CULTURE-BASED TYPOGRAPHY: THE CREATION OF THE RINGGIT BALI FONT AS A VISUAL REPRESENTATION OF TRADITIONAL BALINESE CEREMONIAL OFFERINGS

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Abstract

This study explores the creation of the *Ringgit Bali* font, a typeface inspired by the visual elements of traditional Balinese ceremonial offerings, particularly *Lamak.* Employing a practice-based research approach, the study investigates how the aesthetic values and philosophical meanings embedded in Balinese culture can be translated into letterforms with distinctive characteristics. The research aims to uncover the visual potential of *Lamak* and adapt it into a type design that not only represents Balinese cultural identity but also serves diverse design applications, including branding, visual identity, and promotional media. The font development process involved form analysis of *Lamak,* typographic experimentation, and legibility testing to ensure that the resulting design possesses both artistic value and functional usability in visual communication design. Visual data of *Lamak* were collected through direct observation and documentation studies. The final outcomes of this research include the *Ringgit Bali* typeface and a documentation book detailing the font creation process, form exploration, and its application across various design contexts.

Keywords: Typography, Balinese Culture, *Lamak*, Typeface Design, *Ringgit* Bali, Visual Communication.

INTRODUCTION

Typography is a crucial element in visual communication design, functioning not only as a medium for conveying information but also as a vehicle for cultural expression (Pranata et al., 2025). In the era of globalization, many local cultures are increasingly marginalized by the dominance of international typographic styles that often fail to reflect regional cultural identities (Haswanto, 2018). As a result, the creation of culture-based typography has become a vital effort in preserving and promoting local visual heritage.

Indonesia, with its rich cultural diversity and ethnic alphabets, offers an inexhaustible source of inspiration for type design. Typeface designers can create Latin-based fonts that embody local cultural identities, resulting in unique designs that stand apart from generic, widely used typefaces (Haswanto, 2013). Balinese culture, in particular, is one of Indonesia's many cultural riches, renowned for its high aesthetic value. One significant cultural element is *Lamak*, a ceremonial decoration used in various religious rituals in Bali. *Lamak* not only holds religious significance but also contains distinct artistic and symbolic values. For instance, the decorative motifs often represent cosmic structures in Balinese belief systems, with female-shaped figures known as *cili* symbolizing fertility and human regeneration (Brinkgreve, 2016). The visual elements of *Lamak* feature unique patterns, including *reringgitan*—leaf-inspired carvings and traditional Balinese ornaments.

In the context of visual communication design, translating cultural elements into typographic forms requires in-depth exploration. A thorough observation of the concept and visual reference is essential to develop typography that aligns with the cultural source (Özkan, 2024). In the case of *Lamak*, the main characteristic adopted is the *reringgitan* motif, which serves as the primary inspiration for the creation of the *Ringgit Bali* font. The key intention behind the font's design is to balance traditional beauty with modern legibility, ensuring that the resulting typography is not only aesthetically pleasing but also functional across various design applications.

Beyond cultural appreciation, the development of culture-based typography can contribute significantly to the rapidly growing creative industry. As the demand for strong local visual identities increases, fonts inspired by indigenous cultures offer a compelling solution for producing distinctive and appealing designs. The strength of local culture must be explored intensively so that typographic works grounded in cultural heritage can evolve and remain competitive in today's global landscape.

This study aims to explore the visual potential of *Lamak* and adapt it into a type design that both represents Balinese culture and functions effectively in various design applications, such as branding, visual identity, and promotional media. The *Ringgit Bali* concept is envisioned not merely as a typeface, but as a medium for cultural preservation through digital typography. By incorporating historical and design perspectives, the study also emphasizes the importance of a comprehensive creation methodology, involving form exploration, design experimentation, and readability and usability testing. Each stage of this research is carefully examined to produce a font that can be broadly applied without compromising its cultural essence.

Ultimately, this study aspires to demonstrate how traditional visual elements can be adapted into contemporary design through the *Ringgit Bali* typeface. It also seeks to contribute to both academia and the graphic design industry by underscoring the importance of sustaining cultural heritage through innovative, culture-based modern typography. In an age where local cultures are increasingly displaced by homogenized international design trends, the creation of culturally rooted typography represents a meaningful effort to preserve and promote visual traditions.

METHODOLOGY

This study employs a *practice-based research* approach, a method grounded in the act of design creation itself. This approach allows for direct exploration and iterative testing of the developed design, enabling each stage of creation to be refined in accordance with both aesthetic and functional needs. Practice-based research has been widely adopted in design studies to foster innovation through real-world practice (Yee, 2010).

