

SEMIOTIC ANALYSIS OF SABAH PRODUCT: DURIAN CHOCOLATE

Putera Faiz Hassanal bin Nordin¹ & Mohamad Puad Bebit²

¹ Academy of Art and Creative Technology, University Malaysia Sabah

² Academy of Art and Creative Technology, University Malaysia Sabah

Correspondence author: Putera Faiz (email: puterafaiz@yahoo.com)

ABSTRACT

This study is research on advertising of locally produced food products, especially in Sabah. It is undeniable that Sabah products are unique and capable of competing at a higher level. However, the impact of local food product labelling on society is still questionable and less encouraging. Proper labelling should make consumers feel safe and secure with the food they choose. The visual aspects of design, colour, and typography were analysed using Semiotic theory to identify the application of graphic elements to the product labelling. The researcher analyses the effectiveness of visual communication in delivering messages and meaning through product labels. Through this research, graphic elements through labelling can be identified, classified by its category, and also determining the suitability in the product label. In addition, people's perception of Sabah product can be changed. Mandatory graphic element standards in labels can also be identified and are useful as a guideline.

Keywords: Advertising, Graphic Design, Graphic Elements, Labelling, Local Products, Sabah Product

Introduction

A label is the identification of a product produced. Without label consumption, purchasers have trouble differentiating products that exactly match their tastes. This label can be the purchaser's guideline so they recognize what content material they can keep away from or need. In the manufacturing of labels, it has to have the pleasure which is not without

problems written, high-quality printing preferred, now not easily damaged or bleached in addition to a format that is easy to see and examine certainly (Alfred Satyahadi, 2013).

As a product label researcher, the visuals on each packaging will of course be evaluated. Looking at the selection of graphic elements used on the label will affect whether it is of interest or not to the user. The privilege of such packaging will also affect the non-response of observers to own the product. Thus, some issues can be centered such as:

- a. What type of graphic elements should be apply on a product label?
- b. Can the graphic elements and principle of graphic in label be classified?
- c. What is the suitability of graphic elements that can be placed in a product label?

In general, the objective of this study is to analyze the extent of creativity and effectiveness of a graphic design on the labeling of food products in Sabah according to artistic aspects, graphic design elements and standards according to SIRIM. The objectives of this study are:

- a. Identify the application of typographic elements, images and colors on product labeling.
- b. Classify graphic elements and principles in local product labeling.
- c. Analyze the effectiveness of appropriate graphic elements on product labeling.

Local products, especially Sabah products, are the focus of this research where the importance of labeling is less emphasized. Homemade products, for example, paste labels just for decoration and visually differentiate their products from other products. This negatively impacted some communities on incomplete information, hygiene issues, and the safety of the products.



Figure 1: Sabah food products, Durian Chocolate

Durian Chocolate is one of the products that use original ingredients and processed into snack type foods. The ingredient is frozen until it's dry which can last up to a year or more. Various packaging innovations have been produced through the same product for rebranding and commercialization. The same products are manufactured and have differences in terms of layout in the label because there are differences produced of the quantity of the chocolate. The difference is due to target factors and suitability to each type of user.

The label on this product has a layout that can impress the consumer due to the strict use of color and the clear contrast between the product and the background. The size of the typography is according to set standards, the product name is easy to read with a choice of prominent colors. The use of different typography in labels reveals diversity in label design. The front label of this product measures 25.5 cm x 13.5cm.

A harmonious color combination, the color code on the packaging is *ffbd31*. The main ingredients of Durian fruit and chocolate products are clearly displayed on the front of the label. There is the company logo, shape of proboscis monkey on the bottom right of the product label. The label clearly highlights Borneo's features on the overall visual of the packaging.

The visual criteria on the label exert an important psychological influence on its use. The application of images, colors, and typography on the label has an impact on the people to identify a product. The selection of the picture on the label will be able to provide information on the ingredients used on the product. Either the illustration or the actual photo must be clearly

translated on the product label. This study will help examine the importance and effectiveness of labels that conform to existing standards. At the same time as a strategy in further enhancing the product marketing market.

