

Curriculum development model for Cross-Cultural Corporate Identity course in Graphic Design Programme

Modelo de desarrollo curricular para el curso de identidad corporativa transcultural en el programa de diseño gráfico

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to develop a curriculum development model for cross-cultural corporate identity course for Graphic Design programme in higher education institution. The cross-cultural component in this study is based on local cultural contexts from ethnic groups in Peninsular Malaysian, Sabah and Sarawak. At present, the study on curriculum development which includes cross culture in the teaching of graphic design in the local contexts is lacking. Furthermore, there are insufficient studies done to evaluate students' cross-cultural competence in the context of formal education institution. Unfortunately, even though the practice of cross-cultural design is increasingly recognised, research on the design of the corporate identity curriculum is still lacking. Therefore, the objective of this study is to present a framework for a curriculum development model for cross-cultural corporate identity course for diploma in graphic design programme which include three key components: (1) identify the key components in curriculum model development, (2) outline and develop a curriculum model and (3) evaluate its feasibility based on cross-cultural in the process of learning creative corporate identity for the education of graphic design art. The Design and Developmental Research model is applied to develop such a model. The conceptual model proposed in this study outline three main aspects - namely (1) to put forward and establish the need to create the cross-cultural model of corporate identity of graphic design arts in the local higher learning institutions which is concurrent with the demands of current academic and creative industries, (2) design and development phase and (3) evaluation and usability phase. The development of the cross-cultural curriculum model is a guide for diploma lecturers in the education of graphic design arts to facilitate the implementations of project-based teaching and learning to be more responsive by applying local and cultural elements in the product designs. Knowing local cultures is a great way to encourage future diploma graduate graphic designers to produce more product designs with quality attributes such as being authentic, and highlighting locally-produced graphics which then have the potential to flourish globally.

Keywords: Cross-Cultural, Corporate Identity, Curriculum, Graphic Design Arts, Higher Learning.

RESUMEN

Este estudio tiene como objetivo desarrollar un modelo de desarrollo curricular para un curso de identidad corporativa intercultural para el programa de Diseño Gráfico en una institución de educación superior. El componente intercultural en este estudio se basa en contextos culturales locales de grupos étnicos en Malasia peninsular, Sabah y Sarawak. En la actualidad, falta el estudio sobre el desarrollo curricular que incluye la cultura cruzada en la enseñanza del diseño gráfico en los contextos locales. Además, no hay suficientes estudios realizados para evaluar la competencia intercultural de los estudiantes en el contexto de la institución de educación formal. Desafortunadamente, a pesar de que la práctica del diseño intercultural es cada vez más reconocida, todavía falta investigación sobre el diseño del plan de estudios de identidad corporativa. Por lo tanto, el objetivo de este estudio es presentar un marco para un modelo de desarrollo curricular para un curso de identidad corporativa intercultural para un diploma en programa de diseño gráfico que incluya tres componentes clave: (1) identificar los componentes clave en el desarrollo del modelo curricular, (2) esbozan y desarrollan un modelo curricular y (3) evalúan su viabilidad basada en la cultura intercultural en el proceso de aprendizaje de la identidad corporativa creativa para la educación del arte del diseño gráfico. El modelo de Diseño e Investigación del Desarrollo se aplica para desarrollar dicho modelo. El modelo conceptual propuesto en este estudio esboza tres aspectos principales: (1) presentar y establecer la necesidad de crear el modelo intercultural de identidad corporativa de las artes del diseño gráfico en las instituciones locales de educación superior que sea concurrente con las demandas de industrias académicas y creativas actuales, (2) fase de diseño y desarrollo y (3) fase de evaluación y usabilidad. El desarrollo del modelo curricular intercultural es una guía para los profesores con diploma en la educación de las artes del diseño gráfico para facilitar la implementación de la enseñanza y el aprendizaje basados en proyectos para ser más receptivos mediante la aplicación de elementos locales y culturales en los diseños de productos. Conocer las culturas locales es una excelente manera de alentar a los futuros diseñadores gráficos graduados de diplomas a producir más diseños de productos con atributos de calidad como ser auténticos y resaltar gráficos producidos localmente que luego tienen el potencial de prosperar a nivel mundial.

