

Original Research Articlemalihe kashir¹Asghar Kafshchian Moghadam²

Received: 20/ 4 / 2020

Accepted: 17/ 6/ 2020

DOI: 10.22055/pyk.2020.15951

URL: paykareh.scu.ac.ir/article_15951.html**Investigating the effect of visual qualities of the environment on murals****Abstract**

Problem definition: The wall painting comes in conjunction with the three components of the visual audience, the architecture and the environment. Among these factors, the environment has a decisive role in the design and creation of wall effect, because the most important aspect of the distinction of wall painting from its other forms, is the formation influenced by the conditions and characteristics of the environment. The environment surrounding the work as a visual collection involves various factors and qualities that have a direct and indirect influence on the wall painting and plays a decisive role. so the leading research seeks to answer the visual quality of the environment in relation to the mural painting, and how these visual qualities impact on wall murals in the urban landscape.

Objective: the present article has been written regarding with the aim of explaining the effect of visual qualities of the environment as one of the ways of improving the quality of wall paintings in the field of urban arts.

Research Method: The present study was conducted using a descriptive-analytical method and the library collection method was also used.

Results: The visual qualities of environmental conditions including the Climatic Conditions of the Environment, Cultural and Identity Conditions of the Environment, Geographical Location of the Environment, Governing Color Space and Light Conditions Governing the Environment, visual features of environment each has their own capabilities and limitations each has its own capabilities and constraints, and depending on the environment and the walls, there will be significant effects on the design and implementation of the wall paintings. Therefore, studying the visual qualities of the environment, while achieving the artist's ability to integrate into the space of the work and making them more productive, creates a coherent and harmonious atmosphere and, Hence, in general, recognizing them makes a unified and coordinated space moreover achieving environment capabilities and consequently it will lead to more suitable mural. Hence, wall painting, while preserving the essential elements of the artistic wall paintings, it can be considered a function of the governing environment of the wall and its visual qualities.

Keywords: Wall Painting, Mural, Visual Qualities of Environment, Urban Landscape, Environmental Artwork

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Introduction

Murals are part of the surrounding environment, and without understanding that environment and the components affecting it, it is not possible to create a structure in the mural work which is compatible with the environment in terms of visual, semantic, and technological aspects. The surrounding environment of the mural consists of a set of factors and qualities with direct and indirect relations to the mural, while playing a decisive role in the artistic work. Since nowadays murals are often created in the open space and in the realm of urban arts, they are exposed to direct sunlight, pollutants, climatic conditions, weather changes, and the geographical and cultural conditions of the environment. Therefore, murals are certainly affected by the visual qualities generated by these environmental factors. Hence, the main objective of the current study is to explain the effects and impacts of the visual qualities of the environment as an approach for improving and boosting the quality level of murals in the urban landscape. The current study is based on the assumption that paying attention to the visual qualities of the environment and their effects and impacts, from the idea design to implementation, will play an important role in the improvement of the visual and discourse qualities of the murals. Based on this assumption, the current study tries to illustrate the details of the relationship and the effects of visual qualities of the environment on murals in the urban landscape.

Research method

The current study is an applied one with regards to the nature of the topic and the objectives. Moreover, the study was carried out based on a descriptive-analytical method, in which the required data and information were collected using library and internet-based sources.

Research background

In previous studies on murals, various aspects, including history and transformations, themes, technical aspects and capabilities of murals, have been investigated. "Asghar Kafshchian moghaddam" in researches called "How to organize a mural " (2006) and "a study of murals features" (2004) has expressed the characteristics and capabilities of mural painting and the way of organizing it. In another study entitled "environmental visual graphic in urban spaces with emphasis on graffiti" (2017) written by Hassan Sajadzadeh, Mehrdad Karimi moshaver and Salman Vahdat" in order to evaluate Tehran murals from the perspective of the audience, the components of location, visual structure, environment and architecture around the mural were examined separately. "Ahmad pakzad"'s article "An Introduction to the Role of Murals in Humanistic Urban Identity" (2013) also deals with the components of identity in murals.

However, there are no clear and comprehensive studies on the main issue considered in the current study when accounting for the importance of this issue.

Discussion and Analysis of the Visual Qualities of the Environment

Visual qualities of the environment include climatic conditions of the environment, cultural and identity conditions, geographical location, light conditions and color space governing the environment, which in this section we recognize how they affect the wall works.

