Insights from Key Stakeholders on the Development of Graphic Design Education in China

JEFF POON CHAK KIN

Research Scholar Lincoln University College Malaysia

Abstract

This research looks at how the Chinese art curriculum helps students become ready for their first jobs. The study uses questionnaires to collect information from participants (students, instructors, and art experts).

According to the results, students place a higher importance on design abilities than they do on professional skills (such as written communication, oral presentations, and critical analysis) (theory, principles, techniques, craft, etc). ...everything having to do with computers, programming, or writing code.

Therefore, art education should teach students more than only how to get their job done on time and in a professional manner, such as how to use programmes like Photoshop and web design to create effective and efficient designs. And, maybe even more importantly, the ability to effectively communicate with customers, colleagues, and superiors.

Keywords: Graphics, Design, Computer Design, Education, China

INTRODUCTION

The degree to which a programme prepares its graduates for careers in the art world is one measure of its success. The purpose of an art institution is to train the next generation of artists and art scholars. For this reason, it makes sense to analyse the Chinese art education system and how it prepares students for a career in the arts.

How can we put a price on the professional benefits of the arts education that is now readily accessible in China? How, in other words, students may contribute by pitching their enterprises on potential creative initiatives.

Corresponding Author: LEI RONGMING**.** *Research Scholar Lincoln University College Malaysia*

A criticism of schools is not the purpose of this research. Training in graphic design has several applications. Because of the wide variety in students' intended careers, there is no one best approach to art education. The purpose of this research is to gather data and do analysis.

It's true that art school isn't the best place to learn the skills you'll need to excel in your career as an employee. It might be seen as excessively materialistic to prioritise ensuring a smooth transition into professional art designer careers and enhancing earning possibilities. Educational institutions like colleges and universities also need to do their part to spread awareness and appreciation for the arts. Gaining a higher pay and financial stability is a realistic objective, but it's not the sole motivator.

Yes, it seems sense that this would happen. After all, the purpose of school is to educate more than simply how to make a livelihood; it's a place where students and professors may discuss and even discover new ideas and facts. To succeed in our careers is a byproduct, not the goal, of our academic preparation.

Literature Review

Education in graphic design in China has expanded greatly during the last seventy years. Economic change is laying the groundwork for significant cultural shifts. As a result of the country's complex nationalisation and globalisation movements, modern design in China has evolved in ways that are both familiar and unfamiliar. Higher demand for graphic designers is a direct result of the expansion of the economy and the industrial sector. There are four stages in a person's life.

1945- 1978 Meeting the Challenges Head-On

1978-1988 Challenges in Education,

1988-98 Talking to the Westerners

1998-2008 An Inheritance Worth Emphasizing

2008-Current Using modern methods and apparatuses

1945- 1978 Meeting the Challenges Head-On

The People's Republic of China has had a planned economy since it was established in 1945. Prof. Chen Hanmin from Tsinghua University (2017) argues that the design was pointless since people's primary motivation was to eat. Every facet of Chinese society, including the educational system, came under strict communist rule. If not for the free market and artistic independence,

design may have been used as party propaganda. The field of graphic design was in its infancy. In this period, there is just one primary source available. There was no denying the difficulty of the field of graphic design.

1978-1988 Challenges in Education

China's "Modern Design" may be traced back to 1978, a watershed year for the country's aesthetics. The open-door policy and reform altered the trajectory of the liberal arts curriculum. The Chinese design community started to comprehend "consumer-centered" design's basic tenets. Instead of focusing on the political realities of conventional realism, the new Chinese design looked to the consumer, to the pursuit of the meaning of life, and to the attainment of economic benefits.

1988-98 Talking to the Westerners

The market economy was given a boost in the 1990s due to extensive reform. There was an increase in private sector activity and competition, particularly in SEZs. A huge boost to the design came with the advent of the modern market economy. There has been a new period of convergence between Eastern and Western styles in Chinese design.

The cutting-edge graphic design concept was first seen in Shenzhen, a special economic zone close to Hong Kong. A new movement began in Shenzhen and spread rapidly southward when traditional arts and crafts still ruled China's design industry. In 1992, the GDC held its first "Graphic Design in China 92 Exhibition" in Shenzhen, marking a turning point for the field of graphic design in China. It was the first major exhibition of graphic design and its effects were felt all over the globe (Wang, 2018).