Literature Review

According to Nik Mohd Azim Bin Nik Daud (2018), China and Egypt produced the first label about 3000 years ago. Labels with only a sheet of papyrus paper are pasted on the packaging surface of the product to distinguish the product from others. The label also began printing in the early 16th century. Labels for medical purposes in pharmacies were first implemented in the early 1700s. At the same time, Italians use labels for packaging bottles of alcoholic beverages. In the late 1800s, labels began to become mandatory materials to enhance the marketing of their products.

Giles Cater (2004) in his writing titled *What Is Packaging Design?* stating that pre-packaging existed as a new technology at that time to facilitate the supply and expansion of products to each permissor. He also added, entrepreneur emphasizes basic functions only. At the beginning of the century, product packaging was more utilitarian. The utilitarian value is related as a basic function and benefit of the product.

In addition, packaging design nowadays plays a very important role to consumers when choosing a product and is the last medium of interaction before the purchase process is carried out (Ampuero and Vila, 2006). According to Anis et al, (2010), good labeling will make consumers confident and feel safe with the food chosen and thus influence the purchase for either dietary, health, price or other purposes.

Stokes (2003) modeled semiotic analysis method is seen able to help researchers identify the meaning of signs in images more systematically and effectively as it has been applied in many researches on visual interpretation and graphic elements. According to Listia (2002) and Karjalainen (2007) the semiotics of visual communication language can be used more innovatively through the creation of product design illustrations through advertisements, packages or logos used in product marketing in terms of selling product sales.

Faridah Ibrahim (2012) in her research on the interpretation of the meaning of the *Starbucks* logo concluded that the acceptance of semiotic

theory in various academic disciplines is a contributing factor to the diversity of knowledge around the world. The importance of this theory is evidenced by its various applications in the scientific and educational fields. It also states that the communication design of visual language is influenced by the meaning of symbols. This means that researchers are able to explore the variety of symbolic signs available.

Mohamad Suhaizi Suhaimi (2019) also highlighted the use of Stokes semiotic analysis in research on visual illustration and photography of Islamic book cover design. In the conclusion of the study, the results of the study data obtained are flexible. This method provides an advantage in research because the data collected can be explained descriptively and changed according to the suitability and needs of the research. The data collected can be classified as well as explain some of the interpretations obtained.

Product names are a priority in labeling. The user will look at the packaging layout known first followed by the name displayed without examining the contents in the product (Kippahan H, 2000). Most of the buyers look to the name and brand before purchasing the existing product. It will play an important role in making it easier for consumers without hassling to find the desired item. Every detail on the label is important as a communication to the user list of ingredients, addresses, nutritional information, net quantity, etc.

Methods

To obtain more effective data collection, two stages are implemented. Questionnaires are distributed to consumers of prescribed products. Subsequently, evaluations were conducted using content analysis to identify formalistic concepts and the effectiveness of graphic design on products through complete data collection. The combination of Pierce Triadic Model and Jane Stokes (2003) Semiotic Analysis were applied to classify the criteria in the label.

Stokes (2003) describes the method of evaluating a visual through an analytical narrative to interpret the meaning of a sign. The Stokes approach suggests a step-by-step method beginning with the determination of an object or group of signs. The next stage, lists the objects in the visual observations that have been made. These signs are classified by category.

This model makes it easy for researchers to see and interpret the meaning of each visual element on the label.

