



اَللّٰهُمَّ سَيِّدِيْ تَكْوِيْلِيْ كَيْفِيْ مَارَا  
UNIVERSITI  
TEKNOLOGI  
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## **THE 659 ACADEMIC WRITING**

### **RESEARCH PROPOSAL**

A comparative study about the good and bad of hiring a graphic designer or using templates for design in Malaysia

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**February 2022**

## CONFIRMATION BY EXAMINER

I certify that an examiner has met on 6<sup>th</sup> February 2022 to conduct the final examination of Muhammad Harraz Bin Rahimin on his Bachelor Degree (Hons) in Graphic Design thesis entitled “A comparative study about the good and bad of hiring a graphic designer or using templates for design in Malaysia” in accordance with Universiti Teknologi MARA Act 1976 (Akta 173). The examiner undersigned recommends that the student be awarded the relevant degree.



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## **AUTHOR'S DECLARATION**

I declare that the work in this thesis was carried out in accordance with the regulations of Universiti Teknologi MARA. It is original and is the results of my own work unless otherwise indicated or acknowledged as referenced work. This thesis has not been submitted to any other academic institution or non-academic institution for any degree or qualification.

I, hereby, acknowledge that I have been supplied with the Academic Rules and Regulations for Undergraduate, Universiti Teknologi MARA, regulating the conduct of my study and research.

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## **ABSTRACT**

The purpose of this study was to determine whether hiring a graphic designer or using templates in the design was a good or bad idea in Malaysia. In this modern age, customers may choose an existing template to create a brand. Templates are much cheaper than hiring a graphic designer. In addition, templates save more time than designs that require many processes to get the final product. Despite the predominance of templates, graphics carriers are still making money. Most designers are afraid to face this challenge. Over time, many designers are born and all face fierce competition. What makes good graphic designers better than existing templates is that they combine all the elements of principle and design at work. The price is a bit higher than the existing templates, but the design is unique. Customers are anxious for the difference to make their business stand out. All templates create the same logo. However, the goal of graphic design is not to win a glorious award or create beautiful art (leave it to the illustrator). The harsh reality is that Website A is most effective at driving customer growth and helping your business prosper. When clients trust the work of graphic designers more than templates, they become fresh and outstanding logos and websites. Worth every penny they paid.

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENT**

Firstly, I wish to thank God for allowing me to embark on my Bachelor's Degree and for completing this long and challenging journey successfully. My gratitude and thanks go to my supervisor Sir Tengku Shahril Norzaimi Tengku Hariffadzillah. Thank you sir for the support, patience, and ideas in assisting me with this project. Special thanks to my colleagues and friends for helping me with this project even though we only meet at online platform. Finally, this thesis is dedicated to my lovely parents, Saedaton Hadijah Bt Abd Manan and Ahmad Fadzil bin Md Arif. I dedicated this piece of victory to both of you. Alhamdulillah.

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# CHAPTER ONE INTRODUCTION

## 1.1 Introduction

Graphic design is an art form that uses a computer to create a design. The main purpose of graphic design is to convey a particular idea or message. The entire process of defining requirements and visualizing and creating graphics such as illustrations, logos, layouts, and photographs using typography, photographs, pictorials, and illustrations. Most designers create labels, packages, and even apparel graphics. Art is the process of designing and finishing a work of art with canvas, mixed media, sculpture and photography. Common uses for graphic design include corporate design (logo and branding), editorial design (magazines, newspapers, books), guideline or environmental design, advertising, web design, communication design, product packaging, signage, and more. Both art forms can be incorporated into the final work using each other's facets. Art and design are related, both unique and original, but differ in some respects. Graphic design is nothing new in design or art. Over time, technology is growing rapidly and becoming more sophisticated. Some artists have stated that graphic design is too corporate to be an art form. You said that most of the time, graphic designers design for their clients. They block their artistic sensibilities and follow the needs of their customers. The graphic designer followed the instructions, but applied art and design principles and elements to the work. Today, there are many websites and apps that offer free themes and templates. All of this has gradually killed the careers of graphic designers because it's more affordable and easy to use.