1. Climatic Conditions of the Environment

Since murals must be presented in relation to the open space, understanding the climate of the region seems necessary. This forces artists to use those materials in the murals which are compatible with the climate of the area and are resilient against the weather conditions. For instance, in humid areas, it is necessary to utilize impermeable materials which are resilient against humidity and its resulting erosion. On the other hand, through informed selection of materials compatible with the environment, the climatic conditions of the area can be utilized to the advantage of the artistic work. For instance, while the humidity of the environment makes using many materials impossible when creating murals, it can create a suitable context for utilizing plant growths (Figure 1).



Figure1.
Mural, cultivation of plant growths on the wall.
Source :[www. Pinterest.com](http://www.Pinterest.com)



Figure2.
Part of a mural, one of the streets of Tehran.
Source: Autore.

Climatic conditions affect the durability of the murals through impacting the platform, materials, and technologies used for the work. In other words, unprofessional use of inappropriate materials and techniques, which are not compatible with climatic conditions, will cause adverse effects for the murals, including decay, flaking, and color fading, and this early degradation will cause visual pollution in the urban environment (Figure 2). Moreover, the climatic conditions of the area can be discussed in terms of heat and cold, permeability to humidity, seasonal changes, the intensity of wind and rainfall, and the intensity of the sunlight. Of course, when evaluating the climatic factors present in the region,

permanent and long-term conditions must be considered. Among the above-mentioned factors, humidity and sunlight are more important when it comes to the visual quality and duration of the mural. Since the direction of the wall plays an important role in the extent of exposure to precipitation and sunlight, the geographical direction of the wall must also be considered.

2. Cultural and Identity Conditions of the Environment

The societal nature of the mural and the necessity for its compatibility with the surrounding environment requires the artist to consider the cultural and identity structures of the environment as well. Correct application of visual signs and symbols rooted in the culture and identity of the environment in murals will not only promote space building and the sense of place-identity in murals, but it can also boost the sense of compatibility between the mural and the surrounding environment in terms of content. This is accompanied by the readability of the city and region. Furthermore, John Lang states that "the identification of a mural with the symbolic meaning of the environment can increase the people's sense of belonging to that place" (Lang, 2004, 230) (Figure 3). On the other hand, "since artistic works can give the environment the potential for qualification, they play a key role in shaping the cultural landscape of the cities. Meanwhile, murals can be considered as a more effective factor for giving meaning to the space and helping the citizens better understand that space since the reading of the semantic element is easier and more generalized through visuals compared to understanding it through the architectural volume and form" (Zangi, 2016, 43-45). However, an important point is that each individual environment requires its own compatible images and concepts when creating murals, and these compatible images and concepts are based on the character, features, and functions of that specific environment (Figures 4,5,6,7). Overlooking this important point, which results in the detachment of the formal and contextual character of murals from the environment, will reduce the visual and perceptual values in relation to the identity of the place (Figure 8).



Figure4.
Amir Bagheri and Elham Ziani,
Mural, Shiraz, northeast side of
Moallem Square.
Source :www.shiraz1400.ir



Figure5.
Mural painting, Isfahan,
student performance at the
invitation of Isfahan
Beautification Organization.
Source:
www.isfahancity.blogfa.com



Figure3.
Diego Rivera, A Sunday Afternoon Dream in Alameda
Park, Plado Main Hall, Mexico City, fresco , 1947 .
Fresco .Source : www.Pinterest.com.

Figure6.
Mural painting, Isfahan .Source :www.Tasnimnews.com/fa/news

Figure7.
Mural painting, Borazjan, the outer wall of Allameh
Tabatabai Technical Conservatory.
Source :www.Borazjancity.ir



Figure8.
Mural, graffiti, walls of
the sports field of
phase three of Ekbatan
town .Source:
[www. Fardanews.com](http://www.Fardanews.com)

3. Geographical Location of the Environment

Moreover, each mural is located in a specific place inside the geography of the environment, and it is seen and perceived in relation to its conditions. The horizon and geographical slope of the environment must always be accounted for as visual qualities imposed by the environment on the wall. In this regard, the horizon line of the mural must be proportional to the horizon of the wall in the location, it must be considered based on the position of the audience in relation to the wall, and it must be the basis for designing the forms in the mural work. Moreover, if the geographical slope of the environment is overlooked in locating and presenting a design for steep spaces, there will be no compatibility between the horizon line of the mural and the horizon line of the environment, resulting in a final work which is visually unpleasant for the audience.