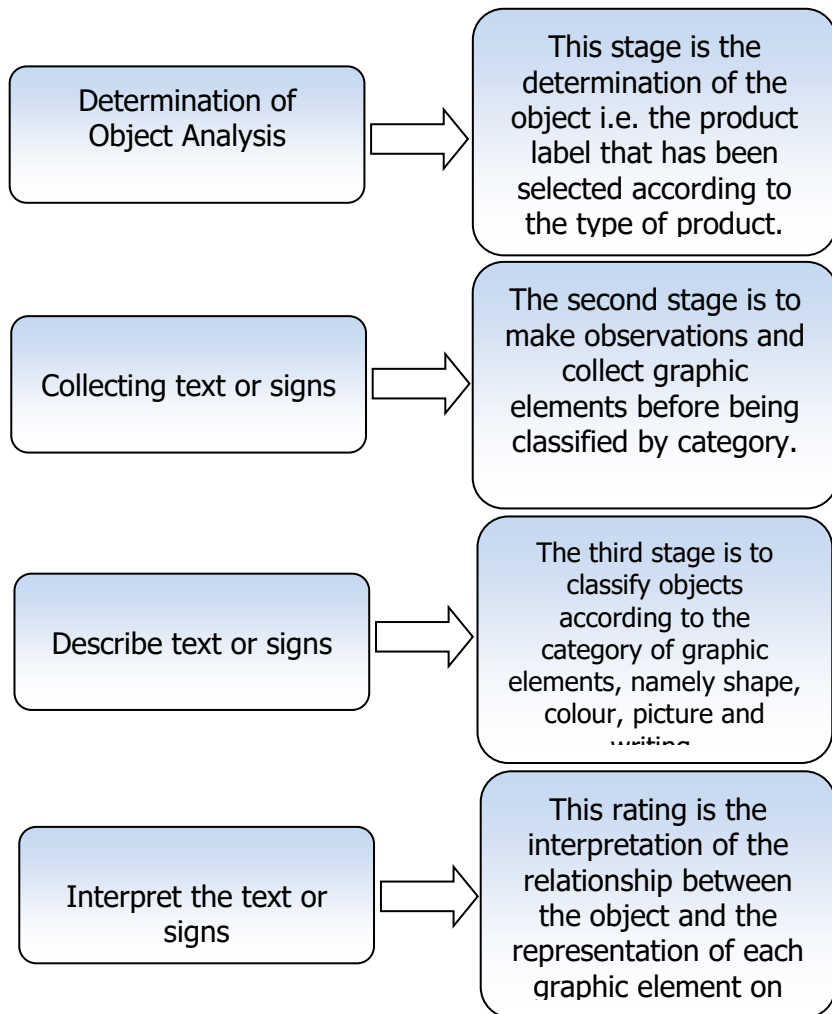


Figure 3.2: Stokes Model and Analysis Approach

Source: Jane Stokes (2003)

This research implements the semiotic theory introduced by Charles Sanders Peirce, Peirce Triadic Model (1839-1914). This semiotic theory is based on several stages before reaching an interpretation. Through this method, researchers can produce research in an orderly and planned manner.

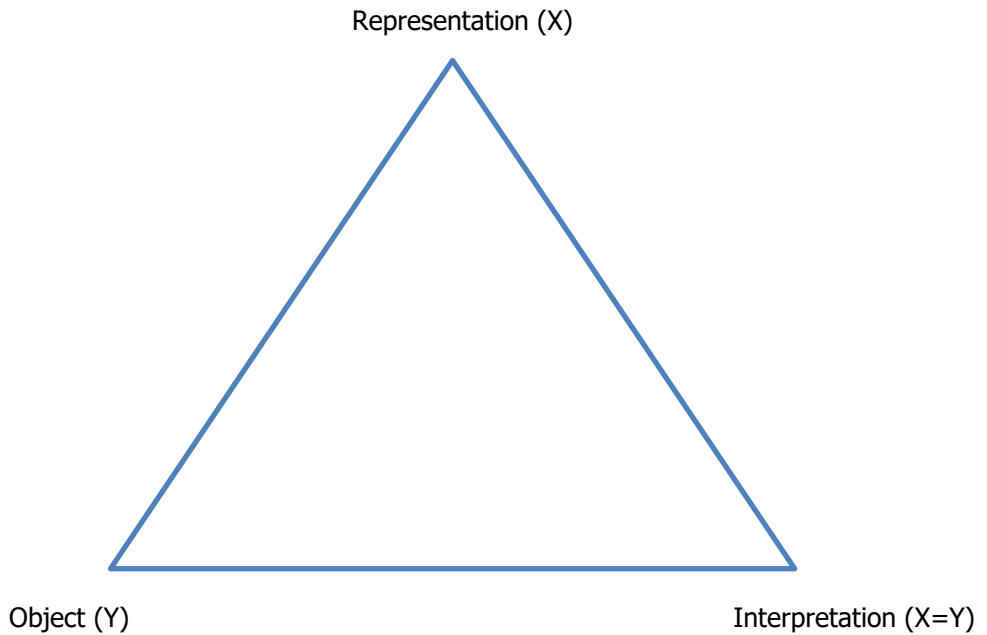


Figure 3.3: Peirce Triadic Model (1839-1914)

