



## THE MEANING OF TYPOGRAPHY ON STREET FOOD CARTS IN BLOK M, SOUTH JAKARTA

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### Abstract

The phenomenon of changing trading patterns among street food vendors in Jakarta, from mobile to stationary stalls, has influenced the communication strategies used to attract consumers. While mobile carts rely on sound to signal their presence, stationary carts have shifted to visual communication through typography. This study uses a mixed-methods approach, including observation, interviews, literature review, and documentation, to examine the meaning of typographic elements on stationary carts in the Sisingamangaraja Street area, Blok M, South Jakarta. Semiotic analysis is used to interpret the relationship between the visual representation of typography and the meaning it produces. This study aims to reveal the meaning of visual typography elements on street food carts in both personal and communal dimensions. On a personal level, typography reflects vendors' backgrounds, experience, and visual preferences as a form of individual identity. Meanwhile, at the communal level, typography functions as a collective representation that shapes the visual identity of the merchant group in the Sisingamangaraja street area, specifically in front of Blok M Plaza, South Jakarta. Through this interpretation, this study aims to provide a deeper understanding of typography as a medium of visual cultural expression within the dynamics of the urban informal economy. The findings show that typography not only reflects traders' personal identity but also serves as a communal visual representation that shapes the identity of street vendor groups. This study confirms the role of typography as a medium of visual cultural expression within the urban informal economy.

**Keywords:** Meaning, Typography, Cart, Street vendor, Urban Jakarta

### INTRODUCTION

Jakarta, as an economic and cultural center, exhibits urban dynamics reflected in the rapid development of its culinary sector. These activities take various forms, ranging from middle- to upper-class restaurants and cafes to street food vendors who occupy public spaces and serve middle- to lower-class consumers. This growth is inseparable from the consumptive culture of Jakarta's society, which makes the city and consumption two interrelated elements, as Jaelani (2020) emphasizes: consumption in the city is not only an activity of consuming commodities but also a process of producing signs and discourse.

One of the dominant forms of culinary businesses among the lower-middle class is cart vendors. A cart, as defined by the KBBI, is a wheeled device pushed or pulled by vendors for mobility. In practice, carts not only transport goods but also serve as the visual identity of the product, as seen in the differentiation of cart shapes for meatballs, ketoprak, satay, and others. In addition to visuals, street vendors utilize sounds, both their own voices and tools such as bells or bowls, as communication strategies and identity markers that have formed a conventional sign system in Jakarta's urban culture.

As the industry has evolved, some vendors have shifted from a mobile system to a stationary model at strategic locations with high economic potential. This stationary strategy is considered more efficient because vendors can wait for customers in high-mobility locations, such as offices, terminals, markets, or shopping centers. Thus, the emergence of stationary carts can be understood as an adaptation to the ever-evolving spatial and social dynamics of the city.

Table 1. Differences between mobile cart vendors and stationary cart vendors

<b>STREET FOOD CART</b>	
<b>ROAMING VENDORS</b>	<b>TATIONARY VENDORS</b>
Roaming	Stationary
Small cart	Large cart
type of merchandise	More than 1 type of merchandise
Seeking customers	Waiting for customers
Approaching customers	Being approached by customers
Using sound	Using typography
Cheaper prices	More expensive prices

According to Jaelani (2020), urban space is a complex space where various social, economic, and cultural interests meet, clash, and compete. It plays a vital role in shaping the consumption culture of urban communities. City streets function as contemporary showcases of various objects, symbols, and signs of consumption, where formal and informal economic practices coexist and negotiate with one another (Zukin, 1995; Kusumawijaya, 2006). In Jakarta, one of the strategic urban spaces for street food vendors is the Blok M area in Kebayoran Baru, which, since the 1980s, has been known as a center for business, shopping, and a social space for young people and urban workers (Jamaludin, 2017). The development of this area is supported by its proximity to various commercial facilities such as Pasaraya, Pasar Melawai, and Pasar Mayestik, which form an ecosystem of high consumption and mobility.