The late 1990s were a time of upheaval and change in China's higher education system. Universities in China were given greater freedom under the "Outline for Reform and Development of China's Education." Most federal departments and agencies delegated authority over higher education to state and regional bodies. Multiple schools in this scenario combined and were restructured in a major way with government assistance. There has been an expansion of majors and programmes at certain prestigious Chinese universities (Wong, 2005). The Central Academy of Arts & Crafts and Tsinghua University have amalgamated.

1998-2008 An Inheritance Worth Emphasizing

The turn of the century saw a number of significant events, including Beijing's successful bid for the Olympic Games, Shanghai's hosting of the APEC conference, and China's admission to the

World Trade Organization. What those major events indicated was that China was undergoing a rapid transformation. The country's cultural endeavours were flourishing, soft power was growing, the spiritual world of the people was expanding, and the cohesion force of the Chinese nation was being significantly bolstered. There was undeniable cultural diversity on display.

People weren't only looking for high-quality products, however; they also wanted something backed by a trustworthy brand and excellent customer service. They started reading symbols instead of books. When competing on a global scale, both foreign and indigenous firms look to design innovation to provide them an edge. Newspapers, periodicals, and television all had a role in the expansion of the graphic design industry into the digital sphere.

2008-Current Using modern methods and apparatuses

The 21st century was a revolutionary era. The terms "digitalization" and "networking," formerly considered theoretical, are now commonplace. A majority of the world's internet users were located in China in 2008. The internet has subtly transformed how culture is produced and disseminated. The combination of design and technology sparked increased productivity and new ideas in society. The proliferation of media will boost the visibility and importance of cultural and artistic productions.

The two-dimensionality of traditional graphic design has been pushed to the limits in favour of the three-dimensionality of contemporary works. Electrical art, including the use of sound and light, was developed to raise public consciousness. A lot of cutting-edge materials and user-friendly technology were used. Flavor and temperature are two design components that are becoming more popular.

There can be no doubt about the success of China's higher education system. Alterations in the state of the economy, the makeup of the talent pool, cultural norms, and other factors all contribute to the emergence of new challenges. To aid in the process of reforming China's educational system, I want to analyse the parallels and contrasts between eastern and western approaches to curriculum design.

RESEARCH DESIGN

Scientific inquiry here is self-modifying. The questions and suggestions in the questionnaire are tailored to the individual filling it out. Such a tactic is feasible in the digital questionnaire format. As you answer earlier questions, the system will automatically adjust the ones that follow. These questions, for instance, will be framed differently depending on whether the respondent is a

student, teacher, or working professional. Making the questionnaire flexible ensures that the questions are tailored to the experiences of the respondents, resulting in more meaningful data. Students will be required to do more self-reflection and forecasting, for instance. The questions are becoming increasingly in-depth. The solutions to these questions will come from inside, as the students go within for insight. Of course, while asking pupils, it's important to keep in mind that they may all have different points of view or misinterpret the scenario. There's a chance they'll give more weight to certain aspects of the work than others. According to the findings, students' responses are also prejudiced.

Data Collection

The surveys are stored digitally and may be sent to respondents through links. Due to COVID-19's lack of friends and family at first, this is a viable alternative. While this is true, there are a few advantages to doing surveys online. The physical anonymous questionnaire demands careful logistic to select out non- target response. But using an online poll, researchers can track IP addresses to weed out those who don't fall into one of the three groups they're looking for (fortunately, there was none, as it turned out).

Human error in data collection is also mitigated by the digital format. The convergence (mean) and dispersion may be easily seen by simply computing and assembling the digital data (standard deviation). Researchers may also benefit from the digital format by receiving instantaneous updates. When enough information has been gathered, scientists may organise it in a unified fashion that improves their ability to make sense of it.

PROCEDURES

Respondents are given a link to the survey, which they may fill out on their own time using any electronic device (including but not limited to computers, cell phones, and tablets). The questionnaire has been formatted so that it may be accessed from any mobile device. By maintaining a consistent format and design across all electronic devices, we can lessen the likelihood of irrational differences in user response.