Source: Danesi (2004)

This concept was introduced by Peirce (1839-1914) as a process in identifying objects, interpretations and representations in a sign, in addition to looking at the development of the meaning of the sign. Object (Y) refers to the determination of the sign being analyzed, the representation (X) is the classification of the elements from the selected sign, also the representation of the sign. Whereas, the relationship of X and Y ($X = Y$) is the result of the study of signs (Danesi, 2004).

CRITERIA		AVERAGE SCORE			
		1	2	3	4
a)	Contrast between images and backgrounds.	The cons between the image and the background are very unclear.	There are cons between the image and the background but it is not good.	The image is used as a contraindication with the background.	The images used have excellent contraindications with the background

b)	Equilibrium and maximum effectiveness.	Does not use balance and is ineffective.	Images and typography that don't use balance but are effective.	Images and typewriters that use balance but are effective.	The images and typography used are balanced and effective.
c)	Image selection.	The image used has nothing to do with the product.	The images used have little to do with the product.	The image used has something to do with the product.	The images used are very relevant to the product.
d)	Use one type of typography.	Use three types of typography.	Use two types of typography.	It uses sans serif and serif type interfaces.	Use a sans serif typeface type.
e)	Use of the corresponding letter size.	Apply a mixture of uppercase and lowercase letters to one word.	Applies lowercase size to one word.	Use the uppercase size at the beginning and followed by lowercase letters on one word.	Applies all uppercase letters to one word.
f)	A combination of colours (looking in terms of colour selection i.e. light or dark colour).	Use an inverted colour (example: yellow over black).	Using erratic colours, basic and secondary colours (example: yellow over green).	The combination of both colours is light and dark.	Use the right colour combination (example: black over yellow)

Source: Modifications based on Ismail Ibrahim, 1993; and Sharul Azim bin Sharudin@Sharaddin, 2011; Mohd. Faizal Nizam Lee Abdullah and Leow Tze Wei, 2017; Asia Binti Lawang, 2018

Results and discussion

Elements in Label		Representative (X)	Object (Y)	Interpretation (X=Y)
Shape	a) Logo	Company logo, the shape of a Square/ Rectangle	Balance	Rectangular shape depicts balance, professionalism and proportion. A square or rectangle is enough to instil trust in the buyer. It also makes users feel safe with the product used.
	b) Illustration/ Images	Mount Kinabalu	Borneo Identity	Borneo Mount Kinabalu is a symbol of grandeur, pride for the local community of Sabah. Sabah product identity.
		Durian Chocolate	Product illustration	Description of the appearance of brown. Make it easy for users to identify the appearance of the product.
		Original Ingredient used in a image form	Durian shape	The shape of durian describes the ingredients used in the product.
		An animal: <i>Bayau</i> (monkey species)	Identity of Borneo	Illustration of the Bayau species highlights the original characteristics of Borneo on the
		The flag	Flags of Malaysia and Sabah	National symbols and products come from Sabah. Convince consumers that this product is locally made.
Colour	a) Background	Yellow	Warmth, brightness, and energy	Warm colours fill the background space. Provokes the psychology of feelings of joy, happiness, and energy.
	b) Illustration / Images	Durian	Actual ingredients	The actual colour of the durian image on the

				label as an affirmation that the actual material consumption of the product. It is also as an affirmation of the type of food ingredients of the product used directly.
	c) Typography	Product name colour.	Monochrome and purple	Use a combination of monochrome and purple colours in the product name as a contrast to the background. Creates a feeling of calm, luxury and exotic.
	d) Logo	Company logo	Brown colour	Psychology of colour that evokes a sense of accuracy and trust.
Illustration / Images	a) Illustration / Images	Durian	The main ingredient of the product.	Introduce product ingredients clearly on the label. The image of durian fills the space to the left of the label according to the suitability of the composition.
		Chocolate	Representation of the form and content of the product	Shows the shape and content of chocolate, namely chocolate and durian core. The image is placed in the centre of the product under the product name.
		Mount Kinabalu	Sabah identity.	Symbolizes Sabah's product to consumers to identify visually and clearly.
Typography	a) Typography	Implicit (Writing on labels): Product name	"Durian Chocolate"	The meaning behind the writing of Durian Chocolate is as a notification that the product is a combination of durian and chocolate.

