score
1	The source of the dress code motif ideas is acceptable and attractive	145
2	The harmony of the elements of the batik motifs is attractive.	130
3	The application of colors to each batik motif is attractive.	142
4	The harmony of the combination of batik motif elements.	140
5	The harmony of the stylized shapes of the main and supporting motifs.	133
6	The harmony of the application of batik motifs to patterns or fields.	131
7	The harmony of motif lines and coloring.	125
8	The suitability of motif creations on fabric	120
9	Batik motif dress code creations with Indonesian-Saudi Arabian cultural and natural nuances	130
10	Batik motif creations encourage pride in loving Indonesian culture	145

From the data in the table above, obtained from questionnaires given to 150 students, it can be concluded that the batik motifs inspired by nature and Indonesian and Makkah culture meet the aesthetic and functional requirements of the Indonesian Makkah school dress code batik motifs. The assessment aspects proposed received positive responses, for example, in terms of attractive color combinations, harmony between motif elements, harmony in the stylization of batik motifs, and other aspects that are also in line with the tastes of Indonesian Makkah School students as prospective users.

Conclusion

Sekolah Indonesia Makkah (SIM) is a formal educational institution under the auspices of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia. Located in the city of Mecca, this school serves the sons and daughters of Indonesian citizens who live and, in some cases, were born in Saudi Arabia. These students represent the younger generation of Indonesia living far from their homeland, whose sense of love and pride as Indonesians must continually be nurtured. At the same time, they are also part of the nation's image abroad particularly in Saudi Arabia. Educational institutions, therefore, play a crucial role in producing graduates who not only master knowledge, technology, and culture but also embody strong religious and moral values. In this broader context, students serve as cultural ambassadors who help promote Indonesia's image in the

international community through their identity and behavior by wearing school uniforms featuring batik motifs with representative visual characteristics.

This research does not merely describe the technical steps involved in creating a batik-designed dress code. Rather, its central contribution lies in demonstrating why specific visual components from Indonesian and Saudi cultures were deliberately selected as symbolic elements capable of strengthening students' cultural identity and pride. Each motif chosen, such as the *kawung*, *suluran* (vining plant) motifs, Mecca Clock Tower, Meccan hills, *bunga surya* (sunflower), the school logo, and other decorative forms and Korma palms, carries visual and philosophical meanings that represent the cultural heritage and geographic realities connected to SIM students. The integration of these motifs is therefore not an aesthetic exercise alone but a cultural strategy aimed at embedding symbols of homeland identity into students' everyday environment. By wearing uniforms that contain culturally meaningful decorative elements, SIM students are continuously exposed to symbolic reminders of their Indonesian roots, which reinforces national pride despite living abroad. Thus, the visual choices in this research are fundamentally tied to identity formation, cultural representation, and emotional attachment, not merely to the technical creation of a batik motif. Accordingly, the significance of this research lies not in the production technique itself, but in the cultural, symbolic, and educational rationale behind motif selection, showing how visual design can function as a medium for cultural preservation and national identity reinforcement among diaspora students.

These batik motifs were designed and composed based on aesthetic and functional design principles, emphasizing harmony among visual elements, balance, and a strong sense of iconicity to reinforce the school's branding. The motifs were applied to dress code fabric using digital printing techniques, and the resulting textiles were sewn into prototype uniforms corresponding to the different school levels, elementary, junior high, and senior high. The creative outcomes were then presented through product exhibitions and fashion shows at *Sekolah Indonesia Makkah*, involving the students as both participants and evaluators. The presentations received highly positive responses, demonstrating that the new dress code design successfully fostered enthusiasm and pride among students. These findings confirm that the creative dress code design not only strengthens students' identity and national pride as Indonesians living abroad but also enhances the school's visual branding as an Indonesian educational institution in Saudi Arabia.

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