## 1.2 Research Background

The purpose of this research was to determine if hiring a graphic designer or using a template for designing is a good or bad idea on Malaysia. In this modern era, clients are likely to choose the existing templates to design their brand. The templates are way cheaper than hiring a graphic designer. Furthermore, the templates save more time than designing that needs a lot of processes to get the final product. According to (PENJI), Celeste Zosimo, (2020) “Is graphic design dead? The answer is a resounding NO. Recent studies conducted by IBISWorld show that in 2019 alone, the industry generated a revenue of \$15 billion with an annual growth rate of 3.5%. It is expected to grow further at a rate of 2.7% to become a \$14.8 billion-dollar-strong industry”. This means that graphic career is still gaining income even though the templates taking over. Most of the designers afraid to face the challenge. As time goes by, many designers are born and all of them have to compete in a tight competition.

What makes a good graphic designer work better than the existing template is that they combine all of the elements of principles and design into their work. The price is a little bit higher than the existing templates but it has the uniqueness of the design. The client craves for the difference to make their business stand out. All of the templates making the same logo. According to (The Startup) Michael Buckley, (2019). “Imagine you’re an established company, and you have to develop a new website to grow your business. Your options are website A, which spends 90% on content and marketing, and 10% on design. Or website B, which spends 90% on design and 10% on content and marketing. Its possible website B may win a few awards for being a fantastic looking site and get credit where credit is due. However, the goal of graphic design is not about winning shiny awards or creating beautiful art (leave that to the illustrators). The harsh reality is website would be the most effective at increasing customer growth and helping the company succeed”. If a client trusts graphic designers work more than templates, they will get a fresh and outstanding logo or website. Worth every cent that they paid.



### **1.3 Problem Statement**

Over the last few decades, technology has improved from time to time. As the population grew, all professions in this world thrived including graphic designer's career. As the number of graphic designer increase, they have to compete with each other to get to the top. Most designers should be the most experienced and great designers. A good attitude, good friends, and a good work ethic are some of the factors that make a good designer. According to (QUORA) Prabhath Jayarathna, (2018). The graphic designers are more demanded than before and it's constantly getting increased. The reason is, today the role of the graphic designer is much complex and diverse. Every communication task of the modern market seems to be 'visually designed'. Therefore, the Graphic designers are hired to serve hundreds of job roles in the industry”.

Graphic designers also have few rivals in their careers. Not only do they have to fight each other, but they also have to compete with instant designers. Nowadays, anyone with software and tools can also be a designer. Instant designers also create artwork, but with minimal payment. This will confuse the designer market. Most clients will go to the instant designers to get a design because it will save their budget more than hiring actual graphic designers.

In addition, most instant designers used templates platforms to do their job. The reason is that instant designers unaware about the element and principles of design. The templates helped them get the design that they wanted and most of the platform are free of charge. They also saved a lot of time. This will give them an advantage over the average designer who spends a lot of time brainstorming about design ideas.

#### **1.4 Research Question**

- I. Which does the client prefer between hiring a graphic designer or using templates?
- II. What are the benefits of hiring a graphic designer?

#### **1.5 Research Objective**

- I. To identify which are clients prefer between hiring a graphic designer or using templates
- II. To study about the benefits of hiring graphic designer

#### **1.6 Significance of study**

This writing has three significance of study which is graphic designers, clients and people who use templates for designing.

#### **1.7 Research Framework**

Starting with pre-production, do a research topic proposal and consult with the supervisor for the title. After that, the production begins with listing a question and collecting survey data. In post-production, finalize thesis and submit. (see Table 2)

- Pre - Production
- Production
- Post Production

Table 2. Milestone

W1	W2	W3	W4	W5	W6	W7	W8	W9	W10	W11	W12	W13	W14
<b>Pre Production</b> <i>Do a research topic and make proposal</i>													
		<b>Production</b> <i>Create question and Collecting survey data</i>											
									<b>Post Production</b> <i>Finalize thesis and submit</i>				

