

Analysis of Visual Design Elements on A Plastic Recycling Campaign Poster in Malaysia

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Abstract

Recycling is one of the three R's (Reduce, Reuse, and Recycle), and it is heavily promoted and organised by the Malaysia's government, schools, and other public institutions since 1993. Indeed, the advertising campaign employed multiple mediums to increase recycling awareness. However, the failure of the advertising campaign is due to a lack of strong graphic design features in existing posters contributes to a lack of awareness of Malaysia's plastic recycling initiatives. Thus, the goal of this research project is to examine the effectiveness of visual design elements in Malaysia's current plastic recycling poster and further establish effective visual design elements to help Malaysian designers. This descriptive study employed a visual analysis as a research method. The study identified the existing posters for a plastic recycling campaign are highly used elements of color, typography, shapes, lines, spaces and visual aids. The study's findings are highly assist graphic designers in creating a better artwork as a point of reference and modify the visual performances.

Keywords: Poster, Visual Elements, Recycle, Campaign

Introduction

Recycling is one of the three R's which stands for Reduce, Reuse, and Recycle, which is constantly stressed when working on a connected campaign which is often organized by government, schools, and other public organizations. Appropriately, an awareness campaign about recycling was firstly introduced in Malaysia during the year of 1993 by Ministry of Housing and Local Government of Malaysia (MHLG). The medium used by the government in producing the awareness campaign including banner, television advertisement, billboards, brochures as well as posters. However, despite all the campaigns that has been spread by government, the rate of recycling was stood still at only 31.52% in the year of 2021 and it is due to Malaysian people ignorance towards the recycling campaign (Chung, et.al., 2019; Roslan & Sakini, 2022). Accordingly, Malaysia also has been listed as one of the top 20 countries that produce highest total plastic waste with a whopping number of 2,058,501 metric tons.

Posters were commonly utilized to raise recycling awareness because of their capacity to reach both large and targeted audiences, as well as the fact that they can be physically or digital. Towards this, the visual elements employed in posters also play an important role in organizing information and imagery so that they are easily understood and grasped by the general public. Previous studies revealed that Malaysian are aware of environmental issues, yet lack of participation is a big issue that needs to be addressed (Abdul Wahid et al., 2000; Abdul Wahid and Abustan, 2001). In addition, exploring the effects of visuals design element is becoming important because of the increasing number of graphics used in instructional materials (Anglin et al., 2003). Thus, this research aims to study on the effective visual design elements in plastic recycling poster in Malaysia that further will cover the improvement of the awareness posters campaign. The study focuses on the visual design elements used in the existing plastic recycle poster campaign and how are the visual design elements be used in the existing plastic recycle poster campaign. Further the findings will establish the most effective visual design element for plastic recycling poster campaign.

Literature

Recycling is turning spent materials into new goods, which lowers waste, energy use, air pollution from burning, and water pollution from landfilling (Ying, 2010). Furthermore, recycling is essential to contemporary waste management and fits into the 3Rs' waste hierarchy to cut down on the production of rubbish. Recycled materials must be separated, what items to recycle, and where to find recycling bins are just some of the information that prevents people from participating in recycling activities. Recycling also depends on individual participation.

The study on recycling awareness was conducted by (Tharimazi & Jusoh, 2012). A survey employing three different kinds of questionnaires was used to gather samples and data. The study's conclusions demonstrated that respondents had very little knowledge of recycling campaigns. On the other hand, the participants have a favorable view regarding their willingness to learn more about the recycling practice. Another study conducted by Nguyen (2011) revealed that a knowledge gap among participants contributing to the engagement in recycling awareness. In addition, the study found that even though the public are aware of recycling, this does not necessarily translate into participation in recycling initiatives.

As a concern providing the knowledge to the public on recycling awareness, the availability of material for recycling campaign is highly important to be considered. Towards these scenarios, the media is a vital communication tool that is helping to boost public knowledge. Aesthetic appealing and goods designs elements frequently can attract people intention. According to Onkargouda et al (2013), radio, newspapers, and new media platforms have the ability to spread information quickly and further provide better understanding on any issues.

Visual Design Elements for Poster Established in The Literature

Elements of design are the essential parts that visual artists and graphic designers use to create a concise composition and relate the message behind the work to their target audience effectively (Gatto et al., 2011). The elements identified by Gatto et al (2011) are line, color, shape, form, value, space, and texture. Evans and Thomas (2013) identify line, texture, shape, space, and type as tangible elements, and size, color, value, and volume as conditional elements. 13 sources of literature (books, journals and research articles) been analyzed and the summary are presented in Table 1.

