

Exploring the Multicultural Design of Malaysian Ang-Pow

Siek Hwee Ling

Department of Art, Design and Media, Sunway University, Malaysia

perlinesiek@gmail.com

Abstract

Malaysia is a multicultural and multiethnic moderate Islamic country 31 million people with three main ethnic groups: Malays, Chinese, and Indians; Under Malaysian constitutional law, all Malays are Muslims, the largest ethnic group with 50.4% of the population, Malaysian Chinese is at 22.6%. Each ethnic group has their respective festive season celebrations such as Hari Raya Aidilfitri, is the day after the holiest period in the Islamic year when Muslims rejoice. Chinese New Year, to Chinese over all the world, it signifies a prosperous new year and Deepavali, is the festival of lights, signifies light over darkness. During Hari Raya festive season, Malaysian Muslims devote 'duit raya' (cash gifts) to children and old folks. During Chinese New Year, Chinese people give each other 'Ang-Pow' (red envelope), a monetary gift that symbolizes good fortune and prosperity. For Deepavali, money and gift were not presented in the old days but due to influences and rituals from other cultures, monetary gifts are distributed by family members. Festive celebrations often involve distinctly cultural designs which help to share traditional virtues and conveying information among people regardless of ethnicity or religion.

This paper attempts to outline how the Malay's green Ang-Pow and Indian's purple Ang-Pow in Malaysia subverted the Chinese's Ang-Pow by not transforming its original purpose. The designs printed on different Ang-Pows have certain design criterion which reveals the unique cultures in Malaysia.

This paper adducted the elements of Cultural Markers Method set by four graphic design industry's experts to analyze the content and identify the embedded cultural characteristics in a total of 99 Ang-Pows; thus six significant elements of the cultural factors according to their layout, logo, language, typography, colour, and images were identified. This was followed by a t-test to determine significant differences that reflect the graphic preferences of these ethnic groups and the uniqueness of Malaysian culture. This study also demonstrates that the existence of a design 'platform' (the space for the composition of the visual elements) creates opportunities to showcase and drive the creativity and aesthetics of different ethnic cultures. The modification of visual images on Chinese Ang-Pow to graphics from other ethnic groups has positively facilitated a flexible strategy that proves it is well accepted and widely used by Malaysian society. Based on the analyses of the cultural marker identification, designers of green and purple Ang-Pow should prioritize horizontal layout for words and texts to reveal racial identity. Malays seem to prefer the ability to select their preferred Ang-Pow designs instead of using those with merchant logos. Since Malays hold the majority in Malaysia, graphic designers can extend the market in this direction.

Keywords: Malaysia, Green Ang-Pow, Purple Ang-Pow, Cultural Markers Method

1. Introduction

Malaysia is a multiethnic, multicultural and multilingual society. Under Malaysian constitutional law, all Malays are Muslim, and Islam plays an important part in their daily life. Meanwhile, other ethnic groups have freedom of religion and the right to practice their own culture. In Malaysia, a moderate Islamic country of 31 million people, the largest ethnic group is represented by the Malays, with 50.4% of the population, followed by the Chinese (22.6%), and Indians (6.7%). These three races make up 79.7% of the population while the remaining percentage is represented by ethnic races such as Ibans, Dayaks, Kadazan, and other minorities that are not included in this study. (Malaysia Government Statistics, 2019).

Malaysians tend to have friends, colleagues, customers, business partners, and neighbours from different ethnic groups. One part of Malaysian culture is the concept

of open houses, where all races are invited to enjoy celebrations together. During celebrations such as Chinese New Year, Hari Raya, and Deepavali, hosts decorate their homes and invite guests, serving delicious traditional cakes, cookies or meals.

Festive celebrations often involve distinctly cultural designs. In visual communication, design plays an important component in conveying information and help to share traditional virtues among people regardless of ethnicity or religion. This paper explores the impact of Chinese culture on the visual communication design of other Malaysian ethnic groups. While there are numerous printed materials and advertisements in Malaysian life the Ang-Pow (money packet) was selected for its cultural significance.

The cultural markers method was used to examine common print material in Malaysian social life and identify the visual design elements such as layout, symbols, language, typography, colour, and images used on the Ang-Pow of the three main ethnic groups.