4. Light Conditions Governing the Environment

On the other hand, the light, natural and/or artificial, governing the environment will affect the mural in various manners. Appropriate and sufficient light can increase the appeal and brilliance of the colors and visual qualities in the texture of the mural. Moreover, such light can create various visual features, promoting and focusing a specific portion of the work. Nonetheless, improper light conditions in the environment, including intense and long-term sunlight, can create adverse physical impacts such as color fading. Therefore, a proper wall and an appropriate geographical sunlight direction, which determines the duration of the light, the color, the intensity, the shadow, and the reflection, must be selected in an accurate way to improve the effects of the mural.

5. Color Space Governing the Environment

In addition to the above-mentioned components, each environment is a set of spaces, volumes, and diverse color levels, giving it a unique color character. Since the color space of the mural can result in a desirable aesthetic quality if it is compatible with the surrounding environment, in order to create such a coordination and compatibility, the range of colors utilized in the mirror must be inspired by the color character of the environment. As noted by Ethan, "a coordinated set according to public opinion is a set consisting of elements brought together without an intense contrast" (Itten, 2001, 24) (Figure 9). This is while



Figure9.
Mehdi Qadianlou, Acrylic paint
on cement, Tehran .Source :
[www. Persian-star.org/painting](http://www.Persian-star.org/painting)

many urban murals have a high color conflict and contrast to the dominating color of the urban landscape (Figure 10).

Discussion Before Conclusion

1. Visual Qualities of the Surrounding Environment in Relation to Murals

Given what has been said, what are the visual qualities of the environment can be presented in the following diagram1.

2. The Effects of Visual Qualities of the Surrounding Environment on the Mural

2.1 The effects of climatic conditions

The climatic conditions, including heat and cold, the intensity of wind and rainfall, the intensity of the sunlight, and permeability to humidity will impact the resilience and durability of the mural. These effects are exerted on the materials and the technology of the mural work. Therefore, when creating murals, materials and technologies compatible with the climatic conditions of the environment must be utilized in order to make the mural more resilient to the climatic conditions of the region.

2.2 The effects of cultural and identity conditions

Based on its character and functions, each individual environment requires compatible forms and concepts when creating the mural. Therefore, the artist must create the work based on the dominant social and cultural structures, the functional philosophy of the place, the readability and semantic potentials of the environment, the importance of Qibla, and the ethnic, national, and historical memories of that environment. Creating an identity for the murals inspired by the surrounding environment will facilitate the readability of the urban space and will give meaning for the environment, promoting the sense of place in the audience. Moreover, reflecting cultural values in the murals will affect the mental layers of



Figure10.
Mural painting, oil paint on cement, Tehran .Source: of works of Tehran Beautification Organization