The development of the *Ringgit Bali* font began with the exploration of visual elements from Balinese culture, particularly *Lamak*, as the primary source of inspiration. Previous studies have shown that the integration of cultural elements into typographic design can enhance visual appeal and strengthen cultural identity in visual communication. For example, Yudhanto et al. (2023) emphasized the importance of cultural understanding in communication design, arguing that designers who comprehend the values, norms, language, and beliefs of their target audience are more likely to produce effective and culturally relevant designs, thus reinforcing cultural identity through visual media. Accordingly, this study adopts the practice-based research approach to ensure that adapted visual elements retain their original cultural essence while remaining relevant to modern design contexts.

In addition, this research draws upon *design-based research* (DBR), which emphasizes iterative development through cycles of experimentation and systematic evaluation. DBR is a practical research methodology that effectively bridges the gap between academic inquiry and

real-world application, particularly in educational settings (Anderson & Shattuck, 2012). The creation of the *Ringgit Bali* font, while grounded in practice-based research, also contributes to academic discourse through the DBR framework by providing insights into culturally informed design methodologies. Practice-led research in the creative arts plays a critical role in generating new forms of knowledge that can be disseminated and critically examined within academic contexts (Candy & Edmonds, 2018).

The research process involved the following stages:

1. **Exploration and Research** – Gathering visual references related to *Lamak* and culturally inspired typefaces.
2. **Sketch Development** – Producing multiple letterform sketches based on visual elements from *Lamak*.
3. **Digitization and Refinement** – Converting sketches into digital fonts using type design software.
4. **Readability and Functionality Testing** – Evaluating the *Ringgit Bali* font across various design applications.

The readability tests were conducted with a sample of ten individuals selected based on their professional backgrounds. Both **subjective** and **objective** evaluation methods were employed.

1. The **subjective test** involved respondents from diverse backgrounds (graphic designers, academics, and the general public) who were asked to read text written in the *Ringgit Bali* font at various point sizes (8pt, 10pt, 12pt, 14pt, 18pt, 24pt) and assess readability using three categories: *very easy to read*, *moderately readable*, and *difficult to read*.
2. The **objective test** used readability analysis software to evaluate font contrast and letterform clarity. Additional testing included examining readability under different lighting conditions (natural light, dim light, digital screens, black-and-white print, color print) and simulating reading at varying distances (30 cm and 1 meter).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION
Readability Test Results of the *Ringgit Bali* Font

Readability testing is a crucial step in evaluating the effectiveness of a typeface under various usage conditions. The *Ringgit Bali* font, designed by adapting visual elements from *Lamak*, requires rigorous testing to ensure its optimal usability across diverse media and font sizes without compromising legibility. The main objectives of the readability test are: (1) to assess the font's legibility at various sizes and across different media formats; (2) to identify factors influencing reading comfort, such as letter spacing (kerning), word spacing (tracking), and color contrast; and (3) to determine the most suitable design applications for the font in the context of visual communication design. The results of the readability test are presented and discussed as follows:

Table 1. Readability Test Results Completed by 10 Respondents

No	Name	Profession	8pt	10pt	12pt	14pt	18pt	24pt
1	Agus Wijaya	Graphic Designer	Hard	Fair	Easy	Easy	Easy	Easy
2	Rina Setiawan	Academic	Hard	Hard	Fair	Easy	Easy	Easy
3	Budi Pratama	General Public	Hard	Fair	Fair	Easy	Easy	Easy
4	Dian Kurniawan	Researcher	Fair	Fair	Easy	Easy	Easy	Easy
5	Fitri Handayani	Teacher	Hard	Fair	Fair	Easy	Easy	Easy
6	Satria Nugroho	Student	Hard	Hard	Fair	Fair	Easy	Easy
7	Indah Permata	Graphic Designer	Fair	Easy	Easy	Easy	Easy	Easy

No	Name	Profession	8pt	10pt	12pt	14pt	18pt	24pt
8	Hendro Susanto	Academic	Hard	Hard	Fair	Easy	Easy	Easy
9	Lina Wulandari	General Public	Hard	Fair	Fair	Easy	Easy	Easy
10	Eko Saputra	Researcher	Fair	Fair	Easy	Easy	Easy	Easy

The table above presents the collected readability test results, from which several key findings were identified:

1. Font Size: Most respondents indicated that type sizes of 12pt and above provide optimal readability. Sizes below 12pt were generally perceived as difficult to read, especially by those unfamiliar with typographic structure.
2. Readability on Print and Digital Media: On low-resolution black-and-white prints, smaller font sizes (8pt–10pt) tend to be difficult to read. Conversely, on high-resolution digital screens, sizes 12pt and larger demonstrated significantly better legibility.
3. Respondent Preferences: Graphic designers and academics showed greater sensitivity to typographic detail, such as kerning and stroke clarity. In contrast, general readers prioritized ease of reading without focusing on technical nuances.
4. Reading Comfort: Font sizes 14pt and above offered a more comfortable reading experience, especially in low-light environments, suggesting that larger point sizes enhance user experience across variable conditions.
5. Conclusion and Recommendations: Based on the readability test results, the *Ringgit Bali* font is effective for designs requiring a Balinese cultural aesthetic—such as branding, packaging, and promotional media. However, for longer texts, a bolder or higher-weight font variant is recommended to improve legibility and reduce reader fatigue.

