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Dr. Nida Ijaz¹

Dr. Aisha Saddiq²

The Power of Visual Design and Communication in Contemporary Era

Abstract

Communication is a fundamental human process that enables the sharing of ideas, emotions, and knowledge. Derived from the Latin word meaning “to share,” it encompasses both the act of transmitting information and the understanding that follows it. Effective communication requires awareness of the audience, the message, and the medium through which it is delivered. In the field of graphic design, communication extends beyond words to include visual expression, where meaning is created through symbols, images, and design elements. Visual communication, in particular, plays a crucial role in today’s globalized and media-driven society. It serves as a universal language that transcends cultural and linguistic barriers, shaping how people perceive brands, products, and ideas. Through visuals, designers and marketers influence the emotions, thoughts, and behaviors of their audiences. This form of communication relies heavily on psychological understanding, consumer research, and cultural awareness to ensure that the intended message aligns with the viewer’s interpretation. The study explores how communication, especially in its visual form, functions as both an art and a science, merging creativity with cognition. By understanding how the human brain processes visual information, designers can develop more effective strategies for delivering meaning and enhancing brand identity. Visual communication, therefore, is not merely about decoration; it is about constructing understanding and fostering connections in a visually saturated world.

Dr. Nida Ijaz

Assistant Professor, Graphic Design
Department, IDVA, Lahore College for
Women University, Lahore.

Dr. Aisha Saddiq

Associate Professor, Graphic Design
Department, IDVA, Lahore College for
Women University, Lahore.

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**VOL-2, ISSUE-5, 2024****What is Communication?**

The word communication is derived from the Latin language and the meaning of the word is “sharing”.¹ Communication is a procedure of sharing and understanding.² The meaning of communication can be divided into two different keys: process and understanding.

Process is all about how to communicate according to the situation or how to process the communication according to the scenario. It is important to have a better understanding of the audience before processing the information that is to be delivered. Knowledge of the receiver leads to the re-evaluation of the information in a positive manner. How to re-evaluate the information and communication tone via certain skills is called processing. A second major factor is understanding, “To understand is to perceive, to interpret, and to relate our perception and interpretation to what we already know.”³

Then there is the transfer of knowledge and information from one place to another place, from one person to another person, or from one group to another group. This act requires the cooperation of both parties, one who will deliver the information and the other one who will receive the information. There is a range of different things which could have an impact on the transmission of a message. The things involved in the procedure are dependent on the location of the receiver and the sender, cultural values, and most importantly the selection of the medium for transferring the information.

Communication design happens to be another name for graphic design.⁴ In graphic design, especially in the field of advertising, communication plays an important role for marketers, brands, companies, and products. Different brands and companies are eager to deliver or transfer their message through advertising. This is done by using different types of communication. For better impact and results, a company must transfer its corporate identity (logo) with clarity and positivity. Thus, various companies tend to use different types of communication methods to deliver their corporate identity. This in turn is meant to create a favorable impression on the consumer's mind.

There is an assortment of media for communication. They include Verbal Communication, Non-Verbal Communication, Written Communication and Visual Communication.⁵ Every medium has its own impact in accordance with its field and requirement. In the field of graphic design, for example, the most effective and efficient medium of communication is the visual kind.

What is Visual Communication?

The contemporary world we live in revolves around a virtual flood of information and data. As for the most important part of this, it seems to be how someone relates to or decodes that information. In previous decades, communication and information were limited to a single area, nation, region, or culture. Nowadays, however, information spans the entire world because of the globalization of media. The

¹ Ernest Weekley, *An Etymological Dictionary of Modern English* (New York: Dover Publications, 1967), 338.

² Judy C. Pearson, and Paul E. Nelson, *An Introduction to Human Communication: Understanding and Sharing* (Boston, MA: McGraw-Hill, 2000), 6.

³ Scott G. McLean, *The Basics of Speech Communication* (Boston, MA: Allyn & Bacon, 2003), 102.

⁴ Philip B. Meggs, “Graphic Design,” *Encyclopedia Britannica*, last modified on 23 December 2022, <https://www.britannica.com/art/graphic-design> (accessed on 25 January 2023).

⁵ “What is Communication,” Skills You Need, <https://www.skillsyouneed.com/ips/what-is-communication.html> (accessed on 14 March 2020).

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meaning of information is completely in the hands of the public. However, marketers in the field of graphic design, and specifically advertising personnel, want to keep the meaning of information in their own hands. They want to deliver it on their own terms for the betterment of their respective companies. According to the marketers, it is a vital right of the public to have direct access to organized, well-designed, and well-controlled information. As a result, the information design organizations keenly look forward to managing the content of information. They also want to manage the individual's experience in order to contain the quality of content. At present, the foremost concern of any business agency is to manage information in a suitable manner. "Informing can make the difference between a culture which wanders aimlessly and often destructively and a culture with vision and direction."⁶

In the present era, advertising increases the demand for and implications of visual communication in the corporate world for the public. This demand has increased for informative graphics, which can deliver semantic content in a more profound style. Via visual information, marketers can handle problems of delivering required meaning. This is a giant step in setting a new trend in the competitive world of visual communication. In this age and time, it is necessary to gain a better understanding about how the human mind works with reference to visual aids. It is mandatory, while designing graphic information, to focus on the thinking process of the public which is the proper consumer of that information. Possessing knowledge regarding how effectively visual information can impact the consumer's behavior helps in achieving a better level of designing sense. That sense or knowledge in turn acts as a guide. The producer can thus trigger someone's feelings and emotions towards the design and company. The final image will mold the consumer's behavior, thinking process and the angle of perceiving the meaning of a message. All these efforts require plenty of research by marketers about consumer behavior in all aspects like their interests, living style, and even geographically. This is all the better to understand the consumer and his or her interest and demand for more effective design.

It is clear as the light of day that visual aids can leave a remarkable impression on the consumer's mind in comparison with other sources of information. An image provides a three-dimensional (3D) surface. Ordinary words merely provide a two-dimensional (2D) surface. Fifty percent of the human brain is dedicated to visual functions, making it the optimal way to communicate.⁷

Visual communication is a strong and powerful source of contact between human beings. It is the delivery of an idea or concept, without using words, in the form of pictures and symbols. It communicates a concept and lends you information by using different gestures, signs, and poses. All these are expressive in nature. Visual communication has the remarkable power to deliver content and to educate not only an individual but an entire group of people as well. It is just like a map that helps a lost individual find his or her way in unfamiliar territory. Visual communication also helps sharpen the skills of an individual who can then communicate with the help of signals.

⁶ Dino Karabeg, "Designing Information Design," *Information Design Journal* 11, no. 1 (2003): 82-90.

⁷ Susan Tinnish, "Visual Communication", *Communication Effectively Beyond the Written Word*, last modified on November 2, 2014, http://hotelexecutive.com/business_review/4134/visual-communication-communicating-effectively-beyond-the-written-word (accessed on 20 March 2020).