## CHAPTER TWO LITERATURE REVIEW

### 1. Literature Review

Graphic designer and templates is not a new issue in Malaysia. Most of graphic designers studied graphic design to learn more about the principle in design. They also have a better experience. The scope and content of graphic designers' work are in a state of change. Traditionally, graphic designers have often been conceptualized as concerning themselves with symbolic and visual communication (Buchanan, 2001, p. 8) in the process of shaping messages and images (Meggs & Purvis, 2012). Transforming ideas into visual solutions (Givechi, Groulx, & Woollard, 2006) and communicating ideas through visual elements such as typography, colors, and images in both print and digital media have also long been considered to be the responsibilities of graphic designers (Ambrose & Harris, 2011; Bestley & Noble, 2016; Frascara, 2004; Tomes, Oates, & Armstrong, 1998). However, following developments in industry and technology, the realm of graphic designers' work has become increasingly blurred and complex (see e.g., Davis, 2008; Harland, 2016). Moreover, most of the students do not apply graphic design for their study is because of high competition in getting a job. Studies have shown that designers with contextual understanding, proficient design skills, planning and integration capabilities, design knowledge, programming skills like PHP, HTML, CSS, knowledge in the use of prototyping tools such as Axure, Adobe XD, Sketch, etc. are more likely to be hired (Sørum & Pettersen, 2016; Dziobczenski & Person, 2017; Dziobczenski, Person & Meriläinen, 2018; Dziobczenski et al., 2018). However, in this era with technology always evolving around, it is found that this research may be not relevant. A few research shows that graphic design has their position. Bennett, (2006) found that graphic designers are found in several different positions within the industry, forcing designers to adapt and expand their skill sets to a range of new activities and responsibilities. Similar to other fields of design (Buchanan, 2001; Valtonen, 2005), graphic designers are for instance also found to work in areas such as business strategy, innovation management, branding, and service design (Davis, 2006). Several other studies have also shown an interesting finding. A graphic designer who cannot make it to the industry has to be a freelancer to gain income from their career for example, "Free Agent", (2015) said that in business, a free agent is someone who works independently and is not permanently employed by a company. A free agent can be, for example,

a freelancer, someone self-employed, and/or a temporary worker. The difference between working for a graphic design firm and being a freelancer is quite significant. One design agency details the difference from a client's perspective ("Creative Agency vs. Freelancer", 2015) which states that a major difference is that a freelancer is mostly specialized in one area while an agency can perform more complex work which requires a wider variety of skills. However, inhouse graphic designer Kevin Potts (2003) stated, freelancers, understand they are singularly in charge of seeing a project through to the end, and that creates a valuable sense of ownership and personal responsibility." Freelancers are also described as having more flexibility and generally lower fees due to not having to support a large staff and offices ("Design agency versus freelancer", 2013). The findings of this study proved that hiring a graphic design is better than using a template because graphic designer will give a unique design and clients will satisfy with the outstanding artwork for their brand.

## **CHAPTER THREE METHODOLOGY**

### **1. Methodology**

Regarding to this topic, the researcher would like to use quantitative study suitable for this case study. Quantitative research is called the process of gathering and investigating numerical representation data. This type of research also is a manipulation of observations aimed to explaining the circumstance that the observations reflect. It is used in various topics to find connections between variables under analysis.

The reason why researcher use this type of research method is because according to according to (Cohen, 1980), quantitative research is defined as social research that employs empirical methods and empirical statements. He states that an empirical statement is defined as a descriptive statement about what “is” the case in the “real world” rather than what “ought” to be the case. Typically, empirical statements are expressed in numerical terms, another factor in quantitative research is that empirical evaluations are applied. Empirical evaluations are defined as a form that seeks to determine the degree to which a specific program or policy.

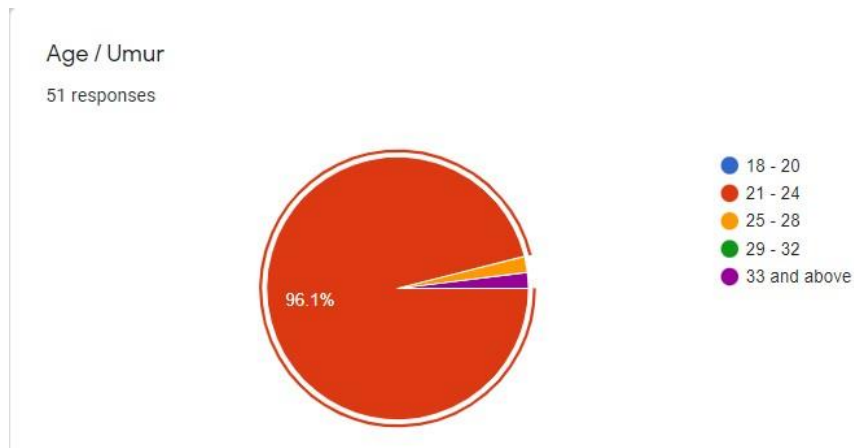
Moreover, Creswell (1994) has given a very concise definition of quantitative research as a type of research that is `explaining phenomena by collecting numerical data that are analyzed using mathematically based methods (in particular statistics).