Evidence for the Data's Validity and Trustworthiness

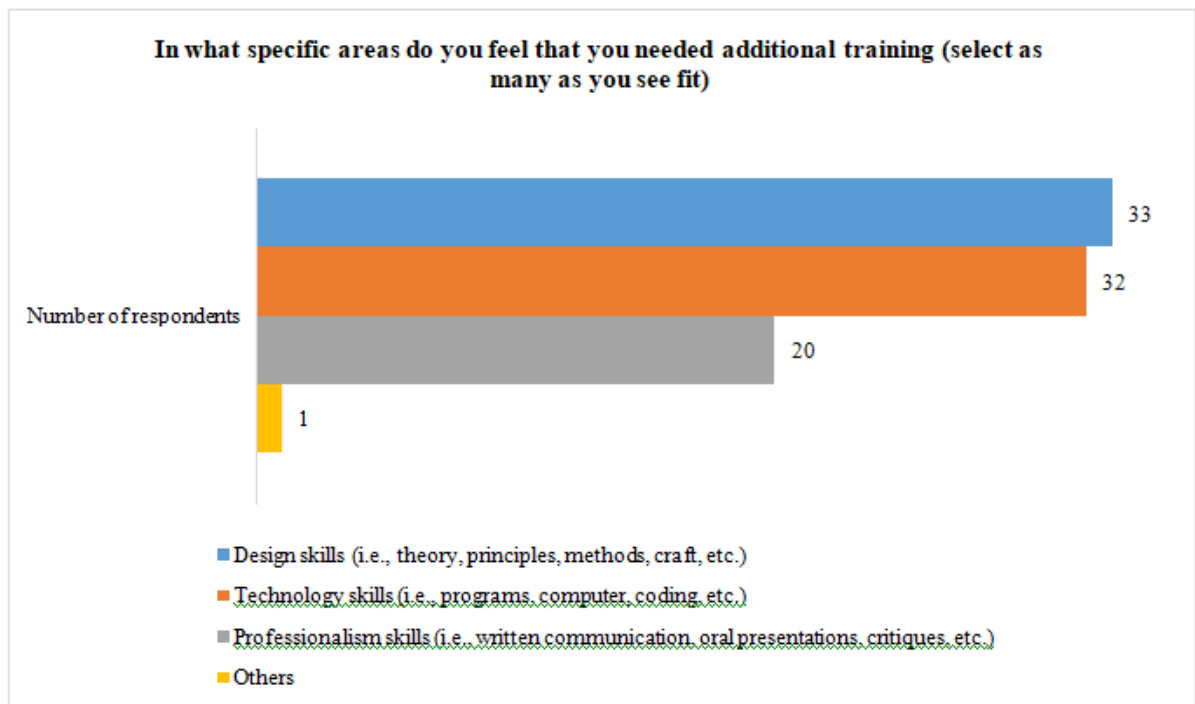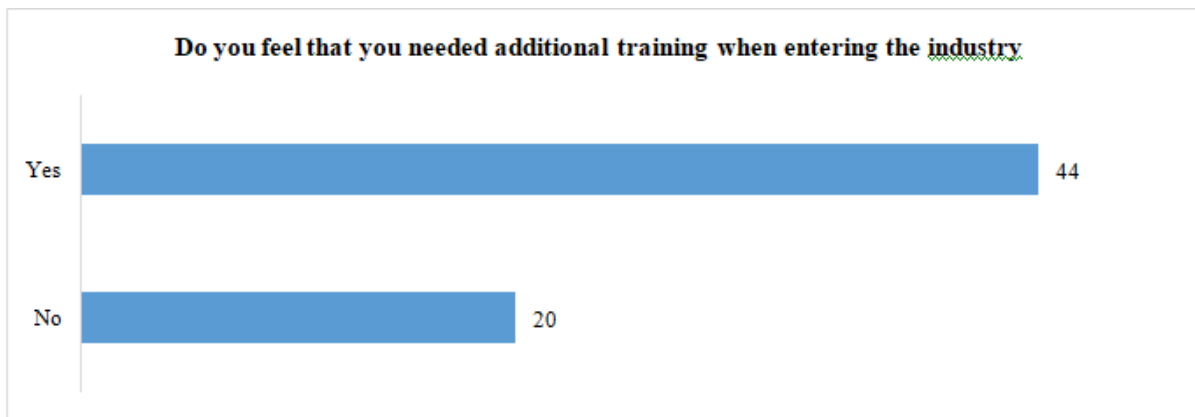The researchers behind this survey have gone to great lengths to guarantee the validity of their findings.

