

Chapter 3

Visuality in Corporate Communication

Özen Okat

Ege University, Turkey

Bahadır Burak Solak

Trabzon University, Turkey

ABSTRACT

One of the most important areas where visual communication is prominent today is marketing. Brands try to adopt to the visual world of today in order to make their communication with their target audience more meaningful and effective. This way, organizations, and therefore brands, take significant steps for differentiation from their competitors by forming their visual identity. Additionally, considering the current advertisements of brands, it is seen that visual narratives are highly abundant. In this context, brands which are starting to use visual communication effectively are gaining a broader place in the memories of their target audience by increasing brand awareness. As a result, it is believed that the significance of visual communication and identity is increasingly higher in terms of influencing existing and potential masses by being integrated into the visual world of today.

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INTRODUCTION

The time allocated for reading by people is increasingly rarer in the intense struggle in life with an accelerating pace. Reading and the process of making sense that starts with combining words are processes that are more complicated and time-consuming in comparison to perceiving and making sense of visual content. For this reason, for a simpler and more comprehensible communication process, people always prefer visual content more. An example of this issue is that the number of Instagram users worldwide is higher than the number of Twitter users, and content that is shared on Instagram receives more interaction (Statista, 2019). Another striking example of this is the rapid increase in the rates of using emojis. Now, instead of expressing thoughts and feelings through text, it is possible to communicate with others faster and in a simpler way by emojis which are visual. In some cases, these visual emojis are used to strengthen the thoughts and feelings that are expressed through texts.

Communication that is achieved with “visible” content is known as visual communication. Even though people do not understand the language of each other, they are able to communicate via visual images and symbols. This is because visual communication is more universal in comparison to written and verbal communication, and therefore, it is easier to perceive and make sense of its content. For instance, when someone who visits London without speaking English sees a traffic sign on the side of a road with the symbol of no parking can comprehend what it means thanks to the symbolic narrative even though they do not understand the language that is spoken in that country. Communicating through gestures may be possible in a country whose language we do not speak. Moreover, in today’s world where time is very limited and life is very fast-paced, visual images are preferred by individuals much more in comparison to written texts as they are perceived faster. Therefore, with numerous different advantages it provides and for reasons such as the qualities of human nature, visual communication has a much larger place in the world of communication. Thus, it is clear that visual communication should not be left to coincidences in commercial spaces where very large investments take place. The necessity of all organizations taking part in the world of commerce to pay attention to information on visual identity planning and the perceptual characteristics of their target audience is clear.

VISUAL DIMENSION OF COMMUNICATION

A person is a being that prioritizes what is visual. This is because, although we utilize several of our senses for communication, for all individuals who have the capacity to see, the basis of learning, attitudes and behaviors is in direct interaction with visual content. A person assesses the reflections coming from around them within visual communication systems, and more of the time in their daily life, they direct their actions based on visual communication. This visual attitude is almost in the genes of people (Ketenci and Bilgili, 2006, p. 268). In this context, it may be argued that the sense of sight is one of the most important senses in people.

People identify and try to make sense of the objects, events and situations around them firstly by seeing them. Humanity has spent tens of thousands of years to develop this quality (Uçar, 2004, p. 17). Since the dawn of humanity, the most effective form of expression has included the pictures, shapes

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and symbols that are drawn. With these symbols, humans have aimed to transmit the thing they want to express in the shortest and clearest way possible. The first examples of the shortest and clearest form of expression, namely visual communication, were encountered with pictures and shapes in cave drawings. These symbols not only allowed communication among people living in those times but also left traces that have reached today in the form of knowledge about those people (Yaban, 2012, p. 973). In this sense, it may be seen that visual communication firstly emerged for the purposes of helping decision-making and transmitting information. Likewise, cave paintings and pictograms which are the oldest forms of visual communication were used to transmit information on marking territory, identifying dangers, finding and showing routes for migration and identifying locations of shelter and sources of food/drinks. Usage of such marks may be traced back to more than 200,000 years ago (Jaenichen, 2017, p. 10).

As in the past, visual contents are prevalently utilized and play an important role in the process of communication in today's modern world. In their daily lives, people frequently encounter stationary and motile images, texts and visual elements that are organized in certain forms. These visual messages are designed to serve various objectives such as informing, explaining things, providing directions, persuasion, education, sales and entertainment. The process of visual communication starts on the level where interaction with various visual constructs start for such purposes (Holsanova, 2014, p. 331). The process of visual communication involves sharing all visible things within a perceptual context (Kavuran & Özpolat, 2016, p. 267). Visual communication takes place at the end of the process that progresses in the form of the eye's function of seeing and interpretation of sensationally obtained information in the brain. Information that is collected from the environment and the visual contents that carry this information are stored in a person's memory. In the process that follows, the mind tries to interpret and recall information by using visual messages in different forms (Onursoy, 2017, p. 50). Visual images enter long-term memory storage faster and easier in comparison to written and verbal texts. This is because visual communication is the oldest and most natural form of human communication. As mentioned before, the history of visual communication may be traced back to the cave paintings of the ancient time. In this context, visual communication is considered to be a significant form of communication for all eras where visuality and visual expression forms have been in the center (Uyan Dur, 2015, p. 444).

Individuals and communities in developed or developing countries obtain their information to a large extent from visual sources such as newspapers, television, magazines, posters and brochures. Other than this type of information, several helping tools that make daily life easier are presented visually. For example, people try to recognize places they are visiting for the first time with maps, they utilize visual information consisting of writings, photographs and other symbols before buying a product from a store, or they resort to the guidance of visual elements for distinguishing men's restroom from women's when they visit a place (Becer, 2006, p. 29).

