

## Conference Paper

# Mega Shifts in the Business Pivot in Visual Communication Design Subsector during the COVID-19 Pandemic

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**Abstract**

COVID-19 has brought about a number of changes in people's lifestyles and business pivots, specifically in the Visual Communication Design (VCD) subsector of the creative industry. This study aimed to determine those changes. The first step is to identify the new business pivot; next, look for future business opportunities so that the businesses can sustain and grow. The study uses a phenomenological method that specializes in visible phenomena and realities to examine their explanations. The method explores data to find the meaning of the primary and essential things of the phenomenon, reality or events experienced by the object of the research. The results of this study indicated four new lifestyles in the new normal era: (1) Staying at home; (2) Staying at the bottom of the pyramid; (3) Going virtual; and (4) Being an emphatic society. As such, the new lifestyle influences the changes in the VCD-business pivot. Designers can change the business pivot to survive during the pandemic, including designing masks, personal protective equipment/hazmat suit, making posters and comic strips including quotes motivating people to face the pandemic, etc.

**Keywords:** business pivot, visual communication, COVID-19 pandemic

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## 1. Introduction

Pandemic Corona Virus Disease 2019, from now on, referred to as Covid-19, has changed the way of life of humans, including the economic behavior of the community. This pandemic situation forces humans to behave in a new normal way. It also applies to the creative industry, especially in the Visual Communication Design (VCD) subsector. In no time, freelancers lose income due to job cancellations. The condition is exacerbated by the absence of a protective net against them (Krisis Covid-19: Pekerja Film Hingga Desainer Grafis Kehilangan Pendapatan Hingga Pertengahan Tahun, 2020).

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This condition is reflected in the results of an online survey conducted by the Media and Creative Industry Workers Union for Democracy from March 20 to April 4 on freelancers from various sub-sectors of the media and creative industries who have lost their jobs cancellation of projects due to the pandemic. During the survey period, 139 freelancers in various big cities admitted that they had no income to survive. The creative industry subsectors that experienced the most job cancellations due to the Covid-19 crisis were a film, video, audio (17.35 percent); performing arts (10.8 percent); vocal arts and music (9.4 percent); photography (9.4 percent), research (7.2 percent), and visual communication design (7.2 percent).

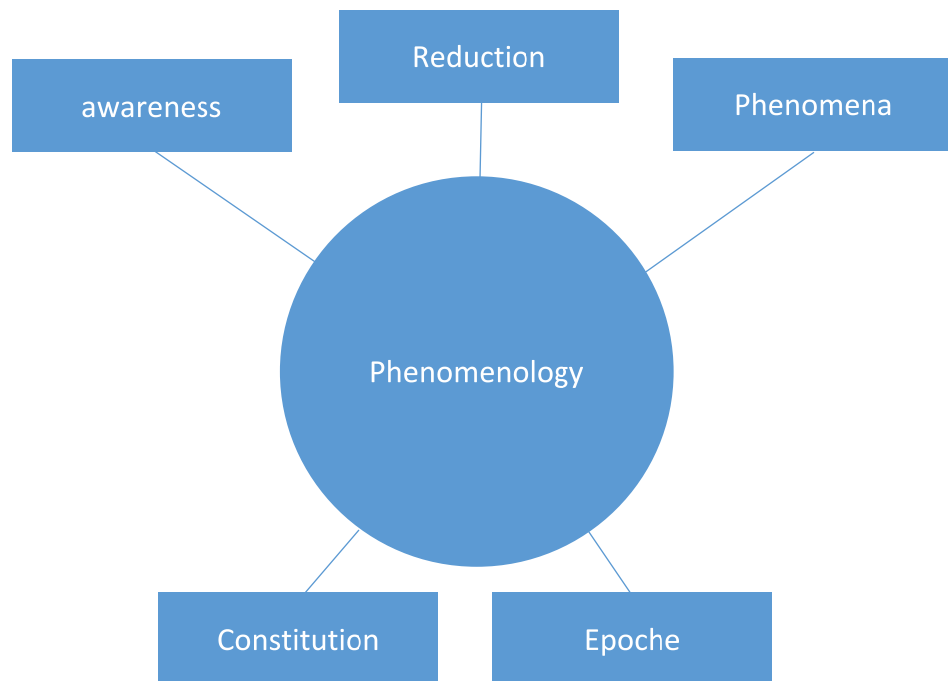
Visual communication design is a sector with very large freelancers and in-house workers in Indonesia (Yon Ade Lose Hermanto., 2020). The right tools are needed to collect orders to help the affected designers, exceptionally orders with a small value. It is due to the declining economic condition of the community due to the Covid-19 pandemic—consumer Behavior changes when there are restrictions in various fields of business (Yuswohadi dkk., 2020). The sluggish economy meant that design orders also declined. They resulted in design workers losing their jobs.

