

## Cultural and Communication Approaches in the Design of Visual Communication Design Works

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### ABSTRACT

*This paper discusses culture and communication, which are essential in designing visual communication design works (visual communication design). A student and professional designer with a good understanding of culture and communication can create appropriate and effective designs for the target audience. Designers need to study the target audience's values, norms, Language, and beliefs. This is conducted to ensure the designs are acceptable to the target audience in achieving the desired goals. Designers must also consider visual elements such as colors, typography, symbols, and images appropriate to the target audience's culture. The designer must have a right and measurable design concept to accommodate cultural values and norms that are adapted to the placement conditions and the target market of the users of the visual communication design product. In the test and evaluation stage, the designer must test the design on an audience that fits the consumer culture. After that, the designer needs to evaluate the audience's response to the visual communication design product that is produced, including the effectiveness and readability of the message conveyed through the design communication. In conclusion, understanding culture and communication is crucial in designing visual communication designs. Designers who consider these factors can create appropriate and effective designs and solve design problems.*

**Keywords:** culture, visual communication design, communication

## INTRODUCTION

Visual Communication Design is a field of knowledge and practices concerned with using images, text, colors, and other visual elements to convey messages or information to target audiences through visual media. Visual Communication Design uses technology and design software to create visual masterpieces such as posters, brochures, catalogs, advertisements, logos, and more. So, visual communication design is the art of conveying information or messages using visual Language conveyed through the media in the form of design. Visual Communication Design aims to inform, influence, and change the target (audience) behavior following the goals to be realized. The design process generally considers aspects of function, aesthetics, and various other aspects, the data of which is usually obtained from research, thinking, brainstorming, or pre-existing designs (Lia Anggraini S. & Kirana Nathalia, 2021, p. 15). Visual communication design is a science that studies communication concepts and the expression of creative power, which is applied in various visual communication media by processing graphic design elements consisting of images (illustrations), letters and typography, colors, composition, and layout (Migotuwio, 2020, p. 51). The main task of Visual Communication Design is to create effective visual works and attract the audience's attention because the design is a way of communicating in a visual form that uses image facilities to convey information or messages as effectively as possible. The design process in visual communication generally aims to inform and promote visual messages that attract attention and can change the recipient's behavior (Wibowo, 2021, p. 181). In general, people will more quickly receive notifications in visual form than in text form (Rizali et al., 2019, p. 296). In this case, the designer must consider factors such as the target audience's characteristics, the message to be conveyed, and the media to display the visual work. Visual Communication Design has several functions, for example, product promotion, introducing a brand, raising awareness about a social issue, and enhancing the user experience. Visual Communication Design can also be used in various media, such as print, digital and social media (Supriyono, 2019). Some important elements in Visual Communication Design include layout, typography, colors, images, textures, and graphics. A designer also needs to consider design principles such as balance, contrast, and visual hierarchy in creating effective visual works; visual elements are descriptive, provide identification of visual characters and visual variety found in visual communication design works (Antoro et al., 2022, p. 946).

Visual Communication Design as a spearhead in advertising and marketing; even in the academic world, products from visual communication design as a creative and visual communication approach can be a useful complement to traditional academic results (Ma et al., n.d., p. 15). Visual communication design conveys messages through visual elements such as colors, typography, symbols, and images. However, the message conveyed through design work must be acceptable to the target audience. Therefore, designers must consider cultural and communication factors in creating effective and targeted design work. Products from visual communication design will have an inevitable effect, both positive and negative: within the scope of giving advice, directing, influencing, stimulating, disturbing, and even burning enthusiasm (Ouyang, 2021, p. 1). Effective visual works can increase the attractiveness and value added to the brand and provide a new paradigm for the target on how to understand the message to be conveyed. Therefore, designers

need to have a cultural and communication approach because culture and communication are two things that are interrelated and influence each other.

Culture refers to the values, norms, Language, and beliefs of a society or group of people, consumers, or target markets. At the same time, communication is conveying information and messages from one party to another. The spread of culture itself occurs through intercultural communication, which is increasingly widespread, making certain cultures then experience universalization and even be applied in aspects of life (Utami, 2018, p. 37). Since this communication already contains cultural values (Muchtart et al. , 2016, p. 113).

