

A Peircean semiotic analysis of international poster design: Study of Petra Christian University and Sophia University

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File info	Abstract:
<i>Received:</i> 17/10/2025 <i>Final Revision:</i> 07/02/2026 <i>Accepted:</i> 13/02/2026	Posters are a form of visual communication that conveys information to the audience. This study analyzes the design of each three international activity posters from Petra Christian University (Indonesia) and Sophia University (Japan) using Peirce's semiotic theory, by dividing signs into icons, indices, and symbols to reveal the meaning of the visual components used. The visual components (signs) observed consisted of dots, lines, shapes, colors, textures, spaces, images, illustrations, typography, and layouts found in each poster. The results of the analysis show that Petra Christian University displays diverse visual components and global collaboration, while Sophia University reflects Japanese culture and local identity. Through the points of difference and similarity that have been explained, Petra Christian University and Sophia University demonstrate consistency in their designs and have very different design characteristics. This research provides insight into how meaning is formed in poster design through a semiotic approach, as well as the importance of understanding the cultural context in visual communication between countries.
Keywords: International Poster Design, Peirce's Semiotic, Petra Christian University, Sophia University.	

Introduction

Design has become a familiar and integral part of human life, both for designers and audiences. The development of design is very promising with technological advances accompanied by changing trends that create a variety of styles, techniques, and increasingly diverse visual approaches. One medium with a diversity of design and function is the poster, where posters have become a form of visual communication by designers to audiences in the form of carefully arranged visual components. According to the Big Indonesian Dictionary, "a poster is a placard posted in a public place in the form of an announcement or advertisement (Badan Pengembangan dan Pembinaan Bahasa, n.d.). Meanwhile, according to the Japanese Dictionary (デジタル大辞泉精選版日. 小, n.d.), a poster is described as "ポスター 【名詞】 : ([英語] poster) 一般公衆への視覚伝達を目的として柱や壁などに掲示される宣伝用の印刷物", meaning "poster [noun]: ([English] poster) a promotional printed material displayed on pillars or walls for the purpose of visual communication to the general public".

The characteristics of a poster can be recognized if it has only one idea as the focal point of the meaning or message to be conveyed, contains a combination of visual components (points, lines, shapes, colors, textures, space, images, illustrations, typography, and layout) to add appeal and form a consistent design, persuasive but concise language, and a strategic form of promotion (Anam et al., 2022). A poster must be able to attract attention, memory, interest, or at least curiosity from someone (Simola et al., 2014). The function and purpose of a poster are not only limited to conveying and promoting something, but also to enhancing the artistic perspective or beauty of the design used (Wen et al., 2022). Thus, posters are believed to build interaction between designers and audiences.

Posters are no longer limited to print formats, but also expanded into digital media so that they can reach audiences without requiring a physical form. This change has resulted in a diversity of poster designs that fluctuate or change easily according to what is popular within a certain period of time (Amirotu, 2023). This condition sometimes requires audiences to take time to enjoy the poster design and understand the meaning and message being conveyed. Similarly, designers who create visual components in their designs are able to represent the meaning they wish to convey visually.

The diversity of design in Indonesia and Japan underwent significant transformation due to the influence of Western modernization accompanied by adjustments to technological developments from America and Europe (Sachari, 2006). Kardinata (2011) explains that posters in Indonesia were often used as a medium of communication and government propaganda during the colonial era (1900-1945), the independence and Old Order era (1945-1965), and the New Order era (1966-1998). Poster designs during these eras relied on the principles of realism, using contrasting colors, expressive (heroic) designs, and bold (patriotic) typography. Then, during the reform and digital eras (1998-present), posters became freely available in Indonesia, becoming adaptive and featuring diverse designs in line with technological developments and the times.

Japanese design has strong distinctive characteristics and forms the foundation of visual aesthetics that greatly influence graphic design. These characteristics were used during the Edo period (1603-1868) in Ukiyo-e (浮世絵), which means “pictures of the floating world,” a woodblock print design used as a promotional medium that relied on bright colors, flat compositions, and strong contour lines (Pixcap, 2024). Replaced by paper in the Meiji era (1868-1912), the Taisho era (1912-1926), and the Showa era (1926-1945), posters became a medium for government propaganda that adopted a modernist style. At that time, the designs still had the characteristics of Ukiyo-e but featured illustrations of soldiers accompanied by patriotic slogans. After the war and Japan's economic boom (1945-1980s), the Heisei era (1989-2019), and the Reiwa era (2019-present); posters became freely available in Japan but still retained the visual aesthetics of Ukiyo-e. This decision was discussed by Saito (2015), who said that Japanese aesthetics need to provide empty space as a ‘container for creativity’ for designers to work and maintain Japanese visual aesthetics to appreciate the past.

The diversity of designs means that a great deal of effort is required to understand the meaning they convey. Therefore, a theory was developed to help individuals understand the meaning of designs, known as semiotics theory. Etymologically, “semiotics” comes from the Greek word “simeon,” which means sign. Then, from the English derivative “semiotics,” the word “semiotika” was born in Indonesian. Another name for ‘semiotika’ is “semiology.” Terminologically, semiotics is defined as a science that studies signs, which considers signs as a basis for social conventions and has a specific meaning (Chandler, 2007; Fiska, n.d.).