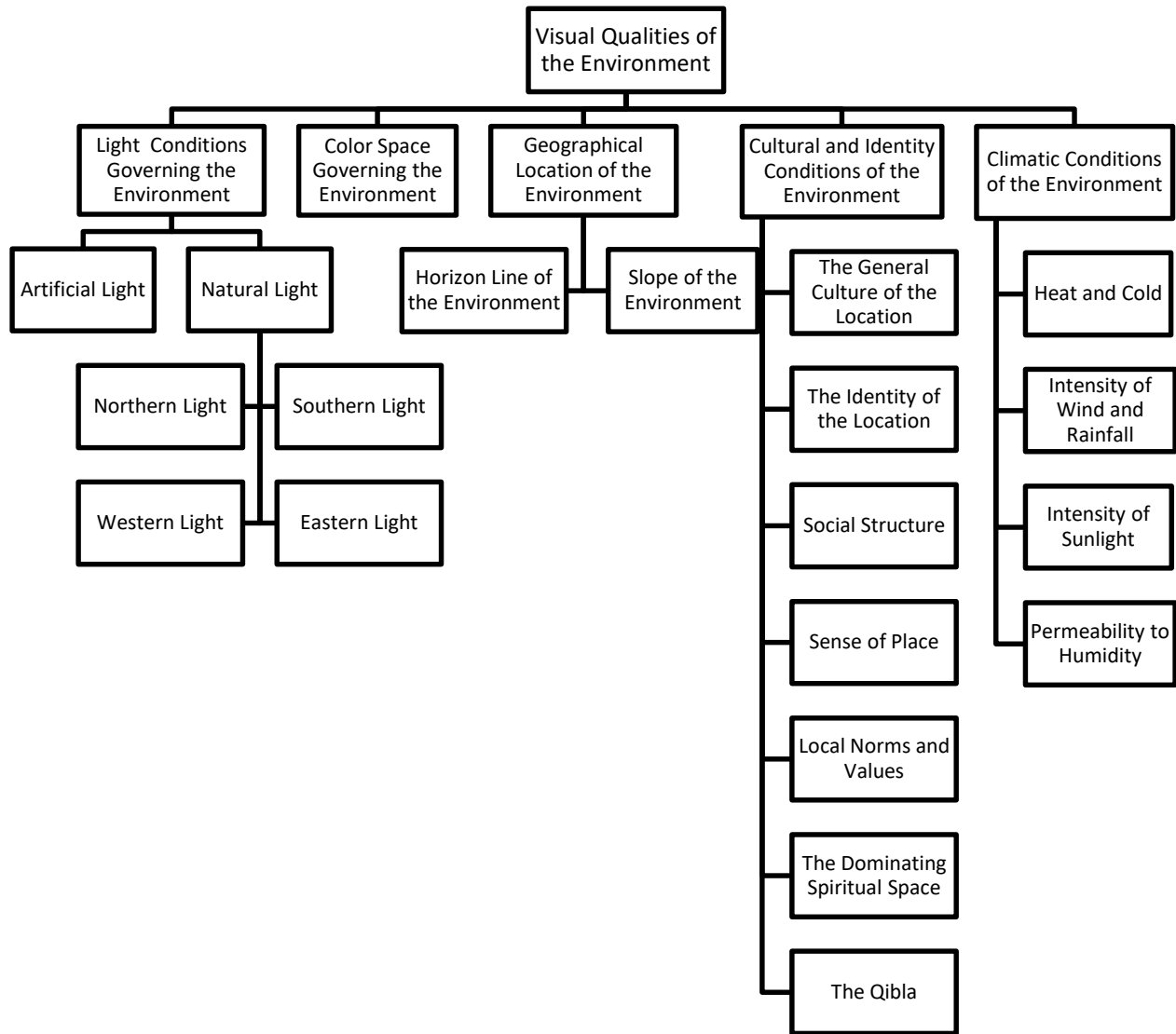


diagram 1: Visual Qualities of the Surrounding Environment in Relation to Murals. Source:Authors.

the audience, helping the promotion and internalization of the public culture of the community. In contrast, the formal and contextual distance between the murals and the dominant cultural space and the identity of the environment will interfere with the cultural structure of the set and will reduce the visual and perceptual values in the identity of the location.

2.3 The effects of geographical location

The geographical location of the environment, including its line of horizon and geographical slope, will affect the readability of the murals in relation to the

position of the audience. Therefore, this issue must be considered when designing the mural. In case of failure to account for compatibility, the final image will be visually unpleasant for the audience.

2.4 The effects of the governing color space

The dominance of a color in the environment will impact the color space of the murals. Therefore, creating the desired aesthetic quality in the murals requires the establishment of a color harmony between the art work and its surrounding environment. On the contrary, high conflict and contrast between the color of the mural and the dominant color of the environment will result in visual confusion in the space.

2.5 The effects of light conditions

Appropriate light of the environment can result in brilliant colors and improved visual quality of the texture of the murals. However, intense and long-term sunlight can create adverse impacts such as color fading and degradation. Therefore, the geographical direction of the wall, which determines the duration of sunlight, the intensity of the sunlight, shadows, reflections, and even the color theme of the received light, must be selected accurately and with the aim of improving the quality and the impact of the mural.

Conclusions

The surrounding environment of the mural generates a set of factors and qualities, and the visual qualities of the surrounding environment play a decisive role in creating the mural work. The mural is a part of the environment, so it must be compatible with it in a way that the materials and technologies used in the work along with the shape and meaning of the work have a direct relationship with the visual factors and qualities generated by the surrounding environment. Therefore, in addition to the basic artistic elements of the murals, they can be considered subjected to the environment dominating the wall and the visual qualities of the surrounding environment. The results obtained from the current study indicate that evaluating the visual qualities of the surrounding environment will not only help the artist perceive the potentials present in the surrounding space of the artistic work and realize these potentials, but it will also help the artist to create the mural in a manner compatible with the surrounding environment. In general, this type of evaluation will result in more desirable murals, while boosting their level of quality.

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