One of the main corridors in the Blok M area is Jalan Sisingamangaraja, a 1.8 km-long road connecting Melawai and Senayan. This corridor is equipped with strategic public transportation infrastructure such as TransJakarta Corridor 1 and the Jakarta MRT, thereby increasing the intensity of human movement and economic activity in the surrounding area (Jamaludin, 2017; Kusumawijaya, 2006). According to Jaelani (2020), urban space is a complex space where various social, economic, and cultural interests meet, clash, and compete. It plays an important role in shaping the consumption culture of urban communities. City streets function as contemporary showcases of various objects, symbols, and signs of consumption, where formal and informal economic practices coexist and negotiate with one another (Zukin, 1995; Kusumawijaya, 2006). In Jakarta, one of the strategic urban spaces for street food vendors is the Blok M area in Kebayoran Baru, which, since the 1980s, has been known as a center for business, shopping, and a social space for young people and urban workers (Jamaludin, 2017). The

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Figure 1. The location of street food carts in front of the Blok M Plaza shopping center on Jl. Sisingamangaraja, South Jakarta.

Street food vendors began setting up shop in front of Blok M Plaza in the early 1990s, following changes to the urban landscape following the shopping center's 1991 inauguration. The presence of modern shopping centers opened new market opportunities for the informal economy to utilize transitional spaces, such as sidewalks and roadways, as strategic trading locations (Permadi, 2007; Jaelani, 2020). The primary consumers of street vendors are employees, salespeople, and visitors to Blok M Plaza who need quick, affordable, and easily accessible culinary options amid the rhythm of city life. Thus, street vending in this area can be understood as an informal economic adaptation to formal economic expansion and the competitive, layered dynamics of Jakarta's urban space.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

When food cart vendors choose an operational strategy of staying or parking in one location to wait for customers, they shift their communication strategy to attract public attention. During the mobile cart phase, communication relied on sound media, both in the vendor's distinctive voice and the sounds of tools to signal their presence and the identity of their wares. However, with stationary carts, this

communication medium transformed into visual communication through typography applied to the cart's body and surrounding visual elements. This transformation is a logical consequence of changes in operational patterns, from the mobility of mobile carts to a static pattern in locations with high noise intensity due to vehicle traffic and urban community activities, thereby reducing the effectiveness of sound-based communication (Ong, 1982; Schafer, 1994).

Table 2. Changes from Oral Tradition to Script or Typography on Street Food Vendors' Carts

<b>CHANGE FROM ORALITY TO LITERACY ON THE MANGKAL CART</b>	
<b>SPEECH</b>	<b>WRITING</b>
Sound – Voice	Sound – Voice
Spoken	Written
Repeatedly	Spoken
Written repeatedly, pronounced louder	Written repeatedly Written higher
Varied sounds	Basic classification of dominant Serif letters
Sound as a commercial identity	Typography tends to be uniform
Sound media	Cutting sticker media

As an adaptive strategy to these environmental conditions, stationary cart vendors compromise with the noisy urban environment by shifting their communication medium from sound to visual, using typography. Typography was chosen because it can serve simultaneously as a marker of presence, a medium of information, and an instrument for attracting attention in a dense, competitive urban visual landscape (Tinarbuko, 2008; Safanayong, 2006). Thus, there was a process of transfer from oral media in the form of sound to visual literacy in the form of typography, which represented the traders' adaptation to the dynamics of the urban environment and the demands of communication in urban public spaces that were full of distractions.

**The Transformation of Cart Street Food Vendors**

ROAMING

CART

STALL



**ALIH WAHANA**

Figure 3. Physical differences between culinary pushcarts and street food carts.

In line with Damono's (2018) view, the transformation from sound to letters is a significant issue in the concept of transfer because it involves two distinct modes of human sensory perception. Sound is related to the sense of hearing, while letters as symbols or images of sound are related to the sense of sight. This difference in media consumption modality is a fundamental characteristic of the transmodality process. The process of converting sound into images or letters is made possible by technological developments and visual cultural practices, which allow auditory messages to be transferred into a more stable, durable, and repeatable visual form in the context of modern urban spaces.

Typography is the smallest visual element in a writing system that functions as a concrete representation of sound as well as a carrier of visual meaning. Letters are not only understood as linguistic symbols but also as visual forms with communicative and aesthetic potential (Sihombing, 2015; Boedhatmaka, 2023). In the context of street food carts, the typography applied to the body of the cart and other supporting elements serves to replace the sound function previously used by traveling cart vendors as the primary medium for signaling their presence and promoting their wares. The basic function of typography remains the same: a means of communication to attract consumers' attention and a marker of the vendor's presence in urban public spaces (Tinarbuko, 2008).