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Visual communication comprises visual aids, which are used to transmit vital information and ideas.⁸ Mostly the audience depends upon and is comfortable with visual communication rather than verbal communication. Communication in graphic form is the object of imaginative, creative, and thoughtful play.⁹ It gives liberty to marketers to assume the results and this way they can think and act in a creative manner. They make their assumptions totally based on the selected colours and images of the design. At the same time, a question arises. This relates to the ambiguity regarding how marketers can assure themselves of the fact that consumers will discern the right meaning from the image. To achieve this, the marketers manipulate the minds of the consumers via human psychology.¹⁰ They select colours and employ images. The experts select images stored in long-term or short-term memory.¹¹ Also, they use local vocabulary in the development of their corporate identities. Marketer's pinpoint these with the help of intensive research. Still there remains a remote possibility that the audience's perception may differ in relation to an image. We have to keep in mind that every visual scene evokes a different set of emotions, thoughts and perceptions based on the individual's experience, knowledge and exposure.¹²

Whenever a viewer is exposed to an image or a visual and graphic symbol, his or her perception is unavoidably coloured by certain defined or stereotyped ideas, values, and beliefs. These may include irrational preferences and aversions. Other elements are also part of the mix. They might change the perception of a viewer. The demographic and biographic background, which consists of age, education, income bracket, gender, language, and cultural influence, is crucial. "Despite what appears to be a cross-cultural ability to recognize objects depicted in pictures, the visual content of an illustration is frequently a vehicle to communicate a far more complex meaning or intention. Unlike the subject content of the picture, this intended meaning may often be misunderstood or unrecognized by the viewer."¹³ Perception of a designer and a viewer may be different from each other due to their individual exposure to and knowledge of art. That is why thorough research is required before designing and delivering the visual message. It is a very important element in this highly complex game. Whenever an individual sees an image, the human brain starts working on developing a link between the background, colours and shapes. It is a challenging task for marketers and brand developers to presume the audience reaction. That is because for this they must know how someone from the same demographic and psychographic background would behave or react while seeing a visual. Moreover, how that individual would react to the opposite demographic and psychographic background is of paramount importance as well. How would an individual consumer understand the visual? That is the main challenge and ultimate achievement for message developers. It is proof of the fact

⁸ Brian Nuckols, "What is Visual Communication and Why Is it Important," *Visme* (blog), May 22, 2020, <https://visme.co/blog/visual-communication/> (accessed on 27th January 2023).

⁹ Brian Nuckols, "What is Visual Communication and Why is it Important."

¹⁰ Brian Nuckols, "What is Visual Communication and Why is it Important."

¹¹ Niroshan Samuel, "Marketing to the "Long Term Memory" – How to Not Waste Advertising Money," *LinkedIn*, last modified on April 19th 2016, <https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/marketing-long-term-memory-how-waste-advertising-money-samuel> (accessed on 27th January 2023).

¹² Jonathan R. Zadra and Gerald L. Colre, "Emotion and perception: the role of affective information," *Journal of Wiley Interdiscip Rev Cogn Sci*, 2, no. 6 (2011): 676-685.

¹³ Elizabeth Boling, Malinda Eccarius, Kennon Smith, and Ted Frick, "instructional illustrations: intended meanings and learner interpretations," *Journal of Visual Literacy* 24, no.2 (2004): 189.



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that visual representation cannot be designed or understood in isolation but can only be perceived with the help of research in the proper context.¹⁴ Visual language has several design elements, which convey meaning and better understanding of consumer perception. Knowledge of visual representation gives the needed edge to the designer to perform in a far more optimal and positive way.

Visual information works differently from verbal information or written information for that matter. The human mind has a processing system especially built for visual information. The brain has three major memory structures. These are: sensory memory, working memory and long-term memory.¹⁵ Received information is stored in sensory memory and very little information passes from sensory memory to working memory. Some information gets registered in long-term memory as well. Information stored in long-term memory can play an important role as regards the actions undertaken by the consumer. Marketers can trigger long-term memory storage by showing a series of identical visuals and graphics. Malamed refers to the example of a painting bearing the title of 'The Starry Night'. In this he points out how the memory system works in the first place. Whenever a viewer is exposed to this painting, the information the viewer receives gets divided into sections like stroke application, style, colour selection and mood registration in the sensory memory. However, the name of the painting and the painter's name can be recalled only from long-term memory. This unique model represents the idea of how a brain works and how visual information can be deployed to interpret the reaction of the consumer (fig. 3.1).

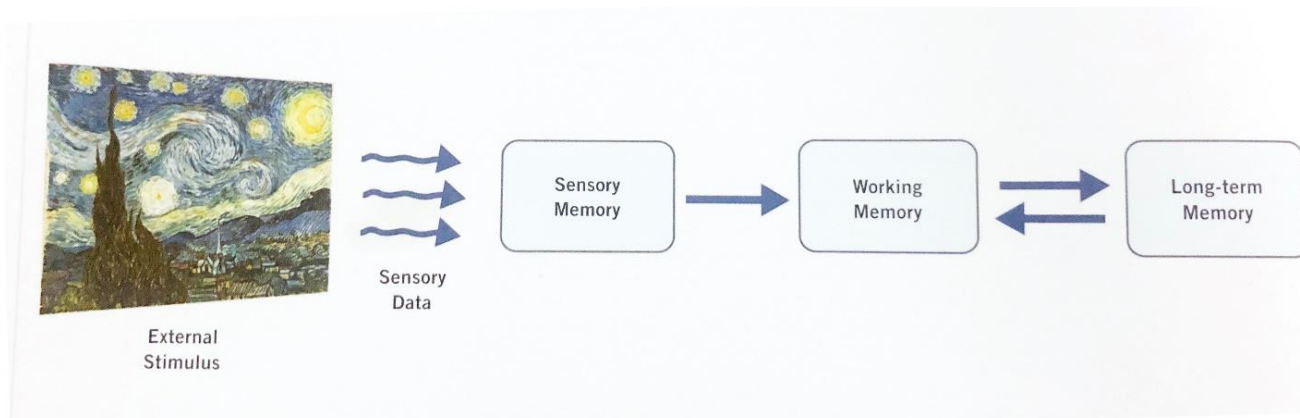


Figure. 3.1: Image processing system in human brain. Source: Connie Malamed, *Visual Language for Designers* (United State of America: Rockport Publishers. Inc., 2009), 22.

In addition, when a viewer's eye is exposed to an image or graphic scene, the viewer perceives motion, different shapes, contours, and colours through bottom-up procedures without any conscious awareness.¹⁶ A brain develops this feature, which categorizes background from foreground, different groups of elements and identifies different shapes, with the help of textures. This comes in handy for the purpose of differentiating objects, visuals, and graphic perceptions. The viewer receives

¹⁴ Jorge Frascara, "Graphic Design: Fine Art or Social Science?" in *Design Studies: Theory and Research in Graphic Design*, ed. Audrey Bennett and Steven Heller (Princeton: Princeton Architectural Press, 2006), 28.