Culture is a civilization that continues to develop and form the community's habits or mindset and broadly influences social life. A small part of the scope of community life is a form of Development in Graphic Design as a form of social communication in the community (Widi Nugroho, 2019). In culture, Language is essential because it is the main means of communication between individuals or groups. Intercultural communication is the process of transferring messages by someone through certain channels to people who come from different cultural backgrounds (Ammaria, 2017, p. 6). Language reflects the culture and can influence the way a person thinks and acts. In addition, cultural values and norms also influence the way a person communicates and receives information.

On the other hand, communication can also influence culture. For example, the mass media can influence a person's perspective on an issue or problem, including a system of symbols and cultural perceptions that are quite different (Karuni Mulia Putri, 2022). Communication can also help people from different cultures to understand each other and appreciate different forms of difference. Communication can be interpreted as a process of transferring and exchanging information between humans through a system. In the process of transferring and exchanging, it is carried out through symbols or verbal and visual Language that can be understood collectively (Ibrahim et al., 2012, p. 258).

In conclusion, culture and communication are two elements that will complement each other. Understanding the cultural characteristics of the target audience and creating design works that can accommodate these cultural factors is very important in designing a visual communication design that is effective and acceptable to the audience. All acts of communication originated from the concept of culture. The contribution of cultural background is significant to a person's communication behavior, including understanding the meanings perceived for communication actions originating from different cultures (Natadjaja, 2004, p. 159). Culture and communication is critical in visual communication design because design works must be able to accommodate the values, norms, Language, and beliefs of the target audience. As designers, we must understand the cultural characteristics of the target audience to create design works that are acceptable and effective in conveying messages or information. Meghan Kelly from Deakin University (PSDK, 2011)

explained in communicating messages that it will be challenging to design a design for markets from other countries because there are cultural differences between the intended market and the message's sender; in this case, the designer.

For this reason, cross-cultural understanding is needed in making visual communication designs. For example, certain colors, symbols or images can have different meanings in different cultures. For example, red can represent good luck in some Asian cultures, while in Western cultures, it can represent danger or anger. Therefore, in visual communication design, it is important to consider the target audience's culture and choose visual elements that are in accordance with the values and norms of that culture.

Visual communication includes the working mechanism of the five senses possessed by humans. Eyes that perceive impressions of visual objects. Furthermore, the impression will be passed on to the brain to produce a particular interpretation of meaning. In the semiotic concept put forward by Roland Barthes, the term Denotation is known as a literal message through an image that naturalizes symbolic messages. Meanwhile, the sign or symbol's message is a connotation based on a particular cultural code (Ernawati, 2019, p. 28). In visual communication, exchanging messages involves symbols, letters, colors, photographs, pictures, graphics and other visual elements through certain media variants with specific interpretations of meaning. Keith Kenney, professor of communication from SMC (School of Journalism & Mass Communications) from the University of South Carolina, United States of America, explained that visual communication is a process of interaction between humans who express ideas through visual media. The feedback is in the form of understanding the meaning of the message's recipient as intended by the sender (Kenney, 2009). So, two things need to be considered in visual communication; first, from the communicator's point of view with regard to how symbols, letters, colors, photographs, images, graphics, and others are packaged in such a way as to have a certain message content. Second, from the communicant's point of view, how to interpret the meaning of symbols, letters, colors, photos, drawings, graphics, and others according to what the communicator means (Rengga Andhita, 2021, pp. 3-4).

In addition, Language is also important in visual communication design. Language can affect how the audience understands the message or information that is to be conveyed through design work. Therefore, in visual communication design, we must choose words and phrases that are acceptable and easily understood by the target audience. In conclusion, culture and communication are very important in visual communication design because they can influence the way the audience understands and receives the message or information to be conveyed through design work; for instance, the process of adopting good communication will provide a form of information that will help a marketing person to develop and convey the right promotional messages, improve the correct product perception of customer groups and adjust promotional strategies that are more relevant to the target audience (John & De'Villiers, 2020, p. 2), case studies in the application of culture and communication in visual communication.

