



**CHINESE TRADITIONAL INK PAINTING CHARACTERS AS
A NEW CONCEPT OF VISUAL COMMUNICATION DESIGN**

By

WANG WENYU

**Thesis Submitted to the School of Graduate Studies, Universiti Putra
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The significance of Chinese traditional ink painting as a new concept in visual communication design has been challenging to meet aesthetic needs as well as its information function. The development of a new visual communication design should keep up with the current trends so that the visual communication design can get rid of the limitations based on the traditional design in the context of its layout, concept, and spiritual value. This research aimed to investigate the Chinese traditional ink painting character that can be explored into a new concept of visual communication design for better aesthetic appearance and information function. The methodology for this research included a literature review and data collection through the survey. A survey conducted involved several experts such as artists, designers, industry practitioner, and scholars that knowledgeable in Chinese traditional ink painting. The results identified ten (10) most valuable characters of Chinese traditional ink painting that can be explored into a new concept in Chinese visual communication design. The conclusion of this study is to put forward a new method, namely, CTIPC based on VCDE, which integrates visual communication elements with traditional Chinese ink figures, as a new concept of Chinese visual communication design, with better aesthetic appearance and information function. Validation through user conducted to provide better understanding and prove the value of Chinese traditional ink painting characters as a new concept in Chinese visual communication design.

Keywords: Chinese ink painting, ink painting character, visual communication design, aesthetic appearance, and information function

Abstrak tesis yang dikemukakan kepada Senat Universiti Putra Malaysia
sebagai memenuhi keperluan untuk ijazah Master Sains

KARAKTER LUKISAN DAKWAT TRADISIONAL CINA SEBAGAI KONSEP BAHARU REKA BENTUK KOMUNIKASI VISUAL

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Kepentingan lukisan dakwat tradisional Cina sebagai konsep baharu dalam reka bentuk komunikasi visual telah mencabar untuk memenuhi keperluan estetika serta fungsi maklumatnya. Pembangunan reka bentuk komunikasi visual baharu harus mengikuti aliran semasa, supaya reka bentuk komunikasi visual dapat menyingkirkan batasan berdasarkan reka bentuk tradisional dalam konteks susun atur, konsep dan nilai rohaninya. Penyelidikan ini bertujuan untuk menyiasat karakter lukisan dakwat tradisional Cina yang boleh dieksploitasi menjadi konsep baru reka bentuk komunikasi visual untuk penampilan estetika dan fungsi maklumat yang lebih baik. Metodologi untuk penyelidikan ini termasuk kajian literatur dan pengumpulan data melalui tinjauan. Tinjauan yang dijalankan melibatkan beberapa pakar seperti artis, pereka, pengamal industri dan sarjana yang berpengetahuan dalam lukisan dakwat tradisional Cina. Hasilnya telah mengenalpasti sepuluh (10) karakter paling berharga berdasarkan lukisan dakwat tradisional Cina yang boleh dieksploitasi menjadi konsep baru dalam penghasilan reka bentuk komunikasi visual China. Hasilnya juga mencadangkan kaedah baharu dikenali VCDE-based-CTIPC yang mengintegrasikan elemen reka bentuk komunikasi visual dan karakter lukisan dakwat tradisional Cina sebagai satu konsep baharu reka bentuk komunikasi visual Cina bagi penampilan estetika dan fungsi maklumat yang lebih baik. Pengesahan melalui pengguna dijalankan untuk memberikan pemahaman yang lebih baik dan membuktikan bahawa karakter lukisan dakwat Cina bernilai sebagai konsep baharu dalam reka bentuk komunikasi visual Cina. Kesimpulan kajian ini adalah untuk mengemukakan kaedah baru, iaitu, CTIPC berasaskan VCDE, yang mengintegrasikan elemen komunikasi visual dengan angka dakwat Cina tradisional, sebagai konsep baru reka bentuk komunikasi visual Cina, dengan penampilan estetik dan fungsi maklumat yang lebih baik. Pengesahan melalui pengguna dijalankan untuk memberikan pemahaman yang lebih baik dan membuktikan nilai aksara lukisan dakwat tradisional Cina sebagai konsep baharu dalam reka bentuk komunikasi visual Cina.