2. A Multicultural Society

2-1 Multi ethnic, Multilingual and Multicultural Society

In 1871, the English anthropologist E.B. Taylor defined culture as “the complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, morale, laws, custom and other capabilities and habits as acquired by man as a member of society” (Shank, 1997, p. 95). Culture is equivalent to a nation’s soul and spirit in the form of the arts, literature, traditions, beliefs, and lifestyle. Culture may also be defined as cultivated behavior, a complex amalgam of distinct spiritual, emotional, intellectual patterns, or a way of life followed by a certain group of people. According to Idilfitri (2016), culture is intangible and can only be discovered when practiced by insiders through symbols, pictures, objects, words, or gestures. All cultures share some basic features: learned, shared, based on symbols, integrated, and dynamic (Bueno 2012, O’Neil 2007). Culture is not inherited, but learned subconsciously, through observation, and being immersed in the environment. Parts of culture, such as languages, traditions, or behavior, can be shared between groups, and is known as shared culture.

Every culture uses symbols to communicate or pass on beliefs. Language is the primary mode of transmitting culture between two parties. Culture is interconnected

and all aspects of culture are related. It is dynamic and does not remain constant or unchangeable.

When different ethnic groups live together, this gives rise to multiple cultures in the same area and creates a multicultural society. Rosado (1997) defined multiculturalism as “a system of beliefs and behaviors that recognizes and respects the presence of all diverse groups in an organization or society, acknowledges and values their socio-cultural differences, and encourages and enables their continued contribution within an inclusive cultural context which empowers all within the organization or society”. Yusof & Esmaeil (2017) mentioned that multiculturalism concerns the form and process of cultural construction, while Brislin (1993) stated that a multicultural society is one that not only learns more about their own culture, but does not ignore other cultures and seeks to learn about them.

2-2 Malaysian Culture

“Malaysia, which declared independence in 1957, is a secular Islamic country that is multiethnic, multilingual and multicultural. Malaysia’s main ethnic groups consist of the Malays, Chinese, and Indians, which account for 31 million people in the population. The majority of the population belong to the Malays, who are all considered Muslim by Malaysian law. Despite Islam being the official religion of Malaysia, other races have freedom of religion and the right to practice their culture (Statistics, 2019). As such, there are many different festivals and holidays in Malaysia.

2-2.1 Hari Raya

Islam is the centre of Malay Culture and is ingrained in Malay life. Hari Raya Aidilfitri is an important festival celebrated by Muslims. Hari Raya Aidilfitri is the day after Ramadan (the fasting month, the holiest period in the Islamic year) when Muslims rejoice. It is an important festival celebrated by Malaysian Muslims. During this festive season, devotees present cash gifts called ‘duit raya’ to children and old folks. Green is the main colour used in Hari Raya decorations as it is a significant colour in Islam. “Greenness” was mentioned many times in the Quran, such as in sura 55, verse 76: ‘They relax on green carpets, in beautiful surrounding’. This was used to describe the paradise of the inhabitants and the dome built above the tomb of

the prophet Muhammad S.A.W, both of which were green.

2-2.2 Lunar New Year

The lunar new year, also known as Chinese New Year, is an important celebration among ethnic Chinese people because it signifies a prosperous new year. Red has been a popular colour among Chinese people for centuries, who believe that red has the ability to exorcise evil spirits. During Chinese New Year, every family displays couplets (two pieces of red paper, each a metre long with traditional words written on them to represent well wishes and hopes for prosperity) on the doorframe of the main entrance of the house that can repel evil spirits (Chan, 2001). On the eve of Chinese New Year, parents and elderly relatives distribute cash gifts wrapped in red paper to unmarried younger relatives during the reunion dinner. This cash gift is known as ‘Ya Sui Qian’ , or New Year’s money. Children are advised to place the red paper under their pillow to suppress evil spirits and serve as a blessing for the coming year. This cultural practice had a profound influence on Chinese people around the world. When printing technology developed in the 1900s, the red paper was replaced with printed red envelopes, keeping the tradition alive in the modern era.

In modern times, Chinese people still gift money in red envelopes (known as ‘Hong Bao’ or ‘Ang-Pow’) to family members, friends, and/or employees to express care and well wishes towards the receiver. The terms ‘Hong Bao’ and ‘Ang-Pow’ originate from Mandarin and Hokkien (a Chinese dialect spoken by many Chinese diaspora, especially those living in Southeast Asia) respectively. The words mean ‘red’ and ‘packet/to wrap’ in either language. Ang-Pow are usually presented during important events or occasions such as weddings, birthdays, appreciations gifts, or when a devotee wishes to request a favour from the divine in a Chinese Temple.