Table 1

The Visual Design Elements for Poster Established in Literature

AUTHORS	ELEMENTS OF DESIGN						SUMMARY
Hafizah Rosli (2018)	Color	Font	Title	Blank space	Size	Visual aids	Color Typography Shapes Lines Spaces Visual aids
Ken Masters, Trevor Gibbs & John Sandars (2015)	Color	Font	Space	Logical flow	Orientation		
Kaylee S. White (2012)	Color	Font	Space	Value	Texture	Lines	
Rhianna K. Pedwell, James A. Hardy & Susan L. Rowland (2017)	Color	Font	Title	Layout flow	Visual aids		
JaneAnne Stout (2000)	Color	Line	Shape	Space	Texture		
Deborah A. Sleight, PhD (2009)	Color	Text	Arrangement	Alignment	Space		
Justin Morales (2020)	Color	Font	Lines	Shapes	Texture	Space	
Abhinav Girdhar (2020)	Color	Font	Layout	Design hierarchy	Shape	Contrast	
Beth Jenkins & Jaycee Fraser (2019)	Color	Font	Balance	Design hierarchy	Shapes	Balance	
Timothy Samara (2014)	Color	Font	Layout	Form	Space	Image	

Alex W. White (2012)	Space	Type	Unity			
Aaris Sherin (2012)	Color	Shape	Lines	Scale	Contrast	Image
Laura Keung (2019)	Color	Shape	Lines	Form	Space	Texture

Methodology

For this descriptive study, a content analysis was used to establish effective visual design elements for plastic recycling poster campaign in Malaysia. The research design used as per shown in Figure 1.

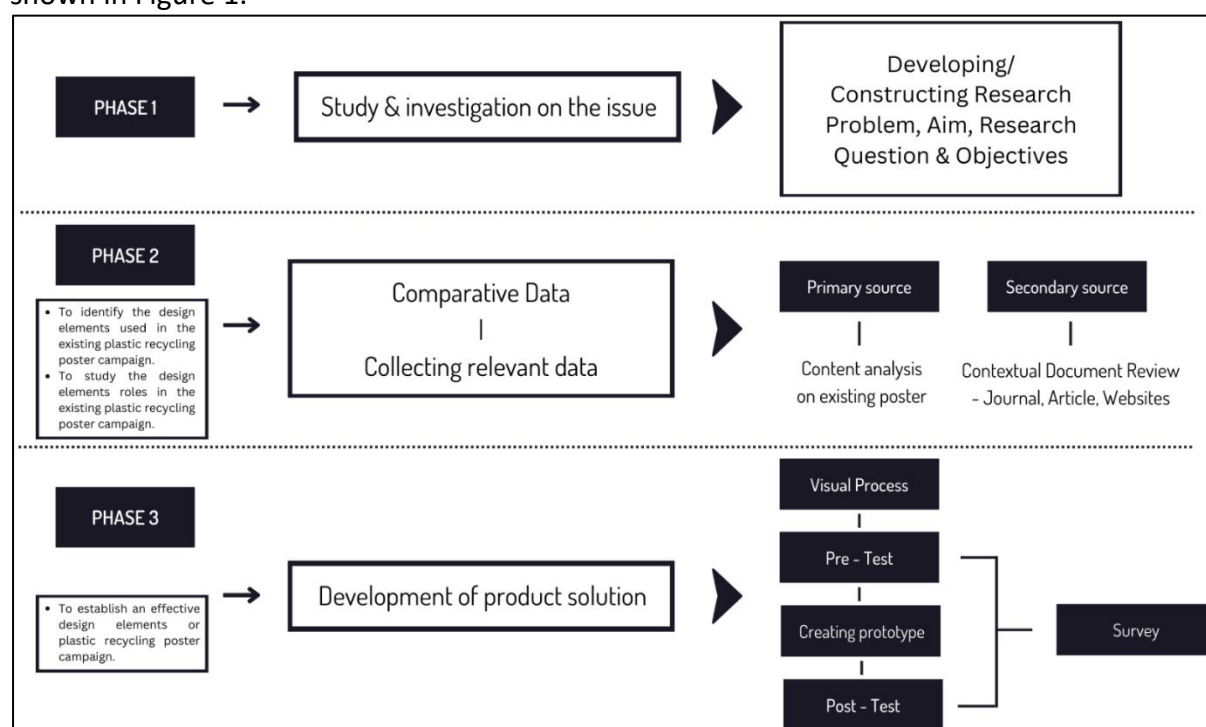


Figure 1. The Research Design

The method used is content analysis which applied to the existing literature and existing poster. The purposed of this this method is to extract information about elements of design from authors of previous established books, journals and articles and further form it into a concise table. The detail steps to this procedure were followed as Table 2 below:

Table 2

The steps for content analysis on the existing literature.

