

# *A study of the influence of visual imagery on graphic design ideation*

Simon Laing and Masood Masoodian, Department of Computer Science, the University of Waikato, Private Bag 3105, Hamilton 3240, New Zealand

*Although existing literature shows that graphic designers collect and access visual imagery as part of their design process, the influence of such material on the process of ideation and the creative output of design is generally unclear. Therefore, we carried out a study with 18 graphic design students to better understand the effects of supplying specific types of images during the ideation phase on the creative outputs of the graphic design process. The findings demonstrate that exposure to the images had minimal measurable effect on the creativity of the design outputs, as rated by experts judges and study clients. The participants, however, reported positive benefits from the availability of visual images to their experience during the ideation phase of the design process.*

© 2016 Elsevier Ltd. All rights reserved.

*Keywords: graphic design, design creativity, design studies, design process, design ideation*

Graphic design<sup>1</sup> as an activity relies on the production of visual designs for communication, typically on behalf of clients or third parties. In the conception and production of such designs, visual imagery plays an important part, facilitating not only inter-personal but also intra-personal communication (Beaudoin, 2014). Published literature on design practice has encouraged seeking and collecting visual examples to inform the design process (Arntson, 2007; Curtis, 2002; Heller & Ilić, 2007; Hembree, 2006; Meggs, 1992). A study by Laing and Masoodian (2015) has also confirmed this as occurring in professional graphic design practice. Despite this evidence on the role of visual imagery in ideation, however, it remains unclear as to how the presence and use of images during the design process actually influence the creative design output.

In this paper we present a study we have conducted to better understand the influence of images related to the aesthetic tastes of clients and their market competitors during the ideation phase of the design process on the creative outputs of the study participants, as well as their experience of the design process. Section 1 provides a review of existing literature on the role of visual imagery during the design process, and the influence of images on design creativity. Section 2 describes the details of our study, while Section 3 presents

**Corresponding author:**  
Simon Laing  
[simonl@waikato.ac.nz](mailto:simonl@waikato.ac.nz)



[www.elsevier.com/locate/destud](http://www.elsevier.com/locate/destud)  
0142-694X *Design Studies* ■ ■ (2016) ■ ■ – ■ ■ ■  
<http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.destud.2016.04.002>  
© 2016 Elsevier Ltd. All rights reserved.

its findings. We then provide a number of conclusions and discuss the limitations of our study.

## *1 Background*

Existing literature has argued the importance of the use of visual imagery and examples during the design process. [Haug \(2015\)](#) reported a study of industrial design students, documenting their need for information about a client, as well as the client's preferences and requirements. [Herring, Chang, Krantzler, and Bailey \(2009\)](#) conducted an interview study of eleven professional designers (including four graphic and three web designers) where participants reported usage of, and the benefits associated with examples, particularly in idea generation stages of design activity. Their results included 'providing scope' of what is already in the market, providing inspiration for new design ideas, providing a visual framework, encouraging reinterpretation of ideas, and in later stages, to validate ideas ([Herring et al., 2009](#), p. 89). They defined examples as 'any material, product, prototype, or digital artefact (sketch, photo, Web page) that contributes directly or indirectly to a design' ([Herring et al., 2009](#), p. 87).

Work by [Chase, Hughes, Miriello, and White \(2008\)](#) identified common mistakes made by designers such as 'designing for yourself', 'overestimating the client's ability to translate words into visual language', '[creating designs that] looked just like another design that was already out there', and 'designing a logo in a vacuum' ([Chase et al., 2008](#)), all of which suggest the need for example exposure. Consistent with this, expert designers are observed as 'request[ing] more for client and product related information to learn more about the design space and from the experience of other designers' ([Sharmin & Bailey, 2011](#), p. 193). Further, they suggest improving the design process by 'creating a vocabulary for capturing and categorizing different types of communication with related artefacts (e.g., requirement, user preference, design decision, and feedback) [which] would allow effective access and retrieval' ([Sharmin & Bailey, 2011](#), p. 195).

Similarly, a previous study by [Laing and Masoodian \(2015\)](#) identified that professional graphic designers seek, collect and use visual material for multiple purposes including:

- their own personal (i.e., professional) development (PD),
- as a cognitive aid (CA) to give expression to an idea specific to the current design problem,
- to communicate an idea (CI) between parties involved in a design process,
- to help discover or define the aesthetic tastes of a client (AC) for whom a design is being created,
- to help discover or define the aesthetics of the audience (AA) targeted by a design, or

Download English Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/en/article/4918711>

Download Persian Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/article/4918711>

[Daneshyari.com](https://daneshyari.com)