Palabras clave: intercultural, identidad corporativa, plan de estudios, artes de diseño gráfico, educación superior.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Graphic design entails intellectual and technical skills in generating creative ideas to deliver information to the public. It also involves the talent to create concepts, effective visuals, critical skills and technical knowledge (Drucker, 2016). Graphic design is continuously transforming with the changes of time and innovation of technology. Changes in the field of graphic arts are concurrent with new technological advancements which demand graphic designers to enhance their skills, technical abilities and produce their design tasks speedily. To remain significant, Engeler (2017) asserted that graphic design arts has to continue being dynamic and constantly evolving following the advancement in technology, as well as to apply cultural and social values in meeting the demands in this field. In addition, it is important to consider social, cultural and environmental elements when producing designs. Bahahir Zahrom (2017) also explained that graphic design art is driven by the sophistication of technology, and the improvement of taste and the culture of the people.

In fact, the field of graphic design is a professional one which requires expertise, a high level of creativity and a good technical mastery. Therefore, educational institutions play a key role to produce professional graphic designers, and in order to do that it is important to provide learning experiences which encompass all these elements in order to prepare students with the relevant professionalism to cater the needs of current creative industries. Fortunately, our world community today has embraced arts as much as other fields since arts is recognized as a relevant field which has the potential to grow further and has played a contributing role in the nation's economic growth. In the 21st century, with the progress of technology and communication, design fields such as graphic design arts are among the top programmes offered at higher learning institutions. As such, it is undeniable that many public and private universities, polytechnics, colleges and skill institutions offer study programmes related to creative arts such as the Graphic Arts Programmes at diploma and degree levels in local and international institutions.

Teaching and learning in the field of design emphasize the production of appropriate concepts, visual appeal, mastery of skills and technical expertise. Curriculum in graphic arts education not only focuses on visual organization, layout, text and image display but also emphasizes other aspects. Issues in the design of the Art Program curriculum include the failure to produce potential designers which meet the demands of the creative industry. The study done by Spencer (2016) stated that the failure of the university's graphic arts programme to produce graphic design students according to current needs has led to difficulties in obtaining employment as a designer in the industry. Spencer further explained that the factors contributing to the failure of the Graphic Arts Programme were the teaching and learning approaches that were less relevant to the realities of the work environment. In addition, there are problems in the implementation of teaching and learning methods for the Graphic Arts Programme.

A study conducted on students in the Graphic Arts Programme in Oman found that there was a lack of pedagogical practices and this has an impact towards the students' creativity (Alhajri 2016). This means that students' learning should never focus on a limited method of learning as this approach could affect the students' creativity levels. A study conducted at a university in Los Angeles USA, found that the Graphic Arts Programme focused less on the design process and less on commercial values in design (Drucker, 2016). Eventually, students had trouble understanding the process of producing a design. Such lack of understanding was also highlighted in the study done by Inciong (2010), where less emphasis was placed on the design process in the Graphic Arts Programme. In fact, without a good understanding towards fundamental design aspects and practices, the quality of design will become lower.

Furthermore, the production of corporate identity is a challenge in the era of globalization. Corporate identity requires the understanding towards various aspects in producing a design such as culture and national identity (Grethe and Pedersen, 2016). A study conducted by Stoimenova (2018) asserted that there is a lack of research on the visual design of corporate identity which is a part of corporate identity. The study conducted by Mohamad et al. (2016) also explained that only a handful of studies were conducted in the field of corporate identity. Moreover, the lack of teaching and learning practices in creating a corporate identity has left no new breath in the new design of corporate identity. Therefore, academicians need to address these issues so as to overcome issues on poor quality design works and complaints on failures to produce graduates who do not meet with the industry requirements.

