

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

Generation Z, born between the mid-1990s and early 2010s, is the first generation to grow up entirely immersed in digital media. This generation has faced significant challenges, from the global pandemic to social and political turmoil, which have deeply influenced their perceptions of identity and social change. In response, Gen Z has adopted alternative fashion as a way to express their thoughts and emotions, using fashion both as a personal and collective form of resistance against societal norms. Fashion trends, now more than ever, are not only markers of individual identity but also reflect the broader cultural transformation driven by technological advancements and the rise of digital media (Chittenden, 2010). As fashion communicates identity, it becomes a vital element of online cultures where youth seek to distinguish themselves while also belonging to specific communities. Clothing, once merely a physical shield, is now a virtual currency in social media conveying aesthetic choices, cultural affiliations, and political stances.



Figure 1.1 DIY Fashion in Indonesia
Source: fidousoza.blogspot.com (2011)

The alternative fashion scene has always existed in Indonesia. During the Asian Financial Crisis, young creatives started to modify their own clothing, accessories and other fashion items rather than buying from stores as a form of self-expression and resistance against mainstream consumerism. The rise of social media platforms like Instagram and TikTok during the global pandemic amplified the reach of alternative fashion in Indonesia. Young Indonesians began showcasing their unique styles online, leading to the emergence of new subcultures and fashion movements. Alternative fashion in Indonesia celebrates individuality and self-expression, allowing people to showcase their unique personalities and styles, while building a sense of community, with individuals supporting and inspiring each other.

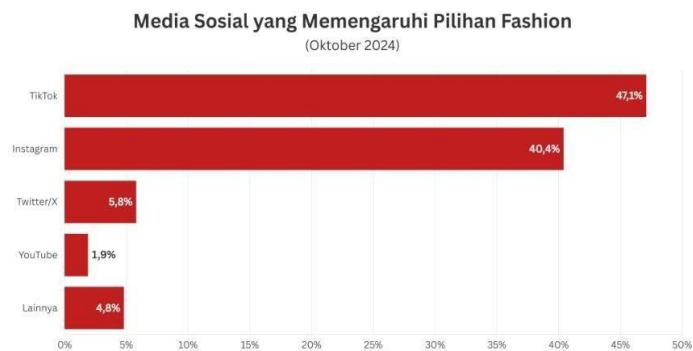


Figure 1.2 Social media influence on fashion choices

Source: Goodstats (2024)

In recent years, the growing impact of social media platforms like TikTok and Instagram, has led to the rise of new alternative subcultures that resonate with Gen Z. These alternative subcultures have captured the imagination of younger generations, particularly Gen Z, whom gravitates towards non-mainstream styles as a form of self-expression and social identity. According to a survey by goodstats (2024) 47.1% of the respondents in Indonesia say that their fashion choices are influenced by content seen on social media platform Tiktok. Since the rise of the social media platform TikTok, there has been a demand for these alternative fashion styles that are now becoming more mainstream and widely embraced. The integration of these alternative styles into digital platforms amplifies their reach,

with social media serving as an extension of the self and allowing youth to display their identities on a global stage (Maguire, 2021). However, despite its growing visibility, finding brands that fully represent alternative aesthetics in Indonesia remains a challenge as the society lean towards conservative ideologies and are often reluctant to embrace expressions that deviate from traditional norms. Although there are limited local brands that fully represent alternative aesthetics or offer immersive brand experiences tailored to Gen Z's lifestyle and values. Most local fashion brands still rely heavily on commercial trends and do not incorporate subcultural narratives or digital experiences.

In response to this problem, this research proposes the design of a visual brand identity for Seroja, an alternative fashion brand that caters to Indonesian Gen Z. The brand will be rooted in the Y2K aesthetic, offering not just apparel but also a visual and emotional experience that taps into nostalgia, individuality, and self-expression. The early 2000s' Y2K aesthetic serves as a perfect demonstration of changing aesthetics while introducing new ways of self-expression. The Y2K aesthetic combines futuristic elements with nostalgic ones because it expresses social and cultural anxiety about the fast-moving digital era. The fashion style revival demonstrates an anti-traditional approach to femininity as it embodies women's expression and pursuit of fashion and aesthetics. (Meng, 2017). Fashion works in two directions during this new period by helping individuals reveal themselves and by representing collective identities that bring people together. The fashion process is then multiplied through social media which transforms outfits from mere clothing into self-made content shared across networks and develops personal and social identities (Doshi, Patel, & Lin, 2024). The research aims to explore how visual identity can effectively communicate the brand's values, engage with Gen Z, and position Seroja as a brand in Indonesia's growing alternative fashion scene. By aligning design strategy with the cultural behaviors and digital habits of Gen Z, this study aims to build a brand that stands out while also building a community among youth who seek authenticity and creative freedom.