2-2.3 Deepavali

Deepavali, also known as Diwali, is known as the festival of lights. It is an important festival among Hindus. The majority of Malaysian Indians (84.5 percent) (statistics, 2019) are Hindus. Previously, money and gifts were not distributed during Deepavali. However, the culture evolved over time due to influences and rituals from other cultures. Now, monetary gifts are distributed by family members.

2-2.4 Festival that Coincided with Each Other

Chinese New Year and Hari Raya Adifilfitri came very close to each other in 1996, 1997, and 1998 (See Table 1). The phrase ‘Gong Xi Raya’ or ‘Kongsi Raya’ (‘Raya’ means ‘celebration’ in Malay) was coined for this double festive celebration, which were used by merchants and the media in decorations promotions. The creation of Marlboro’s 1996 TV commercial, and Petronas’ ‘Kongsi Raya’ advertisements from 1996-1998 (Lean, 2011) expedited the formation of Green Ang-Pow.

Malay people adopted the Chinese custom of handing out monetary gifts in envelopes as well. However, the colour of the Ang-Pow was changed to green, because green is the traditional color of Islam.

Table 1 The Dates of Chinese New Year and Hari Raya from 1996 to 1998 and the Time Difference between Them

Gregorian Calendar Year	Chinese Lunar New Year	Hari Raya Aidilfitri	Difference
1996	19th Feb 1996	20th Feb 1996	1 day
1997	7th Feb 1997	8th Feb 1997	1 day
1998	28th Jan 1998	29th Jan 1998	1 day

Source: Compiled by the author

In 2004 and 2005, Deepavali and Hari Raya were celebrated 2 and 3 days apart respectively (See Table 2), giving rise to the phrase ‘Deepa-Raya’ (Deepa-Raya, 2005). Since Malaysian Indians also adopted the custom of distributing monetary gifts, purple Ang-Pow was created.

Table 2 The Dates of Deepavali and Hari Raya in 2004 and 2005 and the Time Difference between Them

Gregorian Calendar Year	Deepavali (Diwali)	Hari Raya Aidilfitri	Difference
2004	11th Nov 2004	14th Nov 2004	3 days
2005	1st Nov 2005	3rd Nov 2005	2 days

Source: Compiled by the author

2-3 Cultural Visual Elements

Arnheim (2004) indicated that the word ‘images’ encompasses pictures, symbols, and signs. While there are numerous different kinds of images available in the world, some visual elements have stronger associations with a particular culture, making them cultural indicators.

2-3.1 Malays Visual Elements

Islam forbid the usage of animal images (especially those forbidden or proscribed by Islamic law, such as pigs and dogs) in decorations. Acceptable images include flora, geometric patterns, Quranic scripture, crescent moons, oil lamps, and ketupat. Crescent moons are traditionally used to represent Islam, even appearing on the Malaysian flag (Siek and Chen, 2012). Oil lamps, called pelita or panjut, are lit to attract spirits and angels, thereby bringing blessings to devotees. The ketupat is a type of traditional rice cake which is shaped into a diamond by weaving palm leaves together. It is commonly served during Hari Raya open houses and has become one of the major symbols of Hari Raya. All these imagery have strong links to Islam and Malay culture, and are often used in decorations during festive seasons.

2-3.2 Chinese Visual Elements

One of the elements most strongly associated with Chinese culture is the dragon, which symbolizes the emperor, abundance, prosperity, and good fortune. The phoenix, the most important of the winged creatures, represents the empress, and strength. Pineapples are another favoured symbol due to their association with luck in gambling (Siek & Chen, 2013, Giacchino-Baker, 2000).

While there is a sizable Chinese population in Malaysia, not all of them can read or write Chinese characters due to being placed in schools that use Malay or English as the main medium of instruction. As such, English or Malay text commonly appears alongside visual elements in printed materials that are marketed towards Chinese people.

2-3.3 Indian Visual Elements

Indians use bright hues due to the significance of each colour (saffron – sacrifice; red – prowess; blue – power; yellow – wisdom; white – purity; green – stability).