As a general definition, visual communication is transmission of information, ideas and feelings by using various images, symbols and visuals. In other words, all types of exchanging messages through visual contents are known as visual communication. It is one of the three main forms of communication in addition to verbal and non-verbal communication. It is known that visual communication is the form of communication that is perceived by people in the easiest way. Visual communication includes numerous examples such as various signs, typographies, photographs, graphical designs, animations and movies (Ruhela & Parween, 2018, p. 748).

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At times of primitive life, the most effectively used communicational contents were pictures, symbols and marks. Instead of speech, several pictures and shapes used as visual communication tools that symbolize their lives and communicate may be observed on clay tablets or rocks where they lived (Ketenci & Bilgili, 2006, p. 266). Today, with the prevalence of using visuals, it has started to be seen that visuals may be used just like written language to transmit a thought or meaning to people. Just as in the case of written texts, narratives may be constructed on different semantic levels by using visual contents (Öncü Yıldız, 2012, p. 74). Different visual contents may be used for meaning creation and transmission on conventional and digital platforms. One of the most popular ones among such visual contents today are emojis that are frequently used on digital platforms. It is seen that usage of emojis on various digital messaging platforms and social media is increasing fast. The visual language that was used at times of primitive life has been reanimated today in the form of “emoji communication”. It has now become almost impossible to encounter content without emojis while viewing posts on social media. Similarly, many people use emojis on digital messaging platforms, and it is even observed that people sometimes communicate by using only emojis. This is evidence that the visual-based simple form of communication used by the ancestors of today’s people who lives centuries ago is still going on in the context of contemporary developments and innovations.

We firstly identify and try to understand what is around by seeing it and react to it later. This is why the sense of sight is one of the most important senses of humanity (Ketenci & Bilgili, 2006, p. 265). A study conducted by educational psychologist Jerome Bruner at the University of New York also stated that people remember 10% of what they hear, 30% of what they read and about 80% of what they see (Lester, 2006). In this sense, it was argued that products of visual communication are at the top of factors that motivate learning, grab attention, make comprehension easier, transfer information simply and in a comprehensible way and promote learning while having fun (Mercin, 2017, p. 211). In short, communication that is carried out with visual content is both more effective and more memorable. Thus, brands, one of whose most important objectives is to have a place in the minds of their target audience by effective communication, have used products of visual communication from the past to the present intensively.

IDENTITY AND ITS VISUAL FORM

In today’s world of marketing where the level of competition increases unpredictably, firms and thus brands that have to make large investments towards the process of communication also utilize opportunities of visual communication. In this period where the importance of visual communication has been proven in several studies (Bosch, LM, De Jong, & Elving, 2005) (Melewar T. C., Measuring visual identity: a multi-construct study, 2001) (Peng & Hung, 2016) (Rutter, Stephenson, & Dewey, 1981), the most useful method for firms and brands to differentiated from and rise among their competitors is showing their difference by presenting their target audience with a visual integrity. Visuality that is different and striking is a factor that always provides advantages for prominence. The most fundamental way for a firm/brand to be able to present visual integrity is a well-managed corporate visual identity design. However, corporate visual identity should be shaped in the context of the identity of the organization. A practice of corporate visual identity that is independent of corporate identity will fail in presenting an integrated point of view and will collapse like a building without a foundation. Therefore, before talking about corporate visual identity, it would be useful to define the concept of corporate identity where it comes from and its components.

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Corporate Identity

Corporate identity is usually considered to be interchangeable with the concept of corporate visual identity. However, just as the character of people is not limited to their appearance, corporate identity is not limited to its visual components. It is also seen in recent studies that the attention in the context of the definition of corporate identity has shifted from design to the own nature of the organization, and the importance paid to visual elements in definition has decreased (Bosch, Elving, & de Jong, 2006). Corporate identity is the self-presentation of an organization, rooted in the behavior of individual organizational members, expressing the organization's 'sameness over time' or continuity, 'distinctiveness' and 'centrality' (van Riel, 1997). Identity refers to individuality that is a means by which others can differentiate one person from another (Melewar T. C., Determinants of the corporate identity construct: a review of the literature, 2003). Corporate identity can thus be defined as the picture of the organization in terms of how this is presented to various audiences (Cornelissen, 2004). With this explanation, Cornelissen (2004) focused on how corporate identity is perceived by the audience of the organization and defined identity as "a picture of the organization".

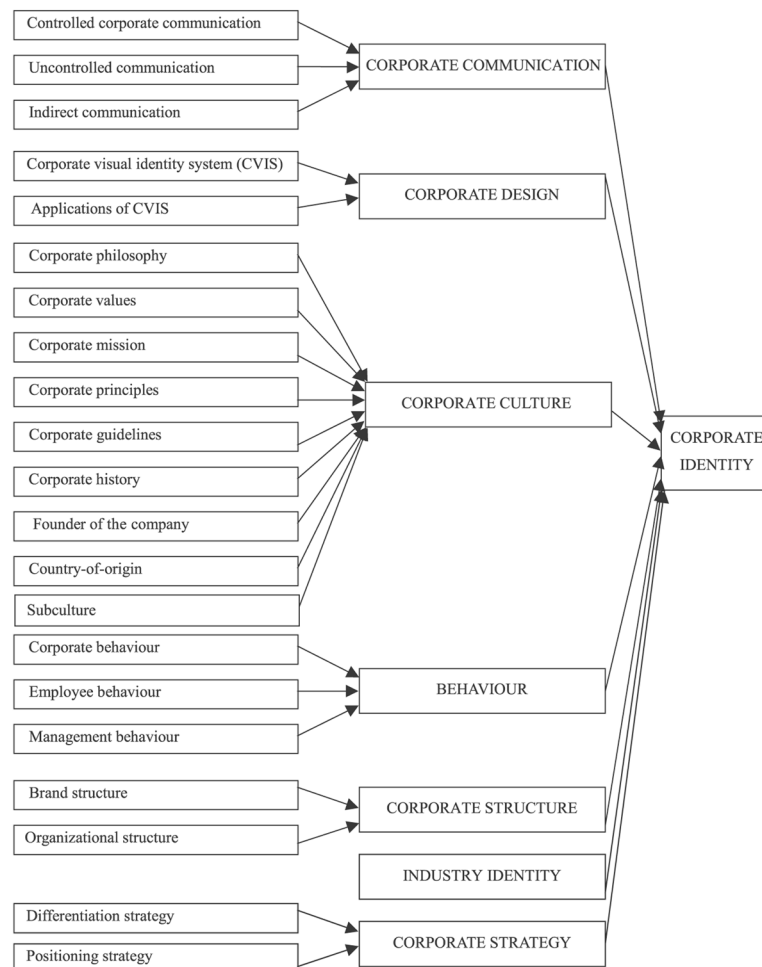
Corporate identity (Figure 1) consists of the components of corporate communication, corporate design, organizational culture, behavior, corporate structure, sectoral identity and organizational strategy (Melewar & Karaosmanoğlu, Seven dimensions of corporate identity: A categorisation from the practitioners' perspectives, 2006). Before getting into corporate design, there is a benefit to emphasize the multidimensionality of corporate identity by shortly defining these components in question:

Corporate Communication

Communication, which already starts in the mother's womb, is a factor that plays a critical role in sustenance of existence for all living beings. Life starts by learning, and all living beings survive with the help of what they have learned. Learning occurs by usage of various forms of communication. Considering this issue in the context of organizations, it may be argued that all organizations have functions of learning and teaching, or in other words, receiving information and providing information. The entirety of all these processes of receiving and providing information is the expression of corporate communication processes. Corporate communication focuses on the organization as a whole and the important task of how an organization is presented to all of its key stakeholders, both internal and external (Cornelissen, 2004). In addition to all these, corporate communication may also be defined as a management function:

Corporate communication is a management function that offers a framework and vocabulary for the effective coordination of all means of communications with the overall purpose of establishing and maintaining favorable reputations with stakeholder groups upon which the organization is dependent (Cornelissen, 2004).

Considering it as a management function, corporate communication that is discussed in the framework of the 4Ps of marketing (Product, Price, Place, Promotion) refers to a much more complicated and planned process that may be considered in the context of the science of public relations and covers various strategies. This is why it covers the concepts of strategic thought, strategic planning, and thus, operational and action plans. In this aspect, there is the question of a controlled communication. How-

Visuality in Corporate Communication*Figure 1. The original corporate identity categorization (Melewar and Karaosmanoğlu, 2006)*

ever, corporate communication has also uncontrollable, spontaneously developing and indirect aspects. Increasingly frequent usage of social media may be considered to be the best example of the uncontrollable dimension of corporate communication. Firms that constantly have to follow social media for this reason are recently spending more and more effort to be able to control social media communication and take action in this field.

Corporate Culture

It is possible to think about the existence of culture as an influential and influenced concept in every community where people are. Culture, which may be defined as a “realized system of making sense, a wholesome lifestyle” (Williams, 1993) refers to the entirety of all types of understanding that affect

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the identity of an organization directly. In this sense, the concept of corporate communication has been explained with similar definitions. Ayla Okay defined corporate culture as a system of values, beliefs and habits that are shared within an organization and interactively influence the formal structure with the aim of achieving behavioral norms (Okay, 2005). According to another definition, corporate culture is a collection of norms that show how individuals behave and activities that determine interpersonal relationships are carried out with the attitudes, beliefs, assumptions and expectations who work at the same organization even though it is not expressed in written form (Erengül, 1997). Several definitions on the topic of corporate culture state that elements that distinguish all organizations from each other like shared beliefs, values, meanings, myths, ceremonies and symbols form corporate culture (Bakan, 2005). The concepts of corporate identity and corporate culture are a collection of abstract phenomena that form the general structure of the organization, determine the ambiance in the organization and create a living space for employees and a perception or outlook towards the organization for external target audiences (Elden & Yeygel, 2006). Most researchers viewed corporate culture as an effective instrument used to support and reinforce corporate identity to achieve such goals as labor flexibility (Vella & Melewar, 2008). In the light of all these definitions and other definitions in the literature, corporate culture may be explained as an organizations main adopted values, philosophy, mutual views, collective mind, rules, beliefs and assumptions, habits, attitudes, expectations, projections, emotions and history (Akıncı Vural, 2005), (Okay, 2005) (Erengül, 1997) (Balmer & Greyser, *Managing the Multiple Identities of the Corporation*, 2003).

Corporate Behavior

Corporate behavior is formed out of collection of the behavioral styles of the individuals who work at the organization. In this framework, there are two main approaches that explain corporate behavior. These two approaches may be considered as personnel behavior and managerial behavior styles. It may be stated that managerial behavior style forms personnel behavior style, and the combination of both forms corporate behavior. Considering that organizations cannot be thought of independently of the culture they live in and that behavior is a concept that is completely intertwined with culture, it is clear that cultural factors influence the organization via its employees.

The cultural factors that are related to corporate behavior may be categorized by the cultural dimensions theory of Hofstede. These dimensions proposed by Hofstede define the effects of culture on organizational culture, and therefore, organizational behavior. In the theory of Hofstede, there are six different dimensions of culture, and each community may be categorized based on these six dimensions. These dimensions are as the following (Hofstede, 2011):

1. Power Distance, related to the different solutions to the basic problem of human inequality;
2. Uncertainty Avoidance, related to the level of stress in a society in the face of an unknown future;
3. Individualism versus Collectivism, related to the integration of individuals into primary groups;
4. Masculinity versus Femininity, related to the division of emotional roles between women and men;
5. Long Term versus Short Term Orientation, related to the choice of focus for people's efforts: the future or the present and past.
6. Indulgence versus Restraint, related to the gratification versus control of basic human desires related to enjoying life.

