

# An Overview: Visual Communication in Photography as Healing Therapy

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## Abstract

The study explores the use of visual communication focused mainly on photography images as persuasion on Therapeutic Photography. The context of the study involves examining the photograph as a factor that contributes to the sustainability of visual communication in photography practice. The discussion examines the visual significance and understanding of image data using visuals and analysing the value of photographic images for self-healing therapy. The study discusses; firstly, the value

of visual communication, secondly, on visual studies in photo-imagery practice and the discussion of the robust value of visual sustainability toward photographs.

Keywords    Visual Communication / Photography / Therapeutic Photography

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Visual is a cognitive intelligent tool. It is also a powerful source of production and reproduction. (Bolwerk and others, 2014:1-8) The visual data can stimulate and enable it to retract memory. (L. M. S. and M. R. Z. James P. Roach, 2017: 139-148) With the evolution of digital technology, computer algorithms have brought visual production to the next level. Revolution 4.0 has been an added value to intelligent learning, mainly in the camera industry. (Vaquero and Turk, 2015) As part of Artificial Intelligence (AI) technology, all data images are available for mutual categorisation. (Li, J. Ma, and S. Gao, 2012) By emphasizing integrated information into a form of visual creativity, the human brain can recognize and process every data in the memory through visual experience. (Borkin, 2016: 519-528) In terms of reviving data, identifying the right tools for the respondents is very important. In the technology era, the future of technology is flourishing. Visual, mainly photography in the development of AI has become an easy tool in the digital platform. All forms of technical formulae are concluded into one simple device. Altogether, the practice of visual has formed into many branches of 'isms' which is still debatable in terminology of value. (Zhang, 2017: 231-239) Additionally, the rhetoric of image can be disturbed as it is easy to be manipulated and produced without explanation.

Photography is an easy technique of Visual Communication to enhance understanding. (Keshavarzi, 2010: 537-540) The instant photographic images can reflectively attain and build memory, is archivable, gives meaning, and possess the ability to evaluate. The photograph is one of the visual imagery memories. It is divided into two separate codes, verbal and non-verbal. (Dewan, 2015: 1-10) The

photograph dual-code theory remains in storage in the long and short term memory, and can improve the ability to recall. (Anwandter, 2006) This explains the language in visual perception has advanced using image, purpose, development, and marketing which can be applied in advertising, artwork, fashion, or journalism. With a clear objective, messages will be easy to explain. The study of communication is general and useful in the application of learning and interaction. The result discussed not only focuses on the study of visual communication, it also opens towards several branches of visual studies such as visual literacy, visual persuasion, visual rhetoric, visual meaning, and visual imagery. These branches of studies determine the value of images either drawings, video, sculpture, photography, or even animation.

## 2. PROBLEM STATEMENT

Every photograph shares different stories. (Howard, 2018) The idea of talking about them is characterised into several categories. Argumentation of real impact of image photograph to individual is subjective. It is a complicated process because each individual have their own passage (Murray and Adams, 2019: 48-54) regarding the definition on how they interpret the photo. Therefore, the method of visual analysis is interchangeable for each stories. (Harper, 2002: 13-26) The limitation of interferences between visual perception and visual persuasion is an obstruction of different discipline, either process of psychotherapy or the study using photo as a therapy. Through the advance knowledge of both disciplines, its depend on the boundaries of learning or finding knowledge. (Mange, Adane, and Nafde, 2015: 209-217) Qualitative interview is deliberately performed by mindfulness effort. (Kee and Li, 2019: 104-232) Its relate to the interview process which is often motivated by the mental skill which is influenced by persuasion from the environment, background, or mood. Under the visual communication, imagery usually sets in the territory of a certain purpose of understanding usually related to image. (Coad, 2015: 6a-7a)

### 3. AN OVERVIEW OF VISUAL LITERACY, VISUAL PERSUASION, VISUAL RHETORIC AND VISUAL IMAGERY.

#### 3.1: Visual Literacy

Visual literacy provides the ability to explain and create visual. The theory of visual literacy purposely utilises, understand, and discusses about visual. It is the foundation of visual studies and the principle of visual thinking. Visual literacy is defined whereby the creator bases his ideas, develops the concept, applies the elements and principles in theory, and produces the image. The meaning can be focused on certain groups or probably on an individual. Visual literacy is related to the development of meaningful visuals for applying, discussing, and giving rhetorical knowledge to the viewer or creator. The paradigm of visual literacy is a direct response to visual psychology and the narrative to visual story telling. It has the tendency to lean towards programmes and share visual information, that is the output for us to receive. It is also a way to deliver a message. The benefits of visual literacy can be concluded to many performances. Despite the transition and influence via technology in IOT (Internet of Things), the circle of visual literacy does not break. The development process may slightly change, but it does bring a lot of benefits to the visual design process.