¹⁵ Connie Malamed, *Visual Language for Designers* (United State of America: Rockport Publishers. Inc., 2009), 22.

¹⁶ Robert Solso, *Cognition, and the Visual Arts* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1994), 26.

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information in both ways: verbal and visual. Marketers communicate or deliver information in both ways too. Yet the human brain processes them differently. Both forms of information can be stored in long-term memory and can be retrieved at one and the same time. For example, by hearing someone's name, the listener can recall the physical appearance of that person from memory.

There is another benefit of visual communication. It lends a better understanding of the message for which it is not necessary to have any literary knowledge. Anyone who can see and directly and indirectly is the audience can understand the meaning of an image by seeing it. When someone saw a visual, they analyze it within a very short snippet of time, knowing the meaning and scenario within it immediately because human brain can identify a familiar object within 100 milliseconds and identify familiar faces within 380 milliseconds.¹⁷ It's that simple. This sort of understanding depends upon the knowledge of symbols and icons which are stored in an individual's mind. These meanings can be influenced by culture, literal knowledge, belief, and personal experience. Visual knowledge requires certain images, icons and symbols which are decoded by the consumer.

Visual communication is an important factor of advertising, and this plays an important and prominent role in the development and success of any business, company, or organization. A symbol or image can deliver the same textual information within a far shorter span of time. Research has proven that the human brain responds to images 60,000 times faster than it does to scripts.¹⁸ A designer can construct a visual or graphic layout and thus convey the necessary content in a more suitable style. With the help of research, a designer and marketer can devise a strategy to organize the specific information in a way that will evoke the required mental reaction of the consumer. Every visual has its own meaning, specification and reason that lie behind its creation. Yet one thing must be kept in mind. In the development of the corporate identity (logo) for any business or organization, the graphic symbols used for this purpose must be reasonably attractive, remuneratively sound, and directly communicative. To get the company registered in the consumer's mind, that symbolic representation must be a visual treat. It ought to work like a magnetic force for consumer choice. To transfer the message from process memory to long-term memory, the most essential job for a designer is to compose the trademark or logo design in an apt manner. The consumer's mind should see and understand the coded message quickly. As Krome Barratt said in *Logic and Design in Art, Science and Mathematics*:

For design is about the making of things: things that are memorable and have presence in the world of the mind. It makes a demand upon our ability both to consolidate information as knowledge and to deploy it imaginatively to create purpose in the pursuit of fresh information.¹⁹

Delivering the message and corporate identity through visual communication gives an opportunity to marketers to communicate with the consumer within seconds. It is

¹⁷ James Balm, "The power of pictures. How we can use images to promote and communicate science," *Biomedcentral* (blog), last modified on August 11, 2014, <https://blogs.biomedcentral.com/bmcblog/2014/08/11/the-power-of-pictures-how-we-can-use-images-to-promote-and-communicate-science/> (accessed on 27th January 2023).

¹⁸ Troy Larson, "Powerful Facts about Visual Communication," *Mind Manager* (blog), November 18, 2011, http://hotelexecutive.com/business_review/4134/visual-communication-communicating-effectively-beyond-the-written-word (accessed on 20 March 2020).

¹⁹ Connie Malamed, *Visual Language for Designers* (United State of America: Rockport Publishers. Inc., 2009), 41.

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the fastest method of grabbing their attention and delivering a meaningful message or an image of the company as per requirement. While designing a visual message, it is necessary to understand the arrangement and organization of the elements, which are meant to be the prime features of the whole gestalt. The structure with an emphasis on prime features around the other required elements such as symbols, icons, and text, will allow the consumer to identify with it more quickly and easily.

Importance of Visual Communication

It sure saves time to communicate in visual form with people rather than to invest time in words. That is content in visual form reaches its target audience with speed and efficacy. Visual communication keeps it interesting for the consumer and helps in the retention of the given information in such a manner that it is hard to forget. Communication with the masses takes place in different fields thanks to visual aids. Teaching an infant is one of these. In pre-school, the method of teaching an infant is to deliver content in visual form, for example, animal forms of different shapes, sizes, and colours. By the age of one or two they start to identify most of the visual cues. These visual aids are a form of visual literacy and in the long run they lead to visual skills.²⁰

In the advertising world, a company communicates both nationally and internationally. Different countries and different native languages exist in today's Global Village. It is thus challenging for advertisers to communicate with them through a language which can be understood on an equal basis. It is very difficult to grab the attention of the masses and deliver the same information in different media or linguistic forms. Visual means happen to be the source since they can save time for the advertiser by grabbing the attention of the audience and communicating with it without using a particular language. Graphic images also keep them engaged and they retain the given information for the long haul. With the correct strategy in the selection of elements, icons, symbols and other graphic elements, the opportunity to convey and portray identity in a more meaningful way is achieved. This in turn leaves its marks on the consumer's mind and on his or her buying behavior.

Symbols, icons, and other graphic elements in a single visual message work together in the context of creating meaning within it. In addition, that selected package of graphic icons and symbols is highly influenced by the culture it belongs to. So, the consumer can interpret it without any effort whatsoever. It is an essential demand of visual communication that the symbols and text should coalesce in a particular manner.

The Role of Design in Visual Communication

For a designer and marketer, it is very difficult to make an impact with all the general ignorance that is existent in everyday life and the physical world. Nowadays, social media is ubiquitous, and it influences the ability to interpret whether semantically or semiotically. Decoding any visual communication is a very basic element in this process. It is a common phenomenon of individual perception that the experience of perception shapes an individual's ability to understand. This, of course, is with reference to abstract elements, shapes, icons, and symbols. Experience will inevitably determine the meaning of anything and everything. For example, it is universally understood that a large dark block gives the expression of heaviness rather than a block which has a lighter colour and is smaller in size. It is natural

²⁰ Digital Vijay, "Why Visual Communication is So Important in Content Marketing," *Market Growth* (blog), May 19, 2018, <https://blog.markgrowth.com/why-visual-communication-is-so-important-in-content-marketing-d955ccd932a2?gi=8136498948af>.

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because in the practical world, mass is associated with weight. This is applicable not only in visual communication but in any information which is delivered in written form. The rule of emphasis is on words without any graphic elements. For example, when the requirement is to present the importance of anything in the English language, the writer types out the required sentence or word in uppercase alphabets which gives an impression of a pop-up object.