Charles Sanders Peirce (1839-1914), an American philosopher and logician, developed a theory of semiotics that focuses on the relationship between signs, objects, and their interpretations. Peirce's semiotics is based on logic because logic is the basic human thought process for reasoning (Short, 2007). Peirce found that signs in semiotics will always be related to logic, especially human logic that seeks meaning or significance in the signs that appear around us. According to Peirce, signs can be categorized into icons, indices, and symbols based on how they refer to their objects. Icons bear a direct resemblance to objects, indices have a causal or existential relationship, while symbols depend on conventions or cultural agreements (Tinarbuko, 2004).

There are two predecessor works, which the first study by Muhammad Alfath, Guruh Ramdani, Muhammad Rafiasa, Ahmad Baihaqi Sufyan, Ananda Rizki, and Luthfiah Farida Balqis (2025) is titled “The Cultural Contestation of Indonesia and Japan in Pocari Sweat's ‘Be a High School Star’ Advertisement.” (Alfath et al., 2025). This study discusses the application of Peirce's semiotic method to Pocari Sweat advertising posters. The analysis is divided into finding the meaning of visual components and identifying the types of signs consisting of icons, indices, and symbols. It is concluded that the advertising posters are a visual representation of local Indonesian culture (high school

teenagers) and Japanese pop culture (anime illustrations). These findings show that advertising posters can serve as a medium for interaction between local and global cultures in order to be accepted by a wider audience. And the second study by Muhammad Rusdi Amirulah (2018) is titled Charles Sanders Peirce's Semiotics Analysis on China's Tourism Poster "China Like Never Before". This study discusses the application of Peirce's semiotics method in posters promoting Chinese tourism. The analysis is divided into finding the meaning of visual components and identifying the types of signs consisting of icons, indices, and symbols. It is concluded that these tourism posters are a visual representation of China as a foreign country that is worth visiting as a tourist destination. These findings show that tourism posters can be a medium for disseminating the characteristics of something.

This research was inspired when the researcher undertook an international study at Sophia University in Tokyo, Japan for one semester or five months. This research took international activity posters from Petra Christian University and Sophia University after the researcher realized the significant differences between the designs of international activity posters on each campus. As an international student, the researcher needed time to adapt to the differences in design and understand the meaning being conveyed. Not just the researcher, but many Indonesians have taken a liking to Japanese graphic design but encounter difficulty to understand them. Therefore, by doing thorough research, this paper would certainly benefitted Indonesian who want to acquire further knowledge of Japanese graphic design while also appreciating Indonesian graphic design.

This study attempts to reveal the meaning of international activity poster designs through the representation of visual components in the environments of Petra Christian University in Indonesia and Sophia University in Japan using Peirce's semiotic method, which divides signs into icons, indices, and symbols. Furthermore, this study seeks to examine how Indonesian and Japanese cultural influences are constructed within posters as an advertising medium. Contextual advertising is more readily accepted by the public because it is closely aligned with—and even reflects—their social conditions and lived situations (Natadjaja & Setyawan, 2021). The purpose of this study is to enrich academic studies as learning materials or references for design students. The novelty of this research lies in discussing the meaning of international activity poster design in higher education institutions or universities between two countries, namely Indonesia and Japan.

Methods

The research method used is Charles Sanders Peirce's semiotic method (Hoopes, 2014). The research focuses on the use of previous theories (secondary data) and relates them to the research object (primary data) to find the results of the research objectives. Primary data was obtained through non-participant observation of three international activity posters from Petra Christian University and Sophia University. Meanwhile, secondary data consisted of all academic materials related to the research method to help achieve the research objectives. The research was conducted at Petra Christian University in Surabaya for three months, from October 1, 2024, to December 31, 2024. The research was also conducted at Sophia University in Tokyo for five months, from September 25, 2024, to January 31, 2025. Therefore, all the primary data must be collected in the timeframes that the research took place.

The analysis was conducted using Peirce's semiotic method of classification based on objects, namely icons, indices, and symbols. The visual components observed consisted of dots, lines, shapes, colors, textures, spaces, images, illustrations, typography, and layouts found in each poster. The division of analysis elements into icons, indices, and symbols is presented in a table containing explanations of the analysis and image fragments of the visual components in the posters in question; meaning each element would be explained in detail using the chosen method. The analysis would start from the researcher's home university and then continue to the researcher's international university.

Each poster would start with a brief introduction about the activity that was promoted in the poster, then continue with an analysis table that concludes with an explanation and a summary of the differences and similarities between all posters, accompanied by the respective reasons.

Result and Discussion

Poster IDEsember



Figure 1. Poster IDEsember 2024
Source: Personal Documents

This poster contains information about an exhibition of student works with the theme “Dearest Mom,” where students of Petra Christian University and international students are allowed to submit works that fit the theme. Works can be in the form of posters or videos with the format listed on the IDEsember poster. The event will take place from December 2, 2024, to December 7, 2024, at Building Q of Petra Christian University.