Designing an advertisement involves carefully considering various factors to ensure its effectiveness in conveying the desired message and achieving the intended objective. When

designing an advertisement, both print and electronic, the designer must understand the culture of the target audience and the Language used by them to create advertisements that are acceptable and attract attention. In addition, designers must also consider other factors, such as the values held by the target audience, visual preferences, and what kind of lifestyle suits them. Therefore, it is essential to understand the cultural characteristics of the target audience and choose the appropriate visual and Language elements to create an effective design work that the audience can accept in conveying a dialogue to others. Nature prompts humans to recognize images and their creators. God as the creator may be seen as a universal force or energy that governs the universe's workings.

Visual influences influence such adaptive biological attitudes: in some contexts, humans react to an image by seeking its creator; in some other contexts, they ignore the intentionality of the creator and focus on their way of "creating" the image in their reception of it; and in several other contexts, they concentrate on how the image itself is so that each individual can become a communicative agent in the world (Leone, 2016, p. 215).

Delivering dialogue through visuals to other people can also be a problem for a designer. As a new designer, this potentially becomes a problem and challenge because of the demand to compromise on the cultural background of potential market candidates. In addition, designers also need to consider the media or platform used to convey messages. The media or platform can influence how the audience understands the message. For example, suppose a designer wants to create design work that will be seen via social media. In that case, the designer must consider the way social media users interact with visual content and the Language used on the platform. Under these conditions, the issue that will be raised is how to ensure that there is a connection between the design process owned by the designer and the culture or market culture in a spatial concept (Wiyono, 2021, p. 3). Due to the inability of a designer to design visual communication design products with a cultural and communication approach, the strength of the product will shift. This shift can occur due to input from designers who have experienced a change in mindset, making designs cheap, meaningless, unsustainable, and even losing the "spirit" of the design product itself. This is also enough to corner design artists from being dissolved in the capitalist industrial system and designing designs that elevate local culture as a commercial product. The symbolic representation that is offered to the public through a product becomes the output of a visual communication design product that deserves to be examined for its meaning (Nurfiana, 2021, p. 92). with a pragmatic mindset, designers only start to think that for their designs to be liked, the results must follow the existing flow. The prestige of local aesthetic culture is decreasing due to being eroded by the flow of globalization (Hamdanu Budi Nurmana, 2022).

## RESEARCH METHOD

This paper, in the context of critical review, puts forward a critical review of the form of evaluation or critical analysis carried out on an idea or its relation to producing visual communication design products with a cultural and communication approach which has implications for empirical studies about it from an objective point of view. In conducting a critical review, several aspects are considered, including the context in analysis, structure and organization, Language and style of writing, quality of evidence used, and quality of thoughts and conclusions conveyed. This allows the author to provide a more holistic and objective assessment of the ideas reviewed. The elaboration will use a structure that begins with an introduction and closes with a conclusion (UNSW Sydney, 2022). The theoretical study will be an essential stage in the process of visual culture movement being disseminated to the public through various existing signs and symbols (Gunalan et al., 2022, p. 213). Visual communication design products produce various kinds of communication devices; visual media variations refer to multiple types of media, such as television, films, blogs, websites, and most recently, social networking sites where visual content such as images, videos, infographics, animations, posters, and memes feature images as part of messages (John & De'Villiers, 2020). For example, many individuals prefer to use visual rather than verbal representations because it is considered that the closer (temporally, socially, or geographically) they are to the recipient of the message, the more likely they are to use a means of representation that is closer (graphically) to the recipient of the message. (Torrez et al., 2019, p. 1),