Step 1:	Assess existing documents.
Step 2:	Secure access to the documents that had been identified through assessment.
Step 3:	Compile the documents relevant to your evaluation.
Step 4:	Extract related information from every document into a table form.
Step 5:	Summarize the information from documents reviewed.

For the poster analysis, the existing posters were collected and used as a sample for the content analysis. In detail, the researchers were collected the poster and analyze the elements that are being used in the poster using table of design elements checked list that extracted from the literature. Each poster was analyzed thoroughly and compared with one another in the form of a table list. The detail steps to this procedure were followed as Table 3 below

Table 3

The steps for content analysis on the existing poster.

Step 1:	Collecting existing posters from various sources
Step 2:	Defining the categories of analysis.
Step 3:	Analyzing the poster
Step 5:	Summarize the information from poster review

The Data Collection and Analysis Existing Posters for Recycle Campaign

There are 10 existing posters were collected through different sources. It including existing posters from the government and private entities. The listed posters are the poster by Malaysian Ministry of Defense (MINDEF), Sabah Holiday Packages, Department of Environmental, and a few posters campaign from different society across Malaysia. Each of the poster further was studied based on the six visual design elements: Color, Typography, Shape, Line, Space and Visual aids. The detail of the analysis result is presented as following Table 4, Table 5, Table 6, Table 7, Table 8 Table 9, Table 10, Table 11, Table 12 and Table 13.

Table 4

The Visual Design Elements Analysis on Poster 1

Design elements					
Colors 	Typography 	Shapes 	Lines 	Spaces 	Visual aids
■	■	■		■	■

The Malaysian Ministry of Defense (MINDEF) provided this poster via their official Twitter account. Except for the shapes, the design made use of nearly all the design elements found in earlier works of literature, including typography, colors, lines, spaces, and visual aids. There were two font sizes used in the headline, "HINDARI PLASTIK SEKALI GUNA." To highlight the

significance of stopping the use of plastic, the words "HINDARI PLASTIK" and "SEKALI GUNA" are typed in larger letter sizes. The typeface for the content texts was consistently styled in italics using a sans serif font type. The visual used in the poster included reusable tote bag, eco-friendly straw, wooden cutlery, food grade water bottle as well as reusable food container to show the examples of alternatives that can be used instead of one-time usage of plastic utensils.

Table 5
The Visual Design Elements Analysis on Poster 2

Design elements					
Colors 	Typography 	Shapes 	Lines 	Spaces 	Visual aids
■	■			■	■

The Pakej Cuti Sabah Facebook page provided the poster. Four of the six specified elements: colors, typography, spaces, and visual aids were employed in the design. Even though color is employed in this poster, it is used mostly in the graphic and only occasionally in the text. The headline and body content texts made up the poster's typography. The headline, "SELAMATKAH AIR BUNGKUS PLASTIK?" placed a strong focus on the word "SELAMATKAH" by using a larger font size and a vivid shade of red. The other subtitle in the design was also red. However, the content texts were in a different font type, which disrupted the design consistency because they employed a handwriting style font rather than a standard sans serif font. The design contained a lot of negative space, and the white blank background color made it appear empty and dreary. The design only includes one visual aid: a depiction of a beverage takeaway container, which is an example of single-use plastic.








Table 6

The Visual Design Elements Analysis on Poster 3

Design elements					
Colors 	Typography <u>A A</u>	Shapes 	Lines 	Spaces 	Visual aids
■	■	■		■	■








This poster is very colorful with a multicolor gradient background with abstract texture and colored visual aids. The main color used for the background is light pink and light blue gradient. While the typography in this design has the same sans-serif typeface, the designer used two different kinds of fonts. There is an underlined typography emphasis used in the header title. The shapes used in the design are rectangles for the text content border as well as circles and oval for two visual frames. The design of this poster is quite packed with texts and multiple visual aids that leave not much negative space around the design. This design used a lot of visual aids such as graphic art of under the sea and beach as well as other vector images.