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In relation to Hofstede's theory, the behavioral forms of organizations may be classified in the contexts of degree of democracy in decision-making, rate of avoiding uncertainty, level of individualism or collectivism, masculine or feminine character, qualities of short-term or long-term decision-making and whether or not freedom is restricted. For example, employees at firms that are established in individualistic societies are more "me"-centered, while those in collectivist societies are more "us"-oriented. Nevertheless, the issue that should be kept in mind is that each country might not necessarily be at these extreme points that are defined in the cultural dimensions proposed by Hofstede. There may be countries where individualism is intense, and collectivism is less dominant, or vice versa. It is even possible to encounter societies where both approaches are equally dominant. However, the main issue is that the society that is lived in is determining in terms of corporate behavior.

Corporate Structure: Brand structure and Organizational structure

Melewar and Saunders mentioned two separate structural elements in the context of corporate structure which is a key element of corporate identity: organizational structure and visual structure. Organizational structure may also be divided into two foundations: centralized or decentralized. In the centralized structure, the organization accepts a certain location as a center and forms its entire identity based on this center. In the decentralized structure, corporate identity is constructed differently at different centers (Melewar & Saunders, *Global corporate visual identity systems: Standardization, control and benefits*, 1998). This issue, therefore, affects the visual structure. In the centralized structure, an organization is expressed over a single corporate identity in all markets where it operates. In the decentralized structure, it may, for example, develop a unique corporate visual identity system for each different market it operates in. This way, differentiation from market to market in the corporate structure becomes a necessity.

Wally Olins defined corporate identity structures as monolithic identity (usage of a single name and a single visual element by the organization everywhere), endorsed identity (endorsement of an organization for the operational areas it has with its name and identity) and branded identity (ownership of a brand or brands by an organization or its subsidiaries) (Okay, 2005). This classification is a more detailed approach in the context of corporate identity to the centralized and decentralized corporate structures defined by Melewar and Saunders (1998).

Branded structure is among the main factors that both affect and shape the corporate structure. The brand's essence (psychological and physical elements of the brand), brand personality (Who is the brand? What is its identity?), brand value (what it makes the consumer feel), utilities offered by the brand and brand quality (advisability, being a product that provides precise solutions for problems, etc.) may be listed as the components that form brand structure (Aktuğlu, 2004). According to a different view, brand structure is built on three pillars: identity, which includes the sign or group of signs that identify the brand; marketing, which includes the products, and response, which includes the markets (De Lencastre & Côte-Real, 2010). Therefore, considering brand structure, it is possible to recall all preceding and succeeding components related to the brand. At this point, it is necessary to make a distinction about brand identity and corporate identity which are concepts that are very close to each other, even intertwined. While corporate identity is a blanked concept that defines the entire organization and all elements that are related to the organization, according to Perry and Wisnom, brand identity consists

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of the controllable elements of a firm, product or service such as an essence, placement, brand name, label, logo, message and experience. The reason for considering these as controllable elements is that they may be changed at any point, while this requires more control in comparison to creating, sustaining and changing corporate identity (Perry & Wisnom III, 2003). Corporate communication refers to rather the internal structure of the organization in the context of some certain elements of it, while corporate visual identity, and thus, brand identity that is an element of corporate design defines the aspect of the organization that faces the outside. As the process of communication with the society has started at the point of exteriorization, a small change in brand identity requires a long-term and detailed procedure, followed by a set of communication activities.

Industrial Identity

The industrial structure where the organization operates and the identity of this industry may be defined as factors that directly influence corporate identity. This is because this structure also determines the environment where the organization belongs to. The competition level in that industry, the size of the industry, its speed of change-transformation and how the organization positions itself in the industry where they operate also affect corporate identity. According to Melewar and Karaosmanoğlu (2006), especially finance firms, banks and petrol companies are a good example for the interaction between industrial identity and corporate identity in the context that they are highly influenced by the industry they are in. Considering them in this framework, the highly frequent exposure of the petrol industry and thus petrol companies to criticisms by environmental protection communities defines the relationship between out-of-control communication and industrial identity (Melewar & Karaosmanoğlu, Seven dimensions of corporate identity: A categorisation from the practitioners' perspectives, 2006). In this sense, it is necessary for such firms to be prepared for a potential activity by environmentalist communities and shape their corporate identity accordingly.

Corporate Strategy

Corporate strategy is the blueprint of the firm's fundamental objectives and strategies for competing in their given market (Melewar & Karaosmanoğlu, Seven dimensions of corporate identity: A categorisation from the practitioners' perspectives, 2006). Melewar and Karaosmanoğlu (2006) categorized corporate strategy as differentiation of corporate strategy and positioning strategy. Nevertheless, as the strategy known as positioning may also include differentiation from competitors, these two concepts may be discussed under a single framework.

The element of competition is at the center of corporate strategy. Thus, competition strategies influence corporate strategies. There are three competition strategies in general (Porter, 2007):

Total Cost Leadership: The objective of this strategy is to bring the firm to a more advantaged position in comparison to its competitors in the market producing substitute products by reducing costs.

Differentiation: The purpose in this strategy is to create something that is accepted as matchless in the sector by differentiating the goods and services offered by the firm.

Segmentation: This involves focusing on a specific group of buyers, a section of the product range or a geographical market.

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The choice from among these competition strategies is in parallel with the general structure and objectives of the organization. As the strategy that is selected will also define the strategy of the organization, it will form one of the inputs of corporate identity.