Kata kunci: Lukisan dakwat Cina, watak lukisan dakwat, reka bentuk komunikasi visual, penampilan estetik dan fungsi maklumat



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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

VCDE	Visual Communication Design Element
CTIPC	Chinese Traditional Ink Painting Character



CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

This chapter is introduced the research background of the study followed by a statement of issue that highlighted the significance of the subject under investigation. Furthermore, the aim, research questions, and objectives are stated attempt to achieve the research goal. The scope and area of research and the significance of the research were indicated as the outcome of this research. The end of this research listed the thesis structure.

1.2 Research Background

Chinese traditional culture is highly diverse. Chinese traditional culture is a treasure, a country, and the development of a national culture (Li, 2015). Chinese painting is one of the oldest continuous artistic traditions in China. Most Chinese paintings are closely related to Chinese calligraphy and pottery and are essential expressions of Chinese cultural life and ideas. Traditional Chinese painting, also called Chinese painting, belongs to traditional art forms unique to the East painting style. It passes on the artistic thinking of the Chinese nation (Yang, 2015). Chinese painting existed during the Han Dynasty in 206 BCE - 220 BCE (Gladston, 2014). Chinese paintings began with figure painting to keep vivid pictorial evidence of important events, such as hunts, battles, and processions, followed by landscape painting. Figure painting developed highly during the Tang Dynasty, while landscape painting started during the Song Dynasty. The concept of Chinese paintings does not attempt to capture the actual physical appearance of a subject but rather its essential character or quality. After the twentieth century, Chinese painting began to evolve into new styles with Western impressionism. The New Culture Movement in 1917-1923 adopted the Western painting technique with oil material.

The ancient Chinese used the expression “yu pi yu mo’ or to have brush or ink. Ink art is one of the oldest and most beautiful art forms in Chinese history and an important milestone in Chinese civilization. Ink art results from most Chinese people’s aesthetic choice and cognition. It contains the spirit of traditional Chinese culture and cultivates the Chinese people’s aesthetic consciousness and value orientation (Olsen, 2012). The ink art has been extended and carried forward on the bridge of design, and its influence has become increasingly extensive. In addition, it also emphasizes nature, intangibility, and freehand brushwork. The ink art has been gradually introduced into various fields of visual communication design in modern society. The ink art has survived to this day, and the focus is on the coexistence of tradition and innovation.

The primary material for Chinese traditional painting is ink. Chinese traditional ink painting is a unique art and is rich in culture as well as philosophical history. In China's centuries of development history, the ink painting style has formed a unique artistic style, passed down from generation to generation and carried forward. Chinese ink paintings come in various styles, including monochrome and very brightly coloured. Chinese traditional ink painting commonly uses brushes and ink to paint on paper. According to the Mozhai Foundation (2022), modern ink painting from the early 20th century embodies the heroic story of constant renewal and reinvigoration of Chinese civilisation through rebellions, revolutions, and reform in the political and cultural. More recently, the ink painting created with the multiplicity of forms has become the face of both literally and figuratively.



Figure 1.1 : Iconic Ink Wash Shrimps
(Source by Qi Baishi 1864-1957)

The development of new technology makes the visual communication design constantly forward. With the development of new media technology, there are more modern visual communication design schemes (Zongtai, 2020). In addition, Traditional elements have significant advantages in vision, but there are obvious defects in dynamic and exchange design. This modern combination brought a new signal and ushered in a breakthrough in the development of the design field. According to Jie (2018), the application of various modern technologies makes the design of visual communication development in the direction of first evolution and technicalisation. Under the continuous improvement of aesthetic requirements, visual communication has become more acceptable to people. Zongtai (2020), as the main idea of visual communication, is to meet people's needs visually. However, with the development of new media technology, visual communication has new needs at the spiritual level.

Recently, most of the new visual communication design concepts in China have been influenced by cultural elements, and the integration of Chinese traditional art, especially ink painting, has become meaningful. Liu (2015), with the development of modern art, the application of Chinese traditional ink painting characters in modern visual communication design is gradually developing. However, strengthening the application of Chinese traditional ink painting characters in visual communication has become a challenge in developing visual communication design. According to Zongtai (2020), during the design process, the designer should fully consider the personalised needs of users and pay attention to the spiritual attributes of products. So, the design conveys the design concept to users in one way, and the interaction between people and products, that is, reflects the interactive design concept. Feng (2020), the elements of Chinese traditional culture cannot be ignored in the current traditional cultural elements should be applied in the visual communication design so that often produce the effect of ideal effect, not only fully showing the connotation but also highlighting the beauty of the artistic conception of Chinese traditional culture, in the Chinese culture (Zheng, 2022). The traditional elements are the essence of it, under the background of the increasingly frequent exchange of global culture. In order to promote visual communication art to form a local and unique style, we need to strengthen the extensive use of traditional cultural elements comprehensively. This way, the style and national spirit of the times can be further highlighted.