1.2 Problem Identification

1. Particularly in Indonesia, it is challenging to find brands that embody alternative styles, as the society tends to be more closed-minded, less progressive, and often reluctant to embrace expressions that deviate from traditional norms.
2. Most local brands still lack the ability to create immersive experiences. As Gen Z becomes increasingly nostalgic towards eras like the early 2000s, there's a unique opportunity to design a brand that doesn't just sell clothes but brings the moment to life. Seroja will be delivering the nostalgic, expressive, and bold energy of the Y2K era, and transporting users emotionally and visually back to that iconic time.

1.3 Problem Formulation

The problem is centered on the challenge of designing a visual brand identity for "Seroja" that effectively resonates with Gen Z.

1. What design elements, visual identity, creative concept and digital marketing can differentiate Seroja from conventional fashion brands?
2. How can Seroja design a brand experience that immerses users in the nostalgic and expressive feel of the early 2000s (Y2K era)?

1.4 Scope

1.4.1 What?

This thesis explores the development of a visual brand identity for Seroja.

The aim is to create an immersive brand experience for Gen Z, differentiate Seroja from conventional brands, and create a Graphic Standard Manual as the main form of media.

1.4.2 When?

The entire research process will be conducted from February to June 2025.

1.4.3 Where?

The data for this research will be collected across Indonesia, particularly Jabodetabek and Bandung.

1.4.4 Who?

The main focus will be towards Gen Z, people born between the mid-1990s and the early 2010s.

1.4.5 Why?

This research is important because Gen Z's preferences are shaping the future of branding, but many Indonesian brands fail to address their desire for individuality and authenticity.

1.4.6 How?

By designing a Visual Brand Identity “Seroja” that resonates with Gen Z's desire of self- expression.

1.5 Design Objectives

The objective of this design project is to create a visually compelling brand identity for “Seroja” that resonates with Generation Z's desire for authenticity, individuality, and alternative aesthetics. It aims to deliver an experience that transports users back to the early 2000s. This brand identity will incorporate elements of alternative themes and subcultures, tailored to the preferences of Indonesian youth. The goal is to design a visual identity that reflects the unique self-expressions of this generation, challenges traditional norms, and fosters a sense of community among young consumers. Through an exploration of design elements like logo, typography, and color palette, the project aims to develop a brand that aligns with the values and aesthetics of Gen Z.

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1.7 Design Benefits

1.7.1 Practical Benefits

The visual identity design for Seroja aims to provide the brand with a strong and recognizable identity that appeals to Gen Z. By establishing a cohesive brand image, Seroja can attract its target audience and increase engagement. The design will help in the creation of promotional media, ensuring consistent branding across various platforms.

1.7.2 Theoretical Benefits

This study contributes to the academic understanding of how alternative aesthetics influence branding and consumer behavior, particularly among Gen Z. It serves as a reference for future research on visual identity design, exploring how branding can align with subcultures and digital media trends. The findings can also provide insights into modern branding strategies that cater to niche markets.

1.7.3 Cultural and Social Benefits

By embracing alternative aesthetics, Seroja challenges conventional branding norms in Indonesia, where non-traditional styles are often less accepted. This project encourages creative expression and diversity in the fashion and branding industry, fostering a more inclusive market that accommodates various subcultures and personal identities.

1.8 Design Methodology

1.8.3 Data Collection

A. Observation

Observation is conducted by analyzing visual trends in alternative fashion and branding, particularly on digital platforms such as Instagram, TikTok, and Pinterest, where Gen Z actively engages with aesthetic-driven content. By observing how alternative styles are visually represented and received by the audience, this study gains insights into the key elements that resonate with this demographic.

B. Literature Review

A Literature review is performed to explore academic and industry sources on branding, visual identity, and the evolution of alternative subcultures. This review helps contextualize the historical, cultural, and social factors that shape Gen Z's self-expression through fashion and branding.

1.8.4 Data Analysis

The data analysis process in this study utilizes a qualitative approach, focusing on interpreting visual and cultural trends relevant to Generation Z's identity and alternative fashion branding. The following analysis methods will be used in the thesis:

A. SWOT Analysis

SWOT Analysis (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats) is used to evaluate Seroja's brand positioning. This method identifies the brand's strengths, such as its distinct alternative style, while also acknowledging challenges like societal acceptance in Indonesia. SWOT analysis helps uncover market opportunities and potential threats from competitors or cultural resistance.

B. AISAS Analysis

This study applies the AISAS Model (Attention, Interest, Search, Action, Share) to analyze how Gen Z interacts with branding through digital media. This model tracks their journey from discovering alternative fashion brands to actively engaging and sharing them within their communities.

C. Matrix Analysis

Matrix analysis is a data analysis method consisting of columns and rows and is useful for comparing data sets and drawing conclusions. In this research, the author will compare similar visual projects.