The bar chart below illustrates the distribution of responses across different font sizes, reflecting the trends discussed above.

Readability Ratings for Ringgit Bali Font Across Font Sizes
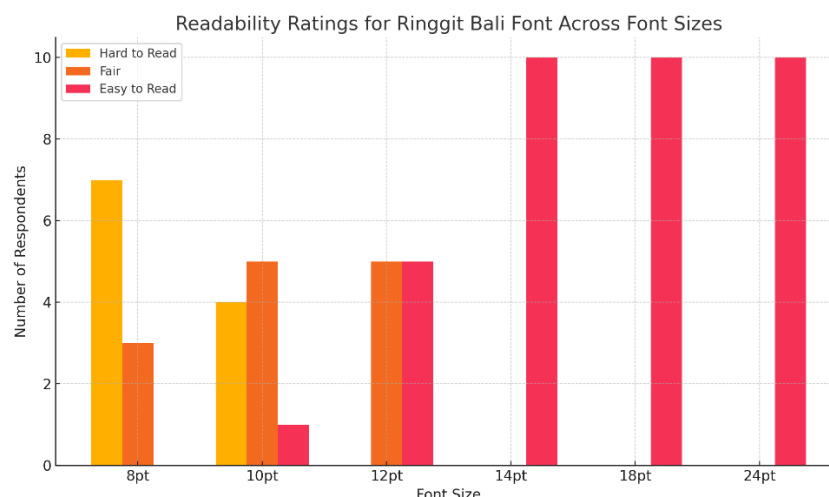
Recommendations for Further Development

Several recommendations for future development of the *Ringgit Bali* font are as follows: 1. Develop a bold variant to enhance contrast, particularly for use on small screens, 2. Improve letter spacing (kerning) at smaller sizes to enhance legibility, 3. Optimize font rendering for digital screen environments to ensure visual clarity across various devices. The findings from the readability test serve as a foundational reference for these future improvements, enabling the *Ringgit Bali* font to be applied more broadly and effectively in visual communication design contexts.

Typography in Visual Communication Design

Typography plays a vital role in visual communication design, serving as one of the fundamental elements that shape the visualization of messages (Wijaya, 1999). Among the seven core elements of typography, typefaces or fonts are essential components that can convey emotion and meaning through their form. Each typeface possesses unique characteristics that influence the audience's perception of the message. Therefore, selecting an appropriate font is crucial to ensure effective message delivery.

The field of typography suggests that every message has its own character, which must be translated through suitable typographic elements. These include font size, color, and style, all of which should align with the context of the message (Gunay, 2024). For instance, bold and angular typefaces may represent strength or confidence, whereas soft, curved letterforms may suggest warmth or gentleness. The combination of these elements creates a visual experience that enhances communication effectiveness. Typography is not merely about aesthetics—it is about how a message can "speak" to its reader (Brumberger, 2004).

In a cultural context, typography also plays a significant role in establishing distinctive visual identities (Haswanto, 2018). Every culture carries unique characteristics that can be integrated into typographic design. For example, traditional ornaments or local motifs can serve as inspiration for designing culturally distinctive fonts. Aleshawie (2019), in his article *"Cultural Identity in Graphic Design"*, highlights that 95.2% of designers in Saudi Arabia incorporate cultural identity into their design work, employing various methods to express it. This underscores how integrating cultural elements into graphic design fosters emotional connection with local audiences, strengthens cultural identity, and enhances the effectiveness of visual communication.

Moreover, the selection and arrangement of culturally inspired letterforms can contribute to the preservation of cultural heritage. By incorporating cultural elements into visual communication design, designers not only convey messages but also preserve traditional values. The fusion of traditional elements with modern design techniques in visual art allows for the creation of works that embody historical sentiment and contemporary aesthetics. Traditional elements can be organically combined with modern design approaches—through form, color, ornamentation, and materials—resulting in artwork that reflects cultural heritage while addressing present-day visual needs (Zhang, 2024). A typeface that embodies specific cultural elements can serve as a reminder of local identity amid globalization, making typography a powerful creative medium that bridges tradition and technology. Thus, culture-based typography contributes both uniqueness and strong visual appeal.

Typography functions not only as an aesthetic element in visual communication but also holds strategic value in building brand identity and image (Wang, 2024). Typography enhances readability, reinforces messaging, and helps establish a compelling visual identity. Its multifaceted role makes it a crucial tool for designers to communicate messages effectively. Whether in a local or global context, well-crafted typographic elements can create a strong and lasting visual impact. Therefore, understanding and optimizing typography is essential in developing successful visual communication design.