1.2.1 Statement of Issue

Cultural values can be integrated into a design by applying representative characters and features. According to Gaver (2001), various cultures have a rich and varied set of materials that could provide designers unlimited inspiration for new ideas. However, the designers must consider cultural values to understand their role in forming users' behaviours and attitudes. Otherwise, the design could fail if user values are not considered (Moalosi, Popovic & Hickling-Hudson, 2010). The growth of progressive design has accompanied the influence of traditional culture. It gives us design data and, at the same time, can inspire us to create more inspiration. However, modern design needs to combine with regional and national characters and cultural traditions to establish a multivariate cultural pattern that has become important in design work (Li, 2015).

Traditional Chinese ink painting has become revolutionary and is used as a new concept in visual communication design due to the development of new media technology. The Chinese traditional ink painting characters have high artistic value and are worthy of further study. The design concept of visual communication design needs to take more traditional Chinese elements into account, especially the personalised needs of users (Widyokusumo & Wijaya, 2017). At the same time, in the design process, we should fully consider the personalised needs of users and pay attention to the spiritual attributes of products so that the designed products not only convey the design concept to users in one way but also the design process, and should pay attention to the interaction between people and products, that is, to reflect the interactive design

concept (Zongtai, 2020). Recently, with the continuous development of its long history, the art of ink painting has gradually become known to the public. Modern information technology is highly developed, and the significance of traditional ink painting is still progressing in knowledge. The constant changes in ink expression in the application field are due to the rapid development of social economy and culture, the progress of science and technology and the diversification of communication media (Sullivan, 1996). At present, there are many fields of design that have been done with an integration of ink art, especially in new visual communication design.

In the design exchange design, the traditional Chinese ink painting has always been a popular Chinese element by designers. Using ink painting characters in visual communication design can make the design contain the beauty of simplicity and simplicity (Zongtai, 2020). Chinese design in a manner that represents Chinese culture. According to Dong (2019), the purpose of visual communication design is to serve people, which means “design for people.” How to reflect the design serves the people, enhances the public’s appreciation and creativity of beauty, learns from traditional graphics, carries on inheritance and innovation, and constantly creates design works that meet the needs of the people’s lives and carry beautiful wishes. Applying ink painting characters with a solid national cultural foundation is worthy of further research. It is due to the construction of a beautiful world line, which advocates natural flow, line, to be honest, simple atmosphere, deep or shallow, straight line or curve, and graphic display to emphasise the artistic charm. However, how to incorporate the Chinese traditional ink painting characters into visual communication design needs to be studied to play the role of visual communication better systematically. The use of ink elements in visual communication design can make the design contain the beauty of simplicity and simplicity and can organically combine calligraphy, painting, and other art forms, and then design works with Chinese traditional culture style, while the works also reflect modern elements. Regarding design consciousness and style, there are also some cultural thoughts in China, which is consistent with the concept of art design in modern society (Xiao, et al., 2017).

When visual communication design, a fashion discipline, selectively absorbs the essence of Chinese traditional culture - ink art characters, it can not only improve the meaning of visual communication design works. At the same time, in the contemporary era of diversified cultural exchanges, Chinese design can better maintain itself and go to the world. Therefore, in visual communication design, how to dig into the application value of pen and ink art characters at a deeper level, how to re-understand and use pen and ink art characters, and how to further integrate pen and ink art characters and visual communication design art, to make Chinese visual communication design more national and global, will bring new highlights to visual communication design art. When visual communication design, a fashion discipline, selectively absorbs the essence of Chinese traditional culture - ink art characters, it can not only improve the meaning of visual communication design works. At the same time, in the contemporary era of diversified cultural exchanges, Chinese design can better maintain itself and go to the world. Therefore, in visual communication design,

how to dig the application value of pen and ink art characters at a deeper level, how to re-understand and use pen and ink art characters, and how to further integrate pen and ink art characters and visual communication design art, to make Chinese visual communication design more national and global, will bring new highlights to visual communication design art.

1.3 Aim

This research aimed to investigate the Chinese traditional ink painting characters that can be explored into a new concept of visual communication design for better aesthetic appearance and information function. The result of this research will facilitate the designers' production of a good concept of visual communication design based on Chinese traditional ink painting characters and promote the development of the visual communication industry in China.