Researchers first make every attempt to get a statistically valid and representative sample. That's why they looked at a wide variety of sources: to lessen the possibility of discovering some

fundamental similarity that couldn't be replicated by just sampling more sources. Researchers try to circumvent this by gathering information from as many institutions and neighbourhoods as they can. Users may fill out the survey without worrying about how their answers will be used since it is anonymous. Even though identifying information wasn't required, studies nonetheless kept tabs on who and how respondents filled out the questionnaires to guarantee accurate results. Researchers checked references despite missing identifying data.
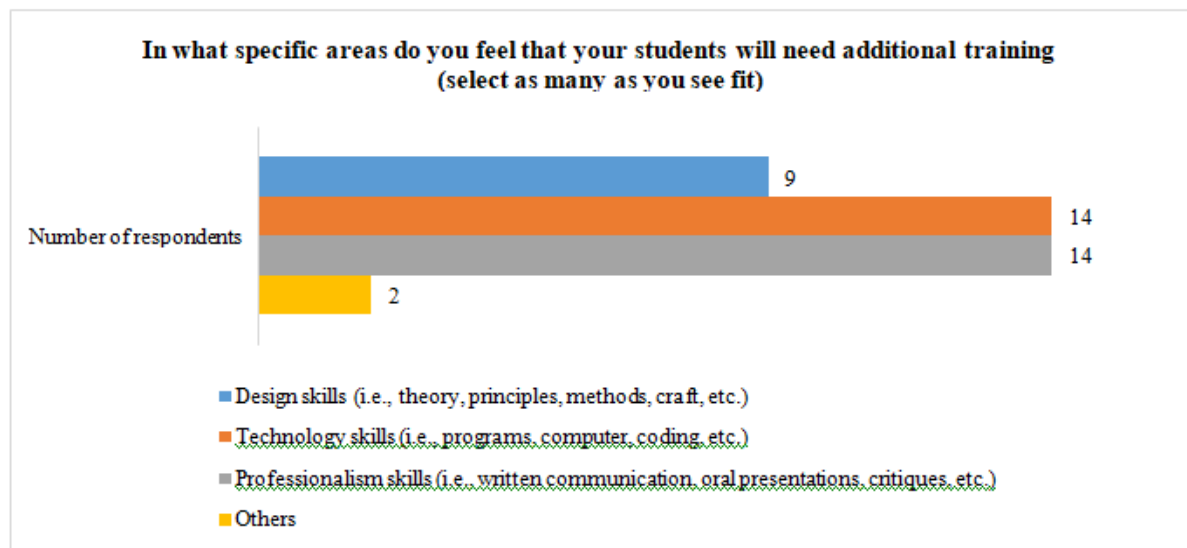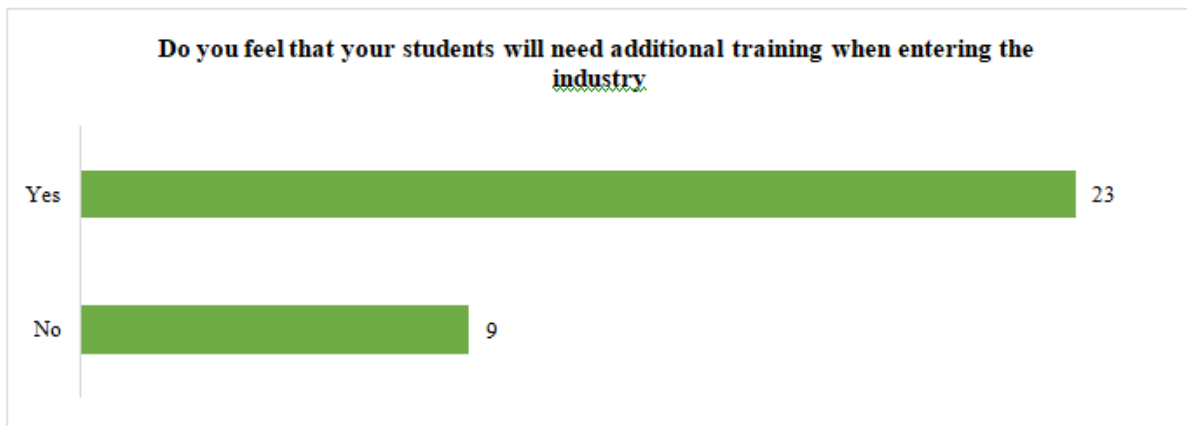
It is worth noting that surveys are intended to be interpreted subjectively. Some of the responses could be genuine, while others might be biased. An individual's perception of the value of feedback's impact might vary.