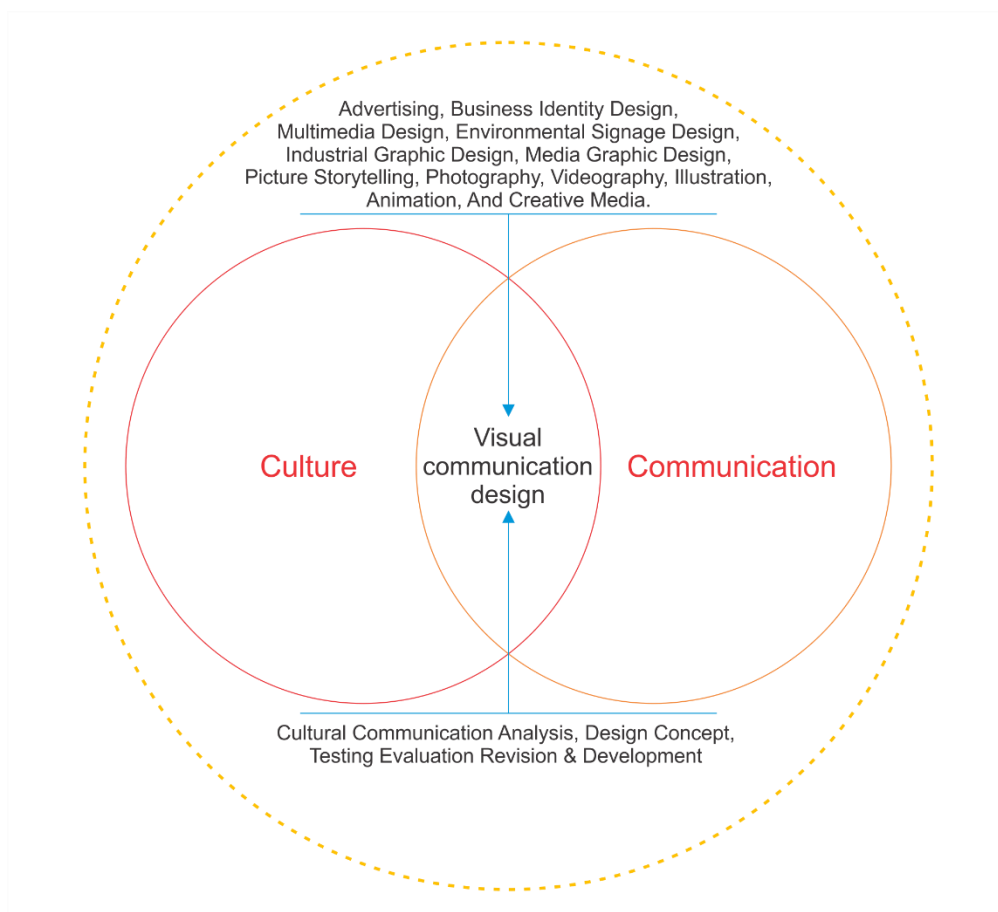


Figure: 1 Framework for designing culture-based visual communication design products and processed from the Kamenparekraf (Kemenparekraf/Baparekraf RI, 2021)

All of these visual communication products become cultural diplomacy as well as indirect communication tools. All explanations will be described in tabular form, and the visualization data selected is the sunburst chart type. Sunburst is a method in visualization technique in the form of radial space-filling. A sunburst visualization technique to display a tree-like structure. The hierarchical items in a sunburst are formed radially, with the main hierarchical part located in the center and the parts farther from the center being branches of the hierarchical data. Angles that have the same color correspond to the data attribute. The main data is located in the middle of the so-called root, while the outside data is called a leaf. The sunburst visualization technique allows the user to control each slice/radial angle of all the items contained therein. 2 technical methods can be designed using visualization (Kirk, 2023). Given the importance of quantitative or qualitative data, it must appear hierarchically so that facts can appear in the form of sunburst plots and graphs that are increasingly capable of practical applications (Woodburn et al., 2019, p. 2 ).

## **RESULT & DISCUSSION**

Cultural and communication research in visual communication design includes several stages, namely: First, the research carried out by the cultural analysis method is the first stage in formulating the design of a visual communication design product that meets cultural and communication aspects. At this stage, cultural analysis is broken down into the target audience, Language, traditions, popular culture, and relevant media the audience uses. Then determine the design concept. After conducting research and cultural analysis, the next step is determining the design concept. In this stage, the designer must choose the right design concept to accommodate the target audience's cultural values and norms. Designers must consider visual communication elements such as position, color, size, shape, and image orientation (Clarkson, 2015) to create design works that are acceptable to the target market.

Further testing and evaluation After the design has been made, the next stage is to carry out testing and evaluation of the design work. Designers need to test design work on the culturally appropriate audience and what the results will be. After that, the designer needs to evaluate the audience's response to the design work, including the effectiveness and readability of the message conveyed through the design work. The outcome is revisions and future developments (Vojvodić, 2021). Based on the testing and evaluation results, designers need to revise and develop design works to create more effective and acceptable designs for the audience. This includes changing visual elements or Language that is not appropriate to the culture of the target audience. Some of the points above will be described in the following table:

Table 1: 4 Stages in designing cultural and communication-based visual communication products.