Finally, the production of corporate identity is a form of visual transmission to society. Ethnic diversity provides space for creative arts education such as graphic design to explore the cross-cultural advantages of graphic design learning. Implementation of cross-cultural design is increasingly recognized in various fields such as education, communication and graphic arts, however, it is still practically lacking in graphic design production (Gray and Bowling, 2017). Cross-cultural aspects such as symbols, languages, visuals and cultural influences have not been used as triggers in the study of design production, especially in the elements of corporate identity. Cultural learning issues need to be addressed at the pedagogical level so as to address cultural issues before students could be positioned in the industry as designers (Meyer, 2008). A study conducted by (Meyer, 2008) stated that there is a need to integrate cultural sensitivity in the study of graphic arts based on the following:

- i) Students lack understanding and appreciation of cultural components of society.
- ii) Different teaching and learning practices are required in learning about culture.
- iii) Students rely heavily on specific aspects of their culture even though they already have a basic understanding of culture

Based on the research gap and the analysis conducted from the previous studies, research on the design of the corporate identity curriculum is still lacking. Therefore, this study aims to fill in the gaps in terms of roping in cross-cultural aspects in the Graphic Design programme and also to further develop a cross-cultural corporate identity curriculum model which takes into account cultures from a number of local ethnic groups in Malaysia such as Malay, Chinese, Indian and Peranakan. In order to address problems pertaining to the design arts programme, this study is conducted to design a cross-cultural

curriculum model to be developed in Graphic Arts Education in Malaysia's higher learning institutions which would serve as a guide to the formation of a cross-cultural corporate identity curriculum in the graphic arts education. In addition, this model is a new platform for developing the Graphic Arts Programme curriculum which injects cultural elements into the learning of corporate identity design and thus contributes to a Malaysian identity based graphic design.

For that reason, the development of the proposed curriculum model would serve as a key guide to assist lecturers involved in the development of graphic design arts curriculum in tertiary institutions. This study would also identify the key components of the arts elements in the cross-cultural local communities and also the task of producing a design process in the workplace in order to develop the design of a corporate identity curriculum. In addition, the study aims to include experts in graphic arts education – namely, lecturers in public and private universities, stakeholders from the industry, as well as the Curriculum Development panel at university and ministry levels.

It is therefore important to note that at present, there is no cross-cultural corporate identity curriculum model which has been developed in Malaysia especially for the diploma programme, by anyone including the Ministry of Education Malaysia or the higher learning institution itself. Therefore, the development of this model would be of great benefit to the field of Graphic Arts education in Malaysia which has been gaining attention from various sectors of the society.

The researchers hope to develop a cross-cultural corporate identity curriculum model for graphic arts course for the local higher learning institution in order to produce professional and marketable graduates relevant to the 21st century. The objectives are as follows:

- a) Establish the need to put together a cross-cultural corporate identity curriculum model in the Graphic Design Arts Education.
- b) Identify and put forward a cross-cultural corporate identity curriculum model for Graphic Design Arts Education

The conceptual framework proposed in this research serves as a guide for the researchers to carry out this study. Ultimately, the main objective of the study is to develop a curriculum development model for cross-cultural corporate course in graphic arts education which is based on several aspects of curriculum components. In Figure 1, three main factors form the basis for the conceptual framework of this study. The first element is the discussion between industry (stakeholders) and academicians to be taken into account in order to understand the needs and demands of the graphic design programme curriculum design. Meaningfully, two-way discussions focus more on the latest needs in the scope of graphic design work, knowledge of graphic design and manual or digital skills that designers need to master. These requirements and demands would be considered by academicians to be included in the design of the Graphic Design Programme curriculum in higher education institutions. This discussion is important so that graduates could reach the market potential of graduates and work in the field as well as reduce the number of unemployed graduates as what they had learned and practised cater to the creative industry and stakeholders already.

