THE IMPACT OF VISUAL COMMUNICATION DESIGN ON THE CONSUMPTION CULTURE, FROM PAST TO PRESENT

Vizuālās komunikācijas ietekme uz patēriņa kultūru no pagātnes līdz tagadnei

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Abstract. *Visual communication design as an interdisciplinary term makes a reference to many disciplines which have focused on communication and presentation point to transmit the messages, prepared as visuals, to target the audience. Especially after the industrial revolution, the visual communication design phenomenon, which in its existence is an influential field in creating consumer-wise shoppers and the visuals are increasing their power with mass communication. Visual communication design as a sustainable phenomenon with more powerful interaction zone, which has been differed from within the several unstable paradigm axis, from Bauhaus to present, maintains its existence by including the aesthetic concerns in designs. Consumption culture has been created by dwelling on the individuals' consumption perceptions. In post-industrial societies, people aim to satisfy the needs of their egos, by getting a hedonic benefit, rather than their material needs by means of the products they have purchased. At this point, visual communication design as a field, being at the middle of capitalism and consumption culture, it has been an inter-bedded phenomenon with consumption in all ages.*
Keywords: *graphic design, visual communicate design, consumption culture, mass culture.*

Introduction

Graphic design – to be able to advertise a product or service and to convey a message about them – is related to the fictionalization of various visual elements like typographical items with pictures, illustration and comics in accordance with the functional aspect and data considering the design principles. Design – regarding the service or product – could be stated as a discipline including a process which is about transferring, announcing and advertising them to the target audience with an appropriate media.

Graphic design products generally serve the advertising commercially and, within this aspect, it has tracked more efficiently its change and development. It could be stated that advertising was started in provincial newspaper and the periodicals in the midst of the eighteenth century and so it has also enabled the improvement of the strong provincial press in 1780s. These periods cover approximately the first sixty years of eighteenth century, it could be stated that consumer revolution was made via advertising in order to insinuate people that they could decorate their homes and their bodies with these products, and that they are affordable.

Signs and symbols being markedly apparent in the associated ideologies of consumption and consumerism, as seen particularly in various forms of advertisements for consumer goods are the key to reveal their importance in industrial societies. On that sense, graphic design could be mentioned as being at the centre of consumption culture due to creating the ad visuals and being a field that could manage consumption perception and culture in such industrial societies. The consumption phenomenon enables the capitalism to be accepted by a very large population and be applicable and respectable by using a variety of effective advertising media.

William Addison Dwiggins was the designer who defined the "graphic design" for the first time in 1922. Graphic design, which was also a visual language before, has continued its development with the effects of technology and has shown activity in diverse areas during the times until evolving into graphic design. Graphic design, during the World War I, began especially in Britain, Germany and United States' propaganda banners and continued to exist in

applications such as corporate identity design which was carried out for commercial purposes as a result of industry's significant contributions. As a consequence of the adoption of the concept of a new industry and society, the industrial production has been addressed in terms of reaching a larger audience.

Graphic design products could continue their existence up to the present owing to their commercial natures as they could be used for various purposes apart from social campaigns and projects. With its commercial structure, graphic design has begun to serve the mass production brought by industrial period. However, in order to eliminate the unqualified brought uponthe industrial period, William Morris' bringing the Art and Crafts movement forward was the beginning of a new process. The Arts and Craft movement meaning arts and handicrafts, towards the end of the 19th century has emerged as an opposition to the artistic, moral and social complexity of industrial revolution (Bektas, 1991: 14). In collaboration with this movement, seeking an artistic dimension quest has begun and the industrial and technological products far from the creativity have gradually given its way to the objects with the aesthetic content.

At the end of the 19th century, intellectual and sensitive designers, who are disturbed by the ordinary products devoid of taste created by industrial age and aimed to reunite art and function; they have initiated a number of formations to get standardized mass production and consumption-oriented industrial products to be aesthetic at the same time.

