

Investigating the Impact of Visual Design on Consumers' Perceptions towards Advertising

Eiman Negm *, Passent Tantawi**

* Media Management Department - Arab Academy for Science, Technology and Maritime Transport – College of Management and Technology

** Media Management Department - Arab Academy for Science, Technology and Maritime Transport – College of Management and Technology

Abstract- There is a growing recognition that visual design and the concept of aesthetics is emerging as a key marketing element regarding the promotion and presentation of products, services, events, people, ideas, etc. (Köksal, 2013). The aim of this paper was to develop a conceptual framework regarding how visual imagery and design in advertising combining the suggestion of consumers about the processing of visual information in advertising. This paper investigated consumers' views and opinions about the elements in visual designs found in adverts that impacts viewer' perceptions. The study reviewed prior research regarding the notion of advertisements and visual designs. An Interview guideline was then developed to question the Egyptian consumers on its application in the market. This study was considered conclusive research, with a cross-sectional design and an exploratory purpose. The variables were identified through the use of semi-structured interviews. Twelve interviews were conducted until the saturation level. The empirical findings indicated that visual designs in advertisements play a major role in influencing and swaying their perceptions. In particular, the research found that a perceptive “matching” of the visual design properties used in ads (predominately visual or verbal) and the consumer segment needs (desiring material to be presented in a visual or verbal manner) appears to be critical. The use of imagery impacts consumers' perception because it increases recall, enhances attitude toward the promoted matter, and affects behavioral intentions. Visual communication attracts attention since ads have become so complex in its efforts to use aesthetics to seize focus and persuade consumers.

Key Words- Advertisements, Aesthetics, Perception, Visual Design

I. INTRODUCTION

Nowadays in the market, there are clutters of advertisements (of various forms) for consumers to see. Adverts are enjoying explosive growth, giving firms an overabundance of ways of contacting consumers. From TV program, Internet or radio, people can find various announcements everywhere. These communication mediums are tools, which many companies exercise to inform prospective customers about their offerings. It is used to encourage, persuade, or manipulate individuals. Advertisements educate people about the available substances in the market, enabling people to widen their knowledge. It has contributed to the improvement of the standard of living of the society, helping people embrace new ways of life and giving-up old habits. Furthermore, advertisement facilitates consumer choices because of the communicated information. Customers refer to the price, quality, or other benefits illustrated in ads. In short, advertisement is a good way to present materials from which consumers can benefit (Mbipom and Harper, 2009).

Due to the massive amount of advertisements in the market, not all ads capture consumers' attention and impact their perceptions. Hence, the notion of **visual design** plays a significant role to allow attractiveness and distinction in the ads. There is a growing recognition in research that design is a key marketing element in triggering human interactions. Advertising, in all media except radio, relies heavily on visual as well as verbal information to present the advertised product. The concept of visual design refers to the organization of elements related to the advertisement's artistic aspects. It is the launching of messages containing aesthetic structures (mixed discipline between the usage of creative and appealing visual schemes and information-development). Visual communication designs pursues to attract attention, inspire desires, and encourage people to respond to the communication messages by formulating a favorable impact on viewers perceptions (Köksal, 2013).

Advertising visual design can affects consumers' perceptions and mindsets. De Pelsmacker *et al.*, (2004) identified three dimensions, which dominate viewers' affective and cognitive response to the communicated message: emotional content, informational content, and format. These factors suggest prominent outcomes such as recall, comprehension, emotional reaction, thematic content, executional characteristics, cognitive appraisal, and level of engagement showing increasing attention to advertising (thinking about an ad or discussing it with individuals).

Despite the growing awareness of the influence on visual design on consumers' perception, surprisingly little is actually known about the way of design or aesthetic theory has on the contributions of people's opinions and judgments. Little is known about how advertising inspiration is viewed by the consumers. The public's views and outlooks toward advertising have not focused on ideas about the impact of visual designs (Köksal, 2013). The aim of this paper is to understand how visual imagery (aesthetic visual designs and figures) works in advertising to impact consumers' views. Visual communication has attracted particular attention because advertising has become so much more multifaceted in its efforts to use artistic components to attract attention and persuade consumers (Phillips and McQuarrie, 2002). This study will address the gap in research regarding the how advertising impact consumers' process and interpretations towards illustration design elements manipulations. Hence, the research problem will be *investigating the impact of visual design and aesthetics on consumers' perceptions towards advertising*.

II. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORKS

Advertisements usually illustrate lifestyle, relationships, personality, values, and cultural norms. Hence, a multitude of imaginary exists in the world of advertisements. Visual imagery is constructive in capturing attention, stimulating curiosity, indicating product features and benefits, and establishing identity. Visual imagery springs personalities or spiritual essence to the promoted subject, allowing differentiation from competitors (Köksal, 2013). For this reason, pictures and illustrations that are rich in colors and textures can allow visual messages to seduce, encourage, and clarify to viewers (Scott, 1994).

Advertisements' Visualization

With the increase of the variety of product and services in the market, attracting consumer awareness is important. Marketing activities, such as the usage of advertisements, have become significant. Advertisements can create impressions through visual imagery or text based imagery (Köksal, 2013). Television commercials, magazine ads, and other forms of advertising often using visual designs and aesthetics in an inspirational manner to attract viewers' attention to affect perception, persuasion, and ultimately behavior. Visual designs help in generating artistic advertising, which leads to ad effectiveness on consumers (Hetsroni, 2005).

Illustrations that are composed of artistic designs, subjects, objects, and symbols, have great implication of providing detailed information not easily applied to written descriptions. Visual design is referred to as *"a form, shade, color, saturation, depth, and motion"* (Bati, 2010, p. 34). These elements of visual design come together in advertising and generate a connotative meaning in the mind of viewers. Visual design and aesthetics in advertisings *"uses images for creating meaning or constructing an argument. Hence, an analysis of visual rhetoric considers how images work alone and collaborate with other elements to create an argument designed for moving a specific audience"* (Bulmer and Oliver, 2006, p.55). Furthermore, the concept of exercising the power of visualization in advertisements also applies the usage of artwork images. *"Art and advertising exchange forms of expression"* (Hetsroni, 2005, p.59); and *"transfer cultural, social and aesthetic value from the appropriated art work to the advertised product"* (Lucian, 2004, p.8).

There are three major roles that images in advertising partake. *"They can elicit emotions by simulating the appearance of a real person or object; they can serve as photographic proof that something really did happen; and they can establish an implicit link between the thing that is being sold and some other image"* (Messaris, 1997, p.7). Moreover, images and visual designs impact the viewers' perceptions towards the advertised matter. *"The iconicity of visual images serves the process of giving rise to some emotional disposition by making it possible for images to draw upon rich variety of visual stimuli and associated emotions"* (Messaris, 1997:34).

Visual imagery benefits advertisers in several ways. It is used to draw attention; stimulate curiosity; showoff the promoted substance and its features; establish a personality for the promoted substance; link the promoted substance with clear symbols and lifestyles; and infuse the image in the minds of the target consumers (Moriarty 1986). *"Identification with the people in images may be the most common way in which visuals advertisements exploit their iconic relationship to our real world visual and psychological experiences"* (Messaris, 1997:44). Visual designs illustrate imagery with passion, giving products, service, place, idea, etc. spiritual essence. Images used in advertising express the nature or the implication of the product or service, as well as differentiating it from competitors (Köksal, 2013).

Elements of Visual Designs found in Advertisements

An image is a complex mode of visual communication, which is analyzed in relative to color, form, design, and other technical properties. The role of images in advertising is to create positive experiences and feelings associated with the advertised matter, which might engage receiver's response. In order to impact consumers, images should communicate claims, evaluations, and express offers (Scott, 1994; Sharma *et al.*, 2012). Advertisements are a form of persuasive writing. Effective visual advertisement

tells a simple story quickly; asks consumers for certain responses; easily understandable; and appeals to the consumer's emotions using pictures, slogans, and symbols (Köksal, 2013).

Advertising uses aesthetics to accomplish the task of promoting a specified matter (product, service, person, idea, place, etc.). The purpose of the art is to provide a certain image in the advertisement. An image is a set of emotional connotations the consumer gains from the ads. There are various visual elements that are the basic vocabulary of the composed communicated art. The principles of design help to plan and organize the elements of art so that advertisements will hold the viewers interest and command attention. In any work there is a thought process for the arrangement and use of the elements of design. These elements are interrelated to each other and to the whole representation (Sharma *et al.*, 2012).

The elements of design take into consideration lines, color, texture, shape, form, value, and contrast. **Lines** refer to the mark on a surface that portrays a shape or outline. There are different types and styles of lines such as vertical, horizontal, diagonal, and contour. The second element is concerning **color**. Color signifies specific shades that act as powerful image builders. The color wheel is a way of showing the chromatic scale. All the existing colors are made with the primary triad (red, blue, and green). Red portrays youthfulness, power, and action; blue depicts relaxation; and green implies organic, growth, and hope. There are also complimentary colors that can produce dull and neutral pigment. Black and white can be added to produce tints (add white), shades (add black) and tones (add gray). The third element found in visual design are the concept of **texture**, the degree of roughness or smoothness in objects. This element refers to the surface qualities of an object. Smooth surfaces usually suggest sophisticated and polished tastes while rough surfaces suggest toughness. The next element in the visual design is regarding **shapes**, 2-dimensional line with no form or thickness (flat objects). Each shapes provides motivation to build images and illustrate different meanings; a circle indicates eternity and virtue; a line suggests freedom; triangles focus peoples' attention upward, while squares often suggest practicality and usefulness (Lidwell *et al.*, 2010).