#### 2.2: Visual Persuasion

The clarification of visual persuasion image is divided into three segments which are complex communicative intents image, factual image, and persuasive image. The communication varies as detailed below:

Table 1: Visual Persuasion Segmentation.

Complex Communication Intents image	Factual Image	Persuasive Image
Photograph with intention to persuade audience	Photograph with direct message to persuade audience with a limitation of meaning	Indirect message for viewing the image and brings out emotions
Example: News media	Example: Landscape view photograph of Kuala Lumpur	Example: Politician holding a baby

form of visual to persuade a viewer.(Lewis, 1998) Visual is used to persuade communication between viewers to analyse, discuss, and interpret the impact from the image. However, all categories of visual persuasion depend on the level of visual literacy towards function of visual itself. This is because every visual gave different effects and affects viewers towards a certain understanding. In addition, the tendency of visual to relate to an individual or group always traced back to their background, experience, and level of knowledge (Maitland, 2018: 91-109). Messaris concluded that the narrative of a photograph is divided into indexes, icons, and symbols (Nijs, 2017). This was explained through a in the book entitled Visual Persuasion: The Role of Images in Advertising, as follow to the Messaris theory:

Table 2: Table inspired by Paul Messaris Theory.

	<p>Iconic Signs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The analogy of meaning of object feature</li> <li>• For example: Kuala Lumpur Petronas Tower; silver, shape of corn and twin tower</li> </ul>
	<p>Indexical Signs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The meaning behind the feature</li> <li>• For example: The purpose of object; the tallest building in Malaysia</li> </ul>
	<p>Symbolic Signs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The personal interpretation</li> <li>• For example: the feeling of heightened, proud or future.</li> </ul>

Visual persuasion is the ability to react in a certain way while viewing the image, with the image giving infinitive or definitive meaning. Its sums up into one general root of visual communication. (Jain, 2018:5-12) coined the term visual literacy chain. Visual persuasion is triggered by the act of literacy and an action of visual rhetoric. Verbal or logical element were developed for discussion. Hence, the symbolic furnace of visual persuasion is described as the bank for image perception of the visual persuasion. However, all categories of visual persuasion depend on the level of visual literacy towards function of visual itself. This is because every visual gave different effects and affects viewers towards a certain understanding. In addition, the tendency of visual to relate to an individual or group always traced back to their background, experience, and level of knowledge (Maitland, 2018: 91-109). Therefore, the observable explanation towards visual persuasion is like a metaphoric "tongue twister" energy; the visual would be successfully elaborated if the visual is structurally literate. Once the visual is able to persuade, the data generator often relates to passive aggressive rhetorical argumentation. For example, the visual of a traffic light has a universal understanding of road rules which persuades by the colours red, yellow, and green. Red means stop, yellow means ready to stop, and green

means go. Red also persuades the indicator of fire, help, or emergency. It also possesses the deep meaning of spirit or statement. This process is triggered by the rhetorical argument based on experience or memory recollection (Burns, 2014) .

### 2.3: Visual Rhetoric

Visual Rhetoric is an interdisciplinary study of persuasion gained by multilevel factors (Tileaga, 2010) which functions as a formula to prove the appropriate data to deliver and receive. There are several questions that needs to be pondered: What does it mean to interpret a visual? Why it is created? And how to understand it?. Visual Rhetoric is a land of persuasion (Helmets and Hill, 2004). It is the art to persuade the audience with methods that enable them to analyse it. The psychology of visual rhetoric always highlights visual arguments. There is a relationship between Visual Rhetoric and persuasion. Visual Rhetoric is the use of image whereas visual persuasion acts as a platform to process the meaning. Visual is a rhetorical argument (D. S. Birdsell and L. Groarke, 1996: 1-10) which functions an instrument to deliver messages and also as a conception of languages to explain visual (Seliger, 2009: 599-604). Gaining the cognitive response from the viewer turns visual rhetoric subjects into metaphor and argument. According to (Maes and Schilperoord, 2008: 227—253), visual segmentation leads to Visual Metaphorical Expression i.e. the indication and development of visual, Literal Meaning which is the purpose of development, and the advertiser's Message to convince the viewer in buying, looking, or interpreting the product.