The existence and the role of designs are considered to be a solution to problems in society (Yon Ade Lose Hermanto., 2020). Design cannot be separated from human life. Various aspects that exist in the design become a part of applied art, which has goals and benefits to overcome problems in society. However, when the economy's wheels stagnate in a pandemic, alternative solutions must be sought so that workers in this subsector can still get design orders and survive with their creative abilities (Hermanto, 2019).

## 2. Method

This study uses a phenomenological method. The phenomenological method is a research method that specializes in visible phenomena and realities to study the phenomena in them. Phenomenology explores data to find the meaning of the primary and essential things of the phenomenon, reality, or experience experienced by the object of research. Stanley Deetz (Deetz, 1981) puts forward the essence of phenomenology. First, knowledge is conscious. Knowledge is not inferred from experience but is found directly in the experience of consciousness. Second, the meaning of something consists of the potentials in a person's life how a person's relationship with an object will determine how the object's meaning to the person concerned. Third, language is a means for the emergence of meaning. We experience the world and express it

through language. There are several basic concepts to understand phenomenology that need to be understood, including the concept of phenomena, epoche, constitution, consciousness, and reduction. The relationship between these concepts can be seen, as shown below:



## 2.1. Phenomena

Etymologically, the term phenomenon comes from the Greek word: *phaenesthai*, which means to raise, to exalt, to show itself. According to Heidegger (Moustakas, 1994), the term phenomenon, which is also formed from the term *phaino*, means bringing to light, placing on the light, showing itself within itself, the totality of what appears behind us in light. Objects that appear in consciousness blend with objects that exist naturally so that meaning is created and knowledge is developed.

## 2.2. Awareness

Consciousness is the ability to treat the subject to become an object for himself or to be objective about himself (Bagus, 2002). The nature of consciousness, when rediscovering presence, the reality of consciousness that finally the word, and the meaning of “consciousness” will show (Berthens, 1987).

### 2.3. Constitution

The constitution is a process that seems a phenomenon into consciousness (Bertens, 1981: 202). It is an activity of consciousness so that reality appears. The real world is constituted by consciousness. Real reality does not mean that it exists because it is created by consciousness. However, the presence of this conscious activity is necessary for the appearance of this phenomenon to take place.

### 2.4. Epoche

Epoche is a concept developed by Husserl, which is related to efforts to reduce or delay assessment (bracketing) to bring up knowledge above every possible doubt. In line with Descartes and Kant, Husserl argued that knowledge comes from intuition, and essence precedes empirical knowledge.

### 2.5. Reduction

The reduction is a continuation of epoche. For Husserl, humans have a natural attitude that presupposes that the world exists as it is observed and encountered.

## 3. Findings and Discussion

From the data obtained, there are four new normal lifestyles during the Covid-19 pandemic, namely New Lifestyle: Staying at Home, staying at the Bottom of the Pyramid, Going Virtual, Society of Empathic. Meanwhile, in each of these lifestyles, several trends are currently happening, which are presented in the table below:

TABLE 1

New lifestyle: Staying at home	Staying at the bottom of the pyramid	Going virtual	Being an empathic Society
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Fall of Mobility. The rise of Stay at Home</li> <li>• Online shopping: from wants to needs</li> <li>• Going Omni</li> <li>• Do It Yourself/self-care</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Jamu</i> is a new popular drink</li> <li>• The Future of Travelling</li> <li>• The century of Self Distancing</li> <li>• Contact-free lifestyle</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The podcast and Virtual experience</li> <li>• Online Education Course</li> <li>• Flexibility in Working Hours</li> <li>• The Emerging of Virtual-Social</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The of Solidarity and Empathy</li> <li>• More Religious</li> </ul>

### **3.1. New lifestyle: Stay at home**

During the pandemic, the Health protocol creates stringent restrictions on activities outside the home, forcing people to stay at home. With these conditions, new lifestyles and habits emerge from the community. Based on research data, there are several new normal lifestyles from this category:

#### **3.1.1. The rise of Stay at Home and the Fall of Mobility**

The impact of staying at home economy causes the most significant disruption in human history. As a result, most of the industries collapsed (fall), while a small proportion of them overgrew (rise). As a marketer/entrepreneur, we have to jump from “the fall” to “the rise”.

#### **3.1.2. Online shopping: from wants to needs**

The shift in consumer behaviour towards online purchases of daily necessities such as groceries, and daily needs will significantly increase the volume of the online market. For companies that provide these goods, now is the time to apply the DTC (direct to customer) channel model, not just relying on the existing marketplace. Remember, “channel is the brand”.

#### **3.1.3. Omni more popular**

With the growing online market due to COVID-19, the official store feature in various marketplaces will be increasingly crowded and in demand by consumers.