1.3.1 Research Questions

There are three research questions addressed in this research are:

- RQ1 What is the importance of Chinese traditional ink painting as a new concept of visual communication design?
- RQ2 What are the most valuable character of Chinese traditional ink painting that can be applied as a new concept of visual communication design?
- RQ3 How to explore the Chinese traditional ink painting character as a new concept of visual communication design for better aesthetic appearance and information function?

1.3.2 Research Objectives

To attain the research questions constructed, three objectives were developed, respectively are: -

- RO1 To identify the importance of Chinese traditional ink painting characters as a new concept of visual communication design.
- RO2 To examine the most valuable character of Chinese traditional ink painting that can be applied as a new concept of visual communication design.
- RO3 To explore the Chinese traditional ink painting character as a new concept of visual communication design for better aesthetic appearance and information function.

1.4 Scope and Area of Research

This research mainly focuses on applying Chinese traditional ink painting characters as a new concept of visual communication design. Chinese cultural elements are symbols of traditional culture and the treasure of the world's design history. To explore the Chinese traditional ink painting character, this research analyzed and summarised the cultural art and national spirit of ink painting. The sample size selected in this study is based on the ten most representative ink paintings from ancient times to the present, representing the prosperity and development of ink painting in different periods. The analysis of Chinese traditional ink painting characters focuses on 1) exploration of the history of Chinese traditional ink painting and its revolutionary, 2) investigation of the Chinese traditional ink painting character that can be explored into a new visual communication design, and 3) apply the Chinese traditional ink painting character as a new concept of visual communication design.

The area studied is a combination of traditional and modern design. Through the analysis of visual elements in ink painting, the essence of Oriental art is sought from traditional ink painting. In modern design, we can see some works combining ink and design. Through the analysis of traditional ink and modern ink and the discussion and research of design trends and design thinking in the new era, the Oriental charm in modern Chinese visual communication design is summarised.

Experts should be selected according to the aim of the research. According to Hitzler (2004), Iriste and Katane (2018) claim that experts are aware of the impact of their specific knowledge on others in the respective subject field. Furthermore, Littig (2011), an expert has competence in the environment of professional activity, experience, and special expertise knowledge related to a respective subject field; it includes knowledge about action routines, decision-making regularities, collective orientation, and interpretation of social models, as well as experts possess flexibility in thinking and action, as well creativity and intuition (Iriste & Katane, 2018). According to Walz, Strickland, and Lenz (1991).

1.5 The Significant of Research

By achieving the research aim, it will be beneficial to contribute as: -

- a) Acknowledged the valuable of Chinese traditional ink painting that can be exploited as a new concept of visual communication design.
- b) Exploration of Chinese traditional ink painting characters as a new concept of visual communication design for better aesthetic appearance and information function.
- c) Promote and better growth of the visual communication industry in China.

1.6 Thesis Outline

The research contains six (6) chapters, as listed below: -

Chapter 1 Introduction begins with a discussion of the research background, the aim of the research, the research objectives and the scope and area of the study. Finally, the research contribution and structure of the study are also discussed.

Chapter 2, Literature Review - reviews the significant issues in undertaking the research. It was followed by an understanding of the development trend of Chinese traditional ink painting and a review of its application in visual communication design. Furthermore, the chapter also covers the history of the development of traditional ink painting, modern ink painting, and contemporary ink painting. At the end of this chapter, the gap was identified, and new ideas as a strategy were offered for further research.

Chapter 3 Research Method - it describes the research methodology. The chapter describes the selected research method and instrument used. It also explains the research work and data collection process and validation.

Chapter 4 Data Analysis and Results deals with data analysis and results. The finding addressed research questions 1 and 2. Several valuable characteristics of Chinese traditional ink painting are identified.

Chapter 5 New Concept of Visual Communication Design. Explored from Chinese Traditional Ink Painting Character - the chapter summary of the research findings from Chapter 4 followed by the suggestion of a new concept of visual communication design that was explored from Chinese traditional ink painting character. The validation conducted of two (2) sampling designs as a new concept of visual communication design explored based on Chinese traditional ink painting characters.

Chapter 6 Conclusion and Recommendation - this chapter is the conclusion and recommendations. This chapter is the summary and conclusion of the contribution of the whole research. Finally, some suggestions for further research are put forward.

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