In a dense and competitive urban visual landscape, typography on stationary carts must not only "sound" informative through legible text, but also "shout" visually through letter shapes, size, color, contrast, and striking typographic styles. This visual strategy is necessary for typography to compete for consumer attention amid the clamor of signs, objects, and other commercial messages that fill urban spaces (Zukin, 1995; Safanayong, 2006).

Research questions integrating all key issues (urban space, trading strategies, typography, identity, and cultural meaning): (1) How do the dynamics of change in Jakarta's urban space shape the adaptation strategies of street food vendors from mobile trading to fixed locations, and influence their choice of strategic locations and visual communication practices through typography? (2) How does typography on stationary carts function as a visual communication strategy that builds visibility, business identity, and collective cultural expression of vendors in the context of visual competition and the socio-economic dynamics of Jakarta's urban space?

## **METHOD**

The research method applied in this study is a mixed-methods approach, combining quantitative and qualitative methods to provide a more comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon under study

(Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018). The two methods were applied sequentially (sequential explanatory design), beginning with quantitative methods to obtain numerical, measurable empirical data. The quantitative stage aimed to produce factual data on the number of research objects, such as the number of street food carts and the basic typographic classification used on each cart. This data serves as the basis for visual mapping and general typographic trends.

The quantitative data obtained then becomes the basis for the qualitative analysis stage, which aims to interpret the meaning behind these numerical findings. The qualitative stage is reinforced through field observations and in-depth interviews to explore the context, experiences, and cultural considerations that traders consider when choosing and using typography. Data analysis was carried out through the stages of data reduction, categorization, and the drawing of descriptive-interpretive conclusions, as stated by Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña (2014). The integration of these two approaches allows the study not only to explain what is visually apparent but also to explain why and how the meaning of typography is formed in the practice of the urban informal economy.

Primary data were collected through field observations and visual documentation at street food cart locations in the Jalan Sisingamangaraja, Blok M area, South Jakarta. Observations were conducted to obtain objective data on the shape of the carts, typography placement, letter classification, and visual configuration in public spaces. In addition, direct interviews were conducted with key informants, namely the coordinator of street food cart vendors in the area, Mr. Sabikis. Informants were selected purposively because they had knowledge, experience, and a strategic role in coordinating vendor activities, enabling them to provide in-depth information on background, habits, and cultural and practical considerations in typography use. Secondary data sources were obtained through literature studies covering typography, semiotics, meaning, street vendors, urban studies, and the context of Jakarta as an urban space. This literature review was used to strengthen the theoretical framework and to help interpret empirical findings from the perspectives of visual communication design and urban cultural studies.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

The primary focus of this study is to reveal the meaning contained in the visual elements of typography on street food carts. The analysis was conducted using a semiotic approach, which views typography as a sign system that operates in the process of visual communication. This approach refers to the triadic model of meaning proposed by Charles Sanders Peirce, which understands signs as relationships among the representamen, the object, and the interpretant (Peirce, 1931–1958). In Peirce's perspective, signs are not static. However, they are constantly engaged in continuous meaning-making, known as unlimited semiosis, which produces and reproduces meaning through a series of interpretants that continue to evolve according to the social and cultural context.



Figure 4. Street food vendors selling from carts on Jalan Sisingamangaraja in front of Blok M, South Jakarta.

Peirce's semiotic framework is used to identify and interpret the relationships between the visual typographic forms that appear on street carts and the realities or concepts they represent, as well as the meanings that form in the minds of consumers and urban communities. As explained by Sobur (2018), communication semiotics places signs as entities that not only convey information but also construct meaning through a process of interpretation influenced by cultural background, experience, and social situation. Therefore, typography on street carts is understood as a medium of communication that functions as a marker of identity, a strategy of representation, and a means of negotiating meaning in urban public spaces.

