The Role of Environmental Graphic in the Identification of Urban Public Spaces

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Abstract

Today one of the important spaces in cities is the public spaces that, according to their classification and specifications, there is no limit to the use of different groups of people, and due to the presence of all type of people in these spaces, attention to identifying is of paramount importance. Environmental graphic is one of the useful tools to design the spaces and create identity. Of course we know that urban identity is based on the relationship and coordination of various branches of art and science such as psychology, sociology, economics, traffic, landscaping, urbanization, architecture, graphic design and so on. Although, as an interdisciplinary topic, it can be said that this branch of graphic can affect urban identity reformation, given its potentials. In this paper we attempt to study about this topic through applied descriptive-analytic method and to consider the position and importance of environmental graphic in create identity for urban public spaces, using required parameters analyze and definition by library method. Considering the space constructed in city without notice to identity, we analyze this important that if there is public space made with environmental graphic, how it creates an identity.

Keywords: Identifying; Public Spaces; Environmental Graphic.

1. Introduction

Identity is one of the important components of urban design, which should be considered by architects, urban designers, and so on. To recognize urban identity, both objective and subjective sides of city -- respectively, such as urban structure and figure, economic performance, public spaces, and so on, and such as resident social groups, social perception and consciousness level, their expectations and demands, citizenship status, homogeneous groups, and like these should be studied and considered.

If these cases are not considered and the nonidentity and loss of sense of belonging to the city appear, then what should be done?

In most cases, reconstruction based on identification and identifying fundamentals is an impossible work and it should be thought to its modification that environmental graphic is one of modification strategies. Environmental graphic plays an effective role on different urban spaces and has a notable in different aspects. But, regarding to the public spaces role in cities because of the use of freely by different groups of people, the recognize identity and identifying of public spaces is more important than privacy spaces.

Using of environmental graphic tools and adding a component in made spaces to establish identity and its modification in public spaces can be a proper way, but it must be noted that the relationship between them is preserved. Depending

on their usage and position, the components considered as environmental graphic in the city could be classified into side, main, completive, structural, applied, and aesthetic components, which all can be designed in line with identifying.

Hence if a component is added to urban space, it should necessary care taken that this adding is in line with identifying, not that achieving the reverse result by copying from different societies blindly. In other words, as audience visually influenced by art works, environmental works also effect on citizens and designers duty is that return citizens' identity to them based on components such as religion, rite, ethnicity, culture, customs and etc. and follow to modify place identity. Accordingly, the following questions will be raised:

Regarding to position and role of environmental graphics in urban design, how can this knowledge be used to identifying public spaces?

How can the environmental graphic affect on identifying the urban public spaces which have not designed correctly based on identity?

2. Research Method

Science guidance model (Figure 1) with applied descriptive-analytic method has been used in the present project.
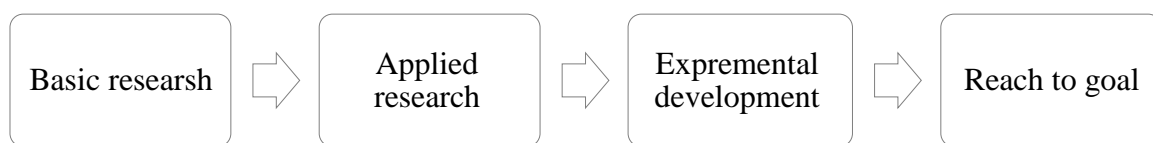
| Basic researsh | ⇨ | Applied research | ⇨ | Expremental development | ⇨ | Reach to goal |

Figure 1. Project model

The aim of project is to reach maintain and modify identity in designing urban public spaces in such a way that causes to identifying of citizens. In this regard, basic and applied researches have been done by library method of key words, which help doing work. Experimental development has studied the impact of each of tools and principles of environmental graphic, identity builder parameters, and public spaces components on each other, which finally lead to the goal.