	Explicit (Typography): Product Name	Script	Script font types have features such as handwriting and calligraphy. The special feature of this font makes the writing look elegant and natural. The script used is MT Bold Script. The MT Script font was designed by F.H. Steltzer.
	Font Size	1cm to 3cm	The font size used is inconsistent.

The shape on this label represents several elements; Logo and illustrations or images on the label. Through the interpretation of Pierce’s theory, rectangular shape of the company logo represents perfection. Each side of the logo has the same size or exact nature. The selection of rectangular shapes illustrates balance, professionalism, and precise proportions. It also could reflect and makes consumers feel safe with the product.

The image used is that Mount Kinabalu is a symbol of grandeur, pride for the local community of Sabah, thus a further strengthening of the identity of Sabah's products. Next, the product label assumes the appearance of the chocolate. Approaching users to identify the shape and appearance of the product content. Images of Durian shapes are placed on labels to explain the ingredients used on the product. Animal-shaped illustrations such as *Kera Bangkatan* or *Bayau* create an understanding and highlight the original characteristics of Borneo products on the label. The use of the Malaysian and Sabah Flags became a national symbol and convinced consumers that these products were locally produced.

The background colour that dominates the label is yellow. Yellow carries the meaning of warmth, brightness, and full of energy. This warm colour also evokes psychology to the feeling of happiness and joy. The illustrations and pictures used on the label are Durian which represents the main ingredient of the product. The image of Durian on the label as an affirmation that the actual ingredient consumption of the product.

The use of colour on typography, the product name applies monochrome colour and purple colour combination. It’s contradiction between the text and the background. This colour also evokes a feeling of

calm, luxury and exotic. The picture or image used on the front of the label, Durian, is intended to clearly introduce the main ingredients of the product. The image of Durian fills left space suitable in the composition to look neater and more attractive. The image of chocolate placed in the middle of the product under, the product name as an additional shape and content in the product. The image of Mount Kinabalu used highlights the identity of Sabah's products.

Name of the product, "Durian Chocolate" or the implicit meaning is as a sign and conveyer of information that the product is the main combination of Durian and Chocolate ingredients. While, the type of font used in the product is MT Bold Script which has handwriting-like and calligraphy features. The type of font chosen makes the product more elegant and natural. The font size applied is inconsistent, the use of capital letters is enlarged and followed by a line of the same font size.

CRITERIA		AVERAGE SCORE			
		1	2	3	4
a)	Contrast between images and backgrounds.				X
b)	Equilibrium and maximum effectiveness.				X
c)	Image selection.				X
d)	Use one type of typography.			X	
e)	Use of the corresponding letter size.			X	
f)	A combination of colours (looking in terms of colour selection i.e. light or dark colour).				X

The first criteria is a contrast between images and background, obtain the highest score (score of 4) because the image used stands out compare to the layout. Equilibrium and maximum effectiveness which is the use of appropriate image or illustration on the label scored highest (score 4). The images used are very relevant to the product. The image selection on the label also scored the highest of 4, with a selection of images and illustrations suitable on the label. Use one type of typography criterion scored average score of 3. mixed typography of sans serif, and serif but still use one type of font. The criterion of the use of the corresponding letter size also scored satisfactory with a score of 3, the use of uppercase size at the beginning and

followed by lowercase letters on one word. The last criteria are the combination of colors on the label scored the highest score of 4 by applying appropriate color and bright typographic color on the label background.

Conclusion

In conclusion, semiotics theory pays more attention to the meaning of the message and the way a message is conveyed through signs (Danesi, 2004). Thus, the results of this study support the assumption of semiotic theory in the design of visual communication language while semiotics provide an opportunity for researchers to interpret broadly any existing signs or symbols.