The fifth element in visual design that emerged from the concept of shapes is **form**, a 3-dimensional object having volume and thickness. It refers to a 3-D effect that entails the usage of light and shading techniques. The next element in visual design is **value**. This component refers to the degree of light and dark in a design. It is the contrast between black and white and all the tones in between. The seventh element in visual designing is **contrast**, the extreme revolutions between values. Finally, the last element of visual design is the perception of **size**, the differences in the magnitudes of objects, lines, or shapes (Lidwell *et al.*, 2010).

These elements when combined form an aesthetic design. Aesthetics is related to the sense of beauty. More broadly, academic scholars define aesthetics as a critical reflection on art, culture, and nature. Since ads' aesthetics can influence perceptions and judgments, the importance of design and color treatments must be considered. Artistic, visual, and appealing designs in advertisements create an interesting composition that acts as an attention attraction to viewers. Consumers' perceptions of advertisements evoke a wide range of emotions and outlooks. These perceptions impact the user's attitude towards the advertisements (Sharma *et al.*, 2012).

Visual Design Impact on Perception

Advertising that employs visual design elements to implicitly highlight the characteristics of the matter being promoted usually, have an impact on viewers' perceptions. Advertisers seek to maximize the attention and the recall of the messages. Visual spurs in adverts tend to attract attention with aesthetics (Toncar and Munch, 2001). Once the advertisement captures the viewers' attentiveness, they usually apply their cognitive resources in the indulgence of the message (requires greater cognitive resources compared to a literal message). Mick (1992) declared that the comprehension of an advertisement has an effect on consumers' outlook toward the message. Visual design and aesthetics give rise to affective responses associated after decoding of the ad (Mzoughi and Abdelhak, 2011). The receiver then will look at the whole advertisement with a more favorable perspective (Mick, 1992). Hence, visual design gives an extra advantage to advertisements in impacting their overall views and judgments to the communed message (Toncar and Munch, 2001; Mzoughi and Abdelhak, 2011).

III. METHODOLOGY

To gain further understanding and insights regarding the topic in Egypt, a mono method of qualitative technique was used. **Qualitative research** is the "*process of enquiry that draws data from the context in which events occur, in an attempt to describe these occurrences, as means of determining the process in which events are embedded and the perspectives of those participating in the events, using induction to derive possible explanations based on observed phenomena*" (Gorman and Clayton, 2005, p.3). **Semi-structured interviews** were casted to collect data. This type of interviews was flexible in its nature due to the capability of reorganizing questions to different situations and interviewees (Bryman, 2012). The sampling method was based on

nonprobability sampling (according to convenience). Twelve interviews were conducted until data saturation level was met. The participants were of different demographic backgrounds to ensure a large enough variety in the studied population. The interviews were recorded with permission and then transcribed into computer files. Once the transcription was composed, the researcher began the analysis.

IV. DATA ANALYSIS (Results & Findings)

During summer 2013, the researcher visited a wide range of public areas in order to stop random consumers on the streets, in shopping malls, college campuses, sports clubs and retail outlets. A total of twelve participants, representing different demographic backgrounds (age, gender, marital status, and career) contributed in semi-structured interviews. Table 1 illustrates the demographic comparison among the interviewees. Once the interviews were conducted, thematic analysis was used. Further coding was done to realize the prevalent themes in the interviews and the related quotes as repeated.

According to the interviews, all the respondents admitted that most ads in Egypt today are well designed; and use different visual design and aesthetics techniques to attract their attentions. Ads have advanced in their conveyance. *“Nowadays, advertisements attract attention because they are skillfully made”*; *“they present novelty in the idea formation”*; *“they develop catchy original statements”*; *“the design, colors, perspective, etc. are well chosen and are positioned in an attractive manner”*; and *“ads have a shock effects that stems from paradox demonstration.”*