Researchers use this quantitative method to collect data obtained to answer questions under research. individual experiences, or things gained from learning recorded in a journal.

## CHAPTER FOUR FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

From the survey, the data has been collected to obtained a quantitative data from respondents about their opinion and perception about the good and bad of hiring a graphic designer or using templates for design in Malaysia. The survey was created on the Google Form platform. Google Forms is an easy-to-use and well-known platform among respondents. The survey link was spread using WhatsApp platform. The survey contains three section, the first section of the form asked about respondents' personal information like their age, gender, religion, state, residence, education, and occupation.

From the survey that has been conducted, most of the respondents is between 21 to 24 years old. Only 2% from 25 to 28 years old and 33 years old and above. None respondent from 18 to 20 years old and 29 to 32 years old.

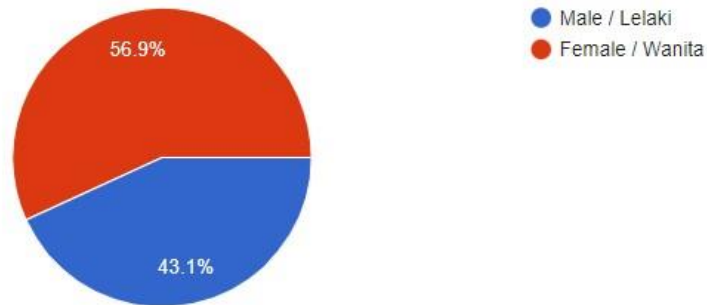


Age	Percentage
18 – 20 years old	0%
21 – 24 years old	96.1%
25 – 28 years old	2%
29 – 32 years old	0%
33 years old and above	2%

Based on the survey research, as a result, it became clear that most of the respondents' genders are mainly female. Male respondents are less than female respondents, but not so far.

### Gender / Jantina

51 responses

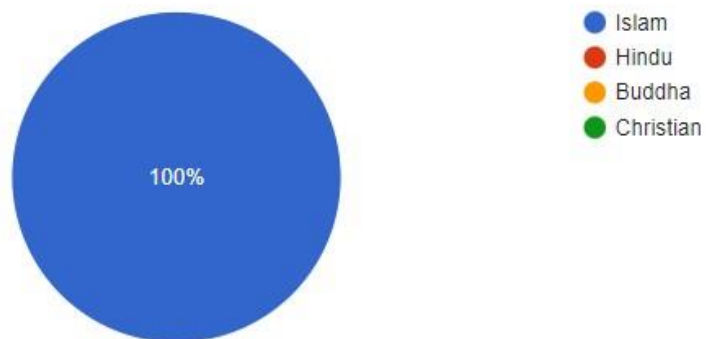


Gender	Percentage
Male	43.1%
Female	56.9%

From 51 responses, 100% respondent's religion is Islam.

### Religion / Agama

51 responses



Religion	Percentage
Islam	100%
Hindu	0%
Buddha	0%

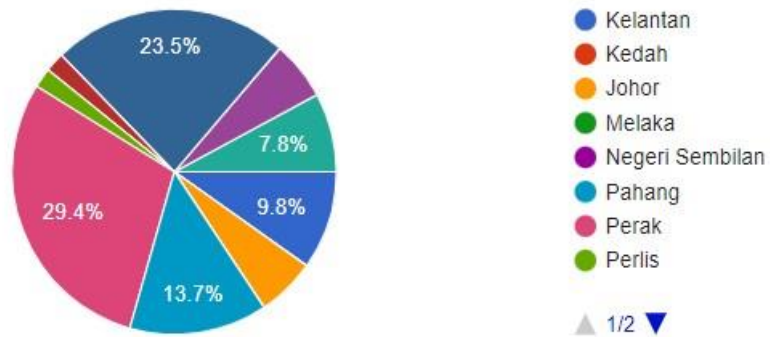


Christian	0%
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According to the survey research, from all the states in Malaysia, most of the respondents came from Perak. Followed by Selangor state (23.5 %) and Pahang (13.7%).