#### **3.1.4. DIY / self-care**

Consumer preference for enjoying beauty services has shifted to home-treatment. In addition, people are more concerned with health, and certified organic products will be more desirable.

### 3.2. Staying at the Bottom of the Pyramid

Referring to Maslow's pyramid, consumers are now shifting their needs from the "top of the pyramid", namely self-actualization and esteem, to the "base of the pyramid", namely food, health, and body and soul safety. Maslow's diagram can be seen in the image below:



During the pandemic, most people shift their needs to the lower level or level of needs, which are called Physiological needs and Safety needs. Some of the trends that occur in this phenomenon are:

#### 3.2.1. New popular drink: Jamu

After the recent crisis, the trend of drinking herbal medicine becomes the new normal. Contemporary herbal cafes like Acaraki in Jakarta is booming. So people hanging out while drinking herbs or meeting at herbal cafes become commonplace. Hanging out by drinking this herbal herbs is becoming part of leisure.

#### 3.2.2. The future of travelling

The way people travel has changed permanently after COVID-19. Tourism actors must change their approaches and strategies based on new changes in behaviour. Vacation preferences will shift to alternative vacations that are not many people, such as staycations, solo travel tours, wellness tours, as well as virtual tourism.

### **3.2.3. The self-distancing century**

The use of masks will become increasingly mainstream and become a new lifestyle. It is an opportunity for brands, especially fashion, to make fashionable masks with unique designs.

### **3.2.4. New lifestyle: contact-free**

The contact-free economy will create a new model of contact-free business with vast opportunities because the market is still a blue ocean. Some of the booming businesses include: contactless delivery services, virtual music concerts, virtual MICE (meetings, incentives, conferences, exhibitions), virtual reality, and augmented reality start-ups, as well as robot & automation start-ups.

## **3.3. Almost every day going virtual**

With the COVID-19, consumers avoid physical human contact; they are now using virtual/digital media. Some of the trends that are currently happening are:

### **3.3.1. The podcast and virtual experience**

The Out of Home (OOH) entertainment business seems to need a long time to recover. Meanwhile, consumers need entertainment. The personalized event business will boom because it offers the experience. Virtual experience does not only apply to music concerts but also in the MICE industry (meetings, incentives, conferences, exhibitions).

### **3.3.2. Online education course**

If physical schools are no longer relevant, the online learning / online course platform which is equipped with licensed certification will boom. Parents prefer to send their children to school because parents can directly monitor their children's milestones.

### **3.3.3. Flexible working hours**

The gig economy will boom, freelance workers are increasingly in demand, multi-tasking work will become a new habit. Millennials and Gen-Z will be increasingly interested in

fields of work and skills that can be done freelance. There was a new tradition of working as a “multi-company”, that is, working remotely in several companies simultaneously.

### **3.3.4. The emergence of virtual-social**

During the quarantine period, people are prone to boredom. Moreover, life is not dynamic and monotonous. The solution is VirSocial activity: socializing and virtual community. New businesses will be born from this trend, such as VirSocial sports, VirSocial games, VirSocial entertainment, VirSocial cooking, to VirSocial wellbeing.

## **3.4. Emphatic society**

The COVID-19 crisis is the most devastating humanitarian disaster of this century, with a massive loss of human life. Humanity around the world was touched to see hundreds of thousands of victims die around the world. So many people are anxious, afraid, and have difficulties in life. The lesson is that COVID-19 has created social solidarity and solidarity. COVID-19 creates a sense of fate and commitment that creates a common goal to fight it, such as the following points:

### **3.4.1. The society of solidarity and empathy**

Caring, empathy, and love are now the most powerful brand-building tools during the epidemic. By making an impact and providing solutions to the difficulties experienced by society, the company will gain a reputation as a responsible and empathetic brand.

### **3.4.2. More Religious**

Brands can add spiritual value/benefit to their value proposition in an increasingly religious society. That way, the brand can create a spiritual connection with consumers. Brands should provide solution for consumers by providing peace or peace of mind.

## **4. Conclusions and Suggestions**

From the data obtained, it is known that the changing lifestyle of consumers affects various industrial sectors, including the DKV subsector, which is also affected. Designers lose orders in times of pandemic. Many companies went out of business, so their needs



for promotion, publication, and information related to visual communication stopped. Automatically designers also lose their income because of this. However, there are loopholes that designers can exploit during this crisis. The future business opportunities that are presented based on the data that have been presented can be used as a basis for the designers to stay afloat. Armed with knowledge about the lifestyle of people who can become clients, small-scale design projects are still up-and-coming but need to be managed in order to flow by creating an application that can bring together the client community with the right designer to communicate, consult, to deal with projects.

To support the performance of designers, especially freelancers, an alternative solution that can be done is to create an application with features that make it easier for clients and designers to reach an agreement on design projects, especially small ones. This application is an e-marketplace application with a scope of visual communication design which is popular in the community.

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