Table 1: Frequency of the Respondents demographic Characteristics

Demographic characteristic	%	Demographic characteristic	%
City of Residence:		Gender:	
○ Cairo	72%	○ Female	56%
○ Alexandria	28%	○ Male	44%
Age:		Job Status:	
○ Under 20	4.2%	○ Manager/ Executive	1.1%
○ 20 less than 35	60.2%	○ Clerk	8.2%
○ 35 less than 50	26.1%	○ Academic	70.5%
○ 50 less than 65	8.4%	○ Self employed	14.0%
○ 65 and above	1.1%	○ Laborer	10.7%

In the Egyptian society, the interviewees declared that traffic has become a major issue. People spend hours in the streets in order to drive from one destination to another. Hence, they considered print ads to be popular among the citizens. They mentioned that billboards, fliers, and ads found in magazines and newspapers are common due to the long hours spent during their daily commute. Continuously follows television commercials, and radio. Due to these expressive insights, the researcher was able to conclude that the respondents are frequently exposed and are drawn to traditional ads. Ads are presented one after the other in a linear flow with viewers reading or watching predetermined ordered sequences of information; passively exposed to information regarding the promoted subject matter.

There is a wide variety of product and services that resemble each other (physical differences began to disappear) in the market. This current situation enhances the role and importance of advertisements as influential communicational tool. Thus, advertising tries to standout in different ways to interest viewers. Advertisers use some persuasion techniques such as using aesthetics and visuals in their announcements (Scott, 1994). A distinctive respondent supported this notion and stated that, *“artwork images can act as a visual linguistic item for inspiring and influencing consumers”*. The usage of artwork images in advertising creates a visual stated language as an expression to persuade the audiences effectively; the revelation of the main idea. Other supporting quotes from the interviews were:

- **Male Respondent age 24:** *“Images give persuasive messages more presence.”*
- **Female Respondent age 22:** *“It is pleasing to the eye.”*
- **Male Respondent age 35:** *“With Visualization, the advertisements’ messages can command more attention from receivers and perhaps cause more change in receivers because it provides clear visualization of the subject matter and rather than mental imaging.”*

The respondents indicated that advertisements communicate announcements, ideas, and propositions through both visual and written approaches. According to the interviewees, all ads contain the same essentials of formation. An explicit interviewee stated that, “*ads in the Egyptian market usually contain a headline, visuals, message content, and company/ product logo*”. There is an interrelationship between visual and verbal texts in the Egyptian advertisements. According to the interviewees’ opinions, these two aspects are complementary together. The interviewees cited that:

- **Male Respondent age 24:** “*Visual illustrations tend to expand what the text indicates.*”
- **Male Respondent age 41:** “*The visuals further illustrate the idea and display all the interesting and challenging situations related to the endorsed issue.*”
- **Female Respondent age 23:** “*Visuals may help create clear meanings and aid in attracting consumers.*”
- **Female Respondent age 30:** “*Visuals are a simpler manner of speechmaking. Visual viewpoint, graphics, and layouts should be related in a specific way to the message of the promoted topic rather than to be an independent factor.*”
- **Male Respondent age 21:** “*Visual designs can be informative, containing info about the product; or symbolic, creating implications and/or associations.*”
- **Male Respondent age 22:** “*Elements found in pictures must be capable of representing concepts, ideas, descriptions, modifiers and actions of the promoted product or service*”.
- **Male Respondent age 24:** “*Visuals should act as a guide in ads’ argumentation about the product or service*”.

For these reasons, the interviewees considered that it is compulsory for the benefits, persona, and relevance of the promoted matter to have illustrations in the Ads. A specified interviewee mentioned that: “*advertisements should discuss the practical matters of the product or service that are being endorsed. The information should be stated in a unique manner so it can be distinguished from other competitors (Female Respondent age 22).*” In addition, the respondents agree that the usage of visual-verbal tropes help in presenting a claim in an attentive manner. An explicit respondent stated that, “*visuals present a proposition in a fresh way, so that the audience thinks about a familiar issue from an unexpected perspective; break through habituated perception, skepticism, boredom, or resistance (Male Respondent age 18).*” Images found in advertisements are symbolic and have meanings, which viewers have to understand; it is representational because the image contains the topic being promoted. Visuals in ads are associations related to the promoted matter presented in the image rising from visual-verbal continuum.