In such societies with capitalist system, advertising has found its direction in accordance with the requirements of industrial and commercial organizations and it has accordingly progressed. Upon arriving to 1950s, mass consumption following a model that has already been settled in United States, has begun to improve apparently with a contemporary approach in Britain first, and then all groups of West European countries apart from the poorest (Bocock, 2005: 30). The capitalism phenomenon, which developed rapidly with the beginning of industrial production in company with the contributions of the capitalist entrepreneurs, that has been changing consumption habits have become the areas affected by technological developments.

Mass productions manufactured with the major contributions of the technology have come to a place that could be reached by many people by turning it into a worldwide action. Mass production texts, images and objects first appeared with the Industrial Revolution in 18th and 19th century. For the first time, the masses had the option to reach the visual culture products and more importantly to purchase them (Barnard, 2002: 148). In mass media and printing technology, it has become inevitable to make a set of factors regarding the existence of current issues with its dynamic structure which changes and evolves depending on the scientific, economic and sociological advances. Since 1960s, especially in 1980s, with the development of mass communication products, everyday life motifs began to become industrial materials (Augun, 1992: 118). Thus the spiral which occurs between the communication and information technology and mass communication and graphic design continued to get stronger.

The beginning of the mass communication era has provided a basis for the contemporary graphic design at the same time. Graphic design, inspired by modern art movements, has marked the view that also aesthetic concerns cannot be separated from the functionality in communication since the beginning of the twentieth century. Starting from this period where the modern art movements' first seeds were laid, graphic design has been a main factor of mass communication established by way of visual expression. Due to this concept of postmodernist communication, graphic design gains the importance in terms of managing the consumption and commercial culture.

The consumption fact, in parallel with social, cultural and economic applications makes capitalism applicable and legitimate in the middle-class societies of 1960s. Along with the adoption of capitalism, the idea of consumer revolution was accepted by people as a result of them being aware of the variety of goods for the household and body decoration as well as being able to purchase them.

In the modern era, people have eliminated the difference among social status with a post-modern approach while they are also reflecting the difference among status on their consumption

habits. The consumption culture which was created by the electronic mass communication tools makes people feel the same desires, same dreams and same pleasures. Social life determined on the basis of similarities is trying to maintain its presence by identifying the masses as a target audience not according to the minorities or small groups' desires (Bauman, 2003: 30). In this standardization environment, advertisers and market researchers who hold this consumption process of mass production have started to deal with the pleasure the consumer goods are giving to customers rather than their objects by breaking the consumption taboos.

By the means of advertisements, and the signs and symbols used in them, the consumption phenomenon has been ceased to be an economic process and evolved into a social and cultural process. Even if people no longer have purchasing powers and they do not need to use the objects they have bought further, they have started to act with the desire of having those objects. In a consumer society, due to the fact that needs cannot be saturated, people's desire capacity has evolved, and desires have been refined as well as become imaginary and sophisticated as a result of increased efficiency in contemporary industry (Odabası, 2006: 28).

With the modern capitalism which has improved towards the end of the twentieth century, signs and symbols have also led people to buy the goods they do not need. One of the factors which affect and determine the individuals' consumption behaviours and it characterizes their social status and place in society (Celik, 2009: 5). Social status and class discrimination formed under the modernism conditions have disappeared in the post-modern conditions. Instead of imitating the consumption patterns and lifestyles of high society groups, the issues such as finding the one's own style, avoiding the pleasure, excitement, stress, boredom and being admirable for oneself and the others are becoming the most important things in life and affecting the consumption patterns.

In these consumer societies people no longer work harder to buy goods advertised and when they domake a purchase, they feel that they have been rewarded and reached a new level. Thus people are stimulated in a circle of earning by working and spending it by consuming. According to Baudrillard, modernist and post-modernist consumers are trying to feed their emotional desires maybe even more than their financial requirements. This is the most important approach which is developed by Baudrillard to analyse the distinctive characteristics of modern-postmodernist consumerism (Bocock, 2005: 83).