Table 1 Analysis Poster IDEsember 2024

VISUAL SIGN	DESCRIPTION, OBJECT, AND INTERPRETATION
	<p>Description: Petra Christian University Logo, Petra Christian University Logo, Faculty of Humanities and Creative Industries Logo, Visual Communication Design Logo, Fashion and Textile Design Logo, and International Program in Digital Media Logo.</p> <p>Object and Interpretation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Index: Activities organized by the Faculty of Humanities and Creative Industries, namely DKV, DFT, and IPDM in the Petra Christian University area. - Symbol: Petra Christian University logo, Petra Christian University logo, FHIC logo, DKV study program logo, DFT study program logo, and IPDM study program logo.
	<p>Description: Typography of the “IDEsember’24” logo and “Dearest Mom” theme.</p> <p>Objects and Interpretation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Icon: The logotype typography is classified as decorative, giving a cheerful and unique impression, while the theme typography is classified as script, giving a sincere and gentle impression. - Symbol: The combination of red, yellow, green, and pink colors gives a playful and creative impression, while black gives a formal impression.



Description: Star-shaped scribbles, lightning-shaped scribbles, flower-shaped scribbles, heart-shaped scribbles, and dotted scribbles.

Objects and Interpretation:

- **Icons:** Star-shaped scribbles, lightning-shaped scribbles, heart-shaped scribbles, and flower-shaped scribbles.
- **Symbols:** The combination of red, yellow, green, and pink colors gives a playful and creative impression. The abstract scribbles resemble pencil strokes, representing abstract and originality. The star shape represents hope, the lightning bolt shape represents energy and a mother's anger, and the flower and heart shapes represent love for a mother. The yellowish-white background resembles drawing paper, giving the impression that someone has drawn these shapes.



Description: The typography for 'About IDEsember' is green and red.

Object and Interpretation:

- **Icon:** The combination of sans serif and script typography gives a serious and playful impression.
- **Symbol:** The information provided about activities requires classification to distinguish the information to be conveyed.



Description: Black typography that contains specific information.

Object and Interpretation: Information about activities.



Description: Red typography for 'General Submission Guidelines'.

Object and Interpretation:

- **Icon:** Typography to classify information about the collection of works.
- **Symbol:** The red color of the text gives the impression of importance.



Description: Typography 'Poster Template' in yellowish white with a pink rectangle shape.

Object and Interpretation:

- **Icon:** Collected works require guidance to fit the theme. The button-like shape gives an interactive impression.



Description: Typography 'Participation Form' in yellowish white with a green rectangular shape.

Object and Interpretation:

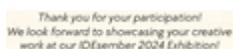
- **Icon:** Collected works require a 'collection container'. The button-like shape gives an interactive impression.



Description: Typography contains information about the requirements for works and how to collect them, using a combination of red and black colors, with green lines.

Object and Interpretation:

- **Icon:** Activities related to exhibitions of works submitted by the audience with a predetermined theme require an explanation of the requirements for accepted works and how to submit them to the person in charge.
- **Symbol:** Important parts are colored red, while the lines separating the information are colored green to create contrast. The explanatory sentences are colored black to give a formal impression.



Description: Typography in the form of a closing sentence at the end of the poster.

Object and Interpretation: Expression of gratitude and invitation.

Description: Poster layout, namely: a row of organizer logos in the upper right corner, hierarchy, and typography arrangement in a column grid.

Objects and Interpretation:

- **Icon:** The row of logos is located in the upper right corner so that it is easily visible. The typography is set to left align and justify, making the paragraphs look neat. The headline or title of the activity is located in the upper left corner in a larger font size, making the activity poster easily recognizable. The use of white space in the poster prevents the audience's eyes from getting tired when reading the information. The layout uses a column grid system (3 columns and 2 rows) to create a hierarchy in the poster, starting from the organizer's logo, activity title, activity information, and closing sentence (from left to right and from top to bottom).



Source: Researchers' Analysis (2025)

It was concluded that the activity posters were a visual representation of the desired theme, namely the image of 'a mother in the eyes of a child'. The findings are shown by the presence of visual components that are closely related to the feelings of a mother and how a child sees her, such as star shapes, lightning shapes, flower shapes, and heart shapes. The activity also invited designers to create works inspired by how designers see the figure of "a mother."

Poster Talkshow IDEsember 2024



Figure 2. Poster Talkshow IDEsember 2024

Source: Personal Documents

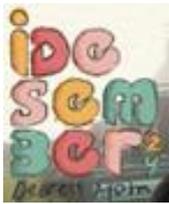
This poster features one of the talk show activities from IDEsember with the theme "The Creative Life: Behind Creative Agency and 3D Modeling." The free event will take place on Thursday, December 5, 2024, from 1 p.m. to 3 p.m. at Gallery Q3.02 at PCU. Two speakers, Ingrid Wenas, S.Sn. and Venus, S.Ds., B.Eng., will share their experiences.

Table 2 Analysis Poster Talk Show IDEsember

VISUAL SIGN	DESCRIPTION, OBJECT, AND INTERPRETATION
	<p>Description: Visual Communication Design Logo, Fashion and Textile Design Logo, International Program in Digital Media Logo, Faculty of Humanities and Creative Industries Logo, Petra Christian University Logo, Petra Christian University Logo.</p> <p>Object and Interpretation:</p> <p>- Index: Activities organized by the Faculty of Humanities and Creative Industries, namely DKV, DFT, and IPDM in the Petra Christian University area.</p>



- **Symbol:** DKV study program logo, DFT study program logo, IPDM study program logo, FHIK faculty logo, and Petra Christian University logo.



Description: Typography of the “iDeSember’24” logo and “Dearest Mom” theme.