In English writing, it is common practice that the reader starts decoding the sentences from left to right. On the contrary, in Urdu writing it is the reverse. Urdu language is read from right to left. The reading practice in any given language is not a rule. In fact, it is an experience, with physical and cultural connotations. The concern is to develop a relationship between visual communication and the consumer audience. It is a designer's goal to create an identity and generate the condition supportive of an individual's or consumer's experience. A designer creates content through proper research. The results of the research help a designer in the creation of the principles of form and the application of visual phenomena. The general need is to narrow down all the possible explanations and to satisfy the consumers by providing them with some useful, utilitarian, and compelling material. The final goal is to grab the consumer's attention; converting their interpretation into some sort of meaningful experience and thereby retaining and expanding the significance of the message(s).²¹

Involvement of Other Disciplines in Visual Communication

Currently, design has gone through different phases of development. It also passes through the stages of aesthetics, values, and perspectives. From the beginning, a designer's priority is to deliver the correct content in the design ensemble. Messages can be delivered without worrying about the placement of objects in a design layout. As soon as people develop an aesthetic sense, the demands of visually communicated design transform and evolve at the same time. It is not possible to develop any visually communicable design by sitting in a locked room. Experts seek inspiration from many external resources and other disciplines. This is to communicate basic identity in favor of the company and business. The reason is sheer survival in the corporate world. Today's designers and marketers are smart enough to know that the first approach is to think and work strategically to develop an identity.

Every field requires resolution via the cross-pollination of other disciplines. Performance is thus enhanced so that the concept works on a larger scale. For example, map-making is essentially a geographical thing, but it requires solid input from graphic design. If the map is in another language and there is a lack of icons or symbols to represent hotels, fuel stations, restaurants, and bus stops, then it is nearly impossible to analyze it or reach anywhere by using it.

Engineering and graphic design are two fields which are diametrically opposed to each other. These domains have their own terms of reference. Yet to assemble any object in engineering requires pictorial direction. That pictorial direction has to be augmented by graphic representation. Without graphic directions, a user may not be able to do the job in a satisfactory manner. Just like in engineering, graphic design helps in the negotiation of meaning with the consumer. Even anthropology acts like a catalyst and allows graphic designers to get a firm understanding of the cultural values, beliefs, and activities of the consumer.

²¹ Meredith Davis and Jamer Hunt, *Visual Communication Design: An Introduction to Design Concepts in Everyday Experience* (New York: Bloomsbury Publishing Plc, 2017), 7.

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In the same way technologists provides their services to deliver knowledge of software. By perusing that knowledge, a designer can benefit from the software and go ahead and design an advanced and user-friendly interface. This may consist of several websites, social applications, and digital media designs. Moreover, a psychologist can lend plenty of information regarding consumer behavior and thinking processes. He or she may suggest that a particular shape, form, or colour is or is not a decent or good choice for a design. Let's face it, we live in a complex society today. The "temper of the times" dictates a negotiation of terms. All disciplines can learn from each other. Furthermore, the invention of other media (like digital and social media) has increased the pursuit of excellence. It is a team effort which feeds the need in a successful manner.

Design influences the efficiency, effectiveness, and character of communicative experiences.²² For example, when a consumer purchases a vacuum cleaner and he or she has to assemble that piece of equipment from scratch. If the instruction manual is missing obviously there will be no graphic guidelines regarding which part is supposed to go were. The user will be confused as to what to do. It is here that visual communication design creates the conditions for the experience. It's the designer's duty to align the external forces in the context of the consumer's experience.

As for the consumer's experience, it happens to be the key to success for any organization in the competitive corporate world. This experience has a vital relationship with visual communication design. There are three phases in the understanding of the structure of this relationship between context and visual form. Memory plays a role here. A good design frame can shift the attention from the physical appearance of the design to the experience and behavior itself. This makes the design more communicative and meaningful in nature which is a good thing.

Knowledge and Sense of Experience in Visual Communication

The word "experience" is very complicated and has different meanings in different fields not to mention life as well. In the physical and social world there are two types of experiences. These are: sensory experience and cultural experience. However, in the field of design, experiences are the result of various situations. These are designed by professionals for the satisfaction of clients. There is a distinction between the experience in itself and having an experience.²³ Dewey explained the difference between the two. Basically, an experience is an ordinary feeling, which often illustrates the clash between expectation and outcome. In daily life, two different thoughts cross the consumer's mind. These are what he or she is thinking and what he or she is observing. The (in)compatibility between the two thoughts is the crux of the matter. In the same way when someone's expectations do not match reality, nothing is received or perceived for that matter. These are odd things which need to be taken into consideration. In sharp contrast to this, having an experience meet the conclusive result is highly satisfying. An example will suffice. When someone meets someone, he or she may expect something from the opposite party and at the end of the day that expectation determines the satisfaction of the experience. Normally, things in life cannot end without a resultant force or an open ending that lies in the unpredictable future. Things reach an end in a way that is conspicuously fulfilling if all goes well. This is a type of experience which has an

²² Meredith Davis and Jamer Hunt, *Visual Communication Design: An Introduction to Design Concepts in Everyday Experience* (New York: Bloomsbury Publishing Plc, 2017), 11.

²³ John Dewey, *Art as Experience* (New York: Perigee Books, Berkley Publishing Group, 1980), 50.

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emotional quality. For example, how an individual thinks of his or her first day at the university is one thing and how someone experiences a scary thunderstorm is another. In simple words, the individual must identify when an experience starts and when it ends. He or she still must be able to separate the event from the daily routine of life.

In visual communication, it is a very crucial responsibility of good designers to engage in experience-making for the consumer.

i) Time and Experience

Experience of time is a structure of design strategy. The message is conveyed in the form of a story. The story is a consecutive structure planned by time. Stories are narratives that lead the consumers towards conclusions and goals.²⁴ Communication needs effective strategies to engage consumers within the plot of an interesting story. For example, by following the given steps in visual form in a manual, it is easy to learn the ABCs of any new software. The instruction manual describes the steps in a proper sequence. The task of a story is to disclose the main reason behind the program because the consumer wants to encounter the end-goals offered by the framework. These are meant for the evaluation, assessment, and execution of the procedure. The main element of visual communication of identity and branding tells the story of an organization and company. Also, the relationship goals which they have planned to develop with the consumer with the passage of time form part of the philosophy of the company. Selected symbols and icons are not the brand in itself. In fact, the set of symbols, icons, typeface in the story go on to deliver the actual experience of the brand. Brand is a story and an impression. Its full development lies in the hands of the consumer though.

It is not necessary that all the viewers conclude the same result after seeing an advertisement. That is because every consumer has his or her own perception and knowledge. That is why Meredith Davis divided the group of consumers into three types according to their demographic, psychographic and sociographic behavior. This segmentation helps a designer and his or her organization gain a better understanding of the consumer. For example, nowadays a water crisis is rampant everywhere in the world (not to mention in Pakistan as well). However, the Government of Pakistan is making sure that awareness regarding the problem is being disseminated among the local population (fig. 3.2).

²⁴ Jean M. Mandler, *Stories, Scripts and Scenes: Aspects of Schema Theory* (New York: Psychology Press, 1984), 32.



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Figure. 3.2: Awareness poster on Save Water, Published and Presented by Government of Pakistan, published in 2020, Source: <https://dailynewspaperadspk.blogspot.com/2020/03/save-water-and-tips-for-water.html> (accessed on 27th January 2023).