Mass communication have become stronger as a result of the contributions of the industry, technology and advertising that easily reach all of the classes in a short time, bring about the feeling of not being satisfied along with the desire of consuming all the time. Consumption – dependent individuals must be left face to face with their needs that cannot be satisfied eternally in this consumption culture. The conception is all by itself an economic order created by the industrial production ideology and foresees the re-production of consumption for the sustainability of the manufacturing (Kırdar, 2012: 71). In this economic order created with the contributions of investors, the post-modernist consumption concept is adopted.

In this process, when functionality and being accessible gains more importance rather than aesthetic, the roles of producers and consumers are associated with each other. Considering that the consumption is as important as the production has an importance in terms of being a cycle sustainable. The idea, that the consumption without production does not have any importance and individuals are self-actualizing by consuming so that they can produce, forms the main features of the post-modernist approach (Odabası 2004: 42). In terms of affecting directly the identity formation of individuals, the strong ties between advertisements and the consumption habits cannot be denied when considering the consumer culture has shaped the role of consumers. Advertising is an issue much more related to transmitting the message about the products and services. The consumers, taking the metaphors and messages covering from the advertisement alerts with a great enthusiasm, integrate them into their life in different ways (Solomon, 2003: 29). In the consumer societies managed by adverts, it is admitted that they bring themselves in hedonic satisfaction with their goods and belongings.

Advertising is now taking shape only in giving information or encouragement in simple terms and the selling is increasingly being led to the manipulation of the desires and pleasures by means of the images related to the product or not (Harvey, 1997: 321). The advertisement enabling not only to consume the objects but also to serve as a consumption object of the consumers' desires and emotions is also one of the cornerstones of post-modernist consumption way. In consumer societies, desires and emotions are turning into a consumption object and the good life choices are restricted. In other words, it is determined which one would be desired and consumed much more not by individuals but by the organizations. This happens because the consumption industry has become widespread by means of several products of culture industry and also especially via advertising (Atiker, 1998:65).

In consumption culture and aesthetic formed by post-modernism, the individuals' sub-conscious and pleasure arising from consuming are the basic building blocks. Subliminal messages used by ads and consumption habits, navigated by signs and habits, have deal with production and consumption as a cycle and advocated that one of them cannot exist without the other. The idea that individuals could be manipulated by controlling their desires and wishes has been accepted in post-modern consumption.

In the process corresponding to the early 20th century and the end of 19th century, visual communication design as a visual way of expression has constituted the main elements of mass media. Visual communication design comprises a creative process involving the visualization of the written and visual elements by organizing them in all digital media and on two-three dimensional surfaces, the transmission of these elements with the various media with the aim of transmitting the message to the predetermined audience in accordance with the strategies and aims of marketing which is planned regarding a product, a service, an idea or an organization.

In terms of managing the perception of the consumption and its culture, visual communication design plays a vital role. Visual communication designer who could communicate effectively now can design the communication beyond advertising as a powerful visual weapon, can lead the world and also can manipulate the people by controlling their perception. It could make the world functioning more accurate and even make it a more beautiful place; and its best side is being on the basis of the equality which could be seen and used by everyone (Twemlow, 2011: 73). With this aspect, visual communication design is one step ahead of graphic design supported by industry and consumption. Graphic design, which was especially a phenomenon managing the consumption habits of people and serving the capitalism through advertising, would be more accurate to be called as visual communication design because now it comes into a position that leads the individuals' awareness levels and social culture of public by establishing an effective communication.

Visual communication shows differences in terms of being more permanent and understandable than the other ways of communication. In the buying process, there are active roles for both receivers and senders. The duties of designers, who are charged of communication design, have also began to change just like the graphic design concepts. To communicate is the main objective of the graphic designer. In order to achieve this goal in a healthy way, the communication designers must have knowledge about the different application fields of design principles, typography, the history of graphic communication, printing techniques, colour, paper and graphic communication (Becer, 2005: 17). On that note, graphic design could be evaluated as a design process associated with intellectual and aesthetic approaches affecting the public via communication designers.