### 2.4: Visual Imagery

The varieties of visual imagery create a sense of reasoning and imagination which aids in mental storage. Visual Imagery is a common practice in psychomotor psychology. (Darling and others, 2015: e775) studies description on the ability to explain with cognitive skills. The process is known as Visual Mental Imagery. Psychologically speaking, visual imagery is a deliberate use of picture which recalls the memory of

the imagery and relate it to experience (Féry, 2013: 1-10). When a participant explain the meaning of photograph; the recall or recondite memories and share the result, can be describe as visual imagination. For example, a case study by (Gelder and others, 2015: 15-26) the study exposed the participants to feelings of anger, and they learned how to describe the image of a tree.

Their imagination was concluded as a result which is beyond reach to visual communication studies. Visual Imagery is a powerful influence of Visual Rhetoric. Visual presents the bit of information recalled from experiences such as arguments, common knowledge, and influence. The angle of visual imagery in research is commonly practiced in two platforms which are psychology research with limitation to the neuron reaction through question and images (Winawer, Huk, and Boroditsky, 2010: 276-284) ; (Dijkstra, Bosch, and van Gerven, 2019: 423-434). Visual-studies research focuses on responses via perception, models, and framework. Examples of studies are from (Brang and Ahn, 2019: 89-95). In the manner of visual as a trigger point, visual imagery does not cross the boundaries of visual argument, but it forms a perception. A study by T. Kondle in his presentation (Brady, and others, 2008: 14325-14329) explained the difference between visual image and visual imagery. Kondle discussed the effects of visual image which is seen as a performance of memory recall from experience, and visual imagery is quoted as transmitting information through the process of viewing visual image. It is the persuasive image on the perception process. These perseverance technique is also known as Mental Analysis Imagery (Kunda, 2018: 155-172).

#### 4. VISUAL STUDIES IN RESEARCH PRACTICE: THERAPEUTIC PHOTOGRAPHY

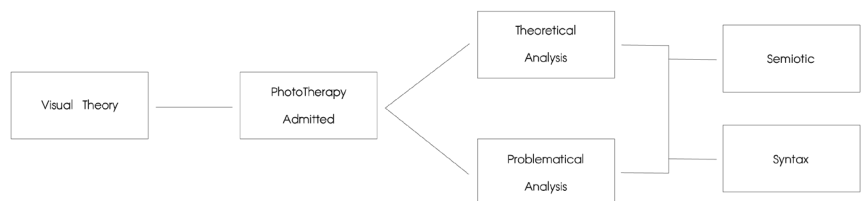
Visual communication, in terms of meaning, focused mainly on understanding the deep meaning of image photography. The approach of every segment could support the visual understanding from a visual communication's point of view. In addition, the study also focused on Therapeutic Photography techniques, approach, and method as a reference for future research. The foundation of visual images is mainly through photo-



graphs or videos. The interpretation of image meaning is also known as Photo as Therapy or Therapeutic Photography. Known as a process of expressing feelings beyond words. Therapeutic Photography does not only mean taking photos. It also includes other photo-interactive activities such as photo viewing, posing, planning, discussing, or even only remembering or imagining photographs. As part of the Art Therapy foundation, these technique purely studies visual imagery to gain information through experience or memory recall. Either as a form of study or a foundation of temporarily healing therapy, these robust techniques bring photography to a whole new different level tremendously overtime with the influence of digital technology.

Figure 1:

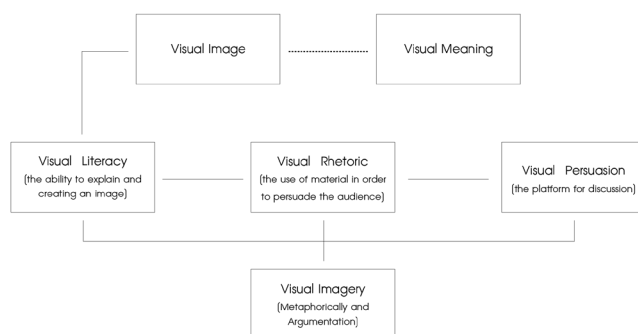
Proto-Theory establish according to the study approach.