Visual Elements in Balinese Culture

Lamak is a prominent visual element within Balinese culture, serving as a ritual decoration placed on altars and sacred spaces during religious ceremonies. Traditionally crafted from woven coconut leaves or *lontar* (palm leaves), *lamak* is often adorned with symbolic motifs that reflect the aesthetic and spiritual values of Balinese society (Brinkgreve, 2016). These motifs—such as symbols of mountains, the moon, and stars—not only enhance the decorative appeal but also embody profound meanings associated with Balinese Hindu beliefs

and philosophies (Matey, 2023). This element symbolizes reverence for noble values passed down through generations.

Figure 1. *Lamak* with Moon and Star Motifs Note. Adapted from Matey (2023).

The process of creating *lamak* requires a high level of manual craftsmanship, showcasing the artistic mastery inherent in traditional Balinese culture. The result is an art form that blends aesthetic beauty with deep symbolic meaning. The presence of *lamak* in nearly every Balinese ceremonial ritual signifies the integration of art and spirituality. Commonly placed on altars as offerings to the gods, *lamak* is also believed to cultivate a sacred atmosphere, thereby enhancing the spiritual experience of ceremony participants. Thus, *lamak* functions not merely as decoration, but as a vital medium for communication between humans, nature, and the divine.

From a social perspective, *lamak* reflects the communal values and spirit of mutual cooperation (*gotong-royong*) embedded in Balinese society. The creation of *lamak* is often carried out collectively, especially in preparation for large ceremonies, serving as a moment to strengthen interpersonal bonds within the community. This collective activity teaches values of cooperation and respect for tradition, positioning *lamak* as a symbol of cultural solidarity and heritage preservation. With its artistic beauty, spiritual symbolism, and social function, *lamak* epitomizes the harmony between humans, nature, and the divine. It illustrates how traditional art can serve as a medium that connects various dimensions of life, and affirms the Balinese community's commitment to honoring and sustaining their cultural heritage.

Beyond its cultural role, *lamak* serves as a source of inspiration and reference for artists and designers. In the realm of design, *lamak* can be explored through the lens of typography within visual communication. Rich with motifs and symbolism, *lamak* embodies visual principles such as balance, harmony, and rhythm—core elements that also define effective typographic design. In visual communication, typography is employed to convey messages clearly and aesthetically, mirroring how *lamak* communicates spiritual and cultural meaning to the Balinese people through its visual form.

Furthermore, *lamak* inspires creative approaches to typographic expression in visual design. Its shapes and patterns can be translated into unique, character-rich letterforms that reflect the elegance of traditional Balinese aesthetics. The organized structure of *lamak* can influence text layout, helping designers create compositions that are both orderly and visually engaging. Integrating traditional elements such as *lamak* into contemporary design allows typography to serve not only as a tool for cultural preservation but also as a means of producing works that resonate with modern audiences. This fusion of traditional Balinese art and modern design technology demonstrates the power of typography to facilitate meaningful, effective communication.

The application of local cultural elements like *lamak* enriches and strengthens the visual identity of a design. Typography that incorporates traditional aesthetics can foster an emotional connection between the audience and the work while contributing to cultural conservation. For instance, the design of typefaces inspired by cultural artifacts from West Java has successfully

combined aesthetic value with philosophical meaning, producing works that are visually appealing and deeply symbolic.

The creation of the *Ringgit Bali* font—integrating visual elements from *lamak*—represents an effort to reintroduce Balinese cultural richness through digital media. This initiative aligns with the belief that culture-based typography can serve as an effective medium for preserving and responding to cultural values amid the forces of globalization. By merging traditional beauty with contemporary functionality, this font is intended to support a wide range of design applications—such as branding, visual identity, and promotional media—thereby broadening appreciation for Balinese heritage within both local and global contexts.

The Design Process of the *Ringgit Bali* Typeface

The incorporation of visual elements from *Lamak* marked the initial step in the development of the *Ringgit Bali* typeface. This element was selected due to its distinctive aesthetic and symbolic value within Balinese culture. The integration of cultural elements into typographic design can enrich visual identity and enhance meaning in graphic communication (Yudhanto et al., 2023).