Objects and Interpretation:

- **Icon:** The logotype typography is classified as decorative, giving a cheerful and unique impression, while the theme typography is classified as script, giving a sincere and gentle impression.

- **Symbol:** The combination of red, yellow, green, and pink colors gives a playful and creative impression, while black gives a formal impression.



Description: A photo of one of the speakers, Ingrid Wenas, who is a designer and winner of the 17th logo competition. The photo was taken in a formal pose, wearing a white shirt.

Object and Interpretation:

- **Icon:** A photo of Ingrid Wenas, one of the speakers at the talk show.

- **Symbol:** As a designer, Ingrid fits the theme of the activity and the topic of the talk show. The formal portrait theme and white shirt convey a sense of formality.



Description: A picture of one of the speakers, Venus, who is an IPDM alumna and has achieved success abroad. The photo was taken with a graduation theme, wearing a gown and graduation cap.

Object and Interpretation:

- **Icon:** A picture of Venus, one of the speakers at the talk show.

- **Symbol:** As an alumna, Venus aligns with the talk show's topic. The graduation theme conveys academic achievement and success.



Description: Typography for the title “The Creative Life” and subtitle “Behind Creative Agency and 3D Modeling.”

Object and Interpretation:

- **Icon:** The title typography is a mix of sans-serif and script classifications that give a formal impression. The sub-title typography is a script classification that gives an original impression.

- **Symbol:** The combination of red and orange gives a creative impression, while black gives a serious impression.



Description: Black typography contains information about the location of activities in a yellow-orange rectangle.

Objects and Interpretation:

- **Icon:** Activities require a specific location so that the audience is not confused. The note-like shape gives the impression of being memorable.



Description: Black typography contains information about the time of the activity in a red rectangle.

Objects and Interpretation:

- **Icon:** Activities require the exact day, date, and time in hours so that the audience is not confused. The note-like shape gives the impression that it should be remembered.



Description: QR code for registration.

Object and Interpretation: QR code to be scanned.

More information on Instagram @idese

Description: Social media activity information.

Object and Interpretation: Instagram account.

CP: 0851 8302 2430	<p>Description: Contact person information.</p> <p>Object and Interpretation: Telephone/mobile phone number.</p>
	<p>Description: Polaroid-style scribbles, crumpled paper flowers, and flower shapes.</p> <p>Objects and Interpretation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Icon: Polaroid-style scribbles, crumpled paper flowers, and flower shapes. - Symbol: The combination of red and green colors gives a playful and creative impression. The abstract scribbles resemble pencil strokes, representing abstract and originality. The Polaroid photo shape represents memories or recollections that can be produced quickly, the crumpled paper flower shape represents someone's frustration, and the flower shape represents gentleness. The yellowish-white color for the background resembles drawing paper, giving the impression that someone has drawn these shapes.
	<p>Description: Sketches of a closed envelope, a house, and a heart.</p> <p>Objects and Interpretation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Icon: Sketches of a closed envelope, a house, and a heart. - Symbol: The combination of pink and green gives a playful and creative impression. The abstract sketches resemble pencil strokes, representing abstractness and originality. The closed envelope shape represents words that want to be conveyed, the house shape represents comfort, and the heart shape represents a mother's love. The yellowish-white background resembles drawing paper, giving the impression that someone has drawn these shapes.
	<p>Description: 'Free' typography or free activities.</p> <p>Object and Interpretation: Important information in a rectangular shape.</p>
	<p>Description: Poster layout, namely: a row of organizer logos in the upper right corner, activity logotypes in the upper left corner, hierarchy, and typography arrangement in a hierarchical grid.</p> <p>Objects and Interpretation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Icon: The row of logos is located in the upper right corner so that it is easily visible. The typography is set to left align and center, making the text layout appear centered. The headline or activity title is in the center and is larger in size, making the activity poster easily recognizable. The use of a hierarchical grid makes the layout appear neat, yet creative. The poster hierarchy starts with the activity title, images of the two speakers, the organizer's logo, the activity logotype, and activity information below (from top to bottom).

Source: Researchers' Analysis (2025)

It was concluded that the activity posters were a visual representation of the desired theme, namely a child's creativity towards their mother. This finding was demonstrated by the presence of visual components closely related to the perspective of a child's creativity and how they wanted to express it, such as Polaroid-style doodles, crumpled paper flowers, and others.

Poster “Explore the World with PCU”



Figure 3. Poster “Explore the World with PCU”
Source: Personal Documents

This poster is about an afternoon tea party, or a chat about overseas education opportunities, along with free consultations. The event will be held on Friday, November 29, 2024, from 1:30 p.m. to 3:30 p.m. in the Reka Rasa room, EH first floor at PCU. The event is also free.

Table 3 Poster Sharing “Explore the World with PCU!”