Therapeutic Photography approach, genuinely started over one decade ago, under terminology as Photo Therapy which later explored and divided into Photo Therapy and Therapeutic Photography . The expression use of Photographs as a therapeutic platform started in 1844 by Dr Thomas Kirkbribe and was later explored by Dr Hugh Diamond in 1856 (Weiser, 2015:159–190). Photo Therapy can also provide interest, therapeutic treatment, satisfaction, and it has received so much information. J. Weiser discussed that the term of Photo Therapy should be determined as sharing feeling with purpose for patients to develop self-exploration. In addition to the study, its elaborated the understanding of photo therapy does not only gain back memory, it became influenced by finding the meaning from the memory. The analysis

of images will be fall into category of Therapeutic Photography. According to (Wheeler, 2009: 63-73), Ansel Adam characterized photography as an idea of psychological aesthetics. The definition of Psychological Aesthetic is specified to the value of photo and meaning behind the image. Somehow people enjoy taking pictures to help them memorise. Although, photography has been valued as a new level of discipline and was broadly used since. Del Loewenthal described Photo Therapy as a process of healing (Loewenthal, 2013).

Visual studies are determined by a set of visual communication which includes Visual Rhetoric, Visual Persuasion, Visual Literacy, Visual Meaning, and Visual Imagery. The set of data can be described based on the following figure:



Based on Figure 2, Visual Image is a form of items which is indicated by the grey area of visual meaning. Through all the process of key development and by persistence with the philosophy of visual literacy, later to rhetorical materials and persuasions, Visual Imagery is commonly scheduled to pass the process. In the past, the process is exten-

sive. It is an added value of Visual Image as a form of sharing memories and experiences which brings the study of images to a whole new level.

## 6. CONCLUSION

This study examined the visual communication in terms of meaning, focused mainly on understanding the deep meaning of image photography. The approach of every segment could support the visual understanding from the visual communication point of view. In addition, the study also focused on Therapeutic Photography Techniques, the Approach and Method as a reference for future researcher.

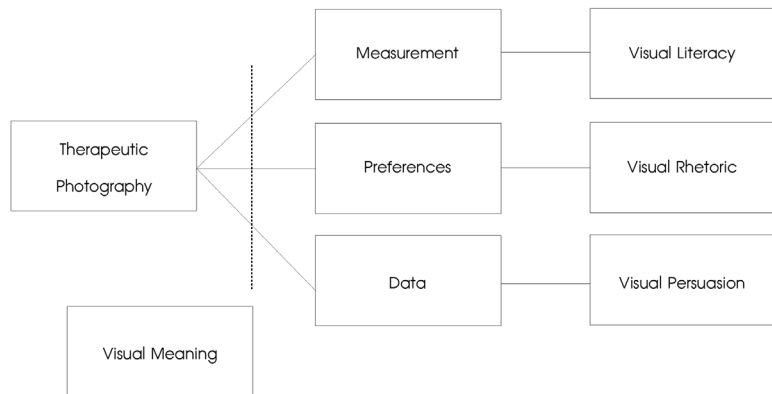
## 7. RECOMMENDATION

This study examined the visual communication in terms of meaning, focused mainly on understanding the deep mean

The study on Imagery combines the structure of several visual studies such as Therapeutic Photography -Photo Therapy, Visual Therapy, and Visual Communication. The concept has been used for a decade and has contributed to other disciplines such as nursing, marketing, management, and other applied and social science research. The development of appropriate design framework may help psychologists become more consistent in their operationalisation of photo-elicitation research. (Barton, 2015: 179-205) explained about elicitation techniques that is capable to reduce the instability conducted between both parties during an interview. Participants are more apt in elaborating meaning in different ways. Therefore, the study recommend to look into the measurement of study, what image of suitable to the participant and the purpose of data analysis. The recommendation the photo therapy as follow:

Figure 3:

The variable study on visual communication of Photo Therapy as a healing process



Visual meaning is a heritage of sign approach which is able to accomplish results (Van Leeuwen and Jewitt, 2011: 134-155). It relates to the use of a methodology (Patel, Schooley, and Wilner, 2007: 62-80). In order to construct meaning, visual absorbs the aesthetic value in the visual aesthetic approach (Patel, Schooley, and Wilner, 2007: 62-80). The study of visual aesthetics values the accomplishment of visuals with its beauty and enables emotion (Määttänen, 2017: 91-96). Novelty visual is the process of a methodological study and the guideline in conducting research studies. The descriptive study on visual image often relates to technical influences. Perception and persuasion in visual images depend on viewer's expectation. The visual system itself interprets through vision or art (Irgens, 2014: 86-94) namely through the interpretation between the semantic data processing of imagination (Gelder and others., 2015: 15-26). The descriptions of visual imagery include the process of understanding the image, sensing the view, composing and providing information together with knowledge of other visual communication through performing decoded data by advocating sustainable technology to achieve results.

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