Table 7
The Visual Design Elements Analysis on Poster 4

					
Design elements					
Colors 	Typography 	Shapes 	Lines 	Spaces 	Visual aids 
■	■	■		■	■








Poster 4 was extracted from the Environment Knowledge Management Center (EKMC)’s website under the Department of Environment (DOE). The poster is about single-use plastics information such as plastic wrapper and cotton buds. The main color that was used in the design was green which is a color that represents recycling. Other colors that were used in the design were light blue, light yellow and peach. The typeface in this design is sans-serif and the font was very consistent throughout the design with varied sizes. The shapes that were used in the design were rectangles for the texts border as well as oval and hexagon for the visual frame. The space was used optimally with some negative spaces still available in the bottom half. There were multiple visual aids such as the images of cotton buds, reusable water bottles, stainless steel cutlery and plastic wrap.

Table 8
The Visual Design Elements Analysis on Poster 5

					
Design elements					
Colors 	Typography 	Shapes 	Lines 	Spaces 	Visual aids 
■	■			■	■

The main color that was used in the design is a dark shade of green as the background color and multicolor plastic straws in the visual aid. The designer used serif typeface for the header text while used sans-serif typeface for the rest of the texts. The phrase 'NO' was written in bigger font size compared to other texts to show the emphasis in the message of refusing to use plastic straw. There were still plenty of negative spaces that can be used to include more informative texts or visual aids. The only visual aid in this design was the plastic straws that were placed in the middle of the poster.

Table 9
The Visual Design Elements Analysis on Poster 6

					
Design elements					
Colors	Typography	Shapes	Lines	Spaces	Visual aids
					
■	■			■	■

The main color that was used in Poster 6 is blue and the designer used different shades of it to create depth, contrast, and texture in the design. The color of this design is very bright and attractive to look at. The typeface used in the design of Poster 6 was sans-serif however the font is different from the main title with the hashtag text under it that uses more of a handwritten font. The font that was used for the main title was bold and written in larger font size to make the reader focus on that message when they look at the design. The design was not too crowded with a lot of texts and the positive spaces were utilized with clear image of visual aids. The visual aid that was used in the design was a plastic bag and plastic container from supermarket in graphic form.

Table 10
The Visual Design Elements Analysis on Poster 7

Design elements					
Colors 	Typography 	Shapes 	Lines 	Spaces 	Visual aids
■	■	■		■	■

Poster 7 has a simple white background with colored text border that uses purple and yellow. The designer used purple colored font on yellow text border and yellow colored font on purple text border. The typeface in this design is sans-serif and all the texts used the same font with different font style and sizes which makes it consistent throughout the design. The shapes that were used in the design can be seen towards the bottom of the poster which were the organic shape of leaf inside a teardrop shape and rectangles behind the visual aids. Although the poster design is simple, the spaces were well utilized without leaving too many negative spaces and the positive space in the design was not too packed. The visual aids that were used in the design were reusable stainless-steel cups, thermos, and reusable tin food containers.

Table 11
The Visual Design Elements Analysis on Poster 8

Design elements					
Colors 	Typography 	Shapes 	Lines 	Spaces 	Visual aids
■	■	■		■	■

The designer used mainly yellow and bright hot pink as the color of choice in designing Poster 8. The typography that was used in the design is consistent and it used sans-serif typeface in both the main title and content texts. The shapes that were used in the design were rectangles and rounded square for the text border and visual aid frame. Although the design space was not packed with informative texts, the background used in the design is an image which makes the design look full. The visual aids were used not only as the content but also as the main background. The designer included images of reusable bags, biodegradation containers as well as reusable tin food containers.

Table 12

The Visual Design Elements Analysis on Poster 9

Design elements					
Colors	Typography	Shapes	Lines	Spaces	Visual aids
■	■	■		■	■

The color usage in Poster 9 has bright contrast between background, fonts and all the visual aids. The designer used typical colors that are normally associated with recycling, which are blue, green, and orange. The typography element in this design were very consistent since the designer only used one typeface which was sans-serif. The designer used different sizes of font typography emphasis such as bold and italic in some phrases to help readers take note on important aspects of the poster’s message. The shapes that were noticeable in the design is one organic shape which is the leaf that was used as a shape of a foot. There is one thin green line to separate the website link and social media icons from the rest of the design. The usage of spaces in this design is very balanced with not so many negative spaces left but still did not look overcrowded with texts. This design used plastic bag image as its main visual aid.