Furthermore, Chandler (2017) asserts that visual signs in everyday life work contextually and depend on mutually agreed social conventions. In this context, the typography on street food carts cannot be separated from the dense, competitive, and visually stimulating urban environment of Jakarta. Meanwhile, Danesi (2018) emphasizes that semiotic practices in everyday life, including on simple commercial objects, play an important role in shaping how individuals interpret identity, social relations, and economic activities. Thus, the typography on street food carts not only functions as an informative visual element but also as an everyday semiotic practice that represents the identity of vendors and their survival strategies in the city's informal economy. Through this semiotic approach, the study seeks to understand typography as a dynamic, contextual, and layered practice of meaning-making that shapes visual communication and the identity of street food vendors in the competitive urban space of Jakarta.

### **Typography on Street Food Carts**

The general public is more familiar with typography as letters, which are the smallest elements in the structure of written language, with the basic function of representing sounds, where letters are images that represent sounds. Sounds have a disadvantage in terms of time; they disappear after being conveyed,

leaving no residue. In their role as visual potential, letters are perceived physically in terms of their anatomy, structure, and processing, and can represent specific messages or concepts in visual communication.



Figure 5. Typography on street food carts

Tinarbuko (2009) argues that typography is the art of selecting and arranging letters for various purposes, including conveying information in the form of social or commercial messages. In the context of visual communication design, typography includes selecting font types and sizes, and arranging letters into words or sentences, tailored to the character of the message to be conveyed. Letters that have been arranged typographically become the basic elements in forming a visual communication design that is communicative and persuasive (Tinarbuko, 2009; Rustan, 2019).

In line with this view, Boedhatmaka (2023) states that typography is the art of communicating letters as visual potential. In this sense, letters are not only positioned in their basic function as symbols of sound, but are also interpreted as visual forms with expressive power. The two functions of typography as a linguistic system and as a visual element can collaborate within a single communication medium but can also be used separately according to the needs of the message and the medium's context (Bringhurst, 2013; Boedhatmaka, 2023). The use of typography on street food carts on Jalan Sisingamangaraja, specifically in front of Blok M Plaza, South Jakarta, is influenced by several primary factors: typography's function, selection, and positioning, as well as its role as an aesthetic element in urban public spaces.

#### 1. Function of Typography.

The change in function of the carts from mobile trading vehicles to stationary carts shifted the vendors' communication pattern from verbal-based promotion to permanent visual communication through typography. This transition from audio to visual media aligns with changes in communication strategies in noisy, visually dense urban spaces (Damono, 2018; Chandler, 2017). The body of the cart serves as the primary display surface for various menus. In contrast, the repetition of text on the body of the cart, signboard, and flag emphasizes the featured menu and strengthens consumers' visual

memory. To attract attention amid the visual competition of urban space, vendors use typography in large quantities, repeatedly, and in bold, contrasting sizes to create a strong visual impression and highlight menu variety. This strategy aligns with the principles of visual communication, which emphasize visibility, visual hierarchy, and legibility as key factors in attracting audience attention (Landa, 2011; Rustan, 2019). In the context of spatial competition, typography is also placed in high areas, such as signs and flags, even with a slanted orientation, so it can be read from various directions, thereby increasing the likelihood that consumers will see and visit the cart.

## 2. Typography Selection and Positioning.

Typography on street food carts in this area is generally selected by vendors and executed by itinerant letterers. Fonts can be grouped into three basic classifications: serif, sans serif, and script (Bringhurst, 2013). Serif fonts have additional elements at the ends of strokes that give a traditional and decorative impression; sans serif fonts appear more straightforward and more modern; while script fonts resemble handwriting and present an informal and expressive feel. The placement of typography on the body of the cart and the supporting elements around it forms a visual configuration that serves as both an identity and a medium of information. The orderly positioning of typography creates a visual landscape that reinforces the visibility and legibility of the message, as emphasized in studies of information design and visual communication (Lupton, 2014). This placement includes: (1) the body of the cart as the primary medium for displaying the business name and menu; (2) a sign at the top of the cart to expand the readability range from a distance; and (3) flags that are placed higher as striking visual markers that effectively attract attention from various directions.

