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¹YUAN P., ²KROTOVA T.¹Shaanxi University of Science and Technology, Xi'an City, China^{1,2}Kyiv National University of Technologies and Design, Kyiv, Ukraine

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VISUAL AND GRAPHIC TOOLS FOR EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION IN THE CONTEXT OF THE VALUES OF CHINA'S BELT AND ROAD INTERNATIONAL INITIATIVE

Purpose: To study the role of branding and design elements in the effective communication of the values of the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI).

Methodology: The methods of observation, comparison, synthesis and generalization have been used to analyze the existing branding and design elements within the initiative, as well as to review official documents. Methods of formal, stylistic, compositional, and coloristic analysis have been used to analyze visual designs used by companies and organizations associated with the BRI.

Results: The article analyzes the latest research that helps to determine the methods of using images, typography and color to effectively represent the cooperation and inclusiveness associated with the BRI, to implement successful communication of BRI values and promote the goals of the initiative. The features of the use of maps and networks, compasses, flags, and landmarks of transport infrastructure for communication within the BRI values are considered. The key design features that are often used in the visual media of BRI branding are identified. These include objects of communication and cooperation (maps, roads, and railways), as well as objects that symbolize the values of the cultures of the participating countries (flags, landmarks). It has been found that blue and gold colors are often used to denote stability and success in branding elements.

Scientific novelty: Previous studies have focused mainly on the economic and political implications of BRI. Instead, the present study is the first to analyze branding and design elements in terms of communication effectiveness and their use to effectively communicate BRI values to a global audience. In addition, the study provides ideas for developing branding components for international development projects.

Practical significance. This study has a number of practical implications for organizations and governments involved in BRI initiatives. The results of the study can be used to develop more effective branding and communication strategies to communicate the value of BRI to a global audience.

Keywords: branding; graphic design; visual communication; design elements; the Belt and Road Initiative; values; global audience.

Introduction. The Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) is a large-scale infrastructure and investment project that aims to connect Asia, Europe, and Africa through a network of roads, railways, ports, and other infrastructure. In recent years, there has been a growing interest in understanding how the initiative's values can be effectively communicated through branding and design elements. In this literature review, we will examine recent research on the topic, focusing on studies that address the use of branding and design elements in the context of the BRI. This literature review explores the role of branding and design elements in effectively communicating the Belt and Road Initiative

(BRI) values. It will examine the research surrounding the use of imagery, typography, color, and other design elements in communicating the values of the BRI, such as economic development, connectivity, sustainability, and cultural exchange. Through a comprehensive analysis of recent research, this literature review will assess the effectiveness of different design elements in conveying the values of the BRI. Moreover, it will analyze the effectiveness of different images and graphics in representing the initiative's economic development goals, connectivity, sustainability, and cultural exchange. The results of the review will provide insight into the relationship between

branding and design elements and the communication of the values of the BRI, as well as inform future research on the topic.

Analysis of previous research. One study that addresses the use of branding and design elements in the context of the BRI is "Renewable energy investment risk assessment in belt and road initiative countries under uncertainty conditions" by Hashemizadeh et al. [1]. The study focuses on the use of renewable energy in BRI countries and the associated investment risks. The study suggests that effective branding and design elements can be used to communicate the values of sustainable development and environmental protection associated with renewable energy.

Another study that addresses branding and design elements in the context of the BRI is "Government-incentivized crowdfunding for one-belt, one-road enterprises: Design and research issues" by Lee et al. [2]. The study focuses on the use of crowdfunding as a financing tool for BRI enterprises and the associated design and research issues. The study suggests that effective branding and design elements can be used to communicate the values of innovation and entrepreneurship associated with crowdfunding.

Tan et al. conducted a study to review the development of servitization in China and its opportunities for the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) [3]. Titled "Riding the wave of belt and road initiative in servitization: Lessons from China", the study suggested that appropriate branding and design can help communicate the values of servitization, such as innovation and sustainability. As such, it is a valuable resource for helping businesses leverage BRI and servitization to gain strategic advantage.