Corporate Design

Corporate design refers to the way of physiological perception of all elements about the identity of an organizations by its target audiences. The scope of corporate design may involve a discussion on several factors including the logo of the organization or the brand, architectural structure of its buildings, decoration and product packaging. The main objective of visual identity is conversion of the philosophy of the organization into a visual language, while visual communication has a substantial meaning and role in this, and this is achieved by corporate design (Okay, 2005).

Corporate design is explained based on three main factors as product, communication and environment (Okay, 2005). These factors may be defined as the following:

Product: Considering that the main objective in the scope of competition strategies is differentiation, rising among competitors in the context of product design is seen as an important factor in terms of gaining strategic advantage. At the first stage, differentiation of the product in terms of its areas of usage is directly proportional to the effort spent by the organization on R&D activities. Designing a different and novel product always plays a key role in the organization's acquisition of strategic advantage. In the second step, the package of the product will not only help in rising among competing products and achieving visual advantage, but it will also get the product to the consumer in an intact and safe way, which will contribute positively to the image of the organization.

Communication: Design of elements of communication defines all visual elements that allow the organization to connect to its target audience. These may be discussed in a very broad spectrum from the logo of the organization and corporate usage of color, and all these elements are shaped within the framework of a corporate visual identity system. Corporate visual identity systems are discussed under a separate section in this study.

Environment: The factor of environment includes several physical design constructs such as the style of decoration, colors, architectural structure and usage of lighting at the working areas and stores of the organization.

All these visual elements that are perceived by target audiences define the outer face of organizations considering the prominence of visuality today, and therefore, these are among the issues that require much care.

Corporate Visual Identity System

The concepts of 'visual, 'visuality' and 'visual culture' have great significance in our period. The most significant evidence for the importance attached to visuality and aesthetics is the growth in the plastic surgery and cosmetics sectors. It was reported that the size of the cosmetics sector in the world is \$460 billion, and the medical aesthetics market grows annually by 10% on average (Advertorial, 2019). The

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most important reason for such large investments that an image is formed in the first second of meeting among individuals and at first sight. In other words, visual image shapes personal image not completely but to a great extent. A similar situation is also applicable to firms. The first image about an organization is perceived by its target audience in the form of visual elements. Such visual elements are discussed in the subject matter of corporate visual identity systems.

A corporate visual identity system is a concept that defines all elements that visually present the organization. Corporate visual identity comprises all the symbols and graphical elements that express the essence of an organization (Bosch, LM, De Jong, & Elving, 2005). “Key elements of a CVI are the corporate name, logo, color palette, font type and a corporate slogan, tagline and/or descriptor, and these may be applied on, for instance, stationery, printed matter (such as brochures and leaflets), advertisements, websites, vehicles, buildings, interiors, and corporate clothing, while sometimes architecture can also be an important element in an organization’s visual identity (examples: McDonalds and Ikea) (Bosch, Elving, & de Jong, 2006).” Visual identity is widely regarded as a key dimension of corporate identity: physical aspects of the corporation such as logos and company name are essential features of an organization’s identity (Simoes & Dibb, 2008). In the light of all these views, corporate visual identity may be understood to not have the same meaning as corporate identity contrary to popular usage, but it is a key element of corporate identity. That is, the concepts of visuality and aesthetics have a much greater significance today in comparison to the past. Adding the tendency of people to believe what they see more than what they hear onto this significance, people pay attention to visual identity as evidence of the corporate image.

In today’s competition-intensive world, the most suitable way of rising among competitors is differentiation. “Like any other identity, visual identity can, in the first instance, be defined in terms of both difference and continuity. Visual identity means difference because it ensures the recognition and proper positioning of a commercial enterprise and because it is an expression of the company’s specificity. On the other hand, visual identity means continuity because it testifies to the ongoing industrial, economic and social values of the company (Floch, 2000).” According to this definition by Floch (2000), visual identity is one of the keys of the organization in differentiation among its competitors. Visual identity has four main objectives which may be listed as giving the brand life by providing its positioning and name with a character and a personality, spreading the acceptance and remembrance of the brand, helping the brand differentiate within competition, and connecting different brand elements to each other under the same appearance and emotion (Perry & Wisnom III, 2003). Additionally, visual identity has a highly significant role in terms of protection and sustenance of the organization’s image.

Applications of Corporate Visual Identity Systems

The concept of corporate visual identity systems (CVIS) defines how and in what way various visual elements related to the organization will be used. In this context, there are various elements such as organization / brand name, slogan, logotype/symbol, color, typography, pattern (Picture 1), layout, letterhead / template, business card and additional graphic elements (Melewar & Karaosmanoğlu, Seven dimensions of corporate identity: A categorisation from the practitioners’ perspectives, 2006) (Okay, 2005) (Bartholmé & Melewar, 2011) (Peng & Hung, 2016). The key elements of a CVI are the corporate

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Figure 2. The integral design of the corporate logo, pattern, layout and color plan for TGC (Peng & Hung, 2016)



name, logo, color palette, font type and a corporate slogan, tagline and/or descriptor, and these may be applied on, for instance, stationery, printed matter (such as brochures and leaflets), advertisements, websites, vehicles, buildings, interiors and corporate clothing (Bosch, Elving, & de Jong, 2006). As seen here, this corporate visual identity handbook contains several elements. However, this study provides the definitions of the most fundamental elements that are indispensable in a corporate identity handbook and also play a key role in shaping other elements. These elements in question are logos, colors, typography and printed materials.