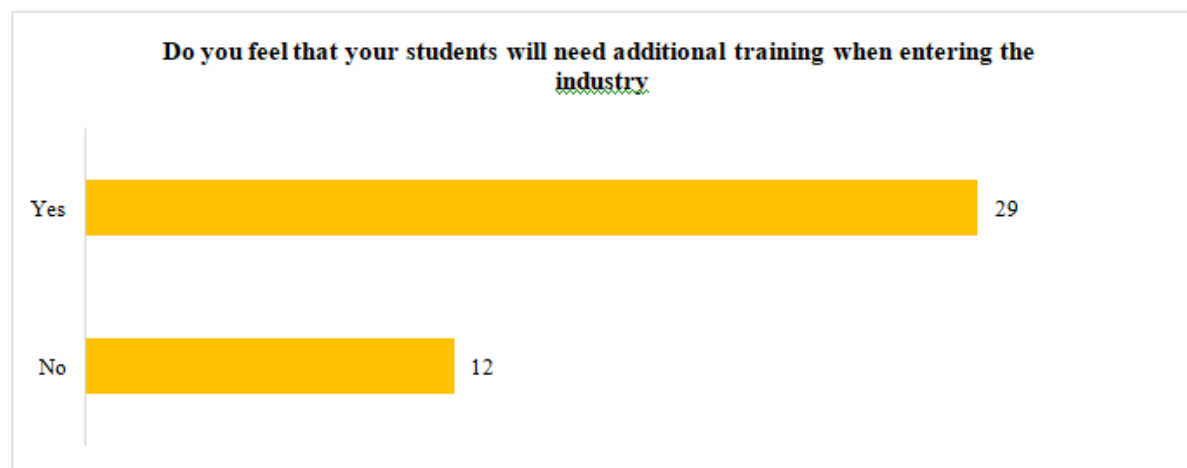## Collected Information - Learner Feedback

Reaction of Educators

Do you feel that your students will need additional training when entering the industry

Yes	23
No	9

In what specific areas do you feel that your students will need additional training (select as many as you see fit)

Number of respondents
- 9
- 14
- 14
- 2

- Design skills (i.e., theory, principles, methods, craft, etc.)
- Technology skills (i.e., programs, computer, coding, etc.)
- Professionalism skills (i.e., written communication, oral presentations, critiques, etc.)
- Others

A Reaction from Experts in the Field

Do you feel that your students will need additional training when entering the industry

Yes	29
No	12

Corresponding Author: LEI RONGMING. *Research Scholar Lincoln University College Malaysia*

In what specific areas do you feel that your students will need additional training (select as many as you see fit)

Number of respondents:
- Design skills (i.e., theory, principles, methods, craft, etc.): 23
- Technology skills (i.e., programs, computer, coding, etc.): 15
- Professionalism skills (i.e., written communication, oral presentations, critiques, etc.): 24
- Others: 3

Legend:
- ■ Design skills (i.e., theory, principles, methods, craft, etc.)
- ■ Technology skills (i.e., programs, computer, coding, etc.)
- ■ Professionalism skills (i.e., written communication, oral presentations, critiques, etc.)
- ■ Others

CONCLUSION

Two-thirds of respondents (whether they be students, teachers, or working professionals) almost always agree that students need more training before obtaining a job. There are 3 symptoms to look out for with this condition. Firstly, students have a firm grip of the nature and reality of professional obligations, despite having yet to join the industry. They understood, even as students, that formal instruction in graphic design cannot replace on-the-job experience.

The second effect is that professors see the need for their services even when they are not connected to any professional networks and may not play any role in the actual recruitment process. They are cognizant of the reality that students will need to supplement their formal education with additional training in order to succeed in the workforce. It's also possible that students have grasped this concept once professors have effectively communicated it to them. Students understand the importance of meeting this prerequisite for education.

This result supported the view held by both students and teachers that art students need supplementary training for employment. As a result of this realisation, graduates of art programmes no longer enter the job market assuming they would be hired without any further preparation.

Both positive and negative conclusions might be drawn from this data. If they can, art schools should provide their students with extra "crash courses" in the workplace. The breadth of skills necessary for different art vocations may be too broad for schools to address, yet art schools may have done their best to prepare students anyway. The general public has become used to blaming

and criticising art schools. There is just too much information and need for a single institution to fulfil everyone's needs. So that everyone may learn, schools may have to choose just the primary overlapping area. However, students using unorthodox approaches may be harmed by this.

Due to the accessibility of online learning resources, schools may theoretically employ a smaller teaching staff while yet providing the same breadth of course material. This allows the graphic design department to dedicate greater resources to provide students with supplementary professional education. From this vantage point, the high expense of duplicating physical classrooms is no longer an issue with online education. The number of available seats within the venue is no longer a bottleneck. Theoretically, therefore, online learning has the potential to serve a larger population with the same number of teachers.