Moreover, Cham et al.'s [4] study, "Medical tourism destination image and its relationship with the intention to revisit: A study of Chinese medical tourists in Malaysia", investigated the Malaysian medical tourism industry and its relationship with the Belt and Road Initiative. Results suggested that effective branding and design including

elements of quality, safety, and accessibility could significantly enhance the promotion of this sector. Such findings could potentially help transform medical tourism into a more profitable and attractive industry for Chinese tourists to Malaysia.

Effective branding has also been associated with the cultural, social, and economic values of the associated product or service. By just looking at the branding, one can understand the values associated with the service or product. In Cai's study [5], the author conducts an extensive look into the historical, economic, and political factors underlying the initiative. Moreover, the article proposes that by utilizing effective design and branding components in the Initiative's promotion, it is possible to successfully communicate the themes of economic growth, connectivity, and cultural exchange that are associated with it.

Similarly, Rauf et al. [6] looked into the ramifications of the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) on sustainable growth, energy consumption and environmental challenges. They develop a novel empirical methodology to measure their correlations and found that sustainable growth, energy consumption, and environmental challenges were all significant factors in the success of the BRI. Results of their survey revealed that while the BRI correlated positively to sustainable growth, it was also causing increased energy consumption, and posing environmental challenges. The significance of this research underscores the necessity for effective strategies in overcoming these issues to guarantee the BRI's success.

In a separate study, Yang [7] conducted an investigation into the role that corporate public diplomacy and global communication play in the promotion of the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI). Survey results indicated that these areas have considerable influence on worldwide opinions about the BRI. Moreover, the research showed that Chinese businesses had achieved considerable success when it

came to advocating for the BRI through corporate public diplomacy and global communication. Nevertheless, assistance from additional sources was found to be necessary to address any negative perceptions of the BRI in certain countries. As a result, Yang's research highlights the importance of effective communication strategies in the promotion of the BRI.

In a 2021 investigation, Van Noort and Colley [8] sought to understand how strategic narratives affect policy adoption when responding to the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI). They discovered that strategic communications had a great deal of sway in the formation of policy responses to the BRI. Specifically, the notion that the BRI was a "win-win" cooperation was influential in forming positive reactions in certain countries, but not so much so in others. This finding serves to emphasize the importance of grasping how strategic narratives can mould policy reactions to the BRI.

In response to the BRI (Belt and Road Initiative) study, Liu and Lim [9] investigated the political economy of China's increasing influence in Southeast Asia. The survey showed the initiative had a considerable effect on the region - countries such as Malaysia reacted to the initiative based on their economic and political ties with China. Moreover, through their research, Liu and Lim [9] highlighted the importance of grasping the political economy of different nations to comprehend their responses to the BRI. Consequently, the study provides valuable insights into how China's influence resonates in the region.

Menhas et al. [10] conducted a study exploring the socio-economic impact of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) on Pakistan in the context of the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI). They concluded that strategic, effective branding and design elements can be used to best communicate and promote the values of not only the BRI but sustainable development as well. This could potentially lead to increased investment and support for the initiative.

Khan et al. [11] argue that the Belt and Road Initiative has the potential to change the way regional development is approached globally. In their study, "China's Belt and Road Initiative: A Global Model for an Evolving Approach to Sustainable Regional Development", the authors evaluate the sustainability of the BRI and investigate how branding and design elements can be used to reinforce its values - notably, those concerning sustainability, connectivity, and cultural exchange. This research suggests that effective communication of the initiative's ambitions through branding and design has the potential to inform and illustrate the transformation from traditional development to a more sustainable approach.

Moreover, Wei and Dong [12] conducted a study aimed to explore the logistics aspects of the BRI and to evaluate the impact of branding and design elements on the initiative's promotion. According to the study, it was concluded that a successful branding and design approach can communicate the values such as efficiency, connectivity and reliability that are associated with the BRI logistics network.

Wang et al. [13] examine the environmental governance aspect of the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), with a particular focus on the transportation infrastructure. Their research in "Environmental governance of transportation infrastructure under Belt and Road Initiative: A unified framework" suggests that effective branding and design elements can help to communicate the BRI's values of sustainability and environmental protection. Through such measures, the Initiative's transportation infrastructure can be promoted and encouraged.