For this express purpose, the government is addressing the problem through different media. These include in their purview: electronic, print, and digital media. Still there are a few people around who refuse to believe that there is any water shortage. They are using water as a resource in a wasteful manner. In addition, for them it is not a problem to leave the tap running while performing other tasks. The second type of people are those who are aware of the problem but unfortunately have no sense of responsibility. There is even a third type of people who are aware of the seriousness of the issue and are even aware of their personal responsibility. Yet they are not exactly sure what their individual efforts can accomplish in the end.

The abovementioned three categories of audiences are not exposed to the correct information. The people cannot avoid an ingrained habit unless they are completely aware of the enormity of the issue. How an individual's actions can impact the results is what the entire campaign of water conservation is all about. This requires a complete strategy of communication, which will convert ignorance into understanding, and understanding into the acceptance of a formidable challenge. Action of course is the ultimate objective in all this. A story which works its magic through visual communication and builds awareness via the diverse stages of understanding is the main point of the effort. For the audience, it is very difficult to understand the complete scenario without the correct form of knowledge.

Media and Experience

Visual communication is totally based on the medium in which it will appear. The target audience can receive the information through this medium. There are

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different types of media in industry: print, electronic and the website-based type. With the passage of time, and with the advancement of digital era, new media have appeared on the horizon. They have their place in this exciting technological journey. Social media (Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter etc.) and mobile applications are clear-cut examples. These are all effective media for the communication of stories and identities. Their effectivity is dependent on the consumer. Not all categories of consumers are using the entire gamut of media in their daily lives. For example, to communicate the shortage of water crisis to the masses merely using television is not a reliable methodology at all. Since most of the people may not get exposure to the story, to cover all the people, other media must be utilized to deliver the message more effectively. Nowadays, people prefer the particular media of visual communication in accordance with their interests. This could prove to be suitable for their behavior. There are social suggestions in the way people come across and use media stories according to their cultural backgrounds and experiences. As Henry Jenkins defined the terms, the most groundbreaking period in technology is the one right after the introduction of the technology. That is the right time for the designers and marketers to figure out the benefits of the user manual.²⁵

The human mind responds to images in an avid manner. It's a natural phenomenon that the human mind and eye respond to images or visuals more quickly than textual content. Just like children who can identify pictures before they get to know verbal skills, visual literacy plays a significant part in the explanation, interpretation and understanding of messages in media. As the world has become a Global Village, everyone needs information in a clear and understandable form without any complications. In this era, visual signals provide information in the form of a few symbols and the viewer receives that information more quickly than reading a complete sentence. Any business or company can benefit from this.

There are three types of communication: verbal, non-verbal (body language) and visual.²⁶ There are certain reasons why visual communication is the most important one of the three. The following are some of the important traits of visual communication:

Elements and Characteristics of Visual Communication

Visual Communication has some elements and characteristics. These include the signs, icons, and symbols, which are physically present in the message like shapes, colours, typeface, lines, and other graphic components. These are used to compose either a visual communication or a visual identity, which is meant to convey a message to the consumers. The meaning of these elements undergoes variability.

Nearly all visual messages have the same components of design in the layout and composition. The main purpose of these is to shape the condition for the consumers. This helps them to interpret the message via experience. Compositions have elements and the consumers will be able to decode the message through their visual grammar and from their cultural surroundings. There are three different steps which go into making the visual message more impactful. The first of these, which designers and marketers keep in mind while communicating, is "control". Control of individual graphic elements is paramount. The next step is to "create". To create

²⁵ Alison Griffiths, "Media Technology and Museum Display: A Century of Accommodation and Conflict," in *Rethinking Media Change: The Aesthetics of Transition*, ed. David Thorburn and Henry Jenkins (London: The MIT Press, 2004), 375.

²⁶ Davis White, "What is Visual Communication?", Study.com, April 08, 2019, <https://study.com/academy/lesson/what-is-visual-communication-definition-history-theory-examples.html>.



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within the composition. The third step is to “communicate”. The purpose is to communicate to the viewer.²⁷

In the first step of control in the hierarchy of visual communication, the following elements are dealt with:

- Position
- Colour
- Size
- Shape
- Orientation

These are the individually useful and functional variables of graphic elements. Graphic units are the components of materials and information, which play an essential part in the formation of any visual communication. Moreover, these include symbols, icons, typeface etc. (fig. 3.3).

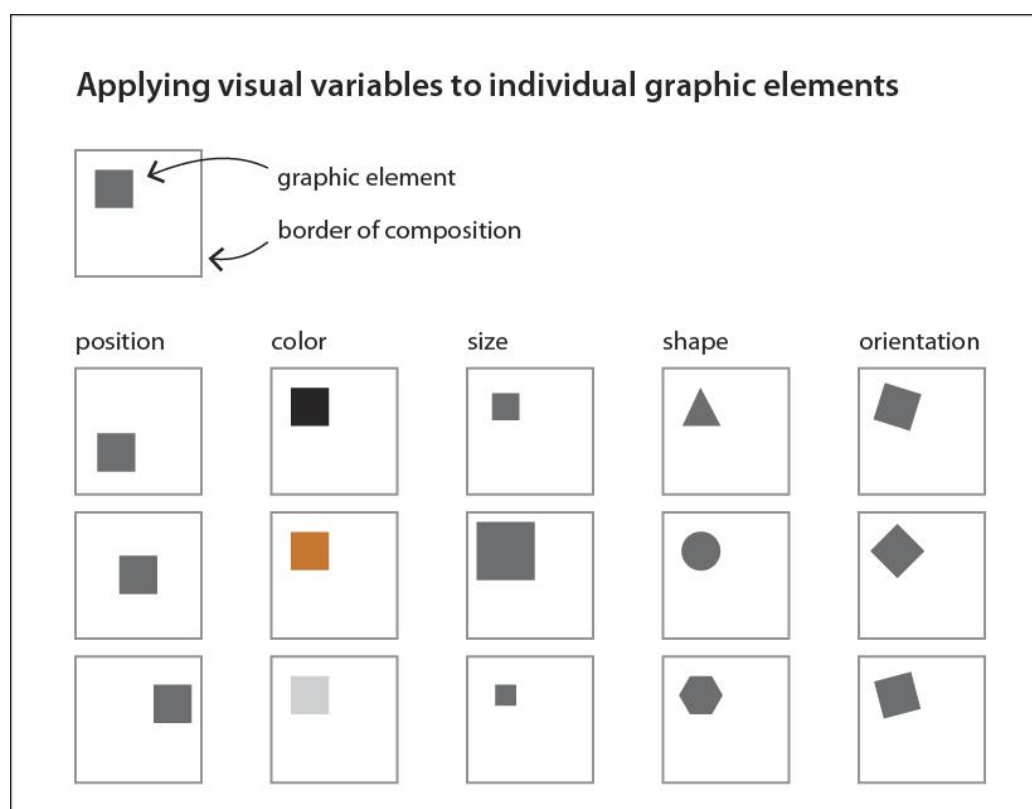


Figure. 3.3: Applying variables of visual in the graphic elements individually, Source: Melissa Clarkson, “Elements of Visual Communication,” *Professional Community Services*, last modified on 1 January 2015, <https://procomm.ieee.org/elements-of-visual-communication/> (accessed on 17 March 2020).