Images such as peacocks (India's national animal), swans, lotuses, mangos, mango leaves, and sun rays are often used as patterns in drawings, greeting cards, and fabrics. Although Tamil is commonly used among Malaysian Indians, Malay and English text are used on printed items as well.

2-4 Visual Communication Design of Ang-Pow

Graphic design is integral to many fields from typography to film (Cornish, 2015, Buchannan, 1992). In 1988, Frascara highlighted how graphic design enables effective communication of visual information through layout, typography, and colours. The demand for monetary gift envelopes in Malaysia regardless of race and occasion has revealed the habits of Malaysians. Every year, these envelopes are redesigned and printed for the three main festive seasons – Chinese New Year, Hari Raya, and Deepavali.

Layout is a core tool of graphic design. The business dictionary defines a layout as something that establishes the overall appearance, and relationship between graphic elements. It encompasses the use of graphics, type, colours, illustrations, and space to achieve a smooth flow of information and eye movement for maximum effectiveness or impact (Thompson, 2018)

Malaysian Chinese red envelopes are similar to Chinese red envelopes all over the world. Traditionally, the elements are arranged in vertical columns similar to traditional Chinese calligraphy (the stroke order and stroke direction of Chinese characters (hanzi) facilitate writing in this manner). This allows both parties to show respect by maintaining a distance between them because most Chinese people dislike being touched and prefer to avoid physical contact, especially from strangers. This is also reflected in the formal greeting etiquette of ancient China (West Zhou Dynasty BC1046-BC771), where the clasped hand (first and palm salute) – carried out upon meeting each other or to express gratitude – allowed two people to maintain distance between them.

Both of these factors influenced the layout of traditional red envelope. Since it is customary for the receiver to use both hands when accepting the envelope, a vertical orientation allows for a greater distance between two parties and enables the receiver to read the text on the envelope quickly from top to the bottom.

Chinese Ang-Pows are often decorated with beautiful Chinese calligraphy, and symbols that convey good luck and prosperity. They are ornate red pockets with a standard size of 80 mm x 155 mm, which can fit an unfolded RM100 (Malaysian Ringgit) note (see Figure 1). Processes such as design creation, colour separation, printing, hot stamping, die cutting, finishing, and gluing are all part of the Ang-Pow manufacturing process.

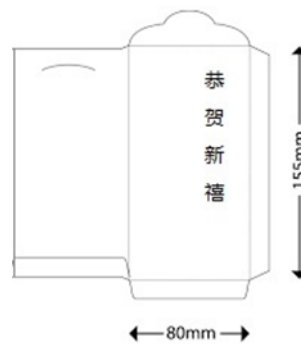


Figure 1 Ang-Pow Template and Layout of Chinese Font

Source: Illustrated by the author

3. Research Methods

Before cultures can be represented visually, a visual repertoire of culturally relevant images must be compiled. Hence, Ang-Pow with cultural images that were produced across the breadth of a culture were collected.

The Cultural Markers Method (CMM) was used to analyse the content and identify embedded cultural characteristics. Badre (2000), and Galdo (1996) mentioned that cultural factors such as icons, symbols, typography, colour, and language are essential to design. Barber and Badre (1998) said that cultural markers are ubiquitous, and that the preferences of a particular culture can be illuminated by identifying commonly used visual design elements. Usage of the CMM enabled the identification of dynamic visual cues that represent diverse sets of cultural elements in different cultures that use particular, and ideal expressive characteristics. The CMM can demonstrate the presence or absence of certain visual characteristics, and identify the characteristics of culturally appropriate and recognized symbols. The elements of analysis for CMM included a search for the most relevant cultural factors as mentioned above, followed by statistical measurement for significance.

The research began with the collection of Ang-Pow as detailed in the next section.

3-1 Stratified Samples

Ang-Pow samples were collected from 15 families (neighbours, relatives, colleagues, and friends) of three ethnic groups. Each family was asked to provide three different envelopes. Those with identical designs were removed. Fewer Deepavali Ang-Pows were collected within the given time frame of 30 days. Since the sample size had to be equal to facilitate further research, the Ang-Pows collected for the other two celebrations were filtered again. One envelope was removed from the Hari Raya Ang-Pows, while three were removed from the Chinese New Year Ang-Pows. There were 33 envelopes left for each festive season (see Figure 2 to 4).