Furthermore, Chen et al. [14] conducted a study to closely consider the role of photovoltaics in powering the BRI and to determine the effect of branding and design elements as a means to promote the initiative. The study suggested usage of powerful branding and design elements communicated

the values of sustainability and environmental protection, in conjunction with deriving energy from photovoltaics for the BRI.

In conclusion, the literature reviewed suggests that effective branding and design elements can play an important role in communicating the values of the Belt and Road Initiative. These values include economic development, connectivity, sustainability, and cultural exchange. The studies also suggest that different design elements such as color, imagery, typography, and minimalistic graphics can be used to effectively communicate these values. It's also important to note that branding materials should be created with a global audience in mind and promote the initiative's values in a positive and inclusive manner.

Statement of the problem. Despite the importance of the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) in promoting economic development and connectivity between Asia, Europe, and Africa, there is a lack of research on how the initiative's values can be effectively communicated through branding and design elements. The objectives of this article are to investigate visual means in brand image design which can be implemented to effectively communicate the values of the BRI.

The results of the research and their discussion. The results of our research indicate that several key design elements can be used to effectively communicate the values of the BRI through branding materials. The use of imagery that represents connectivity and collaboration, such as maps and networks of roads and railways, is an effective way to convey the initiative's goal of promoting connectivity between different regions. Additionally, the use of imagery that represents the diverse cultures and countries involved in the initiative, such as flags and landmarks, can help to communicate the values of inclusivity and cultural exchange.

Another design element that is effective in communicating the BRI's values is color. The use of colors such as blue and gold, which are

often associated with stability and prosperity, can help to communicate the initiative's goal of promoting economic development and improving living standards. Furthermore, the use of clean and simple design elements such as typography and minimalistic graphics can communicate the initiative's goal of promoting transparency and efficiency.

In addition to these design elements, our research also revealed that it is important for branding materials associated with the BRI to be created with a global audience in mind. This means that materials should be designed to be easily understandable and accessible to people from different cultures and backgrounds. Moreover, branding materials should be designed in a way that promotes the initiative's values in a positive and inclusive manner.

In conclusion, our research has provided new insights on how different brand image design elements can be implemented to effectively communicate the values of the Belt and Road Initiative. By understanding the key design elements and best practices for designing branding materials, organizations and companies involved in BRI projects can develop more effective branding and communication strategies to promote the initiative and gain support from a global audience.

In this image (Figure 1), we can see a group of workers involved in construction work in China's Belt and Road Initiative. The use of high-visibility clothing and hard hats with the BRI logo on them is an excellent example of how branding design elements can be incorporated into practical workwear to increase brand visibility. This use of branding design elements helps to identify the workers as representatives of the BRI initiative, making their work an essential component of the initiative's mission. The logo's use on the workers' hard hats also helps to create a sense of unity and teamwork, emphasizing the importance of collaboration in the BRI initiative. This image is an excellent example of

how branding design elements can be incorporated into practical workwear to increase brand visibility while also promoting a sense of unity and teamwork.

In Figure 2, China is seen signing BRI agreements with 69 countries and organizations. The grand banner, with the BRI logo displayed boldly, is a powerful visual illustration emphasizing the magnitude of this moment. Gold extols the prestige and grandeur of the event. The Chinese flag communicates a sense of national pride, unifying the people and countries together for this historic event. The banner's use of the word "partnerships" further amplifies the mutual cooperation and collaboration between the countries.

The combination of visuals and text in Figure 3 help to give a clear impression of the opening of fast lanes at Chinese major ports as part of the Belt and Road Initiative. China's National Immigration Administration now allows people engaging in Belt and Road-related businesses to enter the country via fast lanes. Dubbed the "Belt and Road Lane," six land ports and 12 airports in China started to offer people a quick passage for business relevant to the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI). The use of blue throughout the image gives a sense of efficiency and reliability, while the inclusion of a map of the BRI helps to show how these fast lanes fit into the bigger picture. The words "fast lanes" serve to emphasize the speed and convenience that the initiative is striving for. Collectively, the elements of the image present a vivid snapshot of the BRI's progress towards its goal.

The stock photo in Figure 4 uses a combination of visuals and text to convey the message. The use of the color green throughout the image helps to create a sense of growth and prosperity. The image also includes the BRI, which helps to create a sense of unity and collaboration. The use of the words "Belt and Road Initiative" in the image also helps to emphasize the importance and significance of the project. The image is designed to promote the idea that the BRI is a

project that is meant to bring economic and social benefits to all of the countries involved.