1.9 Design Framework

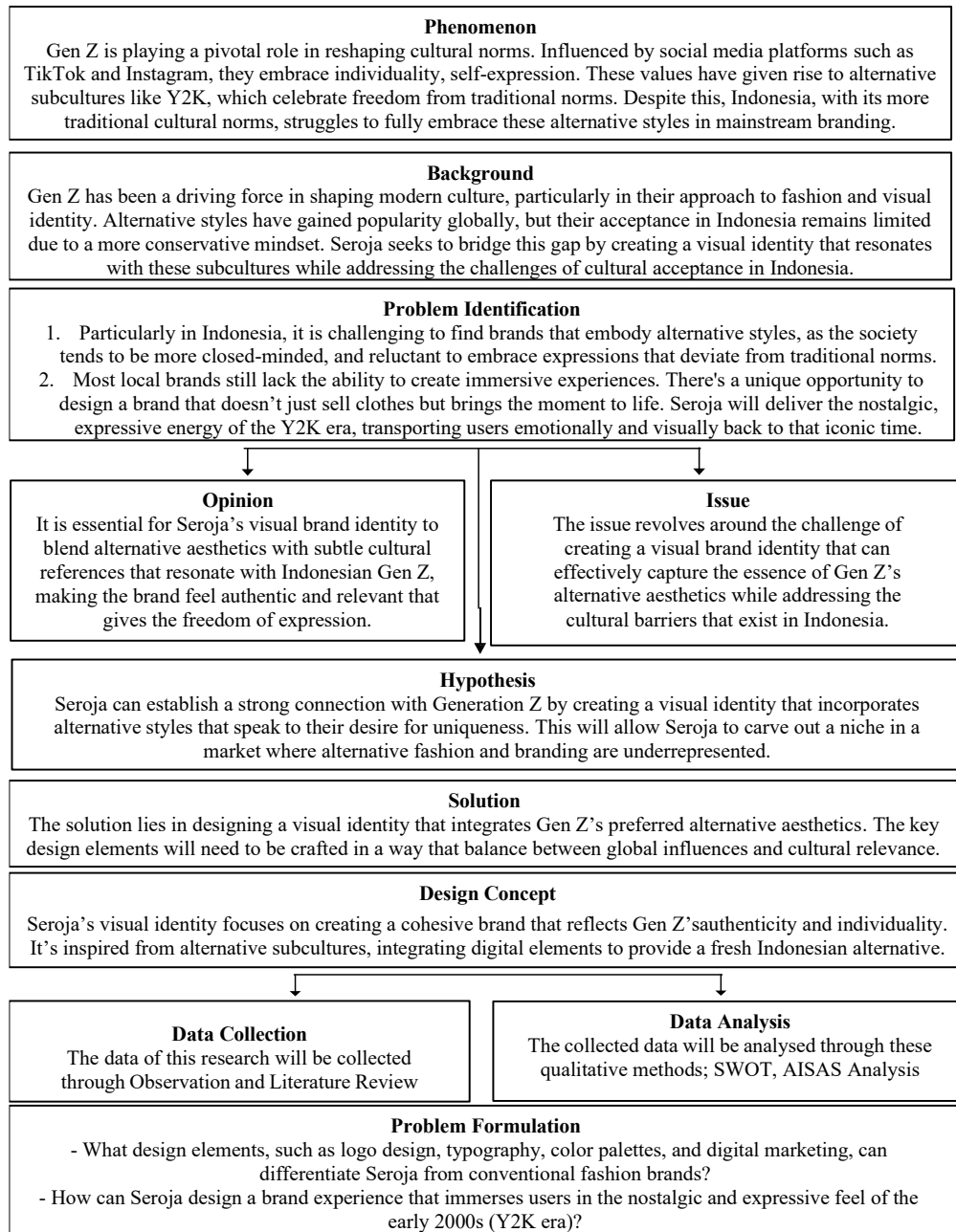


Figure 1.3. Research Framework

Source: Personal Data

1.10 Writing Systematic

A. CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

Introduces the background, problem identification, problem formulation, scope, research objectives, data collection and analysis methods, and the research framework related to the design of Seroja's visual identity.

B. CHAPTER II: THEORITICAL FOUNDATION

This presents relevant theories and references that provide a foundation for understanding the concepts of visual identity, branding, and Gen Z's aesthetic preferences, as well as the alternative styles influencing this generation.

C. CHAPTER III: DATA AND ANALYSIS

Chapter three discusses the data gathered, including information about the target audience, trends, and cultural context. It also includes an analysis of the data, identifying key challenges and opportunities related to creating a visual identity for Seroja.

D. CHAPTER IV: DESIGN PROCESS

This chapter elaborates on the design concept developed for Seroja's visual identity, from the conceptualization phase to the final design. It covers the creative process, media choices, and the visual outcomes that align with the target audience's preferences.

E. CHAPTER V: CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

Chapter five concludes the thesis by summarizing key findings, offering suggestions for future development, and reflecting on the design process and its potential impact on Seroja's brand recognition among Gen Z.