Nowadays the graphic products have a position to be able to lead the consumption culture and people's vital activities through the visual communication design. For example, design could produce the answers towards the areas that could change the general views of world. This can be clearly seen in such trends as modernism, post-modernism and deconstruction (Ambrose, 2012: 24).

The redefinition of graphic design, accepted as a powerful communication tool, is seen essential also by many designers as a result of the technological developments of the time and increasing needs of visual communication in this era.

Method

The method from quantitative research patterns to literature review and the compilation of the expert opinions was employed in this study which aims to reveal how visual communication designs lead to the consumption culture by having a position to be accessible to all over the world using the mass communication media via advertisement visuals and serving the trade especially after the capitalism phenomenon. Within the scope of this study, many national and international literature reviews are examined and they have been a guide in presenting the results.

Overall, this study is complied with the quotations from parts of a study, titled as In the Changing Paradigm Axis, the Reflections of Visual Communication Design on Undergraduate and Postgraduate Education which was prepared as doctoral dissertation in the department of Fine Arts Education in the Institute of Education Sciences at Ondokuz Mayıs University.

Results and Discussion

The term of graphic design, that originated in Germany with the simple goals such as to prepare promotional ads, has become widespread with the effect of industrialization and after it, has continued its artistic motivations and gained a mobility. In this era where the technology and especially mass media tools are used so effectively and widely, consumption societies are formed and in these societies, the consumption perception can be manipulated via visual communication design products made with the aim to direct people to buy the manufactured products and services.In this case, the strong ties between the consumption feeling on the basis of people's needs and visual communication design reveals the importance of visual communication design in terms of its sociological and economical aspects.

Especially since 1930s, visual communication design and typography has gained importance as a means of expression developed a new vision of the world to the industrial world. Accordingly, visual communication design education is also very important. Visual communication designers still maintain their existence by having a larger domain in social, politic, cultural and economic terms. Depending on all of these statements, conclusions, it could be advocated that visual communication designers should be educated in the field of both sociology and economy within the educational process. Thus, whichever elements designers include in their designs, they could have an idea about their roles that they have in the country's economy and the consumption habits more effectively by creating an influential language for the people.

Kopsavilkums. *Vizuālās komunikācijas dizains, kā starpdisciplinārs termins, attiecas uz vairākām disciplīnām, kas ir vērstas uz komunikāciju un prezentācijām, lai pārraidītu ziņojumus, kas vērsti uz mērķauditoriju un sagatavoti, kā vizuāli materiāli. It īpaši pēc rūpnieciskās revolūcijas, vizuālās komunikācijas dizaina fenomens, kas savā pastāvēšanas laikā ir liels spēks gudru patērētāju radīšanā, ar vizuālo reklāmu palielina savu darbības lauku masu komunikācijās. Vizuālās komunikācijas dizains ir kā ilgtspējīga parādība ar vēl jaudīgāku darbības zonu, kas iekšēji atšķiras no nestabilās paradigmas ass, kas no Bauhaus laikiem līdz mūsdienam saglabā savu eksistenci, iekļaujot sevī estētiskā dizaina problēmas. Patēriņa kultūra ir izveidota, ņemot vērā indivīda patēriņa uzskatus un paradumus. Industriālajās sabiedrībās cilvēki cenšas apmierināt savu ego, iegūstot hedonisku labumu, nevis cenšas apmierināt savas materiālajas vajadzības izmantojot produktus, ko tie ir iegādājušies. Mūsdienās vizuālās komunikācijas dizains kā nozare ir jau ievīts fenomens starp kapitālismu un patēriņa kultūru visās vecuma grupās.*

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