VISUAL SIGN	DESCRIPTION, OBJECT, AND INTERPRETATION
	<p>Description: Petra Christian University Logo and Petra Christian University Logo.</p> <p>Object and Interpretation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Index: Activities organized by Petra University in the Petra Christian University area. - Symbol: Petra Christian University Logo and Petra Christian University Logo.
	<p>Description: Title typography ‘Explore the World with PCU!’</p> <p>Objects and Interpretation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Icon: The title typography is a mix of sans-serif and script classifications that give it a formal yet creative look. - Symbol: The combination of blue and green colors gives a natural impression and matches the sky background.
	<p>Description: Blue typography contains information about the theme of the activity.</p> <p>Objects and Interpretation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Icon: The typography is classified as sans-serif and is a mixture of uppercase and lowercase letters, giving it a formal look. - Symbol: The use of uppercase letters emphasizes the theme of the activity, which also serves as an invitation. The blue color gives a natural impression and matches the sky background.
	<p>Description: Blue typography contains information about activity times in green circles.</p> <p>Objects and Interpretation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Icon: Activities require specific times so that the audience is not confused. The button-like shape gives an interactive impression.
	<p>Description: Blue typography contains information about the location of activities in the form of green circles and map illustrations and red destination markers.</p> <p>Objects and Interpretation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Icon: Activities require a specific location so that the audience is not confused. The button-like shape gives an interactive impression. Map illustrations and destination markers on a mobile phone. - Symbol: The map illustration and destination markers inside a mobile phone represent that the location has been confirmed and marked.

	<p>Description: Contact person information. Object and Interpretation: Telephone/mobile phone number.</p>
	<p>Description: QR code for registration. Object and Interpretation: QR code to be scanned.</p>
	<p>Description: 'Free entry' typography or free activities. Object and Interpretation: Important information in a rectangular shape.</p>
	<p>Description: Illustration of an airplane with a green and blue dotted trail. Objects and Interpretation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Icon: Illustration of an airplane with a dotted trail. - Symbol: The combination of blue and green colors gives a natural impression. The shape of the airplane with a dotted trail represents a long journey.
	<p>Description: Illustrations of the shape of the Earth, suitcases and bags, passports, tickets, the Eiffel Tower, and telephone booths. Objects and Interpretation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Icon: Illustrations of the shape of the Earth, suitcases and bags, passports, tickets, the Eiffel Tower, and telephone booths. - Symbol: The combination of contrasting and bright colors gives a creative and free impression. The shapes of tickets, passports, suitcases, and bags represent the destination of a long journey. The shapes of the Earth and the Eiffel Tower represent one of the destinations. The shape of the telephone booth represents long-distance communication with loved ones.
	<p>Description: Bird shape. Object and Interpretation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Icon: Bird shape. - Symbol: The combination of blue, white, and black colors gives a natural impression. The bird shape represents freedom.
	<p>Description: Visual component in the form of a collection of dots forming a dark blue square. Object and Interpretation: Visual component of dots.</p>
	<p>Description: Poster layout, namely: organizer logo in the upper left corner, activity title in the upper center, hierarchy, and centered typography arrangement. Objects and Interpretation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Icon: The logo row is located in the upper left corner so that it is easily visible. Typography is centered, creating a focal point in the middle. The headline or activity title is positioned at the top center in a larger font size, making the activity poster easily recognizable. The centered layout focuses the poster's focal point in the middle. The poster's hierarchy starts with the organizer's logo, followed by the activity title and activity information (from top to bottom).

Source: Researchers' Analysis (2025)

It was concluded that the activity poster was a visual representation of the intended theme, namely discussions about scholarships abroad. This finding is evident in the visual components that are closely related to the words of "travel" and "freedom," such as illustrations of airplanes, the Earth, suitcases and bags, passports, tickets, the Eiffel Tower, and telephone booths.

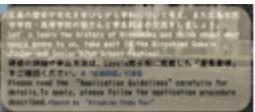
Poster Hiroshima Study Tour



Figure 4. Poster SSIC “Hiroshima Study Tour”
Source: Personal Documents

This poster is about a study tour with Sophia University and Hiroshima Gakuin Junior and Senior High School Festival. The activity will take place over three days and two nights from November 2, 2024 to November 4, 2024, with a limit of thirteen participants from Sophia University. The cost is ¥25,000, and the activity will include a tour of the Itsukushima Jinja (厳島神社) area, Hiroshima Gakuin Junior and Senior High School, an okonomiyaki-making experience, and more.

Table 4 Analysis Poster SSIC “Hiroshima Study Tour”

VISUAL SIGN	DESCRIPTION, OBJECT, AND INTERPRETATION
	<p>Description: SSIC logo, typography ‘Hiroshima Study Tour’ and 広島研修 (hiroshima kenshu).</p> <p>Object and Interpretation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Icon: Use of kanji and English because the activity is international. The typography of the title ‘Hiroshima Study Tour’ is classified as decorative, giving a unique and friendly impression. The typography of the kanji and SSIC is classified as serif, giving a formal impression. - Index: The activity is organized by SSIC from Sophia University in Hiroshima area. - Symbol: SSIC logo from Sophia University.
	<p>Description: Blue typography contains information on the duration of activities, participation capacity, and activity costs listed in two languages.</p> <p>Object and Interpretation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Icon: Information on the duration of activities, participation capacity, and costs as considerations for the audience's decision. The use of Japanese and English makes it easier for local and international students to read. - Symbol: The blue color of the information gives a natural impression and matches the background image.
	<p>Description: Black and white typography contains general information about activities and how to join in a transparent brown rectangle.</p> <p>Objects and Interpretation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Icon: General information emphasizes Hiroshima as the main topic of the poster. The information also mentions that the activity will be held in collaboration with Hakuin Junior and High School. The use of Japanese and English makes it easy for local and international students to read.



- **Symbols:** The information is differentiated by white and black colors to separate the types of information, while blue is used to provide additional explanations. The brown transparent rectangular background gives a modern impression.