During further investigation, the researcher attempted to explore the important elements found in the ads’ visuals; the application of visual design elements regarding the creation of persuasive properties of pictures that impact consumers’ perspectives towards ads. The respondents believed that the usage of colors, shadows, and shapes were very useful in attracting attention, emphasizing certain points, guiding the viewer to certain aspects of meaning (possibly in conjunction with the text), stimulating interest, and developing a certain emotion. Certain supplementary quotes that support these outcomes were:

- **Male Respondent age 34:** “*Visuals in advertising usually strong and eye-catching to capture consumer attention. Written communication draws attention to a message.*”
- **Female Respondent age 21:** “*The use of imagery, visual associations, drawings and paintings, models, visual memory devices, product and corporate symbols are techniques to make people take a look at the promotion.*”
- **Female Respondent age 18:** “*Visual imagery is used to command attention, stimulate curiosity, demonstrate product features and benefits, and establish a personality and lifestyle regarding the usage of the product.*”
- **Female Respondent age 20:** “*Using visual imagery enhances or strengthens the message about their product. For example, when a product is paired with something that provokes a positive affective reaction (a visual), the ad will allow viewers to stimulate and evoke a positive response to the ad.*”

The interviewees mentioned that visual content permits attention and meaning to the promoted matter. A respondent indicated that, “*high imagery visuals usually arouse other mental images (mental picture, a sound, or a sensory experience) quickly and easily (Female Respondent age 22).*” Visual elements can help illustrate meaning to a picture. One person in the interviews stated that “*elements of art leads to concrete pictures, which allows viewers to refer to objects, persons, places or things that can be seen, heard, felt, smelt, or tasted in their daily lives (Male Respondent age 20).*” There are around seven main elements in visual design, lines, shapes, forms, textures, color, value, space, and size. However, the respondents stated that the usage of colors, shadows, sizes, and shapes in visuals found in ads are the most important to create an impression on viewers. These elements help in supplying and conveying meanings. Some interviewees stated that:

- **Female Respondent age 18:** “*Triangles, squares, and parallel lines can suggest different concepts and emotions. Triangles focus the mind upward, while squares often suggest practicality and usefulness.*”

- **Female Respondent age 24:** *“Various shapes can suggest different meanings. For example, curves such as circles can imply female cuts, while angles like triangles can suggest males.”*
- **Male Respondent age 30:** *“A circle can imply eternity and virtue, while a line, like a road leading to a horizon, suggests freedom.”*
- **Male Respondent age 24:** *“In pictorial works, the surface of a visual product can indicate different senses. For example, a smooth surface can suggest sophisticated, polished, and superior tastes; rough surface can suggest toughness. This concept and technique is seen in body soap commercials, hand location commercials, shaving razors commercials, etc.”*
- **Female Respondent age 25:** *“Colors are essential elements of meaning in pictures. Each color indicates a certain implication. They are powerful image builders.”*
- **Female Respondent age 21:** *“Each color implies different meanings. For example, the color red is used to illustrate youthfulness, passion, hunger, power, and action. Therefore ads signifying lovers usually use red. The color blue depicts a calm, dreamy, and relaxing mood. The color blue is often used in sleep-aid ads or commercials related to products that bring a heavenly and blissful sense to a person. Green suggests growth, hope, and natural. Thus, organic products usually use green as a theme.”*
- **Female Respondent age 20:** *“Intense and solid colors suggest speed, youth, and masculinity. These are common in sports car ads and certain types of clothing.”*
- **Male Respondent age 18:** *“The layout is the comprehensive of artistic elements. It is the stage on which all artistic elements come together. It is rather a distribution of objects in a defined environment. A car ad stressing speed and freedom usually use few objects in an ad campaign, and stress the road and the horizon.”*
- **Male Respondent age 24:** *“The uses of colors in visuals are for emotional motivation but black and white colors are sufficient for “information” provision.”*
- **Female Respondent age 20:** *“Colors can help provide contrast between objects and the message in the ad.”*

Advertisements use visual imagery to attract attention; stimulate curiosity and brainstorming; demonstrate features and benefits; establish a personality for the promoted matter; associate certain symbols and lifestyles; and anchor the brand in the minds of the viewers (West *et al.*, 2008). The researcher decided to direct additional inspection to illustrate the impact of visual design on the viewers psychologically. The interviewees indicated that communication by visual image such as photographs, drawings, and graphic embellishments is an important dimension of an advertising message. Visual imagery has an effect on textual components in advertisements, which affects viewers’ perceptions about the promoted matters (products, services, ideas, people, etc.). The respondents gave the following supporting quotes:

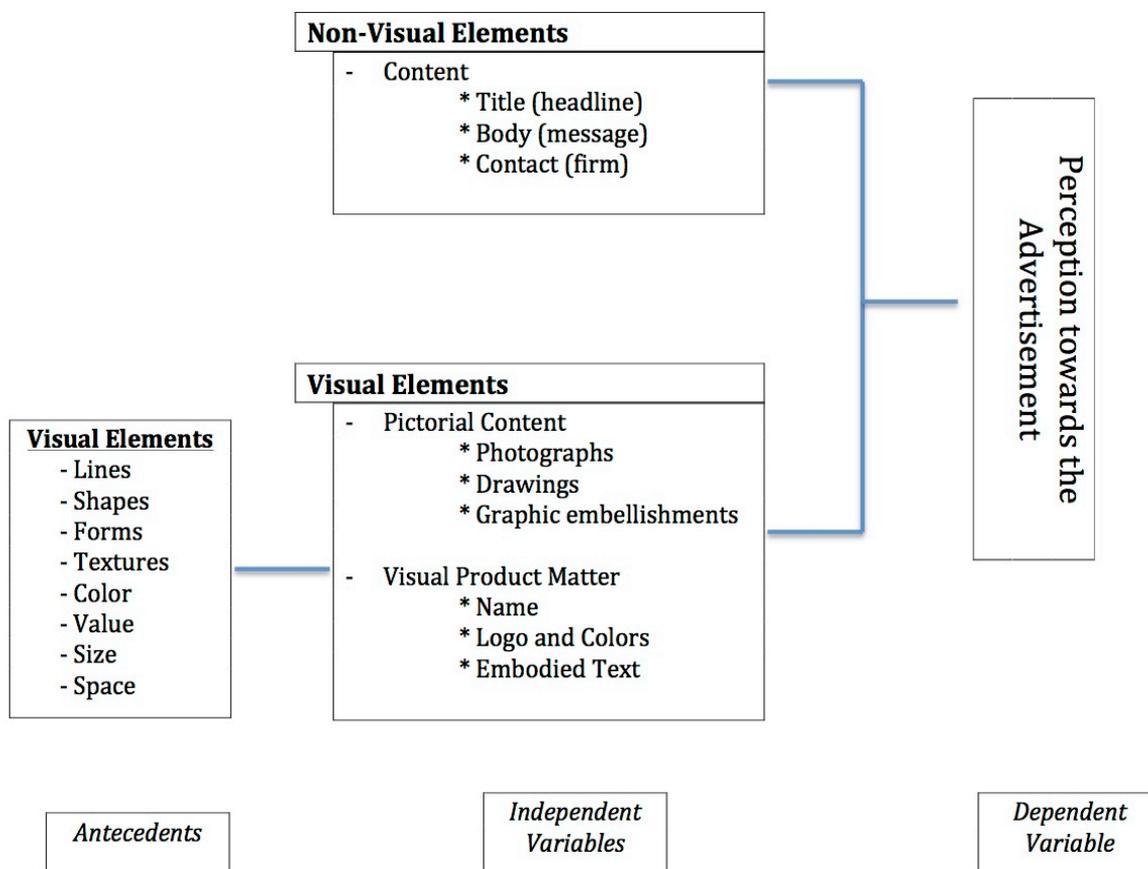
- **Female Respondent age 18:** *“In advertising, visual delivery allows viewers to evaluate the point of view shown and the manner of interpretation.”*
- **Female Respondent age 24:** *“Visual elements help in the creation of perception. For example, certain elements in design can give a sense of romance while other elements give out a sense of ruggedness or heroic.”*
- **Female Respondent age 22:** *“Visual eye-catchers, painterly slogan, sexuality appeal, and novelty in aesthetics can cause the fulfillment of the persuasive effect.”*
- **Male Respondent age 21:** *“The advertisement has an image or a visual component, which is typically a scene which provides the background for the entire advertisement purpose in creating a awareness and opinion.”*
- **Male Respondent age 20:** *“Images provide a variety of interpretations. Images usually have some interpretational component, which guides viewers to certain aspects of meaning, perhaps in union with the text.”*
- **Female Respondent age 30:** *“The image and text are usually put together in some kind of order in which the parts are interpreted, which determines the particular kind of meanings leading to viewers to form certain perceptions.”*
- **Female Respondent age 18:** *“Many advertisers usually try to visually communicate messages, rather than providing heavy text because images is worth a thousand words. Images give viewers illustrations to clear up misunderstandings and help viewers to form opinions and certain attitudes.”*
- **Male Respondent age 24:** *“Nonverbal communication will not only become a means for drawing attention to a verbal message, but it will also become the message itself in many instances.”*
- **Female Respondent age 36:** *“The use of imagery, visual associations, drawings and paintings, models, products and symbols are pervasive in advertising.”*
- **Female Respondent age 30:** *“The longer a viewer looks at an ad, the more likely the product or service being advertised will stick in the viewer’s mind, creating a certain view towards the ads.”*
- **Male Respondent age 20:** *“Visual effects naturally hold our attention because they combine reality with the fantastic,*

which is likely to grab your attention.”