Figure 2 Hari Raya Ang-Pow

Source: Compiled by the author



Figure 3 Chinese New Year Ang-Pow

Source: Compiled by the author



Figure 4 Deepavali Ang-Pow

Source: Compiled by the author

3-2 Rules of Classification for Ang-Pow Characteristics

3-2.1 Four Industry Experts Were Invited

A quantitative research approach was adopted. The data was collected through a quantitative content analysis of 99 stratified samples of Ang-Pow by four experts who had 8 to 20 years of working experience in Malaysia's graphic design industry.

These industry experts are: (A) Design house owner cum designer; (B) visual communications graphic lecturer; (C) senior graphic designer; and (D) offset printer cum designer. The experts comprise of two Chinese, one Malay, and one Indian. Table 3 reveals the background information of the four industry experts.

Table 3 Backgrounds of Four Graphic Design Industry Experts

Industry Experts	Years of experience in the Design field	Design Profession
A	20	Owner, running design services business handling medium size design studio
B	12	Head of department for visual com in a private higher educational institution
C	11	Senior graphic designer in a design studio
D	8	Offset printer cum designer in digital printing house

Source: Compiled by the author

3-2.2 Identification of Cultural Factors

In CMM, visual characteristics and graphic elements were identified to establish their degree of influence on the Ang-Pow design of a particular cultural group. Layout, language, typography, colour, images, sponsor logos are six core characteristics of Ang-Pow. The experts were tasked with identifying cultural factors, and classifying Ang-Pow characteristics based on information on the designs. For characteristics classified under the six main cultural factors, experts had to decide the existence, cultural suitability, and recognition of certain visual characteristics. The 99 Ang-Pow were sorted based on the criteria listed by the four experts in the presence of the researcher (see Table 4). To determine whether the observed differences are statistically significant, the results of the CCM were analyzed in Prism software. The results were only considered significant if the p-value was less than 0.05.

Table 4 Identification of Cultural Factors

Cultural Factor	Characteristics	Remarks of indicator	Classification
1 Layout	Image orientation	The orientation (vertical/horizontal) of the sample may be the most obvious cultural indicator.	Vertical
			Horizontal
2 Logo	Sponsors' logo	Identity of corporate retailers in Malaysia including departmental stores, supermarkets, hotels, and commercial banks that distribute empty Ang-Pow to customers during festive season. There were two categories: with sponsor logo (commercial Ang-Pow)/ without sponsor logo (non-commercial Ang-Pow).	With sponsor logo
			Without sponsor logo
3 Language	Written format	The wording and messages used by each group in various written formats. A total of six types languages appeared on the samples. Of these, only Malay/ Hokkien/ English use the roman alphabet.	Malay
			Hokkien
			English
			Chinese
			Jawi
			Tamil
4 Typo- graphy	Font used	Fonts being used on Ang-Pow. Typography can signify cultural beauty. Script and calligraphy are grouped under cursive.	Cursive
			Fancy
			San serif
			Quran Arabic
5 Colour	Colour groups	The usage of colours other than red, green, and purple. To narrow down the number of colour groups, pink was grouped under 'Red', while orange and gold were	Red
			Green
			Purple
			Yellow

grouped under 'Yellow'.			Blue
			White
			Black
6	Image	Social realm of pictures, symbols, or signs	Images indicate the culture that represents the social realm. Each ethnic group have their own individual cultural representation. Cultural representation for the Chinese include pineapples, and the 12 zodiac signs. Malay images encompass crescent moons, oil lamps, and ketupat. Meanwhile mango leaves, peacocks, swans, and sunray are sorted under Indians. Images that do not belong to any of the social life realms, such as commercial mascots, are classified as non-cultural representation. Images have divided into the following six groups: Cultural representation/ Chinese Han Characters/ Human figures in traditional costume (HFITC)/ lifestyle / Floral pattern/Non-cultural representation.
			Cultural representation
			Chinese Han Characters
			Human figures in traditional costume
			Lifestyle
			Floral Patterns
			Non-cultural representation

Source: Compiled by the author

4. Cultural Markers Method Outcomes

4-1 Cultural Markers Method Analysis

The principal differences of each characteristic are elaborated in Table 5. Only those with the highest score will be discussed.