Description: Red typography contains information about activities to be carried out in a transparent white rectangle.

Objects and Interpretation:

- **Icon:** Information is conveyed in a manner that meets audience expectations. The use of Japanese and English makes it easier for local and international students to understand.

- **Symbol:** The red color conveys a sense of 'importance'. The light green transparent rectangular paragraph background gives a modern feel.



Description: Image of the Hiroshima Peace Memorial (広島平和記念碑) as the background of the poster.

Object and Interpretation:

- **Icon:** Image of the 'Hiroshima Peace Memorial' (広島平和記念碑) building.

- **Symbol:** The theme of the activity is to commemorate the events of Hiroshima and the meaning of peace, therefore the 'Hiroshima Peace Memorial' (広島平和記念碑) building will be one of the places visited during the activity.



Description: Poster layout: organizer logo in the upper left corner, activity title below the organizer logo, hierarchy, and left-aligned typography.

Objects and Interpretation:

- **Icon:** The headline or activity title is located in the upper left corner with the organizer logo so that it is easily visible. Typography is set to left align and placed within a rectangle for easy reading due to the contrasting colors. The use of white space prevents the poster's background image from dominating. The poster's hierarchy starts with the organizer's logo, activity title, background image, and activity information (from top to bottom).

Source: Researchers' Analysis (2025)

It was concluded that the activity poster was a visual representation of the location to be visited, namely the Hiroshima area. This finding was evident in the image of a place in Hiroshima and the typography containing information about the area.

Poster Asakusa Tour

SSIC Asakusa Tour 12/21(Sat.)

Why don't you experience indigo dyeing and making Taiyaki in Asakusa?
 浅草で藍染体験、たい焼き作り体験しませんか。

＜申込みはこちら＞
 Apply from here!!

募集人数 : 13人
 応募期間 : 11月15日(金)～11月29日(金)正午
 参加の可否は12月5日(木)迄にメール連絡
 参加費用 : 1000円
 ＊交通費自己負担

スケジュール
 10:00 浅草駅に集合
 10:30～12:00 たい焼き体験(英語)
 13:00～14:30 藍染め体験
 14:30～15:30 浅草寺見学
 15:30頃 解散
 体験の時間は前後する場合があります

Number of people to be recruited : 13
 Application Period Nov. 15 (Mon.) - Nov. 29 (Fri.) noon
 Admission will be notified by Dec. 5 (Thu.)
 Participation fee: 1000 yen
 Transportation fee are at your own expense.

Schedule
 10:00 Meet at Asakusa Station
 10:30-12:00 Taiyaki Making
 13:00-14:30 Indigo-Dyeing (in English)
 14:30-15:30 Visit Sensoji Temple
 15:30 The end of tour
 Experience times may be subject to change.

Figure 5. Poster SSIC "Asakusa Tour"

Source: Personal Documents



This poster contains information about tourist activities in the Asakusa area with a limit of thirteen participants and a fee of ¥1,000. Registration for the activities begins on Monday, November 18, 2024, until Friday, November 29, 2024, by scanning the QR code on the poster. The activity will take place on Saturday, December 21, 2024, from 10:00 AM to 3:30 PM. Activities include making taiyaki, indigo dyeing, and visiting Senso-ji (浅草寺) Temple.

Table 5 Analysis Poster SSIC “Asakusa Tour”

VISUAL SIGN	DESCRIPTION, OBJECT, AND INTERPRETATION
	<p>Description: SSIC logo, ‘Asakusa Tour’ typography, and activity date.</p> <p>Objects and Interpretation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Icon: English is used because the activity is international. The typography of the title ‘Asakusa Tour’ is sans-serif, giving a friendly impression. The typography of SSIC and the activity date is serif, giving a formal impression. The use of strokes emphasizes the typography. - Index: The activity is organized by SSIC from Sophia University in Asakusa area. - Symbol: SSIC logo from Sophia University.
	<p>Description: Black typography containing information on participant capacity, registration period, registration fees, and explanations of activities to be carried out, complete with timings.</p> <p>Object and Interpretation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Icon: Information is provided by emphasizing Asakusa as the main topic of the poster. Information is also provided to give explanations and meet the expectations of prospective participants. The use of Japanese language provides an approach for local students. The English explanation also provides an approach and makes it easier for international students to read. - Symbol: The black color of the typography contrasts with the background color to make it easier to read and give a formal impression. The use of bold features in some typography emphasizes the information listed. The green background of the paragraph gives a natural impression, in line with the theme of the activity.
	<p>Description: Typography in the form of persuasive sentences and QR codes for registration.</p> <p>Objects and Interpretation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Icon: The use of Japanese and English provides an approach for local and international students. QR codes are used as a scanning medium for registration. - Symbol: The dark green color gives a natural impression. The red color and bold features in some of the typography refer to important sections.
	<p>Description: Image of ‘Kinryu-zan Senso-Ji’ (金龍山浅草寺) as one of the poster images.</p> <p>Object and Interpretation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Icon: Image of the ‘Kinryu-zan Senso-Ji’ (金龍山浅草寺) temple. - Symbol: The theme of the activity is a tour of the Asakusa area, therefore the ‘Kinryu-zan Senso-Ji’ (金龍山浅草寺) temple, which is the largest temple in Asakusa, will be one of the places visited during the activity.
	<p>Description: Image of ‘Aizome’ (藍染め) as one of the poster images.</p> <p>Object and Interpretation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Icon: Image of ‘Aizome’ (藍染め) activity.