Furthermore, this label product applied dense elemental elements to its label. Researcher believe that this label has a good criteria in a graphic design. The effectiveness of the applied art factors is suitable to show the identification of Sabah visually in addition to get attention in persuading the community to very own this product.

This research will ensure that people can identify the importance of labeling in empowering local products. Various brands that have existed on the market are competitive for them to remain in the marketing industry. To ensure that locally produced products remain relevant and empowered, packaging innovations and product presentations are of utmost importance. Every food product produced must implement label on their product as a way to upgrade and improve the corporate image and brand of their products.

Acknowledgment

Appreciation to federal agriculture marketing agency (FAMA), SIRIM Berhad, Bayu Asiana Sdn Bhd with cooperation and permission to use materials for research purposes. Support provided by Universiti Malaysia Sabah (UMS) and the guidance from the lecturers are highly appreciated.

References

Book

- Anis Shuhaiza Bt Md Salleh & Yusramizza Bt Md Isa @ Yusuff (2010) *Perlabelan Makanan: Adakah Anda Usahawan yang Peka? Kolej Undang-undang, Kerajaan dan Pengajian Antarabangsa*, Universiti Utara Malaysia.
- Danesi, M. (2004). *Message, sign, and meanings: A basic text book insemiotics and communication theory*. Toronto: Canadian Scholar's Press.
- Faridah Ibrahim (2012) Bahasa Komunikasi Visual Dan Pengantaraan Produk: Satu Analisis Semiotik. *Jurnal GEMA Online*. Jilid12 (1)
- Giles Cater (2004) *What Is Packaging Design? Essential design handbooks;* RotoVision SA, London: 7-15
- Ismail Ibrahim, 1998, *An Empirical Study of Parents Attitudes Towards the Drawing Development of Children*, Montfort University.
- Karjaleinen, T. (2007). It looks like a Toyota: Educational approaches to designing for visual brand recognition. *International Journal of Design I* (1)
- Listia Natdjadja. (2002). Pengaruh komunikasi visual antar budaya terhadap pemasaran produk pada pasar ekspor ditinjau dari warna dan ilustrasi desain kemasan. *Journal Nirmana*, 4 (2), 158-168.
- Mohamad Suhaizi Suhaimi (2019) Visual Illustration And Photography On Islamic Book Cover Designs: A Semiotic Analysis. *International Journal of Heritage Art and Multimedia*
- Nik Mohd Azim Nik Daud & Zunaidah Razali. (2018). Label: Kepentingannya Untuk Pembungkusan Makanan Dalam Percetakan. National Innovation and Invention Competition Through Exhibition. Politeknik Sultan Abdul Halim Mu'azam Shah.
- Paul Temporal (2000) *Branding in Asia, The Creation, Development, and Management of Asian Brands For The Global Market*, Wiley: 67.

Stokes, J. (2003). *How to do media and cultural studies*. London: Sage Publication.

Thesis

Asia Binti Lawang & Humin Jusilin (2018) *Tipografi Papan Iklan: Satu Elemen Komunikasi Visual*. Universiti Malaysia Sabah

Sharul Azim Bin Sharudin @ Sharaddin & Ismail Ibrahim (2011) *Taipografi dan Reka Letak dalam Aplikasi Papan Iklan Percetakan*. Universiti Malaysia Sabah.

Internet Sources

FOMCA (2017) <http://www.fomca.org.my/v1/index.php/tentang-kami/apakah-standard>. 15 Mac 2019

Norliza Abd. Rahman. (2008). Produk makanan wajib jalani analisis kandungan zat. Utusan Malaysia, 17 Feb. 2019

Zanariah Abd Mutalib. (2008). Tindakan kepada pengeluar yang langgar peraturan iklan dan label produk makanan. mstar.com.my. 07 Mac. 2019.

Satyahadi, Alfred, (2013)

<http://www.indonesiaprintmedia.com/pendapat/225-pentingnya-penggunaan-label-padakemasan.html>, 23 Mac 2019.