Secondly, the results of discussions from stakeholders from the industry and academicians would assist in the development of components in the curriculum design based on Tyler's model (1949). Tyler's curriculum model is selected for the design of graphic arts education curriculum development as a basis to determine the appropriateness of the elements of cross-cultural corporate identity curriculum model. Hence, elements in Tyler's model are deemed as appropriate for developing a curriculum design which involves the teaching and learning of creative arts. The elements of the teaching method are important because in Tyler's model there is an emphasis on the organization of learning experiences to be carried out in a particular order or phases to achieve a maximum learning impact. It is clear here that the model focuses on the goal of achieving a clear and realistic goal. This is important as the teaching and learning of graphic design arts put emphasis on theory and practice.

Thirdly is the formation of cross-cultural corporate identity subjects in teaching and learning. According to the Malaysian Qualifications Agency in 2013, the curriculum content of the Arts and Design Program could be classified into two main areas: (1) aspects of design science and (2) practical aspects of design. This combination of knowledge in design and practical skills could explain the design of cross-cultural corporate identity curriculum. Overall, concepts presented have served to establish a conceptual framework for developing aspects of theory practice (art assessment) and practical practice (art production) in developing cross-cultural curriculum design models. It is hoped that from this study, a cross-cultural corporate identity curriculum model for the Graphic Arts Programme would then be developed in the near future.

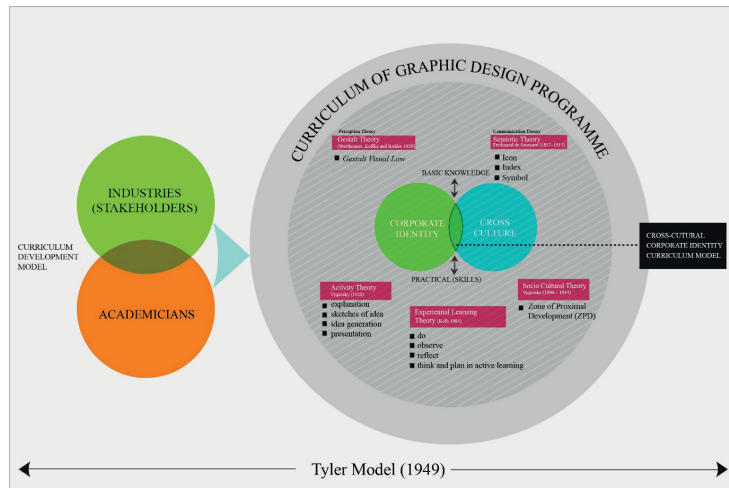


Figure 1: Framework

2. METHODOLOGY

This study features the development of cross-cultural curricula in the creative learning process of corporate identity. The proposed model is a framework of a new curriculum development for graphic arts education that applies process-based learning. This study adopts the design and development research approach (Richey et al., 2004). The concept of development is a form of production of a learning material. In terms of research and development, research is carried out systematically through three primary phases such as design, development and evaluation. This study adopts the ADDIE model development approach as a basis for cross-cultural curriculum development in the process of creative learning of corporate identity. This method of design and development would have a positive impact as it addresses the various issues and concerns in the graphic arts education.

In order to propose the model, the researchers have addressed three main stages suggested by Richey (2004):

1. **Needs analysis** - aims to identify the necessity for the development of this study model.
2. **Development and design** - adopt a model-based approach based on the Fuzzy Delphi Method and founded on expert approvals from academicians and industrial segments.
3. **Evaluation and usability** of the proposed model - conduct in-depth interviews with experts to evaluate the cross-cultural corporate identity curriculum model.

However, the scope of this paper is on proposing a conceptual framework and therefore, would not further outline and discuss the final phase, which is the evaluation and usability of the model. Aspects and phases of Research Design and Development of the Cross-Cultural Curriculum Model of Corporate Identity Curriculum in Graphic Arts Education at Institutions of Higher Learning are shown in Figure 2.