- **Female Respondent age 21:** “Visual effects also help shape a viewer’s feelings about the product or service in the ad. For example, if an ad shows the facial cream can remove dark spots, the viewer might feel confident about the product.”
- **Female Respondent age 30:** “Print advertisements and television commercials each use unique visual effects. These effects make an ad interesting so it can attract the most readers or viewers.”
- **Male Respondent age 24:** “A print ad includes images and text—words and pictures combined; create an overall effect on the readers, allowing them to form attitudes and perceptions.”

Based on the findings, the interviews provided a holistic understanding of the topic, investigating the impact of visual design on consumers’ perceptions towards print advertising. New and rich insights were emerged directly from the studied population sample in their natural settings. The interviews aided the researcher to attain authentic personal experiences, views, and explanations regarding the impact of visual design on consumers’ perceptions towards print advertisements. The data collection facilitated the researcher to construe the townsfolk’ behaviors through their own individual lens of perception, framed within subjective judgments and prior academic references. Furthermore, the qualitative data was used to gaining the needed information for developing a theoretical framework.

The Proposed Conceptual Framework



V. DISCUSSIONS

Recently, academic researchers began to treat visual design and images in advertising as an important factor to consider investigating. Nowadays, the visual element is an essential, meaningful, and culturally inserted characteristic found in contemporary marketing communication. However, detailed theoretical specifications for ad imagery have yet to be fully constructed (Lidwell *et al.*, 2010; White, 2011). In pursuit of this purpose, this paper investigated people’s opinions about the matter as a general principle of text structure that can be embodied in visual texts.

This research analysis suggested that pictorial elements comprised in advertisements evoke a diverse set of meanings that help develop viewers’ perspectives about the brand and/or user (e.g., sophistication, beauty, safety, fun). Visuals such as photographs, drawings, and graphic embellishments stimulated more elaboration and attitude formation toward the ad. Moreover, the effect of visuals was strong and vigorous over different samples, across different ad executions and over multiple product and service

categories. Visual figures with written text appeared to have a consistent and reliable impact on consumers' responses. This study provides additional empirical support for the theoretical taxonomy developed by other prior researches. Respondents in this study have acknowledged that advertising visuals are fundamental since it aids in obtaining attention, creating impact, and stimulating interest from targeted and indifferent audiences.

Print advertisements include a combination of images and text—words and pictures that, when combined; create an overall effect on the readers. Typically, advertisements contain some text, which provides information about the products, services, ideas, etc., which delivers thought for the image. Under the general category of text, there may be descriptive information about the promoted matter; other writings that serves the purpose of catching the viewers' attention; short phrases and slogan; and the name of the company and/or the name of the product or service. The images and visual components in ads are typically a scene, which provides the background for the entire advertisement. The visuals may or may not feature a representation of the promoted matter. The visuals usually provide a variety of clarifications and explanations; interpretation that guides viewers to certain aspects of meaning, possibly in conjunction with the text. The image and written text are put together in some order that suggest coherence, determining the particular meanings that the advertisement has.

According to the respondents in this study, visuals provide factual information about the promoted matter and connect the images with the meanings that are appropriately assigned to the products or services. Visual recall is becoming increasingly important in the Egyptian market due to the clutter of similar products and services. Hence, advertising will need to be stronger and eye-catching to capture consumer attention. The use of imagery, visual associations, drawings, and photos are pervasive in advertising and help develop various perceptions for the promoted matters. Aesthetics and visual imagery is used to command attention, stimulate curiosity, demonstrate product features and benefits, establishes personalities and lifestyles in the minds of the target audience. The respondents believed that visual imagery enhanced or strengthened the message about their products or services. In other words, visuals can add meaning to something that is basically impartial and neutral. The interviews showed that visual affects textual components in advertisements, which then affects brand awareness or fondness. Mental processing occurs depending on the illustrative and verbal message in advertisements.

The research sample realized that visuals in advertising could be found in different styles in the Egyptian market. Ads can use visuals for further identification of the promoted matters (brand, logo, package, etc.); for the description of the promoted matters (appearance and features); comparison with similar categories of products and services (concerning competitors); or demonstration, usage or feelings when having the products or services. Furthermore, visuals can be used in ads for association regarding lifestyle, personas, and situation. In conclusion, ad designers combine graphic materials—words, pictures, and other graphic elements to construct visual communications. The concept keeps viewers looking at the advertisement, allowing the ad to stick in their mind.