A visual analysis of *Lamak* was conducted by examining its structure, patterns, and decorative motifs. Adapting traditional elements into typography requires a thoughtful approach that considers legibility, aesthetics, and visual balance. Typographic principles are essential in guiding the visual presentation of text, influencing readability, emphasis, and overall aesthetic appeal (Gunay, 2024). Consequently, the elements of *Lamak* with strong typographic potential were carefully selected to ensure harmony between cultural heritage and the functional requirements of type design.
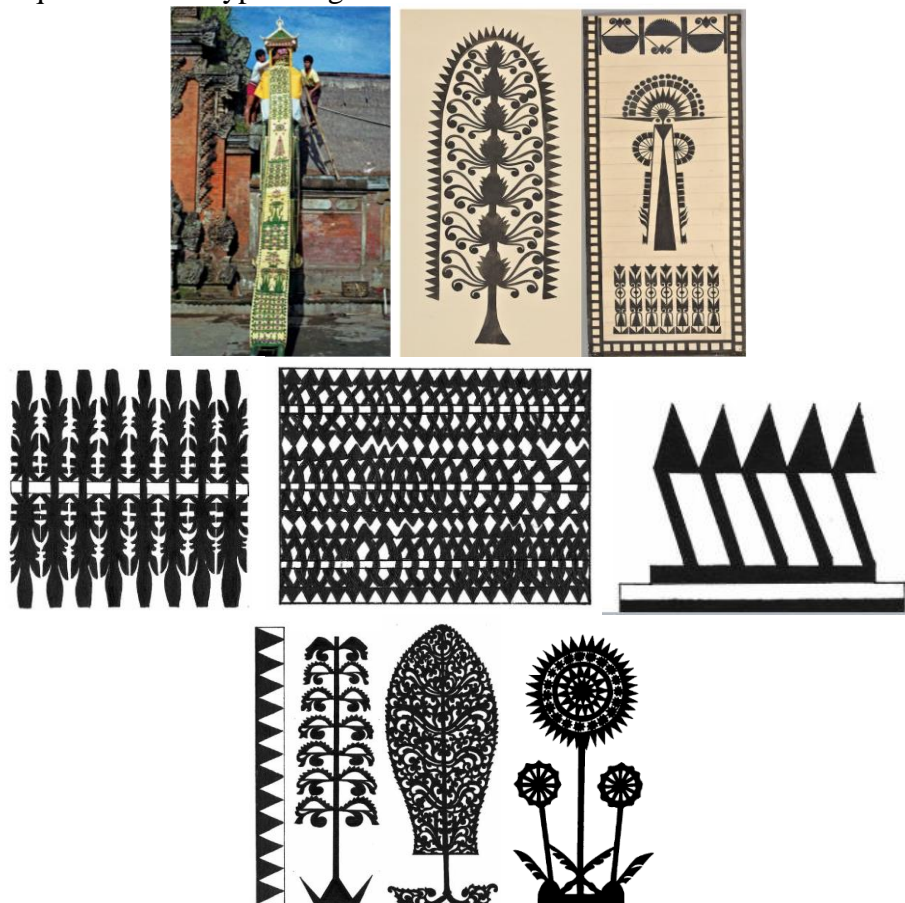

Figure 2. *Lamak* and Design of Various *Reringitan* Pattern Types Note. Adapted from Brinkgreve (2016).

Based on a visual analysis of the *lamak* structure and its internal decorative motifs, the *reringitan* pattern emerged as the primary element adopted as a defining characteristic. *Reringitan* is considered one of the most culturally resonant features within the symbolic framework of *lamak*, effectively embodying Balinese identity. This element was subsequently adopted as the core visual reference in the creation of the *Ringgit Bali* font.

Adapting traditional elements such as *reringitan* into typographic design requires careful attention to the sharpness of strokes and the integrity of form, in order to authentically convey the strength and resilience of Balinese cultural expression.

Figure 3.The Process of Creating *Reringitan* Patterns in *Lamak* Making
Note. Adapted from Brinkgreve (2016).

The experimental phase involved adapting decorative patterns and distinctive strokes found in *Lamak* into the initial letterform sketches. In typographic design, the exploration process must incorporate iteration and testing to ensure that each element supports not only visual appeal but also enhances legibility. The *reringitan* strokes and curved forms commonly seen in *Lamak* decorations were used to preserve both the aesthetic and symbolic aspects. These distinctive patterns were then translated into ornamental details within the typeface design while adhering to legibility principles.

Following the initial analysis, the exploration phase began with the creation of various sketches aimed at identifying the most appropriate letterform structures and proportions that aligned with *Lamak*'s decorative motifs. This experimentation produced multiple stroke variations and letterform proportions, which were then evaluated to determine the optimal configuration that preserved the Balinese cultural essence without sacrificing readability.

From the range of sketches, one was selected for further refinement through digital processing. This step aimed to perfect the proportions and letter structures based on *Lamak*-inspired elements. Digitalization allowed for precise control over the shapes, ensuring an optimal balance between aesthetic expression and technical functionality. Every adapted element from *Lamak* was incrementally tested and refined within a digital environment to achieve a highly functional typeface design. This process was carried out using typography design software such as Adobe Illustrator and FontLab. The use of digital technology in type design enables greater precision in refining letter proportions and ensuring visual consistency across multiple applications and sizes.