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Logo / Logotype / Symbol

Logo, logotype and symbol are indicators that imaginarily define several messages related to the structure and character of an organization or brand by using visual and symbolic narratives. There are various definitions of a logo in the design literature:

The corporate logo is the official graphical design for a company and the uniqueness of the design requires significant creativity, which must match a firm's strategy and identity: it should be unique and creative in its design (Foroudi, Melewar, & Gupta, 2017).

A logo should be in the form of a printed letter (also known as fond) that will help definition of the character and personality of the brand (Perry & Wisnom III, 2003).

A logo or logotype refers to an organizational signature, symbol or trademark designed for easy and accurate recognition (Rosson & Brooks, 2004).

A logotype is a word (or words) in a determined font, which may be standard, modified, or entirely redrawn (Wheeler, 2009).

Logo / logotype and symbol are the most fundamental and more frequently used visual identity components of an organization. The logo and its variations that are used in almost all printed materials, advertisements and similar visual tools are the most important and indispensable elements of visual identity. In a professional way or not, all entrepreneurs who aim to create a brand think about a logo design right after the brand name. A logo contributes to the recognition of the brand and helps in creating its image in a very short time. In other words, it is like the signature of the brand.

There are certain issues that require attention in designing an effective and appropriate logo. The first and most important of these is the simplicity of the logo. Simplicity, which is also one of the main principles of design, is a factor that increases the effectiveness and message-providing strength of the logo. Another important point is designing the logo in a way that would not diminish the character of the logo on all surfaces it would be applied to. If there are typographical characters in the logo, these characters must be used in a way with high readability and noticeability. This way, the logo, which is one of the most important elements of the visual identity of an organization or brand, will contribute to the image of the organization or brand positively.

Color: Another element whose characteristics are clearly defined in the visual identity handbook is color. A corporate color is an element of visual identity that is used effectively in the image of the organization or brand whose codes are clearly predetermined. The color that is chosen is used in all visual materials of the organization. In this context, it should be chosen carefully. Selection of a color that contradicts the personality of the organization or the brand will lead to building an incorrect image in the eyes of the target audience. As the psychological effects of colors on people cannot be denied, it is a sensitive issue that needs to be planned beforehand what the colors to be used while forming the corporate identity may be associated with and which effects they may have on individuals (Bakan, 2005). The cognitive, emotional and behavioral reactions shown to color vary based on the categories of color. Colors may be categorized as follows (Schmitt & Simonson, 2000):

Saturated Colors: *If a color's rate of saturation is high, it provides a strong impression that it is moving. If the color is shinier, it also looks closer than it actually is. While red, orange and yellow are perceived as warm colors, blue, green and purple are considered to be cool colors. Additionally, different shades provide different impressions of distance. The colors blue and green are perceived to be farther away than red, orange or brown.*

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Prestige Colors (Black and White; Gold and Silver): *Black and white reflect the highest levels of saturation and brightness. Metallic colors such as gold and silver have a bright image and carry the visual qualities of these metals.*

Reactions Shown to Color Combinations: *Usage of some color combinations together may attract some associations. For example, using red, brown and other shades of earth colors may be associated with a desert. Using red, white and blue together may be associated with forming the American identity.*

Corporate visual identity handbooks identify the colors of the organization by using certain standard color codes. While color systems that use standardized color codes may be used (e.g. the coding system of the firm Pantone), color codes for four-color process inks (CMYK) may also be preferred (Wheeler, 2009). The important issue is that it is necessary to explain all standards and combinations about color usage in detail in the corporate visual identity handbook.

Typography

Typography is a broad concept that defines and determines the shape, syntax, thickness, size, spaces for letters and similar characteristics and covers the readability and noticeability of texts. It is not possible to argue that a design that is made without considering typographic rules is an effective design. Therefore, typography is one of the most fundamental elements that are defined in the corporate visual identity handbook towards the visual image of an organization. Typographical rules are used to determine and restrict how and by using which typographic characters the brand name and internal correspondence text will be written. All these limitations and typographical rules are found in the corporate visual identity handbook. A unified and coherent company image is not possible without typography that has a unique personality and an inherent legibility, and typography must also support the positioning strategy and information hierarchy (Wheeler, 2009).

While choosing a font in the scope of corporate visual identity, the first criterion that needs to be considered is the readability of the font. At the second stage, considering each font is a separate design element, it should not be forgotten that messages are transmitted to viewers in a visual sense. Based on their form, fonts may provide their viewers with masculine or feminine, stationary or dynamic, entertaining or serious, modern or historical meanings. Hence, for the characteristics of the organization such as its general identity and brand personality, the typographical characters that contain the message to be emphasized should be selected as elements of corporate visual identity. Additionally, which typographical character will be used in which visual material of the organization (correspondence, website, printed materials, etc.) and how it can be used need to be explained in the corporate visual identity handbook in detail.

Printed Materials

After defining the main elements such as the logo, color and typography to be used for all visual materials of the organization in corporate identity handbooks, limitations about the printed materials on which these elements will be used are also identified. Accordingly, corporate visual identity handbooks include templates about designs of the organization's letterheads, envelopes (A4, diplomat, A3), identity card, business card, files, CDs, flags, bags, etc.