State / Negeri

51 responses

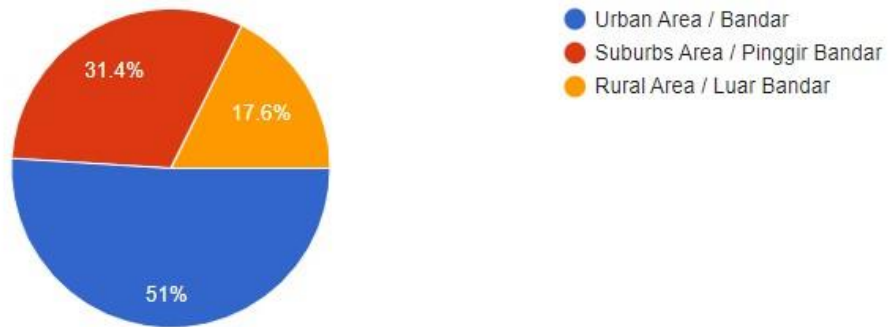


States	Percentage
Selangor	29.4%
Perak	23.5%
Pahang	13.7%
Kelantan	9.8%
Kuala Lumpur	7.8%
Terengganu	0%
Johor	0%
Pulau Pinang	0%
Perlis	0%
Melaka	0%
Negeri Sembilan	0%
Kedah	0%
Sabah	0%
Sarawak	0%

Based on the survey, most of the respondents are from urban area, followed by suburbs area and last one is rural area.

Residence / Tempat Kediaman

51 responses

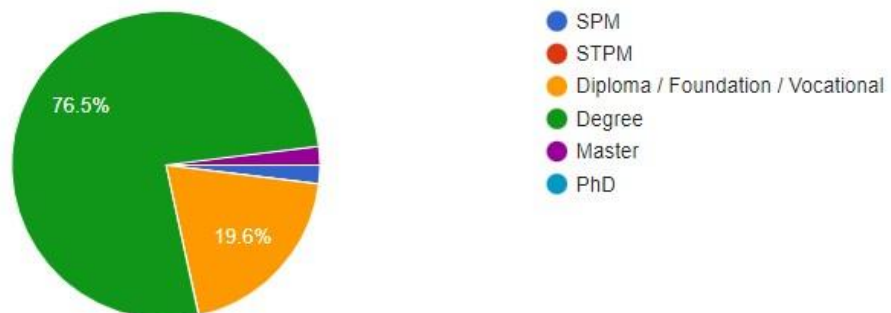


Residence	Percentage
Urban Area	51%
Suburbs Area	31.4%
Rural Area	17.6%

According to the pie chart, highest level of education among those surveyed is degree. Diploma level is second and the SPM and Master are the third.

Education / Pendidikan

51 responses

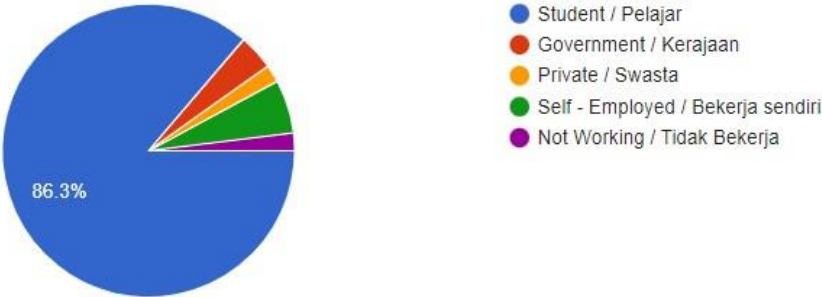


Education	Percentage
Degree	78.5%
Diploma/ Foundation/ Vocational	19.6%
SPM	2%
Master	2%
PhD	0%
STPM	0%

Students are most frequently among the respondents. Other professions are self-employed, followed by government workers.

Occupation / Pekerjaan

51 responses



Occupations	Percentage
Student	86.3%
Self - employed	5.9%
Government	3.9%
Private	2%
Not working	2%

The second section question is about the templates platform for designing and the respondents has been asked to give the benefits and disadvantages using templates for the design.

From the data survey, the first question is does the respondents know about there are many design templates out there. Based on the answer is 98% said yes. Most of them are aware of what templates are. 2% of them said maybe and none of them said no. The next question is have the respondents ever used templates for designing. According to the findings data, 98% of the respondents said they used a template for designing. Another 2% said no means they never use a template platform for designing.

Did you know that there are so many design templates out there? / Adakah anda tahu bahawa terdapat begitu banyak templat reka bentuk di luar sana?