Once the initial sketches were scanned, a vectorization process was undertaken to convert hand-drawn lines into smooth, manipulable Bézier curves. At this stage, each character was carefully reviewed and adjusted for stroke thickness, slant angle, and other technical attributes. Letterform refinement also involved configuring kerning, tracking, and leading parameters to ensure visual comfort across different sizes and design contexts. Achieving a balance between aesthetic expression and legibility in digital typography depends significantly on the careful adjustment of letter spacing and proportion relative to the baseline.
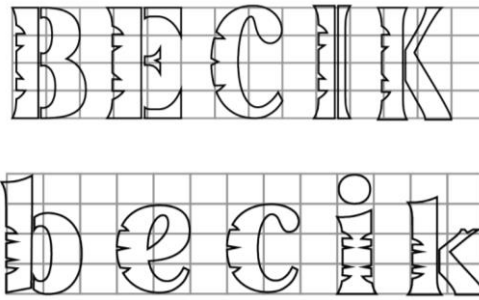
Figure 4. Digitalization Process of Typeface Sketches
Note. Created by the researcher (2024).

During the digitalization process, a serif typeface was used as the foundational reference for the initial letterforms. This serif typeface served as the structural base, which was then extensively modified to reflect the desired *Lamak*-inspired characteristics. The overall serif forms underwent significant changes in their detailed structure. The clean and uniform shapes typical of serif typefaces were deliberately distorted through the addition of *reringitan* strokes.

These *reringitan*-inspired strokes became the focal point in redefining the letterforms in detail, resulting in the final *Ringgit Bali* typeface that bears little resemblance to the original serif model. This transformation introduces a sense of novelty and originality, positioning *Ringgit Bali* as a culturally rooted and uniquely expressive typeface.

Figure 5. Comparison Between Serif Font and *Ringgit Bali* Font
Note. Created by the researcher (2024).

In the final stage, the adapted *Lamak* elements within the *Ringgit Bali* typeface were tested across various visual contexts to evaluate their effectiveness in visual communication applications. Iterative testing within the culture-based design process was conducted to ensure that the developed font not only possesses aesthetic appeal but also functions effectively in practical design scenarios.

Figure 6. Final Design Output of the *Ringgit Bali* Typeface
Note. Created by the researcher (2024).

Throughout the trial phase, the *Ringgit Bali* font was tested across a variety of design applications, including both print and digital media, to identify its strengths and areas for improvement. Real-world testing was essential to ensure the typeface performed optimally in diverse usage scenarios. Based on these tests, adjustments were made to stroke thickness and letter spacing to enhance legibility while preserving the aesthetic qualities of the *Lamak*-inspired decorative elements.

The outcomes of this creative process demonstrate that through an iterative design approach, traditional decorative elements from *Lamak* can be effectively integrated into modern typography without compromising their cultural identity. Practice-based research in design enables the development of creative solutions that bridge visual innovation with cultural values. Consequently, this experiment successfully produced a typeface that is not only visually distinctive but also deeply rooted in historical and cultural significance.

Typographic Characteristics of the *Ringgit Bali* Typeface

The distinctive thick-thin strokes found in the *Ringgit Bali* typeface are reminiscent of traditional writing tools such as bamboo pens or brushes, which naturally produce line variation. This concept aligns with the principles of traditional calligraphy, where the writing instrument and technique significantly influence letterform construction. In the Balinese cultural context, wood carvings and ornamental motifs in traditional architecture also frequently utilize contrasting lines to create a distinctive sense of visual dynamism. As such, the *Ringgit Bali* typeface can be viewed as a digital typographic translation of traditional Balinese visual art techniques.

Beyond its technical construction, the deliberate use of contrasting stroke weights also plays a key role in shaping a unique visual identity. Typography with high contrast often evokes elegance and a strong sense of character, particularly in design contexts where aesthetic value is emphasized. In the *Ringgit Bali* typeface, this contrast serves both as a visual device and as a means to reinforce the traditional nuances inspired by Balinese carvings and bamboo weaving. This typographic form thus enriches visual communication across diverse applications such as branding, signage, and digital media.

Moreover, the use of thick-thin contrast offers advantages in both readability and visual appeal. Contrast within letterform structure builds visual rhythm, making the text more recognizable and engaging to the human eye. In culturally based type design, this becomes even more important, as typography must serve not only as a reading tool but also as a vehicle

for cultural identity. Accordingly, the contrast found in *Ringgit Bali* represents a design strategy that harmonizes traditional aesthetics with the functional needs of modern media.

With its distinctive features, *Ringgit Bali* holds significant potential for use in visual communication projects that emphasize Balinese cultural identity. The typeface is not only a writing medium but also a cultural artifact that reflects the aesthetic and philosophical values of traditional art. Typography can serve as a visual narrative, enriching user experience. *Ringgit Bali* supports authenticity in design and promotes the broader use of culture-based typography in global design contexts.

The decorative forms in *Ringgit Bali* are specifically inspired by *Lamak* motifs—traditional palm leaf ornaments commonly used in Hindu Balinese religious ceremonies. Visually, *Lamak* motifs are known for their symmetrical, repetitive structure and intricate decorative patterns, making them highly recognizable design references. The adaptation of *Lamak* into *Ringgit Bali* demonstrates an attempt to create type not merely as a communication tool but also as a culturally symbolic representation.