## 3. Typography Position as an Aesthetic Element.

The placement of typographic elements, both on the body of the cart and around it, forms an interrelated visual configuration that supports street food vendors' activities. The typography on the cart serves as the primary identity that marks the vendor's presence and communicates information about the menu and products for sale. Meanwhile, the typography around the cart creates a visual context that shapes consumers' perceptions and interactions with it. From a visual semiotics perspective, the relationship between these typographic elements creates a semiotic landscape that functions as a sign system in public spaces (Chandler, 2017; Danesi, 2018). This landscape enhances visibility, improves readability, and supports vendors' communication strategies to attract consumers through informal economic practices amid the complex, competitive dynamics of urban spaces.



Figure 6. Typography Position on Street Food Carts

### The Meaning of Typography on Street Food Carts

Humans can essentially be understood as *Homo signans*, creatures who constantly seek, construct, and produce meaning through the signs around them. These signs are first perceived through the five senses, then processed through experience, knowledge, and learning, until they form meaning in human consciousness. In Charles Sanders Peirce's view, this process of meaning-making is called *semiosis*, the cognitive process by which a person perceives a sign (representamen), connects it with the object it represents (object), and produces a meaning (interpretant) (Peirce, 1931–1958). Everything that humans interpret outside themselves is called a sign. In contrast, the factors behind the emergence of that meaning, whether in the form of experience, knowledge, or social context, are called the ground.

It is through these signs that humans build communication and understand their social reality. Zoest (1993) states that signs are the primary tools humans use to navigate their social world. In the context of street food carts, the cart and its visual elements, including typography, serve as signs that not only convey product information but also enhance visual appeal and mediate the relationship between vendors and consumers in public spaces. Peirce defines *semiotics* as the study of signs, how signs work, the relationships between signs, and how signs are produced, transmitted, and interpreted by their users (Peirce, 1931–1958). Communication *semiotics* in Peirce's perspective emphasizes that the process of sign production and interpretation is dynamic and continuous, known as *unlimited semiosis*. Every meaning produced is never final, but always has the potential to become a new sign for the following meaning-making process (Chandler, 2017; Danesi, 2018).

Peirce's *semiotic model* is known as a *triadic model* consisting of three main elements, namely: (1) *representamen*, which is the physical form of a sign that can be captured by the senses, such as words, images, symbols, or typography; (2) *object*, which is the reality, concept, or idea referred to or represented by the sign; and (3) *interpretant*, which is the meaning formed in the mind of the interpreter as a result of the relationship between the *representamen* and the object. Ground serves as the basis for

meaning, which includes personal, social, cultural, and life experience factors that influence how a person interprets signs (Sobur, 2018). This entire relationship forms the process of semiosis as a dynamic mechanism of meaning in human life.

In this study, the typographic meaning of street food carts on Jalan Sisingamangaraja, specifically in front of Blok M Plaza, South Jakarta, is limited to the meaning found in the typographic elements used on 15 carts. The focus of the analysis is directed at the use of basic font classifications, namely serif, sans serif, and script. This limitation is imposed to keep the discussion focused, in-depth, and free of visual aspects beyond typography, thereby enabling a more precise and systematic semiotic analysis. Through data collection via observation at the food cart location and photo documentation of the research object, namely the street food carts on Sisingamangaraja Street, Blok M, Jakarta, the following quantitative use of basic typography classifications was found:

Table 3. List of Serif, Sans Serif, and Script typography classifications used on street food carts

<b>BASIC CLASSIFICATION OF TYPOGRAPHY</b>				
<b>CARTS</b>	<b>SERIF</b>	<b>SANS SERIF</b>	<b>SCRIPT</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>
<b>Carts 1</b>	27 word			27
<b>Carts 2</b>	29 word			29
<b>Carts 3</b>	14 word			14
<b>Carts 4</b>	21 word			21
<b>Carts 5</b>	4 word	4 word		8
<b>Carts 6</b>	26 word			26
<b>Carts 7</b>	7 word	4 word		11
<b>Carts 8</b>	10 word			10
<b>Carts 9</b>	12 word			12
<b>Carts 10</b>	6 word			6
<b>Carts 11</b>	4 word			4
<b>Carts 12</b>	13 word	9 word		22
<b>Carts 13</b>	19 word	10 word	8 word	37
<b>Carts 14</b>	13 word	3 word	9 word	25
<b>Carts 15</b>	7 word	4 word	6 word	17
<b>JUMLAH</b>	<b>244 word</b>	<b>34 word</b>	<b>23 word</b>	<b>301 word</b>

Table 3 shows the variations in the use of three main typographies: Serif, Sans Serif, and Script on street food carts. All three are chosen not only for aesthetic reasons, but also for their function, visual communication strategy, and how vendors build their cart's identity. Serif fonts are generally used to convey a traditional or "classic" impression. Their footed shapes give a sturdy, ornamental feel, so they are often used for business names or signature menus presented as old recipes. Semiotically, serifs signify authenticity and originality, which are synonymous with traditional cuisine.