The second step is to create, within the hierarchy of visual communication, a combination of the following elements:

- Contrast
- Repetition

²⁷ Melissa Clarkson, “Elements of Visual Communication,” *Professional Community Services*, last modified on January 01, 2015, <https://procomm.ieee.org/elements-of-visual-communication/> (accessed on 17 March 2020).

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- Alignment
- Proximity

By using these elements, a unique and noticeable visual message can be designed. For example, in case of contrast, the elements, which are used in one form of communication are different from each other with reference to their visual characteristics. The second step is repetition where the elements have dependable and reliable visual features. Basically, the components of a visual message here happen to be orientation, shape, colour, and size. Thirdly, we come to alignment. It gives an ambience of balance within the design. Alignment means arranging the different elements alongside each other by following the imaginary grid. Proximity meanwhile means that every element and component used in a singular visual identity must be close to one another within the designed grid to create a harmonious composition.

Up next is strategy and it contain the following elements:

- Hierarchy
- Grouping
- Sequence

Hierarchy creates the prominent bonds among the elements within a composition. Moreover, grouping stipulates the relationship among the associated elements. The last and most important component is sequence, which indicates and specifies the importance of elements within a composition. It gives heightened perceptual depth to the first, second and third element. All of this allows the consumers to have a better understanding of the coded message.

Characteristics**Time-Saving Nature**

Visual communication makes delivering a message easier and it saves up on the receiver's time. Delivering a message in just one visual is more convenient than writing a full paragraph. Because an image conveys a lot of material and information rather than text, it is exceedingly advantageous to use visuals to deliver a message more efficiently in a short span of time.

A Loud and Clear Message

Visual communication delivers the information more clearly. For example, an individual can easily be attracted to a book-based movie due to the pictures and graphics which has been used to deliver the content. In the same way, a consumer's reaction time towards a campaign or logo of any product could be fast or slow depending upon the quality of advertising. Graphics and images make the message louder and clearer and the consumer can recognize the product from its advertisement by seeing its logo at the POS (Point of Sale).

Healthier Maintenance of Information

The human brain is a marvelous thing. People do remember what they see because of visuals stored in the long-term memory. On the other hand, texts and words are stored in short-term memory. For an advertiser or a brand manager, it should be a much more vital aim to maintain the given information to increase sales of products and services.

Simplicity and Flexibility

Visual communication is an effective way to communicate with multitudes, most importantly with the people who are illiterate and cannot read or write. What we must understand is that they can understand visual language. Simplicity makes it more convenient for every individual to understand the information. For example,

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everybody can remember road signs and their semantic significance. The simplicity of the signs makes them clearer and more memorable in their nature.

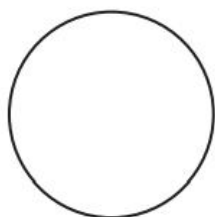
Eyesight is the chief means of visual communication. It can also be more reliable. Good examples of visuals are road maps, presentations, movies, posters, anime comics, advertisements, graphic designs, typography, signs, and logos. The only difference is that in logo designing there are symbols, icons, pictograms, and emblems.

Comprehensive Understanding

The human brain takes more time and effort in interpreting and decoding the meaning and message of textual matter. On the other hand, the brain is trained to be a visual organ and it can easily decode the various images simultaneously. In fact, the processing of images takes place 60,000 times quicker than any textual material.²⁸ Illustrations, graphic elements, and symbols are more accessible, and these lend vitality to the original idea in a more simplified and comprehensive manner. Visual communication is thus a powerful tool.

A Memorable Experience

Certainly, as discussed before, the processing procedures of texts and images are entirely different.

Graphic Description**Textual Description**

A curved lined with every point equal
Distance from the center

An example given by Jerome Bruner ²⁹

According to the psychologist Jerome Bruner from New York University: "People can only remember ten percent of the information that they hear and twenty percent of the information that they see but eighty percent of what they actually see at first blush. Also, eighty-three percent of perceptual learning occurs visually."³⁰

Catching the Consumer's Attention

A colourful and interesting image can attract more looks and glances than plain boring old text. People are more likely to feel attracted to the visual aid in contrast to written material. An attractive layout of design with accurate selection of colours can catch the attention of many

Emotional and Expressive

Visual representation can effectively trigger the emotional side of the consumer. In the contrast of texts and images, it is obvious that images can portray emotions and expressions in far less time than a text. "Visuals are not only excellent

²⁸ James Spillane, "Visual Marketing: A Picture's Worth 60,000 Words," *Business 2 Community*, last update on December 09, 2022, <https://www.business2community.com/digital-marketing/visual-marketing-pictures-worth-60000-words-01126256> (accessed on 13 January 2023).

²⁹ Jenna McNaney, "The Power of Visual Content," <http://www.quick2launch.com/blog/25-the-power-of-visual-content> (accessed on 20 March 2020).

³⁰ McNaney, "The Power of Visual Content," (accessed on 20 March 2020).

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communicators but also quickly impact us psychologically and physiologically.”³¹ To trigger any emotion, colour plays a very important role. It is only normal that colours leave a deep psychological impression on the viewer’s psyche.

Influence

Visual communication can play with one’s emotions. It can also influence the process of decision-making and the buying behavior of a consumer. According to a survey by Kiss Metric “Ninety-three percent of people responded to visual appearance while choosing a new product. Moreover, eighty-eight percent of people positively responded by remembering a brand through simply colour alone.”³² It is the psyche of a consumer that he or she gives more importance to the appearance while purchasing a new product rather than the product efficiency. “This is an uncontrollable action which is a result of the extremely tight coupling between cognition and emotion.”³³ Undeniably, cognition and emotion play different parts in the everyday anxiety of the world. Emotions allow the people to judge the world. Cognition is employed by the people to understand the world. A human brain thus uses these two powers in its toolkit to gauge its surrounding environment. As a result, the consumer gives paramount importance to the emotions over the decision-making process. He or she purchases the product which is better in design and delivers its visual content with clarity. In the case of a product which is weak in design, despite the efficiency of the product, the consumer will show little or no interest.