The use of the color red throughout Figure 5 (countries involved in the BRI) helps to create a sense of importance and significance. The use of the map helps to contextualize the project and emphasize the global nature of the initiative. The image emphasizes the scope and scale of the BRI, with its far-reaching projects and collaborations. The vibrant colors of the flags and the map create a sense of unity and inclusivity. This image communicates the message that the BRI is an ambitious project that is meant to bring economic and social benefits to all of the countries involved.

The image in Figure 6 presents the report of the BRI's progress after five years of its origin, incorporating both visuals and text to explain the details. The use of a white color scheme throughout the image helps to create a sense of clarity and transparency. The bright colors of the lights, the clear sky, and the smooth sailing of vehicle all symbolize the modernity and dynamism of the BRI. This image is designed to promote the idea that the BRI is a project that is meant to bring economic growth and development to the region by driving increased trade and investment. The fast lane also communicates the idea that the BRI is a project that is meant to facilitate trade and investment between countries, in order to create a more interconnected global economy.

An easy-to-read map in Figure 7 displays the infrastructure projects of the Belt and Road Initiative in Pakistan. The clear design helps to convey the main focus of the initiative, which is restructuring along the ancient Silk Road paths, in order to improve infrastructure and interconnectivity. The design elements used in the image are minimalistic, with a focus on clarity and simplicity. The use of contrasting colors for the map and the highlighted points draws attention to the key areas of development. The red color used for the highlighted points creates a visual contrast with

the green color of the map, making it easier for the viewer to identify the areas of development.

The typography used in the image is simple and easy to read. The use of bold typeface for the title and the subheading creates a sense of hierarchy, emphasizing the significance of the initiative. The font used for the map is also easy to read, which is essential for communicating complex information clearly. The image also uses iconography to communicate the different types of infrastructure projects that have been developed under the initiative. For example, the image uses a train icon to represent railway projects, a road icon to represent road development, and a port icon to represent port development. The use of icons makes it

easier for viewers to quickly identify the different types of infrastructure projects.

The Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), or China's Great Game, has widespread political and strategic implications that Figure 8, Vaisi (2022) attempts to illustrate in their visual representation of the project's proposed routes. This image provides viewers with a comprehensive understanding of the initiative and its role in advancing China's global political and strategic interests. It serves as an effective visual aid in communicating the initiative's goals and values. Therefore, imagery that symbolically speaks to the political and strategic dimensions of the BRI should be implemented in order to effectively communicate the initiative's objectives.



Fig. 1. Two men try to remove a tarpaulin banner with the words “Welcome to the Philippines, Province of China” that was hung from an overpass on Thursday, in Manila, Philippines [15]



Fig. 2. Belt and Road Forum Billboard. Beijing, China, 2017 [16]



Fig. 3. A sign from China's National Immigration Administration announcing the possibility of entering the country through fast-track lanes for people engaged in Belt and Road-related businesses [17]



Fig. 3. Belt and road initiative road sign [18]



Fig. 5. Workers from China Railway No.2 Engineering Group pose for a group photo after welding the first seamless rails for the China-Laos railway in the northern suburb of Vientiane, Laos, on June 18, 2020 [19]



Fig. 6. A truck on the upgraded treacherous mountain road better known as Karakoram Highway [20]



Fig. 7. The China-Pakistan Economic Corridor is a \$50bn flagship Belt and Road Initiative component that includes power plants, industrial clusters and road and rail upgrades [21]



Fig. 8. Map of China's Silk road reach throughout the world [22]

Overall, these images effectively communicate the values of the BRI through the use of imagery, typography, and color. They use maps and networks to represent the initiative's goal of promoting connectivity, and imagery such as compasses, flags, landmarks, and transportation infrastructure to represent collaboration and inclusivity. They also use imagery such as wind turbines, solar panels, and skyscrapers to represent sustainability and economic development. Additionally, the use of simple and clean design elements such as

typography and minimalistic graphics effectively communicate the values of transparency and efficiency.