Sans serif fonts are the most dominant choice due to their simple, clean shapes and high legibility from a distance. This typography is ideal for menus, prices, and other functional information. In addition, their easy-to-draw structure makes them practical for mobile sign makers. Sans serif communicates a modern. Although less effective at conveying important information, the script reinforces the cart's identity and uniqueness. Overall, Table 3 shows that the typography on street carts functions as a sign system: serif for tradition, sans serif for clarity, and script for a personal touch. This combination forms a distinctive visual landscape that marks carts not only as economic tools but also as a medium of communication and representation of traders' identity in urban spaces. Modern, direct, and accessible, it aligns with the character of food carts as fast-food spaces. Meanwhile, Script is used more sparingly as a visual accent. Its handwritten style gives it a personal, warm feel, so it usually appears on the cart's name or decorative details.

**Basic Typography Classification on Street Food Carts**

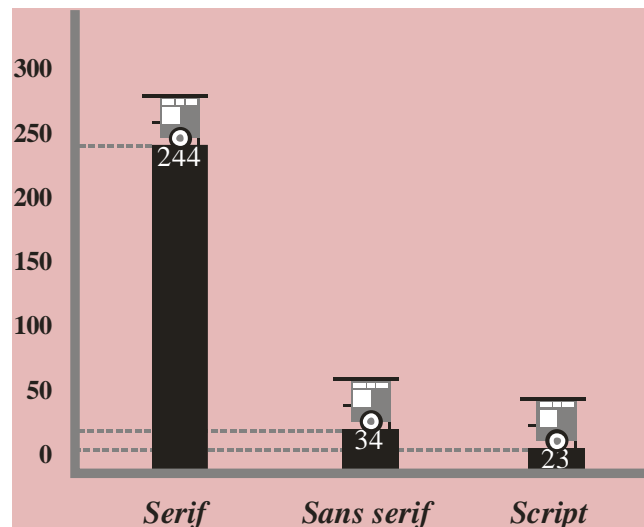


Figure 7. Graph showing the use of Serif, Sans Serif, and Script typography classifications on street food carts.

The next stage was to elaborate on the data collected through interviews with informants, namely Mr. Sabikis, the coordinator of street food cart vendors on Sisingamangaraja Street, Block M, Jakarta, specifically regarding the tendency to use the basic Serif font classification.

### **Cultural Context**

Street food cart vendors from Yogyakarta and Solo tend to maintain their Central Javanese cultural orientation even though they have long lived and worked in Jakarta. This phenomenon aligns with Koentjaraningrat's (2009) view that cultural identity is not easily separated from individuals or groups, even when they move to a different geographical area, but is reproduced through daily practices. The

cultural homogeneity of these vendors is reflected in various aspects, ranging from the choice of trading location, the types of cuisine offered, the physical form of the carts, to the use of typography, so that their "Javanese" identity is maintained in the context of Jakarta as a multicultural city (Abdullah, 2017).

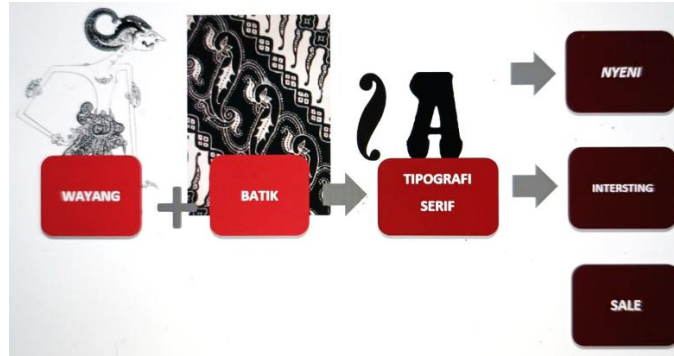



Figure 8. Cultural context chart for the selection of Serif typography on street food carts.