Stage	Process	components	elements
1	<b>Cultural/Communication Analysis</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Target of Audience</b></li> <li>• <b>Language</b></li> <li>• <b>Tradition</b></li> <li>• <b>Popular Culture</b></li> <li>• <b>Media</b></li> </ul>	○ Sex/Gender
			○ Last Education
			○ Location or geographic location
			○ occupation
			○ salary
			○ consumptive behavior
			○ Local/District
			○ National
			○ International
			○ Language
			○ Knowledge
			○ Social Organization
			○ Life tools/Technology
			○ Economics
			○ Religion
			○ Arts
			○ Popular Music
			○ Film
			○ Television
			○ Radio
○ Video Games			
○ Book Publishing			
○ Internet			
○ Comics			
○ Electronics			
○ Digital			
○ Traditional			
2	<b>Design Concept</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Value &amp; Norms</b></li> <li>• <b>Visual communication</b></li> </ul>	○ Custom
			○ Habit
			○ Taboo
			○ Law
			○ Position
			○ Color
○ Size			
○ Shape/Form			
○ Orientation			
3	<b>Testing the Evaluation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Technical</b></li> <li>• <b>Preference/Satisfaction</b></li> <li>• <b>Simulation</b></li> <li>• <b>Market response</b></li> </ul>	<b>Poor</b>
			<b>Fair</b>
			<b>Good</b>
			<b>Excellent</b>
4	<b>Revision &amp;n Development</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Minor</b></li> <li>• <b>Major</b></li> </ul>	○ Colors
			○ Pictures
			○ Fonts
			○ Order of Sections
			○ Partial
			○ Changing the design partially, such as adding new elements or switching them



	completely – more than 20% of the design
	○ Completely changing a design from an original brief.
	○ Changing a design direction
	○ A section is a content block, with each section containing some content such as pictures, text, video, etc.

Then the table above is made in the form of a sunburst graphic to show the hierarchy of the four stages of the process as an alternative visual communication design product design activity for achieving goals, evaluating these alternatives, and selecting the best (most satisfying) alternative among the various options.



Figure: 2 4 Stages in the design of culture-based visual communication products and communication in the sunburst graphic model.

## CONCLUSION

The cultural and communication approach in designing a work of visual communication design is essential to ensure that the message to be conveyed can be received and understood by the intended target audience. In creating design works, it is necessary to consider cultural factors, values, norms, and Language owned by the audience. By understanding cultural and communication aspects, designers can create designs that can positively and effectively convey messages visually. Cultural factors are essential in visual communication design because culture can influence how a person understands, receives, and responds to messages conveyed through visual media. Some cultural factors that need to be considered in visual communication design include Language: The use of appropriate and appropriate Language to the target audience is very important to ensure that the message conveyed can be easily understood. Norms and values: Cultural norms and values can influence how a person perceives a message. Therefore, the designer needs to consider the target audience's cultural values. Traditions and customs: The designer must also consider the traditions and customs in the target audience's culture. For example, the designer needs to consider the food types commonly consumed in that culture in the design of food products. Religion: Religion can affect one's perception and response to a message. Therefore, designers need to consider the religious values the target audience shares in visual communication design. In order to create an effective visual communication design work, the designer needs to understand the cultural factors that affect the target audience and integrate these cultural elements in the design work that is made. Some of the positive and effective impacts that can result from good visual communication design include: Improving message understanding: The right design can help the audience understand the message you want to convey more easily and clearly. Increases visual appeal: An eye-catching design can help grab the target audience's attention and reinforce the message you're trying to convey. Increase trust and credibility: A professional and attractive design can increase the trust and credibility of a brand or product. Improving impression and retention: Effective design can leave a strong impression on the audience and help them remember the message you want to convey. Motivates action: Effective design can motivate audiences to take certain actions, such as buying a product or joining a campaign. To achieve a positive and practical impact in conveying messages visually, it is necessary to understand the target audience, use the right Language, choose the right colors and graphics, and use the right design technology and software.

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