These decorative elements draw on the visual principles of repetition and balance, which are central to Balinese ornamental arts. Repetitive patterns in traditional Balinese visual culture are used to establish harmony and order across art forms such as architecture, textiles, and wood carving. In the typographic context, this principle is realized through ornamental features such as curves, flourishes, and line work that emulate the woven patterns of *Lamak*. These additions enhance the visual complexity and aesthetic richness of the letterforms.

Beyond aesthetics, the integration of *Lamak* motifs also holds deep philosophical significance. In Balinese culture, *Lamak* serves not only as a decorative element but also as a ritual object that symbolizes the balance between the macrocosm and the microcosm. By embedding these motifs into the typographic structure, *Ringgit Bali* offers both visual beauty and symbolic meaning, reflecting the interconnectedness of humans, nature, and spirituality. Typography thus becomes a vehicle not only for textual form but for cultural expression and layered meaning.

While decorative typography offers compelling visual interest, it also presents challenges in terms of readability and application flexibility. Highly ornate fonts are generally more suited for display purposes—such as logos or headlines—than for extended body text. In the case of *Ringgit Bali*, its design is best suited for branding, signage, and promotional media that aim to highlight Balinese identity. Nevertheless, with careful typographic treatment, the font can be adapted to various contexts without sacrificing its communicative function.

The integration of traditional motifs, philosophical meaning, and a balanced visual-functional approach positions *Ringgit Bali* as a culturally rooted typographic exploration. A well-designed typeface should connect the past with the present. *Ringgit Bali* serves as a visual medium that revitalizes Balinese heritage in contemporary design practice. Therefore, the creation of *Ringgit Bali* aims not only to expand the typographic repertoire based on cultural heritage but also to preserve and promote Balinese values within modern visual communication.

Ringgit Bali represents the result of a visual exploration that fuses traditional Balinese aesthetics with modern typographic functionality. This combination aims to create a typeface that is both visually distinctive and usable in a wide range of contemporary communication contexts. Effective typography bridges culture and communication, offering more than visual form alone. In this regard, *Ringgit Bali* integrates ornamental elements inspired by traditional arts with structured letterforms that maintain legibility and usage flexibility.

The traditional aesthetic in *Ringgit Bali* is evident in its adaptation of motifs commonly found in Balinese wood carving, textiles, and architecture. Indonesian traditional art, including Balinese art, often emphasizes ornamentation as a key expression of cultural identity. These features are translated in *Ringgit Bali* through decorative elements that resemble woodcarving

patterns and textile motifs such as those found in *songket* weaving. Despite the ornate details, the typeface maintains a careful balance between aesthetics and functionality, preserving its communicative purpose.

In terms of modern functionality, *Ringgit Bali* was designed to perform well in both print and digital formats. Modern typefaces must account for readability and scalability to remain effective across different media sizes and formats. Thus, *Ringgit Bali* maintains a clear and manageable structure, making it suitable for branding, signage, and digital design. This approach ensures that despite its traditional roots, the typeface remains relevant in contemporary design practice.

The fusion of traditional aesthetics and modern usability is further evident in *Ringgit Bali*'s typographic system flexibility. An ideal typeface must balance visual expression with practical efficiency. *Ringgit Bali* was developed with this in mind, with careful adjustment of weight and proportion to ensure legibility while retaining its distinct character. As a result, it functions both as a decorative element and as a highly usable communication tool.

By combining traditional values with contemporary design needs, *Ringgit Bali* exemplifies how cultural heritage can be adapted to modern contexts. This aligns with the view that typography has the potential to serve as a bridge between the past and present through innovative design. *Ringgit Bali* is not merely a visual representation of Balinese traditional art—it is also a form of design innovation that meets modern communication needs without abandoning its cultural roots.

Application of the Typeface in Visual Communication Design

The *Ringgit Bali* typeface holds significant potential for application in various areas of visual communication design, particularly in branding, packaging, and cultural promotional media. In the design industry, typography plays a critical role in shaping brand identity and consumer perception. With its visual characteristics that reflect Balinese cultural elements, *Ringgit Bali* serves as an ideal choice for brands seeking to emphasize local identity or appeal to audiences with an affinity for traditional values.