51 responses



Have you ever used a template for design? / Adakah anda pernah menggunakan template untuk reka bentuk?

51 responses

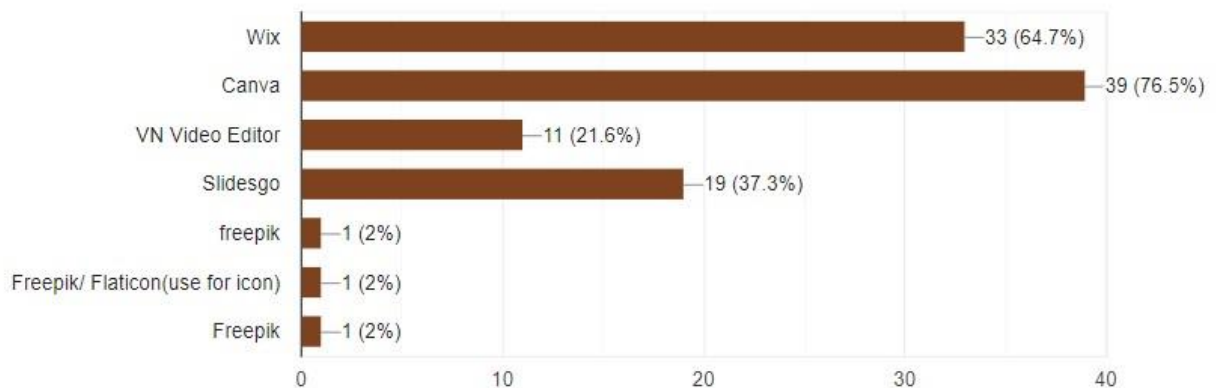


The followed up question is I suggested a few famous templates platform for the respondents to see that if they have use any of the platform given before this. The most used templates platform is Canva by 76.5%. Canva is a graphic design platform used for designing posters, presentation slide and documents. The platform provides a variety of template for users. The second highest platform used is Wix by 64.7%. Wix is an online platform specially to create a website. The platform allows user to create a HTML5 websites and mobile apps with the templates given. Another platform that respondents used is SlidesGo by 37.3%. SlidesGo is an online platform to creates slides for presentation. Most of the templates is used for Powerpoint and Google Slides. The platform has tons of slides theme to help user presenting their works better. After all platform that has been listed, the least platform that respondents used is VN video editor by 21.6%. VN is a

famous video editor mobile application made for editing videos. The app provides LUTs filters, effects and stickers material which can easily improve respondents video editing. The respondents also add other templates platform that they have been used for designing such as Freepik by 2%. Freepik is a platform that provide millions of graphic resources for free to use for creative project.

Have you use any of these templates platform before? / Pernahkah anda menggunakan mana-mana platform templat di bawah sebelum ini?

51 responses



The question for the second section is the respondents have to give their opinion about the good and bad using templates for designing. Most of the respondents agreed that using templates for designing can save a lot of time and able to speed up work. The platform speeds up the work that is need to be done fast, especially making for a client that doesn't really care much about brand identity or aesthetic of design and expect for affordable price. It also approachable to some people that may or might not have the knowledge or skills to do design on their own but just want get the job done. Using template for design save time learning about design. This is because the platform gives many options of theme and templates to use for their project. Another reason for the good is they do not have to think of creating a new design. They do not have to waste time on brainstorming ideas. Just go to the platform and choose whichever design you want and proceed. They do not have to waste time on brainstorming ideas. The respondents also mention that templates may be

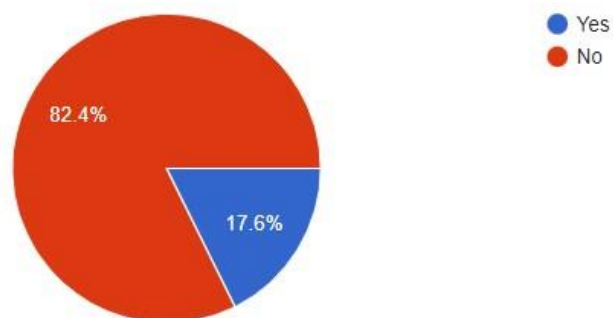
the stepping stones to the person who wants to study design. The rest of the reason is the platform is free to use, no copyright on the design and convenient.