In a visual context, serif typography is the dominant choice because it is perceived as more artistic or having higher aesthetic value. This preference aligns with Bringhurst's (2013) view that serif fonts have historically been associated with tradition, refinement, and ornamentation. According to the merchant coordinator, Mr. Sabikis, the decorative elements on the feet of serif fonts align with the aesthetic references of merchants familiar with traditional Javanese arts, such as wayang and batik, both of which are rich in ornamental patterns and visual details. As stated by Susanto (2011), Javanese art aesthetics place ornamentation not merely as decoration, but as a signifier of beauty, harmony, and symbolic meaning. The additional elements on serif letters are perceived as indicators of beauty, similar to the ornamentation on wayang figures and motifs on batik cloth.

Table 4. The meaning of typography on street food carts in Charles Sanders Peirce's Semiotics.

NO	Study	Description
1	Object (Typography on Street Food Carts)	
2	Representation	Typography on street food carts predominantly uses basic serif fonts.

3	Meaning (Interpretant)	Serif typography has the meaning of "Nyeni" because it has additional elements at the beginning and end of strokes, such as ornaments on wayang and batik. The meaning "Nyeni" is interpreted as potentially attracting consumers to stop by and buy merchandise. The meaning of "Nyeni" is selling.
4	Ground	The culture of Central Java in the cities of Yogyakarta and Solo, especially wayang and batik, is the origin of street cart vendors, which shapes their cultural experiences and references.

The artistic meaning attached to serif letters not only operates in the symbolic realm but also functions practically and economically. From a visual communication perspective, letterforms that are considered aesthetically pleasing and striking play an important role in attracting audience attention in public spaces saturated with visual competition (Chandler, 2017). For traders, visual appeal is directly understood as sales potential. Therefore, the dominance of serif typography on street carts in the Sisingamangaraja area does not merely reflect personal visual tastes but is part of a commercial strategy to attract consumers amid the dynamics of the urban informal economy (Danesi, 2018).

The traditional arts that serve as aesthetic references for these vendors also have strong cultural legitimacy. Wayang, as a traditional performing art, and batik, as a traditional Indonesian textile art, have been recognized by UNESCO as Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity: batik on October 2, 2009, and wayang on November 7, 2013. This recognition affirms the philosophical, symbolic, and aesthetic values inherent in both traditions. These values also shape the visual sensibilities of the vendors, including how they choose and interpret typography in their representations of cultural identity and in their visual communication strategies on street food carts.

## CONCLUSION

The urban phenomenon in Jakarta reveals the dynamics of the city's space, which continue to change as social, economic, and mobility developments among its citizens evolve. In this context, street food vendors have become an important part of the informal economy, occupying strategic points in the city. Initially mobile, traveling around on carts, vendors then shifted to a static, stationary pattern as the city became more crowded and new centers of activity emerged. This shift is an adaptation to the urban spatial structure that offers greater economic opportunities in specific locations.

Jalan Sisingamangaraja, in front of Blok M Plaza, is one of the locations with a high concentration of vendor activity, driven by high community mobility, easy access to public transportation, and intense commercial activity. The vendors' adaptation to this location demonstrates their ability to read urban spatial opportunities and adjust their informal economic practices to the needs of the urban community. In

a dense urban environment, where visual competition is high, the typography on food carts serves as an effective visual communication strategy. The elements of lettering, color, and composition not only convey menu information but also reinforce the business's identity and increase the cart's visibility. They are strategically placed: on the cart body for key information, on the signboard to attract attention from a distance, and on the flag for visual differentiation in a crowded area.

The typography on the food carts also carries personal and collective meaning. It reflects each vendor's visual preferences and communication strategies. Collectively, the choice of visual style reflects the cultural character of the vendor community, which is predominantly from Yogyakarta and Solo, thus forming a distinctive aesthetic as a group identity. Thus, typography is not only a functional marker but also a medium of cultural expression and a representation of socio-economic dynamics in Jakarta's heterogeneous urban space.

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