In certain cases, schools may also choose to work with outside service providers. A growing number of people are interested in online education, and financial institutions are responding by investing in the sector. Because of this favourable economic climate, the number of online schools continues to grow quickly. As a consequence of their efforts, these businesses may soon have answers to the most pressing issues in online education, including the barrier that screens and webcams erect between teachers and students.

REFERENCES

[1] "Graphic Design Teaching and Learning, Learning is not an automatic consequence of teaching". PDF file.

[2] "He is a leading graphic designer in China. He has been teaching in Tsinghua University for 50 years. Every design has witnessed the progress of China!" Web Sohu, 2017, https://www.sohu.com/a/131395922_183589

[3] "Suzhou Academy of Arts and crafts: let more Chinese elements go to the world" https://www.tech.net.cn/news/show-80841.html

[4] "Two MOOC courses of Tsinghua Academy of fine arts were selected into national online excellent courses" https://www.sohu.com/a/306641644_172495

[5] Abramson, Ashley. "I Want to Be a Graphic Designer But I Can't Draw..." I Want to Be a Graphic Designer But I Can't Draw... | Rasmussen College, 4 Jan. 2017

[6] 'Dancing Beijing': Story behind 2008 Games Logo, www.chinadaily.com.cn/en/doc/2003-08/04/content_251437.htm.

[7] Duan Shenfeng. (The core is to build your own design discourse system. Sichuan Fine Arts Academy. [in Chinese], 2019

[8] Duan Zelin. Where is China's art and design education going? China Art daily [in

Chinese], 2010

[9]   Graphic Design Program, 2020, The New School Website, Available at < https://www.newschool.edu/parsons/aas-graphic-design-programs/?show=program-curriculum> [Accessed 47 April,2020]

[10]   Lin Jiayang, On design education. [in Chinese], 2000

[11]   Lin, Jiayang. "On Design Education." Art and Design Magazine, June 2000, p. 29-34. [In Chinese]

[12]   Lin, King. "Highlight: River of Wisdom." Taipei Times, 台北時報, 28 July 2011, www.taipeitimes.com/News/feat/archives/2011/07/29/2003509398.

[13] Liu, Wenliang. Zhonggong The predicament and Transcendence of the teaching of"three components". Modern education science [in Chinese], 2012.

[14] Marks, Andrea. "The Role of Writing in a Design Curriculum." AIGA, 9 Nov. 2004,www.aiga.org/the-role-of-writing-in-a-design-curriculum.

[15] Melissa Plourde Khoury and Tarek E. Khoury, Writing & Research for Graphic Designwithin Undergraduate Studies, The Lebanese American University

[16] Pan Gongkai, Pan Qing, "History of Chinese Design Education" 14 August 2018

[17] Tong, Nora. "Familiar Pattern: How Tradition Has Influenced Artist Kan Tai-Keung." South China Morning Post, 21 Nov. 2012, www.scmp.com/lifestyle/fashion-watches/article/1075322/familiar-pattern-how-tradition-has-influenced-artist-kan.

[18] Wang Pin, The discussion about understanding and education of graphic design majorin China and the West. Zhejiang Wanli University [in Chinese], 2010.

[19] Wang, Min. "Design in China After 1978." Ico, www.ico-d.org/2018/11/14/design-in-china-after-1978.php.

[20] Wendy S. Wong, Design History Society in East Asia: Part 2 Greater China: People's Republic of China/Hong Kong/Taiwan. Journal of Design History, Vol.24, No.4(2011),pp. 375-395

[21] Wendy S. Wong. Torn between Tradition and Modernity: the Future of Design Education Directions of China. International Conference on Design 566 Education: Tradition and Modernity 2005

[22] Yang, Haiyun. Reflection on the basic teaching course of graphic design. Hunan Normal University[in Chinese], 2009.

[23] Yuan, Xishi. Zhonggong Yishu Sheji Jiaoyu Fazhau Lichang Yanjiu (The Studies of the Development of Arts Design Education in China). Beijing: Beijing Polytechnic University Press [in Chinese], 2003.

[24] Zhang, Siyao. 30 years of Chinese graphic design- Review the development of graphic design in China after the reform and opening up. Jiangnan University [in Chinese], 2009.

Corresponding Author: LEI RONGMING. *Research Scholar Lincoln University College Malaysia*