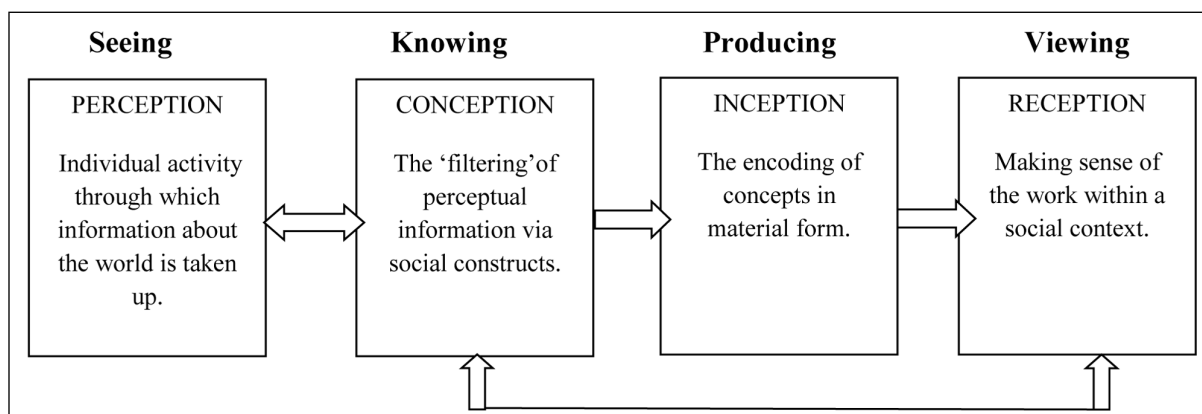
Visuality in Corporate Communication**PERCEIVED DIMENSION OF VISUAL IDENTITY**

A perception is a content that is received through the senses, processed by the brain and creates a type of physical or mental reaction after being stored in memory. In other words, it is the process of a person to be aware of and interpret the stimuli or events around them (Mutlu, 2004, p. 17-18). According to another definition, perception, which is a cognitive process, involves making stimuli that reach the eyes, ears and other receptors meaningful in the mind and interpreting these (Çağlayan, Korkmaz, & Öktem, 2014, p. 170). Most human perceptions are visual and obtained through the sense of sight. The sense of sight is possible by capturing of physical energies outside by receptor cells in the eye and transformation of these energies into nervous energy. As a result of the processing of the aforementioned mental energy in the part of the brain responsible for sight, a perceptual product emerges. This process is called 'visual perceiving', while the product that emerges is known as 'visual perception' (Alpan, 2008, p. 83).

People use especially their organs of sight in the process of knowing about, assessing and interpreting what goes around them. Several pieces of information settle in the mind through careful impressions and visual perception. This allow people to more easily and permanently comprehend the events around them (Öncel Taşkıran & Bolat, 2013, p. 54). In this context, it may be stated that visual perception is not just the skill of seeing well, but it is also a visual-based learning process that takes place in the mind. The point that needs to be especially considered here is that perception should occur first for the process of visual sense-making, visual learning or visual communication to start. Considering the process of visual aesthetical production mentioned by Riley (2004), the pioneering role and significance of visual perception may be understood more clearly (Table 1). Making any idea visible requires a starting stage where social concepts and individual perceptions are coded in a material form. The visual aesthetical process that is considered here is an order of visual perceptual relationships the producer finds fit for transforming an aspect of the socio-cultural values of a certain social and cultural context into a visible form (Riley, 2004, p. 299).

Visual perception is 'object-oriented' (allocentric) perception; it provides information about the size, shape and color of an object (Kurt, 2002, p. 121). In visual perception, the individual organizes, classifies and generalizes visual stimuli in a meaningful sense to understand the information that is obtained by the sense of sight. While interpretation of the visual stimulus starts by seeing, the process of making sense of

Table 1. Visual Aesthetical Production Process (Riley, 2004)



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it occurs in the brain. For example, seeing a ball is a sensory process, but recognizing and understanding that it is a ball is an act of thinking, and it takes place as a result of a set of cognitive processes (Çağlayan, Korkmaz, & Öktem, 2014, p. 170). Experimental studies have shown that the perception of visual content often accompanies thinking (Kurt, 2002, p. 122). In this sense, it may be stated that the elements of visual identity for a brand are guiding for people in terms of having an idea about the brand. Strategies on various levels are constructed for the target audience to perceive and make sense of elements of visual identity in the desired way. At this point, the design of the construct that forms the visual content and the combination of design elements are highly important. The colors, lines, textures, fonts and all types of visual images, symbols or marks that are used in design while forming visual identity for a brand are influential on the process of perception. In this process, brands used the aforementioned design elements within a hierarchy to be able to reach the position they want to be perceived by their target audience. With the help of the elements of visual identity or other advertisement-based visual contents that emerge as a result of this process, the process of brands' visual communication with their target audience starts. If careful efforts are spent on all elements of visual identity from the logo to the packing design for an effective visual communication process, the desired level of perception and meaning may be achieved. The following table shows the progression of this process from the parts to the whole in detail.

As the most important priority for a brand is to grab the attention of its target audience, the concepts of attention and visual perception have a critical significance in communication between brands and target audiences. Considering that the human organism receives all messages coming from external stimuli through its sensory organs and perceives and interprets these messages, it is impossible for this organism that is exposed to millions of messages every day to perceive all stimuli that reaches its sensory organs. For this reason, the main goal of a brand is to achieve access to the field of attention of its target audience by leaving all this crowd of messages (Elden & Okat, 2015, p. 143). Factors that are effective on perception and interpretation of stimuli are related to both the structure of the stimulus itself and various individual characteristics such as the past experiences and personality traits of individuals. Factors such as the magnitude and size of the stimulus, its similarities and differences to other stimuli and its colors are influential on its perception and in making sense of the perception process (Elden, 2009, p. 399-400).