- **Symbol:** The theme of the activity is a tour conducted in the Asakusa area, therefore the 'Aizome' (藍染め) activity, which is an indigo tie-dyeing activity quite popular in Japan, will be one of the activities to be conducted.



Description: Image of 'Taiyaki' (鯛焼き) as one of the poster images.

Object and Interpretation:

- **Icon:** Image of 'Taiyaki' (鯛焼き) activity.

- **Symbol:** The theme of the activity is a tour of the Asakusa area, so the 'Taiyaki' (鯛焼き) activity, which involves making taiyaki snacks that are quite popular in Japan, will be one of the activities carried out.



Description: Poster layout, namely: organizer logo at the top left, activity title below the organizer logo, centered and left-aligned typography, and poster layout in a modular grid.

Objects and Interpretation:

- **Icon:** The headline or activity title is centered at the top left with the organizer's logo, creating a neat and easily visible layout. The typography of the information is left-aligned, creating a neat appearance. The use of a modular grid makes the typography and poster images look contrasting yet neat. The poster hierarchy starts with the organizer's logo, the activity title, the activity information (from left to right), and the poster image (from left to right).

Source: Researchers' Analysis (2025)

It was concluded that the activity posters served as visual representations of the places to be visited and some of the activities to be carried out. The findings are illustrated with images of places in Asakusa and images of activities, such as 'Kinryu-zan Senso-Ji' (金龍山浅草寺), images of 'aizome' (藍染め), and images of 'taiyaki' (鯛焼).

Poster Kabuki Tour



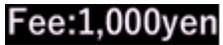
Figure 6. Poster SSIC "Kabuki Tour"

Source: Personal Documents

This poster contains information about a tour activity related to kabuki (歌舞伎), a traditional Japanese dance accompanied by drama or storytelling. The activity will take place on Sunday, January 12, 2025, at a cost of ¥1,000 (excluding transportation). The activity will run from 8:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. If you would like to participate, please scan the QR code on the poster. The kabuki activities will feature Kotobuki Soga no Taimen (寿曾我対面), Onmyoji (陰陽師), and Fuinkiri (ふいんきり).



Table 6 Analysis Poster SSIC “Kabuki Tour”

VISUAL SIGN	DESCRIPTION, OBJECT, AND INTERPRETATION
	<p>Description: SSIC logo, ‘Kabuki Tour’ typography, and 新年 (shin'nen).</p> <p>Objects and Interpretation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Icon: Use of kanji and English because the activity is international. The typography of the title ‘Kabuki Tour’ is sans-serif, giving it a semi-formal and friendly impression. The typography of the kanji and SSIC is serif, giving it a formal impression. - Index: The activity is organized by SSIC from Sophia University. - Symbol: The SSIC logo from Sophia University.
	<p>Description: Pink typography containing information about the date and day of the activity.</p> <p>Object and Interpretation: Information to remember.</p>
	<p>Description: White typography contains explanatory information about the activities to be carried out.</p> <p>Objects and Interpretation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Icon: The information emphasizes Kabuki as the main topic of the poster and explains the activities so that they match the expectations of prospective participants. The use of Japanese provides an approach for local students. The English explanation also provides an approach and makes it easier for international students to read. - Symbol: The black background gives a formal impression and the white typography provides a suitable contrast.
	<p>Description: Typography containing registration fee information.</p> <p>Object and Interpretation: The nominal fee to be paid.</p>
	<p>Description: White typography with orange outline containing the word “application” and a QR code for registration.</p> <p>Object and Interpretation: QR code to be scanned.</p>
	<p>Description: Black Japanese typography contains information about a collection of kabuki theater names in a yellowish-white square.</p> <p>Object and Interpretation: Has no relevant meaning on the poster.</p>
	<p>Description: Black Japanese typography that is illegible.</p> <p>Object and Interpretation: Has no relevant meaning on the poster.</p>
	<p>Description: Illustration of Taiko (太鼓), a traditional Japanese drum in yellow with red and dark blue outlines.</p> <p>Object and Interpretation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Icon: Illustration of Taiko (太鼓), a traditional Japanese drum. - Symbol: Taiko (太鼓) can also be read as taiko (太閤), which means advisor to the Japanese Emperor. It has no connection to any theme in kabuki activities.
	<p>Description: Illustration of a cherry blossom, pink in color with a green stem.</p> <p>Objects and Interpretation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Icon: Illustration of a cherry blossom. - Symbol: Cherry blossoms are interpreted as beauty and transience. They are related to the theme of Onmyoji (陰陽師), which is the kabuki theme for activities, depicting the Yin-Yang connection as temporary beauty and the cycle of nature. It is

also related to the theme of Fuinkiri (封印切), which is the kabuki theme for the activity, depicting the love and loyalty between Chubei (忠兵衛) and Umegawa (梅川).



Description: Illustration of rice, yellow in color.

Object and Interpretation:

- **Icon:** Illustration of rice.

- **Symbol:** Rice is related to the theme of Kotobuki Soga no Taimen (寿曾我対面), which is the kabuki theme for the activity, depicting how rice cultivation during the Asuka period was reserved for powerful clans such as the Soga clan.