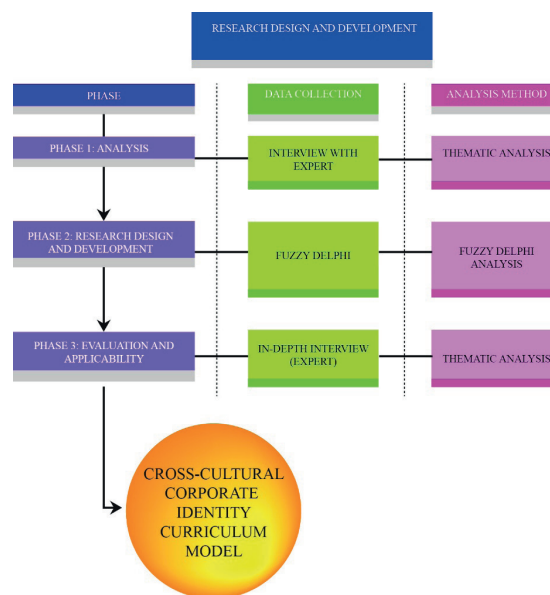


Figure 2: Research Design and Development of the Cross-Cultural Curriculum Model of Corporate Identity Curriculum in Graphic Arts Education at Institutions of Higher Learning

3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The development of this curriculum would provide useful input for relevant diploma lecturers or faculty members and students involved in the graphic arts education to enhance their graphic arts skills which incorporate cross-cultural corporate identity. It is also important to note that the researchers are directly involved, in graphic arts education per se and education in general, in the local public universities in order to partake in proposing this curriculum model. Next, the proposed model could also be used for the existing curriculum review process. Essentially, the development of cross-cultural graphic arts education curriculum should be created so that students can appreciate the diversity of Malaysian local culture that could serve as a source of inspiration in the creative works which embalm original and creative ideas highlighting obvious corporate identity.

The importance of this study can also be seen in helping lecturers guide students to come up with more original ideas and create new designs without imitating or “stereotyping” the creative works. Fortunately, Malaysia’s rich cultures derive from various ethnic cultures; thus, there are countless sources of inspiration relating on the local visual culture which could be adapted and applied in producing original creative ideas. Designs portraying local ethnic cultures and identities must be applied in order to become an art branch capable of competing with the Western and Eastern arts platforms.

The development of a curriculum model which incorporates both theoretical and practical aspects of graphic arts education would then produce creative, innovative, skilled and competitive designers. The learning activities conducted by the lecturers would then emphasize the creative learning process as students experiment with designs portraying aspects of cross-cultural ethnic designs which embalm corporate identity. Learning activities which implement project-based learning tasks could also enhance students’ cognitive, psychomotor and affective processes in producing design tasks and projects. It is hoped that the proposed curriculum design would assist the diploma students to develop an in-depth and rich understanding and also help to enhance skills pertaining the production of global and professional graphic works.

Ultimately, curriculum development in graphic design arts education is very important and requires involvement from academicians as well as the stakeholders (industry) in ensuring that the teaching and learning process benefit both the graduates and the learning institutions. An important aspect to this proposed model is to include the involvement of stakeholders such as professional designers from the creative industry so as to provide input on job process knowledge in the field of design and creative design career. With reference to curriculum development studies based on skills such as vocational engineering education (PTV), there are three main phases: curriculum design, curriculum development and curriculum implementation (Finch and Crunkilton, 1999). This study can also help organizations involved in curriculum development at the learning institutions to develop appropriate guidelines for developing a curriculum based on studies that require theoretical and practical mastery.