Table 5 The Structural Analysis of 99 Sampled Ang-Pow

Culture Markers		Chinese New Year	Hari Raya	Deepavali	Total		Unpaired t-test
					Sub	%	
Layout	Vertical	24	26	26	76	0.77	25.33*
	Horizontal	9	7	7	23	0.23	7.667
Logo	With sponsor Logo	33	22	32	87	0.88	29*
	Without sponsor Logo	0	11	1	12	0.12	4
Language	Malay	0	31	0	31	0.31	23.33
	Hokkein	7	0	0	7	-	
	English	4	0	28	32	0.32	
	Chinese	22	0	0	22	0.22	9.667
	Jawi	0	2	0	2	-	
	Tamil	0	0	5	5	-	
Typography	Cursive	29	19	33	81	0.82	27*
	Fancy	0	6	0	6	-	2
	San Serif	4	0	0	4	-	1.333
	Quran Arabic	0	8	0	8	-	2.667
Colour	Red	31	0	0	31	0.31	10.33

	Yellow	2	7	5	14	0.14	-
	Green	0	19	3	22	0.22	-
	Blue	0	4	4	8	-	-
	Purple	0	2	17	19	0.19	-
	White	0	1	3	4	-	-
	Black	0	0	1	1	-	0.333
Image	Cultural representation	7	18	23	48	0.43	16.00
	Non-Cultural representation	0	3	1	4	-	1.333*
	Chinese Han character	14	0	0	14	0.14	-
	HFITC	3	2	0	5	-	1.667*
	Lifestyle	0	6	0	6	-	2.000
	Flowery pattern	9	4	9	22	0.22	-

The significance threshold was set at .05 is all that is required. *: <.05

Source: Compiled by the author

a. Layout

An unpaired-samples t-test was conducted to determine the differences between the two layout orientations. A significant difference was discovered in the vertical layout. Traditionally, words on the envelopes are arranged according to the traditional Chinese writing style which is written in vertical columns. Hence Chinese Ang-Pow often have vertical layouts. The Malay language uses the 26 letters of the Latin alphabet, while Jawi uses a modified Arabic script. Malay is written from left to right, while Jawi is constructed from right to left. Tamil is an abugida script that is also written from left to right. All three of these languages are usually written in a horizontal format similar to English. Despite the horizontal nature common in other languages, Hari Raya and Deepavali Ang-Pows adopted the vertical orientation of traditional Chinese writing systems found in Chinese New Year Ang-Pows.

b. Logo

Merchants use Ang-Pow as a marketing tool by printing company logos on empty red envelopes and giving them to customers. When customers use these printed envelopes to distribute monetary gifts, knowledge of the brand grows as well. As the practice grew, it became routine for customers to request free empty Ang-Pow packets from merchants instead of purchasing their own. There was a significant difference between the presence and absence of logos on the packets. One third of the sampled Hari Raya Ang-Pows do not contain merchant logos, which indicated a conscious interest in choosing preferred designs instead of using provided empty packets.

c. Language

Malaysian Chinese are concerned about the accessibility of Chinese characters used on red packets. This is evident in the way phrases such as ‘Gong Xi Fa Cai’ (May you become rich) (21%) or ‘Happy Chinese New Year’ are often displayed on the packets. Malay predominates other languages on Hari Raya Ang-Pows, whereas English is generally used in Deepavali Ang-Pows (85%) instead of Tamil. This is probably a concession for the convenience of the younger generation and other ethnic groups. However, there was no significant difference between the non-Romanic writing systems and those that used the Roman alphabet.

d. Typography

Cursive, script, and calligraphy are used distinctively in the collected Ang-Pow sample, especially for the Chinese and Indian ethnic groups. The Malays mainly used cursive fonts (58%), and Quran Arabic script (24%), which are also integrated into their design presentation.

e. Colour

There was no significant difference among colour usage in Ang-Pow design. This means that the choice of colour was secondary, and that people were willing to accept Ang-Pow of different colours during festive seasons. The majority of Chinese New Year Ang-Pows were red and pink. This colour was rarely seen during other festive seasons. Green and purple were the two major colours used in Hari Raya and Deepavali Ang-Pows respectively.

f. Image

There were significant differences between images of cultural and non-cultural representation. Chinese Ang-Pow designs seemed to favour Chinese Han characters (42%). Human figures in traditional costumes also had a significant difference. The individual cultural characteristics of the costumes were identified from the elements of the Ang-Pow they represented. In general, floral patterns were widely used during all three festive seasons.