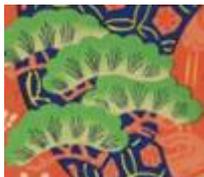


Description: Illustration of a Tancho crane (丹頂), a combination of white, red, and dark blue colors.

Object and Interpretation:

- **Icon:** Illustration of a Tancho crane (丹頂).

- **Symbol:** The Tancho crane is often associated with the aristocracy in Japan and the country of Japan, where “丹” means red and “頂” means crown or head. It is related to the theme of Kotobuki Soga no Taimen (寿曾我対面), which is the theme of kabuki for activities, depicting the Soga clan's ties to the aristocracy.



Description: Illustration of a pine tree, a combination of light green and white, dark blue, and pink colors.

Objects and Interpretation:

- **Icon:** Illustration of pine tree leaves, branches, and trunk.

- **Symbol:** The pine tree is interpreted as bringing good luck and longevity. It is related to the theme of Fuinkiri (封印切), which is the kabuki theme for the activity, depicting the love and loyalty between Chubei (忠兵衛) and Umegawa (梅川).



Description: Poster layout: organizer logo at the top center, activity title below the organizer logo, creative illustration on the left, and left-aligned typography.

Objects and Interpretation:

- **Icon:** The headline or activity title is centered at the top with the organizer's logo so that it is easily visible. The illustration is separated by a white torn paper texture, creating a sense of separation from the typography. The typography is set to left align, which looks harmonious with the illustration border on the left side of the poster. The square shape in the upper right corner also gives a sense of separation, but the information inside it is not legible. The poster's hierarchy starts from the organizer's logo, activity title, illustration, and activity information (from left to right).

Source: Researchers' Analysis (2025)

It was concluded that the posters for these activities were visual representations of the themes of the upcoming kabuki performances, namely Kotobuki Soga no Taimen (寿曾我対面), Onmyoji (陰陽師), and Fuinkiri (封印切). This finding is evident in the visual components that are closely related to the themes of the kabuki performances, such as illustrations of taiko drums, cherry blossoms, rice, Tancho cranes, and pine trees.

Discussion

Both universities offer international programs and communicate these programs through poster media. The analysis shows that there are several similarities and differences in the design of each university activity poster, but the meaning of the poster design is conveyed well. The following is an explanation of the differences found between the international activity posters of Petra Christian University and Sophia University. In terms of element placement, the Petra Christian University poster



separates the organizer's logo and the headline or activity title, while Sophia University combines them into a single headline. This difference arises because Petra emphasizes design creativity, while Sophia prioritizes practical communication. In addition, Petra's poster is designed vertically because the promotional media is in the form of DiVO (digital screen display in portrait format) distributed around the campus, while Sophia's poster is designed horizontally because it has to be posted on campus boards, which require a horizontal format for visual effectiveness—more in line with eye level and following the reading direction from left to right and top to bottom. However, the vertical format used by Petra is considered more prominent because of its uniqueness.

In terms of visual content, Petra's poster is dominated by illustrations and visual elements because it was designed by Visual Communication Design students, who are accustomed to conveying messages implicitly through images. In contrast, the Sophia poster uses more text and images because it was designed by students from the Liberal Arts faculty, who rely more on verbal communication with subtle visual touches. The visual components in the Petra poster are global and tend to be abstract, following current design trends. Meanwhile, the Sophia poster highlights local elements such as Japanese letters and visual forms that represent Japanese fauna, reflecting their cultural identity.

Even so, there are several similarities between the two posters. Both place the organizer's logo at the top in a relatively small size to maintain aesthetic balance while showing the organizer's identity. The headline or title of the activity on both posters is also made large with a unique typographic design to create a focal point that attracts the audience's attention. Both use English as the main language in the poster, as a form of invitation to international students, not just local students. In addition, the selection of vibrant colors and contrast between the text and background is used to increase visual appeal while making the information easier to read. Both also apply a grid system in their design—such as column grid, hierarchical grid, and modular grid—to create a structured, efficient, yet aesthetic layout.

Conclusion

Based on the results of the research and discussion, it can be concluded that Peirce's semiotic theory or method offers better understanding of the meaning of a poster design through analysis of the visual components contained therein. Semiotic analysis of each poster from Petra Christian University and Sophia University shows that the elements of signs, namely icons, indices, and symbols, are used effectively and creatively to build a design aesthetic that is relevant to the message to be conveyed and contains the explicit or implicit meaning of the poster. In terms of sign classification, it can be concluded that Petra Christian University and Sophia University tend to use the icon classification, followed by the symbol classification, and finally the index classification.

Through the points of difference and similarity that have been explained, Petra Christian University and Sophia University demonstrate consistency in their designs and have very different design characteristics. There is a term 'Nihon-Teki Dezain' (日本的デザイン) in Japan, where Japanese designers try to apply this term as a design characteristic that can represent how designers 'see Japan' (Nakagawa, 1939). As for Indonesia, Indonesian designers create designs that follow trends so that the designs can attract the attention of the audience. However, despite their different characteristics, both have the same goal in creating a poster for international activities, which is to promote international activities by attracting the attention of local and international students.

Further research is expected to broaden the scope of objects, not just limited to one object such as posters, so that it can add more diverse scientific knowledge. It is also expected to provide information on various countries of interest, such as Europe or other countries, so that it can attract Indonesians who are interested in certain countries.

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