The strategic communication of brands with their target audiences is highly important for being able to get a permanent place in the mind of the consumer. In this context, the visual dimension of strategic

Table 2. Selection and combination of design elements (Riley, 2004)

SELECT	COMBINE	COMMUNICATE
<i>Elements Of Drawing:</i>	<i>Combinations Of Elements Produce:</i>	<i>Combinations Stand For Physical And Emotional Experiences Of The World:</i>
Point Line Shape (2d) Texture Tone Colour Plane	Contrast Proportion Scale Pattern Rhythm	Spatial Depth Force Direction Movement Volume, Mass Weight Balance Symmetry Structure Form (3D) Surface Properties Observer's position(S)/Mood, Attitude

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communication has a very important role. The visual dimension of strategic communication, namely visual communication design, provides benefits for the brand if it is managed effectively in a way suitable for the target audience. While it adds a visual point of view to strategic communication, it is needed to be aware of the meanings and effects of the visuals that are added to the communicational context of the process. In the context of strategic communication, a visual point of view plays an important, effective and functional role in not only the communication activities of a brand but also all levels of communication (Goransson & Fagerholm, 2018, p. 59). So, brands may reach a desirable position in the eyes of their target audiences very fast with the help of strategic communication on the visual level.

As a result of field studies that have been carried out with marketers, it has been known for a long time that perception of brands' logos, packages and other visual elements by the target audience has a critical role in brand awareness. Thus, brands have allocated substantial levels of resources for visual communication. Several successful brands have become recognized immediately with different visual element as a result of the investments and research carried out in the historical process. The swoosh in Nike's logo, the golden belts of McDonald's and the contoured bottle of Coca-Cola may be given as examples of this (Bajaj & Bonda, 2017, p. 77).

Usage of elements of corporate identity within a certain hierarchy makes it easier for the brand to be perceived to be in a desired position by the consumer and differentiate from its competitors. Considering the example of McDonald's mentioned above, it is observed that the style of the brand's visual communication is completely reflected on its elements of corporate identity. Accordingly, in the elements of corporate identity, the symbol, colors, font, lines, textures and sizes were used in harmony in the McDonald's examples. So, it may be argued that the McDonald's brand achieved a desired dimension of perception and sense-making as a result of using its elements of corporate identity in an integrated way in its visual communication process.

There is an integrity in all elements of corporate identity from the mascot of the brand to its product packages. In addition to using the corporate colors, the symbol of the brand, fonts, lines and textures are used in the same hierarchy in all designs. All these design elements that are used in designing elements of corporate identity are effective on the level of the consumer in perceiving the brand visually. This provides the brand with various advantages in the process of visual communication. For example, today, the brand McDonald's is easily and quickly recognized with the help of its corporate identity everywhere from the United States to Japan, from Turkey to Russia. Moreover, these visual contents that provide a significant dimension on the level of corporatization for the brand also increase the value of the brand in the eyes of consumers. Increased brand value directly affects the positive attitudes of consumers towards the products and services of the brand. In summary, visual communication and corporate identity, which is a reflection/form of visual communication, that are highly prioritized by brands for managing perceptions provide brands with significant contributions in this era where the number of competitors and the degree of market competition are increasingly higher. Furthermore, corporate communication, which provides brands with an identity, personality and image, almost provides brands with life force and sustains their survival.

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CONCLUSION

Visual communication has been a form of communication that has a principal significance in human life since the ancient times where wall paintings were created. While accepting the fact that written communication is associated with the literacy rates of societies, and its increased rate of usage is related to the intellectual capacity of societies, when it is aimed to influence the general public in societies with people of different intellectual levels, visual communication has always been a method that makes comprehensibility easier. In this sense, it is inevitable for organizations and brands that are operational in the commercial field to prefer forms of communication that are easier to understand for everyone in order to achieve higher profits. In the context of the easiness it provides, its function of shortening the perceptibility and comprehensibility times in the process of communication and its appeal to much larger masses, visual communication is also a form of communication that is preferred the most frequently by organizations and brands today.

In the arena of commerce, where organizations and brands make high amounts of investments, they cannot be expected to leave their communication processes with their target audiences to coincidence. Accordingly, it is inevitable for them to conduct a planned and goal-oriented process. As much as there are controllable factors in this planned process, uncontrollable factors may also be encountered. The main purpose of organizations and brands is to develop systems with maximally controlled and predictable results by minimizing the processes that are uncontrollable. Detailed marketing plans and the corporate identity research based on these plans also indicate the efforts of organizations and brands for achieving the maximum control.

Practices on corporate identity offer approaches that define, protect and shape factors such as corporate communication, corporate design, corporate culture, behavior and structure, sectoral identity and corporate strategy. The visual aspect of these factors is shaped in the context of corporate design. The design aspect of a corporate identity practice is discussed under the name of corporate visual identity, and practices of corporate visual identity define the visual aspect of the communication established with target audiences by an organization or a brand. Accordingly, the corporate colors, logo, symbols, typographical elements, styles of correspondence and all printed materials of an organization or brand are studied in detail by the professionals in this field and identified on their corporate visual identity handbooks. Therefore, in human life, where visual communication is so important, corporate visual identity practices define the planned and systematic aspect of corporate communication and brand communication, provide contribution to the perception of the image of organizations and brands in desirable ways and are prominent as a factor that increases the success of organization in this environment.

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KEY TERMS AND DEFINITIONS

Brand Communication: It is the whole of the strategic communication activities planned for a brand to sustain its market activities without interruption.

Consumer Behavior: It can be defined as a process that includes the decisions about selecting, purchasing, using and disposing of products and services.

Corporate Communication: In the simplest terms, it can be defined as the integrated management of all communication processes in line with the strategic business objectives of the institutions.

Corporate Visual Identity: Corporate visual identity is the visual indicators that enable us to understand who and what the institution is.

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Marketing Communication: Marketing communication is a concept that encompasses all the interaction of the products or services that the companies have to sell their products and services to the buyers.

Visual Communication: Visual communication is the transmission of information and ideas using symbols and imagery.

Visual Design: Graphic design is a creative process, which involves organizing a two-dimensional or three-dimensional text and images to develop an image, or to visualize a thought.

Visual Perception: Perception is the ability to interpret the information received from you and your senses.