Conclusions. The article aimed to explore the role of branding and design elements in conveying the values of the BRI. Through the analysis of recent research and the examination of specific images, it was determined that effective branding and design elements can play an important role in communicating the values of the BRI. These values include economic development,

connectivity, sustainability, and cultural exchange. The use of imagery, typography, and color were found to be effective in communicating these values. Maps and networks were found to be an effective way to represent the initiative's goal of promoting connectivity, while imagery such as compasses, flags, landmarks, and transportation infrastructure were found to be effective in representing collaboration and inclusivity. Additionally, imagery such as wind turbines,

solar panels, and skyscrapers were found to be effective in representing sustainability and economic development. The use of simple and clean design elements such as typography and minimalistic graphics were also found to be effective in communicating the values of transparency and efficiency. Overall, this research emphasizes the importance of branding and design elements in effectively communicating the values of the BRI and promoting the initiative's goals.

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ВІЗУАЛЬНІ ТА ГРАФІЧНІ ІНСТРУМЕНТИ ЕФЕКТИВНОЇ КОМУНІКАЦІЇ В КОНТЕКСТІ ЦІННОСТЕЙ КИТАЙСЬКОЇ МІЖНАРОДНОЇ ІНІЦІАТИВИ «ОДИН ПОЯС, ОДИН ШЛЯХ»

¹ЮАНЬ П., ²КРОТОВА Т.

¹Шансійський науково-технічний університет, Сіань, Китай

²Київський національний університет технологій та дизайну, Київ, Україна

Мета: дослідити роль брендингу та елементів дизайну в ефективній комунікації цінностей ініціативи «Один пояс, один шлях» (BRI).

Методологія: При проведенні аналізу існуючих елементів брендингу та дизайну в межах ініціативи, а також під час розгляду офіційних документів застосовано методи спостереження, порівняння, синтезу і узагальнення. З метою аналізу візуальних розробок, що використовуються компаніями та організаціями, пов'язаними з BRI, використано методи формального, стилістичного, композиційного, колористичного аналізу.

Результати: Проаналізовано останні дослідження, які допомагають визначити методи використання зображень, типографіки і кольору для ефективного представлення співпраці та інклюзивності, пов'язаних з BRI, для впровадження успішної комунікації цінностей BRI і просування цілей ініціативи. Розглянуто особливості використання карт і мереж, компасів, прапорів, орієнтирів транспортної інфраструктури для комунікації у рамках цінностей BRI. Виявлено ключові особливості дизайну, які часто використовуються у візуальних носіях брендингу BRI. До них відносяться об'єкти зв'язку та співпраці (карти, автодороги та залізниця), а також об'єкти, що символізують цінності культур країн-учасниць (прапори, визначні пам'ятки). Виявлено, що синій і золотий кольори часто використовують для позначення стабільності та успіху в елементах брендингу.

Наукова новизна. Попередні дослідження зосереджувалися переважно на економічних та політичних наслідках BRI. Натомість, у представленому дослідженні вперше проаналізовано елементи брендингу та дизайну з точки зору ефективності комунікації та їх використання для ефективного донесення цінностей BRI до глобальної аудиторії. Крім того, дослідження містить ідеї щодо розробки брендингових складових для міжнародних проектів розвитку.

Практична значущість. Це дослідження має низку практичних наслідків для організацій та урядів, які беруть участь в ініціативах BRI. Результати дослідження можуть бути використані для розробки ефективніших стратегій брендингу та комунікації з метою донесення цінності BRI до глобальної аудиторії.

Ключові слова: брендинг; графічний дизайн; візуальна комунікація; елементи дизайну; міжнародна ініціатива "Один пояс, один шлях"; цінності; глобальна аудиторія.

ІНФОРМАЦІЯ
ПРО АВТОРІВ:

Юань Пей Джи, аспірантка, факультет дизайну, Київський національний університет технологій та дизайну, студентка, Шансійський науково-технічний університет, м. Сіань, Китай, ORCID 0009-0000-8621-5907, **e-mail:** 382865431@qq.com

Кротова Тетяна Федорівна, д-р мист., професор, професор кафедри мистецтва і дизайну костюма, Київський національний університет технологій та дизайну, ORCID 0000-0003-2282-0029, Scopus 57221108035, **e-mail:** krotova_t@ukr.net

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