Types of Visual Communication

Thus, the objective is to communicate the desired message alongside the brand and identity in a visual form with the help of different electronic images, illustrations, and drawings. In the present era, different types of visual communication have been used in the corporate world. Visual aids come in different forms like PowerPoint presentations, flyers, brochures, pamphlets etc. Every visual aid has its own advantages and disadvantages and before choosing one, it is necessary to take into consideration its pros and cons very carefully. Each one is in fact important in its own way. There are different types of visual communication and some of them are given below:

Objects

An object is under normal circumstances portable. The person who is trying to present some sort of information will bring the objects with him or her on stage for the purpose of demonstration. In most of the fields it is a very suitable type of visual aid because it leaves a clear and forcible impression. For instance, in a cookery show, let us suppose that the cook tells all about the recipe without the use of any objects in verbal form. Thus, the audience will not be able to understand the sequence of ingredients. Some of the onlookers may even miss a step or two and they will not be able to cook the designated recipe on their own. Thus, it can be said that here the demonstrator has failed. The only possible disadvantage of objects is that sometimes objects cannot actually be brought on stage because of their weight, immobile nature or sheer size.

³¹ Mike Parkinson, “The Power of Visual Communication,” <http://www.billiondollargraphics.com/infographics.html> (accessed on 20 March 2020).

³² Jenna McNaney, “The Power of Visual Content,” <http://www.quick2launch.com/blog/25-the-power-of-visual-content> (accessed on 20 March 2020).

³³ Johnson, Steven, “Beauty and the Beastly PC: The Graphics on Your Computer Screen Can Affect the Way You Feel and Think,” *Discover Magazine* 25, no. 5 (May 2004): 20-21.

**VOL-2, ISSUE-5, 2024****Maps**

Maps are the best example of visual aids. They illustrate different locations and landmarks in a crystal-clear manner. But there is such a concept as too much of a good thing. Having too much visual information on it makes for a map full of clutter. Such a map may not be able to provide any positive help to the map reader and may confuse him or her instead.

Graphs

Graphs are another form of visual aid which shows the relationship between two or more things or quantities. There are different types of graphs, and every type of graph provides visual information to the audience instead of verbal information.

Models

Models open vistas into a more thorough understanding and experience of any place, building or huge structure. It is not possible to move the real structure from one place to another. This is where a model of it is very useful indeed. A model is just a smaller version of the original and gives a complete impression of it to the consumer.

Photographs

Nowadays, photographs are the best visual aids available to almost anyone. They capture the emotions, moments, and feelings in an almost magical, mystical manner. A viewer can feel the excitement and energy when he or she is presented with quality colour photos. Photography has a long history. However, in the world of advertising, communication requires a different type of visual aid. This goes by the name of logo designing.

Logo and Visual Communication

Research shows that logo is the best example of visual communication in the corporate world today.³⁴ The end goal of a logo is to become a part of the people's memory. A logo is basically the name and identity of the company to which it belongs. It works like a signature for a company and must be new in conception and represent a certain lifestyle. It is not written in stone that a logo will represent the vision, mission, or nature of a certain company. Selling the company's product is not a logo's responsibility. A logo basically works like an identity for the company. It plays a prominent role and is like a bridge that facilitates the company in reaching out to its consumers.

Logos can be seen everywhere around the world. They cover a broad spectrum from the breakfast table to the dinner table. On a typical breakfast table are arranged several products like bread, jam, butter, cereal, milk, and orange juice. In everyday life, the human eye is exposed to several logos in different forms. They range from transport to office stationery; books to bags; eatables to accessories; attire to hospitals; and last but not least from pharmacies to banks. The fact that we live in a world saturated by television and other forms of mass media means that we are surrounded by a thousand and one logos.

Placement of logo has been discussed before. As mentioned, it plays an important role and leaves an impact on the consumer's behavior and action.

To get a better understanding of logo placement, a qualitative survey was conducted. The intent of this survey was to examine whether the particular placement of logos or symbols affect buying behavior or not (especially in the

³⁴ Ari-Matti Erjansola, Jukka Lipponen, Kimmo Vehkalahti, Hanna-Mari Aula, and Anna-Maija Pirttilä-Backman, "From the brand logo to brand associations and the corporate identity: visual and identity-based logo associations in a university merger," *Journal of Brand Management* 28, (2021): 241-251.

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Pakistani market). Related research work has been found, which has been done in the past, in the context of the international market.³⁵ However, this is not applicable to Pakistan. This survey is unique for this kind of research took place in Pakistan with local products and consumers. Every area or region has its own specifications. And people from a certain area or region do tend to behave in the same manner. This behavioral repertoire is something which they pick up by seeing or experiencing their surroundings. This research is meant to gain an understanding of the symbols and icons which mark identities for some companies in the corporate world. That identity helps them to survive among the competitive worlds. For this, the author conducted a study in an educational sector where potential customers exist who used selected products. At the outset, they were presented with the selected product packaging. These subjects consisted of a selected focus group. The main purpose of this study was to discover and explore the impact of brand logo location on packaging. Further looking into the depths of this research, the following salient points come into view:

- a) Consumer's perception of product quality with reference to the logo's placement.
- b) Impact of logo placement on product packaging and its impression on brand familiarity for the regular consumer.
- c) Does logo position effect the consumer's decision regarding the buying of the product?

This study was conducted for the sake of a brand. As for the consumers, they were familiar with the brand and its products. There were around one hundred students who were engaged in this survey. Furthermore, they were divided into four different groups. All the participants were based on both genders, aged between twenty and twenty-three years. As all the participants were from different backgrounds regarding geographically and demographically. This focus group based on hundred participants and each participant represents the audience which have the same interests as his/her own and have the same background as his/her. Every product has its own audience, Shezan juice has a wide circle of audience because it has variety of products which caters masses and almost all classes of Pakistan.³⁶ Samples of the existing local product and experimental design with different logo placements were distributed among the focus groups. Shezan mango juice had been selected for this study as Shezan juice is very famous not to mention familiar to the students. Shezan is a local brand that has been popular in Pakistan since 1964.³⁷ Shezan foods comprise a variety of products. The fruit-based ones, for example, include fruits jams, tomato ketchups (with a variety of flavors) and a wide range of fruit juices. Shezan's products are positively consumed in the local market of Pakistan. The masses are familiar with its products which is why this product, Shezan mango juice, had been chosen for this survey.

The four groups were further assigned four different tasks for this specific survey as they had to choose one product in accordance with the following points i.e., juice's flavor, odor, and the logo's placement on the package. All details including colours and images were the same except logo placement and brand name. A

³⁵ Rui Dong and Mark R. Gleim, "High or Low: The Impact of brand logo Location on consumers product perceptions," *Journal of Food Quality and Preference* 69, (2018): 28-35.

³⁶ Shezan Foods, "About Us," Shezan, <https://shezan.pk/about-us/> (accessed on 29 August 2019).

³⁷ Shezan Foods, "About Us."



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different yet similar name for another design in which the logo placement was on the bottom in the same colour scheme by the author can be viewed (fig. 3.6).



Figure. 3.6: Package image of Shezan Mango juice, Photographed by author. Placement of logo was the only change otherwise no other changes had been made. Each group was debriefed about this. Also in the background of this research was the fact that the Shezan Company was going to introduce their new product image with a new package name. (fig. 3.7).



