

UNIVERSITI TEKNOLOGI MARA

**AN INTERVENTION
OF FUNDAMENTAL ART
KNOWLEDGE THROUGH HAPTIC
ART FOR THE BLIND**

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ABSTRACT

Social inclusion has always been neglected for blind people, especially towards art accessibility. This study investigates the function of tactile art through the touch senses and the exploration of art accessibility for blind people and visually impaired communities with the 3D-printed tactile flashcard as a prototype. It examines the feedback and the experience through art context. Information has been gathered from a research interview with the representative of the Malaysia Association for the Blind (MAB) in Kuala Lumpur to recognise the problems and issues of blind people and art. The objective of this study is to identify an in-depth review of the underlying factors of human haptic art knowledge within the context of elements of art and the principles of design, to construct strategic research tools using the procedural verbal protocol analysis and finally to formulate a theory of visual art imagery for blind people and visually impaired community, through the design activities that were conducted in the Malaysia Association for the Blind (MAB) and Association of Blind Muslim Malaysia (PERTIS), Kuala Lumpur, through their natural environment setting. A face-to-face, semi-structured interview was conducted to gain feedback, and a response was made. Two design activities were delivered to the participants. Design activity 1 was to understand their perspective of their exposure to art through art education, galleries, and museum access in Malaysia. Design activity 2 was their response towards the 3D-printed tactile flashcard prototype with the understanding of the fundamental language of art through the elements of art and the principles of design. However, before that, a pilot study was conducted in the Formgiving Lab, UiTM, to test and establish the 3D-printed tactile flashcard as a prototype by artists and designers. This study has the potential to close the gap between the unsighted and sighted groups of people towards art accessibility. The study contributes haptic art knowledge for the blind community to learn, create and express art using the fundamental art language to be explored so that society can gain insights into their emotions, expression, creativity and perspective. The prototype is concerned with the semantic approach of conveying emotion, which is used in projecting the characteristic. Moreover, this community could contribute towards the creative arts industry by becoming potential designers and artists from the prototype as a tool towards art accessibility.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Research Background

The Malaysian Government has been recognized for its commitment to providing a sound education system, facilities, accessibility, culture, social structure, and health for the society and country to grow into a better nation. The strategic planning for the 12th Malaysian Plan (RMK 12) with their policy that has aligned with the Kementerian Pembangunan Wanita, Keluarga dan Masyarakat to review various strategies and approaches to accomplish the objective of Empowering People with Disabilities in Malaysia 2021-2025. RMK 12 shows that Malaysia is also looking at developing social inclusion for people with disabilities in this country, including the blind and visually impaired in Malaysia.

Nevertheless, blind, and visually impaired people are always neglected and lack social inclusion, especially when discussing the creative art industry. An estimated 55,240 blind and visually impaired people have been registered under the Social Department of Social Welfare, also known as Jabatan Kebajikan Masyarakat (JKM) dated until 31st of January 2023, and this number is expected to increase in 2024 and 2025. This statistic shows that the vast number of blind and visually impaired people in this country lack art accessibility, which could extend, possibilities for their interest in art to experience and contribute their creative art knowledge in the industry.

When researchers and designers use the term 'Universal Design' to the perspective of improving the human lifestyle, structure, education, and social participation through products, services, and environments to be used by all the people, in other words, the universal design is a process that involves continuous improvement. The final goal is social inclusion and equality, especially for people with disabilities (Steinfeld & Maisel, 2012).

Communication is essential in our daily life. It is a critical factor in sending a message to people around us. However, in art, one of the crucial factors of why art is created and produced in the first place is to send a message to the audience (Newbury, 1996). Apart from that, most art is formed for sighted people to value and enjoy its piece of work; the one group of audience that is being neglected in our society is disabled