Its use in logos, brand identities, and marketing materials can enhance the cultural resonance of a product or service, while also conveying a sense of authenticity and exclusivity. By integrating traditional visual language into modern communication strategies, *Ringgit Bali* contributes to more meaningful and culturally grounded design solutions.
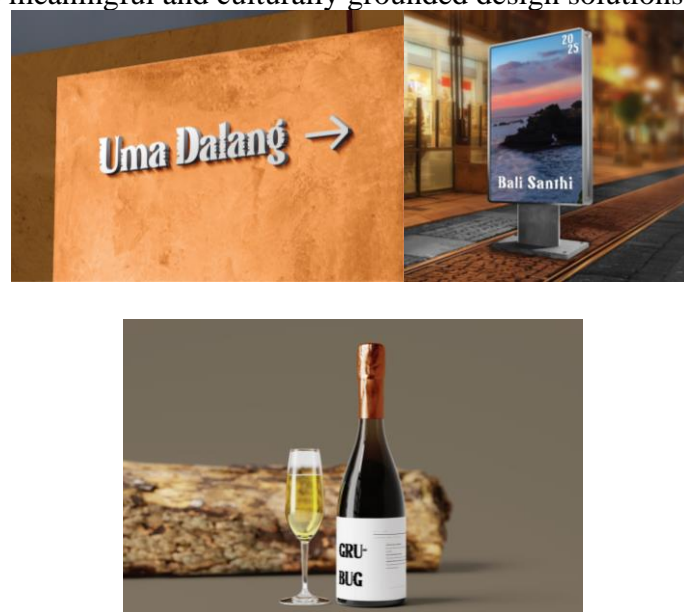

Figure 7. Design Applications of the *Ringgit Bali* Typeface on Selected Products
Note. Created by the researcher (2024).

Beyond branding, the *Ringgit Bali* typeface also holds strong potential in product packaging design, particularly for items that relate to Balinese culture—such as handicrafts, traditional foods, and tourism-related merchandise. Packaging serves not only as a container but also as a powerful communication tool capable of attracting consumer attention through impactful visual elements. By incorporating distinctive Balinese decorative features into the letterforms, product packaging gains enhanced aesthetic appeal, increases marketability, and strengthens the product's identity in global markets. This application aligns with contemporary design trends that value local wisdom as part of a more authentic and culturally rooted marketing strategy.

In the context of cultural promotional media, *Ringgit Bali* enriches the visual appearance of posters, brochures, and digital content aimed at promoting Balinese art, tourism, or cultural festivals. Effective typographic design communicates messages clearly while maintaining strong visual engagement. In tourism promotion, for instance, the use of regionally nuanced typefaces can increase visual appeal and reinforce destination branding in the eyes of the audience. With its unique characteristics, *Ringgit Bali* can serve as a broader branding element for Bali, contributing to the cultural identity across various visual communication platforms.

Moreover, outside of commercial contexts, this typeface can also be applied in local wisdom–based visual identity systems, including those of regional government institutions, cultural centers, or community art projects. Culture-inspired typography can play a strategic role in cultural preservation, where letterforms serve not only as communication tools but also as vehicles for documenting and expressing visual heritage. In this regard, *Ringgit Bali* could be used for city signage systems, tourist information boards, and the visual identity of museums or art galleries—enhancing public awareness of the importance of cultural conservation through design.

With its wide range of possible applications, *Ringgit Bali* demonstrates that typography is more than a communication tool—it is a strategic design asset capable of reinforcing cultural identity across media. Good typography must be both functional and contextually relevant, offering aesthetic value while resonating with its audience. Therefore, the continued development and application of *Ringgit Bali* across various aspects of visual communication represent a significant step in elevating local cultural values within a global context. This also affirms that design rooted in local wisdom can be highly competitive in the global creative industry.

CONCLUSION

This study successfully developed the *Ringgit Bali* typeface, a font design that adapts the visual elements of *Lamak* into typographic form. Through stages of exploration, sketching, digitalization, and testing, the font demonstrates not only aesthetic quality but also strong cultural value. The *Ringgit Bali* typeface integrates decorative features characteristic of Balinese visual art with principles of readability and modern functionality, making it suitable for a wide range of visual communication applications. With its unique character, the font holds great potential for use in branding, packaging, cultural promotional materials, and local wisdom–based visual identity systems.

The successful creation of *Ringgit Bali* illustrates how typography can serve as an effective medium for cultural preservation through design. By adapting *Lamak* motifs, the font functions not only as a graphic element but also as an expressive form that represents Balinese cultural heritage within the realm of contemporary visual communication. In line with the principles of culture-based design, the results of this research demonstrate the potential of typography as a bridge between traditional values and modern design needs.

Although the font has shown satisfying results in terms of aesthetics and cultural representation, there remains room for further development to enhance its usability. One important area for improvement is its flexibility across different sizes and media formats. Additional testing is also needed to assess its performance across diverse communication contexts to ensure its broader applicability without compromising its distinctive character.

As an innovation in culture-based typographic design, this research contributes to the exploration of letterform design that strengthens regional visual identity. The development of *Ringgit Bali* is expected to inspire more initiatives in creating typography rooted in local wisdom—typography that not only has aesthetic value but can also be effectively applied in the broader creative industry. Thus, the creation of this typeface represents a meaningful step in preserving and promoting Balinese culture through the lens of modern design.

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