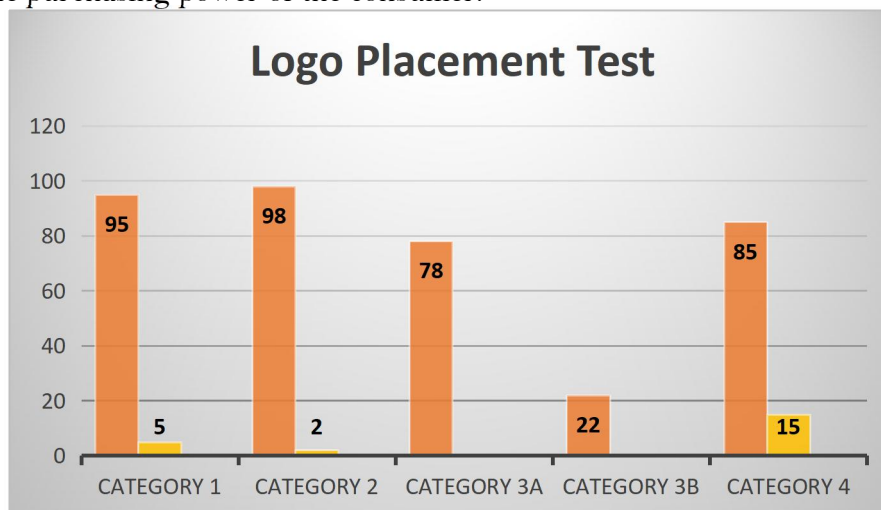
Figure. 3.7: Package image of Shezan Mango juice, Edited image, Edited by author. After distributing both products' images, the focus group was asked the following questions to evaluate the impact:

- Are you familiar with this brand named Shezan? (Category 1)
- Do you understand the name apparently emblazoned on both products? (Category 2)
- Which product would you like to buy on a regular basis: 1 or 0? (Category 3a for 1 and Category 3b for 0)
- Was your answer to the previous question based on the appearance or placement of the product name (logo)? (Category 4)



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The location of the logo was dummy coded. The logo at the topmost position was called 1 and the logo at the bottom position was called 0. Finally, the logo placement of the selected brand on the package was a dependent element and it could affect the purchasing power of the consumer.



Category 1:		95%		05%
Category 2:		98%		02%
Category 3a		78%		
Category 3b		22%		
Category 4:		85%		15%

The results showed that the appearance of the logo on the product can make an impact on the consumer's purchasing behavior depending on two factors. These were that either they were very much familiar with the product or had been using it for a long time. The main contribution of this research was towards the betterment of the design world in Pakistan. It is a necessity to have the complete understanding of your audience and their psychology in order to produce the design which is more accurate and relevant to the audience. This survey will help to the marketers and advertisers to prefer the placement of their product's logo so that product could be more noticeable and recognizable to the viewers. It just goes to show you how the psychology of appearance can significantly change an individual's response towards a certain item or product. Thus, ninety-eight percent of the people involved in the research, and for whom the product was familiar, changed their viewpoint towards it because of its appearance. "Physical descriptions (for example up is equal to good) let us communicate with other individuals who prefer similar physical appearances."³⁸ As a company and its business pursues favorable awareness for brands and products, so positioning of words make an impression. When the logo of the company is on top it gives an impression of high quality. An additional contribution of this research was the importance of human psychology it highlighted. The consumers noticed the high quality of the product when the brand logo was at the topmost position. According to the gist of the research "effect of logo location depends upon brand

³⁸ George Lakoff and Mark Johnsen, *Philosophy in the Flesh: The Embodied Mind and its Challenge to Western Thought* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1999), Chap. 1.



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power.”³⁹ So if a company wants to show or introduce a brand as superior and powerful, the brand placement of the product name would play an important role in all this. “Brand power is well-defined as the knowledge a brand has over a product group or category.”⁴⁰ For example, KFC, McDonald, Hardees and Burger King are very powerful brands internationally. They also enjoy the same popularity in large and medium areas of Pakistan like Karachi, Lahore, Islamabad, and Faisalabad. However, there is a caveat. In the small areas of Pakistan, they are not well-known. Instead of these fast-food chains, local fast-food chains are more popular. Brands such as Fri-Chicks (fig. 3.8), AFC (fig. 3.9) and Hot N Spicy (fig. 3.10) rule the roost at the local level.



Figure. 3.8: Logo of Fri-Chicks, Local company of Pakistan, Source: <https://www.facebook.com/pages/category/Community/Fri-Chicks-531870736861318/> (accessed on 27 March 2022).



Figure. 3.9: Logo of Fri-Chicks, Local company of Pakistan, Source: <https://www.facebook.com/pages/category/Community/Fri-Chicks-531870736861318/> (accessed on 27 March 2022).

³⁹Aparan Sundar, and Theodore J. Noseworthy, “Place the logo high or low? Using conceptual metaphors of power in packaging design,” *Journal of Marketing* 78, no. 5 (2014): 138–151.

⁴⁰ Peter H. Farquhar, “Managing brand equity,” *Marketing Research* 1, no.3 (1989): 24–31.



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Figure. 3.10: Logo Hot N Spicy, Local company of Pakistan, Source: <https://websitequeen-restaurant.business.site/posts/8997767055143868292?hl=en> (accessed on 27 March 2022).

Thus, it goes without saying that “the number of product-related experiences that have been accumulated by the consumer matter in the end.”⁴¹

Conclusion

Communication, in its broadest sense, is the essence of human connection and understanding. It is not merely about transferring information but about shaping perception and creating meaning. As explored in this discussion, the process and understanding of communication are deeply intertwined, one cannot effectively exist without the other. The effectiveness of communication depends on the clarity of message delivery and the depth of comprehension between sender and receiver.

In today's visually driven world, the importance of visual communication has surpassed traditional modes of expression. Images, symbols, and design elements have become universal languages capable of transcending cultural and linguistic boundaries. Visual communication is more than just aesthetics; it is an intellectual and psychological process that influences how individuals perceive, interpret, and respond to messages. The human brain's natural inclination toward visuals gives designers and marketers a powerful medium to create lasting impressions and emotional connections with audiences.

Within the field of graphic design and branding, visual communication acts as a bridge between corporate intent and public perception. It helps translate a

⁴¹ Joseph W. Alba and Hutchinson J. Wesley, “Dimensions of Consumer Expertise,” *Journal of Consumer Research* 13, no.4 (1987): 411-454.

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company's identity, values, and promises into tangible, memorable forms that the audience can relate to. However, this process requires extensive research into consumer psychology, demographics, and cultural contexts to ensure the intended meaning is accurately received.

Ultimately, visual communication embodies the harmony between creativity and comprehension. It is a dynamic dialogue between the designer's vision and the viewer's perception. When used thoughtfully, it not only informs but also inspires, persuades, and builds enduring relationships between brands and their audiences.

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