Illustrations in advertisements use unique visual effects. These effects make an ad more interesting so it can attract the most viewers possible. Effective images are those that command attention and communicate some feeling to an audience. According to Feldman (1987), there are different visual elements. The main elements were lines, shapes, forms, texture, color, value, size, and shape. These basic elements of visual design help improve the image's composition and effectiveness. To create effective images, it is necessary to understand the way people respond to various kinds of visuals. Elements of visual design affect peoples' emotions, making images more effective. A successful image depends upon a multitude of things that are combined. It includes timing, lighting, color, composition, and the viewers' sensitivity to the communication. Elements of design are starting points, the building blocks, of creating an image. In conclusion, the elements of design provide a framework in which to evaluate images and their effectiveness.

VI. CONCLUSIONS

Various researches have been conducted in the American and European context on visual designs and elements found in advertising (Lidwell *et al.*, 2010; White, 2011). Few works have been done in reference to any Middle Eastern/Arab country. Doing fieldwork on this topic (to study the impact of visual design on consumers' perceptions towards advertising) aids in offering a valid and working outline for a theoretical framework for Middle Eastern countries. The interviews were beneficial in providing valuable and rich insight into the subject matter. With the use of the interviews' findings, a proposed conceptual framework was developed for future researches to use and build upon.

The study provides some useful insights for practitioners in the field of civic and political events and activities. Results show that visual imagery has an important role to play in advertisement effectiveness. Images can convey complex concepts in a brief manner, and visual elements can improve understanding and stimulate various feelings and outlooks. Design and aesthetics have

a profound impact on how users perceive information, learn, judge credibility and usability, and ultimately assign value to the promoted matters. Images and texts, when in harmony, work well together.

This study had several limitations. The first was the small size of the sample and the fact that participants were in a single area. The present study needs to be supported by quantitative research that assesses the range of suggested antecedents as well as the overall model that was suggested. Finally, this study only focused on the consumers' viewpoints not the influencer.

REFERENCES

Bati, U. (2010), *Reklamın Dili. İstanbul*, AlfaYayımları.

Bryman, A. (2012). *Social research methods* (4th edn). Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press.

Bulmer, S., and Oliver, M. (2006), "Visual rhetoric and global advertising imagery", *Journal of Marketing Communications*, 12(1), 49-61

De Pelsmacker, P., Geuens, M., and Van den Bergh, J., (2004), *Marketing Communication – A European Perspective*, 2nd edition, Harlow, England, Prentice Hall

Feldman, E. (1987), *Varieties of Visual Experience*, Harry Abrams, Inc. New York. Part three the structure of Art. ISBN 0-8109-1735-1

Gorman, G., and Clayton, P. (2005). *Qualitative Research for the Information Professionals*. London: Facet Publishing.

Hetsroni, A. (2005), "Art in advertising: a cross-cultural examination of ads and creative", *Visual Communication Quarterly*, 12(1-2), 58-77.

Köksal, F. (2013), "The Role and Usage of Visual Rhetoric in Advertising", *Online Journal of Communication and Media Technologies Special Issue*

Lidwell, W., Holden, K., and Butler, J., (2010), *Universal Principles of Design Hardcover*

Lucian, D. (2004), "Art appropriation in advertising", *International Communication Association Annual Meeting*, 1-25

Mbipom, G., and Harper, S. (2009), *Visual Aesthetics and Accessibility: Extent and Overlap. Human Centered Web Lab, School of Computer Science*, (Unpublished) Retrieved june, 2013 http://weprints.cs.manchester.ac.uk/82/1/Aesthetics_Accessibility_Extent_Overlap.pdf

Messaris, P., (1992), "Visual 'Manipulation': Visual Means of Affecting Responses to Images," *Communication*, 13 (3), 181–195.

Mzoughi, N. and Abdelhak, S. (2011), "The Impact of Visual and Verbal Rhetoric in Advertising on Mental Imagery and Recall", *International Journal of Business and Social Science* Vol. 2 No. 9

Phillips, B. and McQuarrie, E., (2002), "The Development, Change, and Transformation of Rhetorical Style in Magazine Advertisements 1954-1999", *Journal of Advertising*, 31, 4, 1-13

Scott, L., (1994), "Images In Advertising: The Need For A Theory Of Visual Rhetoric", *Journal of Consumer Research*, 21, 9, 252-273.

Sharma, A., Bhosle, A., and Chaudhary, B., (2012), "Consumer Perception and Attitude towards the Visual Elements in Social Campaign Advertisement", *IOSR Journal of Business and Management (IOSRJBM)* ISSN: 2278-487X Volume 3, Issue 1, PP 06-17

Toncar, M. and Munch, J., (2001), Consumer Responses To Tropes In Print Advertising, *Journal of Advertising*, 30, 1, printemps, 55-65.