The program structure in graphic arts education implemented at the institute level comprises of subjects which are culturally and visually appealing. Such theoretical subjects emphasize the role and function of culture. However, in practice, the knowledge gained through these theoretical subjects is not applied in the design process. Thus, the design works by students lack cultural and visual appeals which are actually vital to create a different impact or competitive niche in the designs. Based on interviews conducted with a number of academics and graphic designers, the cross-cultural application of corporate identity learning is very helpful in understanding the culture and incorporating elements of culture into the design. The results from the interviews, respondents supported the development of a cross-cultural corporate identity curriculum model as it was seen as a good effort in promoting culture in the field of design education especially in graphic arts programs. Therefore, in fostering local culture for both theory and practice, the cross-cultural corporate identity curriculum design will open the door to create designs that communicate local identities which could compete at a competitive level. In addition, students will also better understand and appreciate the local culture which will assist in the production of graphic works that meet the needs of the community.

In brief, emphasis on culture in the curriculum in teaching and learning of graphic design arts course would ensure that the diploma students are more sensitive towards the needs of the community and, in turn, enable students to become global designers in future. As a result, in future, the university is able to achieve the target market potential of the graduates as planned and further enhance the university’s ranking. The benefits that will come from developing this model will help educators to implement the teaching of corporate identity more effectively. In addition, students will gain a better understanding of the arts in various cultures and will also be able to implement the right design process in the production of corporate identity design. Cross-cultural can also help students generate new ideas to meet the demands of their clients. In addition, the use of art elements in cross-cultural is seen as a way or an effort to combat the issue of visual plagiarism by students who have lost ideas in design. The proposed contexts and aspects featured in this cross-cultural curriculum development corporate identity model can serve as a guide to create a learning curriculum whereby students are to be more creative and innovative and to achieve the national educational aspirations and also to produce creative graduates who meet the needs and demands of the global industry.

4. CONCLUSION

The proposed curriculum development model for the cross-cultural corporate identity course for the Graphic Design Arts Diploma Programme is vital to provide students with the opportunities to understand the learning practises in acquiring original ideas based on surrounding life sources such as multi-cultural elements. This cross-cultural corporate identity curriculum model would then serve as a guide and a clear-cut model which could be of use to university and college curriculum design committees in developing a curriculum model for a cross-cultural corporate identity course

relevant to current industrial needs. The model proposed is in line with the study done by Logan (2006) which suggested the need for academic development in graphic arts programmes that consider industrial needs. In addition, the cross-cultural corporate identity curriculum has the potential to be introduced to the faculty or department which run graphic arts education programme to expand the culture of graphic designs. Essentially, the model proposed also meets the arguments that students from the Graphic Design Arts Programme require exposure to the way professional design work is practiced in the creative industry (Fraher and Martinson, 2011). Diploma and degree graduate students have more potential to become successful professionals if they have in depth knowledge of the academic and industrial practices, cultures, expectations and expertise needed in the real world.

The development of this cross-cultural corporate identity curriculum model is in line with the Graphic Design Arts programme in the higher education institutions because at this level, students need to be exposed to the appropriate knowledge and methods of learnings that reflect the current academic and industrial needs of their future undertakings. In brief, this study contributes to the design of innovative curriculum that meets today's teaching and learning that addresses production of graduates and professionals which fit into the careers in the local and global scenes. Moreover, it is important to note that in order to further extend cross-cultural studies in the field of graphic design arts, cross-cultural contexts could also be proposed to be incorporated into the development academic curriculum for the Graphic Arts programme courses, such as advertising, illustration and animation. It is hoped that this curriculum model not only guide the development of creative corporate identity designs, but also in the creation of designs which have local identity features and also be able to instil diploma students with a sense of applying cross-cultural elements as a source of inspiration in the production of corporate identity design. In addition, by instilling a cross-cultural corporate identity can also convey Malaysia's local culture recognisable to others which features our national culture and identity. This will in future enable our diploma and degree level graduates to compete with other graphic arts design programmes. Ultimately, having an in-depth knowledge about the local ethnic cultures would provide a great platform to encourage future professional graphic designers to produce a more authentic, high-quality and locally-produced graphic design works which have the future potential to grow globally.

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