The bad about using templates for designing listed by respondents is there is no creativity to the outcome design. When using a template, they rely 80% only on the template without using the skill or creativity of the individual. There is no identity in the design make it less unique and less value. Another reason from respondents is people will less likely to hire a graphic designer. The templates will threaten graphic designers' job opportunities, especially the one who does freelance. If the design can easily create just by using templates, designers market value will drop and the number of “instant designers” will increase from time to time.

The last section of the survey is about hiring a graphic designer. The first question is does the respondents have ever hired a graphic designer before. From 51 responses, 82.4% of respondents have hired a designer. The remaining of the respondents have not hiring a designer before. The next question is does the respondents think that hiring a graphic designer is still relevant to this day. Most of the response is yes. 84.3% of the respondents agreed that the graphic designer’s career is still relevant. Another 15.7% said maybe and none of them answer no.

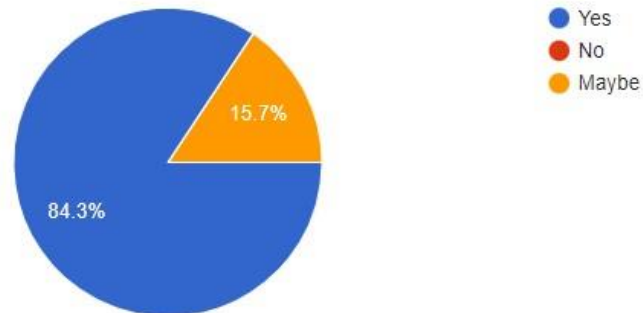
Have you ever hired a designer before? / Adakah anda pernah mengupah seorang pereka sebelum ini?

51 responses



Do you think hiring a graphic designer is still relevant these days? / Adakah anda fikir mengupah seorang pereka grafik masih relevan pada hari ini?

51 responses

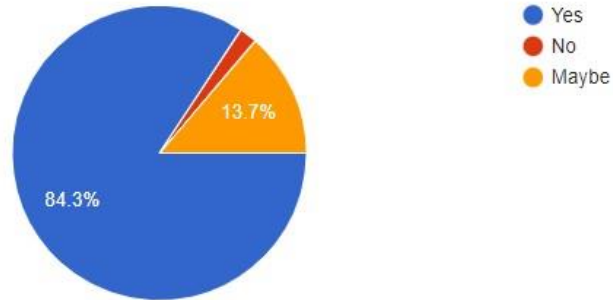


Another question that has been asked is does the respondents agree that it is better to hire a graphic designer than to use a template for designing. 84.3% of the respondents answered yes while 13.7 said maybe. 2% of them answered no. From the question that has been asked, they provide their reason on why hiring a graphic designer is better than using template for designing. Most of the respondents reach an agreement that graphic designer is full with knowledge about good and bad design and design trends. Plus, graphic designers can suggest what is the best and create bigger opportunities for client's businesses or products to stand out. Graphic designer took years of learning to use design tools, understanding principles & elements of design, understand the need for visuals & how to solve problems through design. Designers also speak the language of color and imagery. Graphic designers know better in the solution of presenting a business in an aesthetically pleasing manner. They can understand and help client's main problem which using templates cannot do. Moreover, they can consult clients about everything about design basics, so they clients can have basic knowledge of graphic design. Instant designers that use templates cannot beat how designers think, all they need is related to background study cases, target audience, the unit selling point, etc. Using instant templates does not provide with original & raw files. Only through specific software like Photoshop & Illustrator can provide those. Copying a design is called plagiarism, designers spent hours brainstorming for ideas. The idea itself makes designers expensive, not just skill or 'templates'. But that also does not mean using templates is very bad. It is useful to someone who need the work done fast, meet dateline, and fulfill

requirements. Example, for small business, to some, hiring Graphic designer is not affordable to them yet and not their main priority of thinking about their brand identity.

Do you agree that it's better to hire a graphic designer than to use a template? / Adakah anda bersetuju bahawa mengupah pereka grafik adalah lebih baik daripada menggunakan templat?

51 responses





## **CHAPTER FIVE CONCLUSION**

For the conclusion, the preview survey has concluded that clients more likely prefer to hiring graphic designer over using templates for designing. Even though the templates will help people save their time and speed up the work but the design results from the templates are not unique and does not have a value. Other than that, we can conclude that the graphic design career is still relevant to this day. It is because hiring graphic designer has a lot of benefits rather than using templates for designing and the graphic designer demand will remain increase from time to time.

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