5. Conclusions and Suggestions

This study aimed to investigate the perceptions towards Malaysian Ang-Pow designs. Findings showed that Malays and Indians had silently incorporated new

cultural practices into their lives by adopting the Chinese tradition of distributing monetary gifts in an envelope. Despite the different colours used to make the envelopes, the phrase ‘Ang-Pow’ was retained.

The study discovered that 77% of Ang-Pows used a vertical layout orientation even though Malay, Jawi, and Tamil are usually written in a horizontal format. Large corporations and Small Medium Enterprises (SMEs) printed their logos on Ang-Pow packets for customers as a marketing tactic. About 63% of the Ang-Pow packets had logos printed on the front, whereas 15% had logos printed on the back. One third of the Malays in the sample size were willing to purchase Ang-Pow according to their personal preferences instead of using those provided by merchants.

The language used on the Ang-Pow was mostly in line with the cultural identity of each group. Although Malay is the national language of Malaysia, 32% of the Ang-Pows used English text due to its prevalence among Chinese and Indian communities. Cursive fonts were used on 82% of the designs as these fonts evoke joy, elegance, and creativity.

The green and purple colour of Hari Raya and Deepavali Ang-Pows were not as significant as the red Chinese Ang-Pow. Other colours were used in Ang-Pow designs during Hari Raya and Deepavali, which switched between green and purple 22% of the time. The colour yellow appeared in 12% of the Ang-Pows, thus indicating that it was considered acceptable by all three ethnic groups.

Cultural images are important for each ethnic group to showcase their own festive season traditions. Hari Raya Ang-Pows usually reflect the cultural life of Malays, containing elements that symbolize Malay Islamic culture. Ang-Pows with non-cultural elements such as commercial mascots (3/33) were also acceptable. Meanwhile, Deepavali Ang-Pows usually depicted the celebration of the festival of lights, and Rangoli (70%) in their pattern design.

The Malay green Ang-Pow and Indian purple Ang-Pow in Malaysia subverted the Chinese Ang-Pow by not transforming its purpose in daily life. The creation of Hari Raya and Deepavali Ang-Pows demonstrated that the existence of a ‘platform’ (the space for the composition of visual elements) provided an opportunity to showcase and drive the creativity and aesthetics of different cultures and ethnic groups. The modification of visual images on Chinese Ang-Pow to graphics favoured

by other ethnic groups has positively facilitated a flexible strategy that proves its acceptance and wide usage among society.

According to the CMM, Ang-Pows are traditionally laid out in a vertical format. However, designers should use a horizontal orientation for text and images to indicate racial identity. In addition, graphic designers can explore the market for Hari Raya Ang-Pows without logos since the study indicates that a portion of Malay people are more inclined to select their own designs instead of using Ang-Pows with merchant logos.

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從馬來西亞多元文化探討紅包設計

謝慧齡

馬來西亞雙威大學美術設計媒體系

perlinesiek@gmail.com

摘要

馬來西亞是一個多元文化和種族的溫和伊斯蘭國家，主要的族群有馬來人、華人和印度人；並各自擁有自身的文化節慶，如開齋節、農曆新年和屠妖節。華人的農曆新年期間，華人會互贈予紅包作為見面禮，象徵著吉祥和繁榮。本文概述馬來人的開齋節「綠包」和印度人的屠妖節「紫包」，如何以在不改變其日常中的功能來顛覆華人的紅包設計。本文通過邀請四位平面設計專家，來擬定採用文化標記法的條規以分析這些紅包的排版、企業徽標、語言、字體設計、顏色和圖像設計之六個層面的元素分類。並套用 T 檢驗以比較差異是否顯著來探討「紅包」六個層面的元素，揭示了各個民族因各自文化對平面設計的偏愛有所不同和反映出馬來西亞文化的獨特性。同時也證實了設計只要有「平台」（視覺元素組成的空間）就有機會展示與帶動其他不同族群文化的創造力和美感的行為並受到社會所接受。分析顯示建議設計師在設計綠和紫包時，應採用橫式排版以方便其語言的格式。也發現佔總人口大多數的馬來人，願意花費選購自己心儀的設計而不完全採用供免費索取已印有企業徽標的「綠包」封，是平面設計師可以好好擴展的設計市場領域。

關鍵字：紅包、綠紅包、紫紅包、馬來西亞、文化標記法