Table 13

The Visual Design Elements Analysis on Poster 10

Design elements					
Colors 	Typography 	Shapes 	Lines 	Spaces 	Visual aids
■	■	■		■	■

The main color used in Poster 10 is different shades of green from light to dark varied for background, shapes, and font color. However, the shade of green used for background making some of the logo did not stand out because there was not much contrast. This design used a mix of both sans-serif and serif typefaces. The shapes that were used for the design were circles for the numbers background border. The positive and negative spaces are balanced with the main visual as the focus of the eye in the middle. The visual aid used for the design was the plastic bag vector image.

In summary, based on the analysis of 10 different posters, the result established only one poster use all visual design elements which is Poster 3. Another six poster (Poster 4, Poster 5, Poster 7, Poster 8, Poster 9 and Poster 10) used five elements and three poster (Poster 1, Poster 2, Poster 6) used four elements. The analysis established that typography is been used in most of the poster. Clearly, typography is a character of letters that become a means of expressing ideas, conveying meaning, and building public understanding (Ashari & Rochmawati, 2022). The summary of the visual design elements used on the recycle poster campaign in Malaysia presented in Table 14 below.

Table 14

The Visual Design Elements Analysis Summary

POSTER	Design elements					
	Colors 	Typography 	Shapes 	Lines 	Spaces 	Visual aids 
	■	■			■	■
	■	■			■	■
	■	■	■	■	■	■
	■	■	■		■	■
	■	■	■		■	■
	■	■			■	■
	■	■	■		■	■
	■	■	■		■	■
	■	■	■		■	■
	■	■	■		■	■

Based on the visual analysis, it is found that past posters that were related to recycling highly used color, typography, shapes, lines, spaces and visual aids. The researcher began to create the prototype poster according to the visual analysis finding.

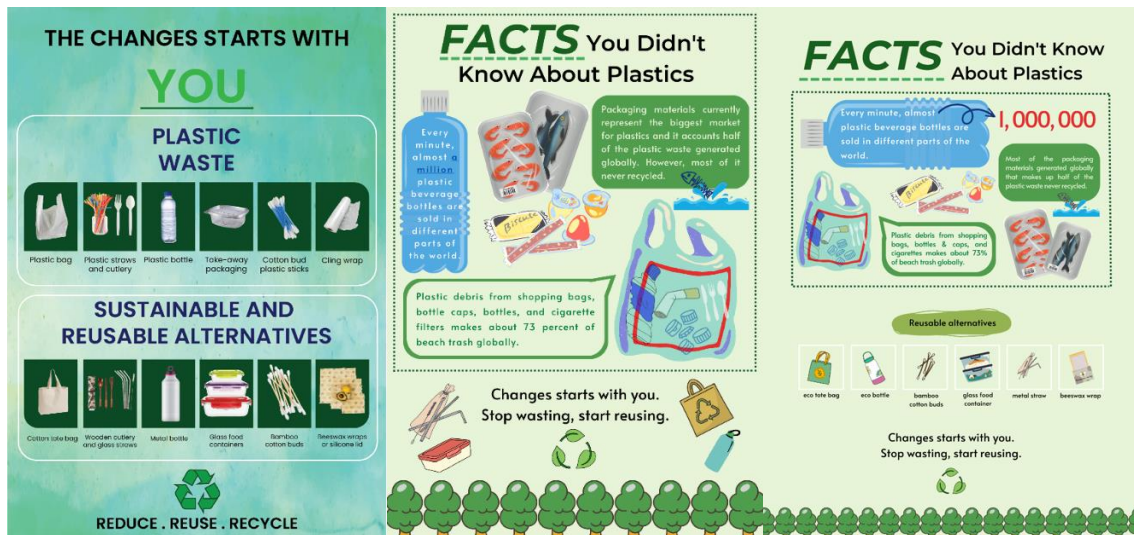


Figure 3: Prototype for poster design

Three concepts were initially developed that incorporated the visual elements revealed from the study. Concept 1 had a graphic representation of a blue sky with clouds placed over the background. The color and size choose for the font and body text is similar to expose that portion of the poster. Concept 2 more focus on the elements of visual aids, color, typography and shape.

Conclusion

The study demonstrates the impact of visual elements and how they might improve campaign posters. The analytical resemblance across recycle campaign posters is the primary basis for presenting material using relevant graphic elements, which will assist produce a strong effect. One of the study's most prominent conclusions is that combining diverse colors with key aspects might result in an effective image. In this regard, graphic designers should use this study to help them create masterpieces based on the poster's design elements.

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