3. Background of the Research

Many books, articles, and project designs have done about urban identity and impact of different factors on it, but particularly identifying and its modification in public spaces have not been studied through environmental graphic; some of them are mentioned as follows:

Robert Harland in his book (Graphic Design in Urban Environments) explained how graphic and communication design in the urban environment have been underrepresented or even ignored in graphic design historiography and in academic and educational definitions of the field, particularly in UK. He also effectively demonstrated the difficulties faced by urban theorists who try to describe the presence and relevance of graphic design artifacts in the public sphere, and the gaps and shortcomings of their approach. The careful descriptions and analysis presented in the book offer a framework for thinking about urban graphic interventions in multiple scales and settings. The result is a relevant contribution to design research, and should stimulate further and welcome debates on the interface between graphic design, communication, and urban design [1].

The "Signage and Wayfinding" book in Chapter 1"What Is Environmental Graphic Design?" by Chris Calori David Vanden-Eynden in 2015, explains the contemporary incarnation of EGD (Environmental Graphic Design). EGD is a relatively new, cross-disciplinary field that has gained recognition and importance over the past forty years. EGD activity involves the development of a systematic, informationally cohesive, and visually unified graphic communication system for a given site within the built environment [2].

The book "public spaces, urban spaces" by Tim Heath, Taner Oc, Steve Tiesdell, recognizes public places components and states six aspects of components to environmental quality in urban life [3].

An article, named as "A Study on the Characteristics of Visual Elements for Space Graphic Design" in Integrated Design Research Journal, is tried to study and investigate the characteristic of space graphic design through the analysis of its visual elements. By analyzing cases of actual usage, it enables to provide a basic visual system for space graphic design. In graphic within space, typography, colors, and light can be applied in complex form, in addition to basic modeling elements like the shape which forms the image. The expressive elements of graphic are displayed in the space form correlation and synthesize details to convey the identity. In terms of the characteristics displayed through the analysis of design elements of space graphic, it includes a variety of expressions through artistic intervention, information communicability of typography, and expansion through optical illusion. Through this, artistic experience is

provided for the subject of experience and sensible relations can be established. Successful space graphic design can form identify about place and community, and it can bring qualitative improvement in the urban environment through the acquisition of practical value [4].

In paper "Re-theorizing contemporary public space: a new narrative and a new normative", Matthew Carmona concluded that a more balanced view of public space is required, one that recognizes the multiple complex types, roles and audiences for public spaces in cities today [5].

4. Theoretical of Environmental Graphic

Long before the invention of paper, humans made marks on objects. The intent of making these marks was to communicate information visually. This communication imbued these marks with meaning, and they became a shared language among the people who made and understood them. Environmental graphic design, or EGD, which can be defined as the graphic communication of information in the built environment, is one of the world's oldest professions. [2].

In western societies, graphics application in formation of internal spaces and urbanization are stated by term such as Environmental Graphic or Sign Design. If this application serves to external urban spaces such as streets, squares, green spaces, and external walls of buildings, then it is referred as City Signs (signs and urban or street graphic).

We all know common media applied in urban environmental graphic such as poster, signs, highway signs, road signs, fluorescent signs (neon), advertisings on vehicles, parks environmental design, design of buildings and resulted colors, public services spaces design, bus stops, phone booth, seats, environmental design of cultural and pleasure centers, design sculptures in squares and parks, or bas-relief of institutions and offices doorway, doorways panels of stores shops, cinemas and all public and private organizations and institutions, and different advertising panels, and also it is well-known that graphic design is one of the messaging and advertising requirements in our life. Therefore acquaintance with culture of society and knowing its norms, values, customs, and regulations can be significantly important to environmental graphic design. As designer knows deeply about culture and moods of society people, he can easily establish simple and deep communication with audience through simple and clear express, and in simple words designer can return audience identity to him with the new express and different framework and in this way can speak to him. Environmental graphic is a knowledge in which discussed and studied about how use different kinds of forms, colors, figures, and various pictures in a skillful, systematic, and planned way in order to making better and more simple relations, informing, and orientation, and also making beautiful the urban spaces such as public spaces. This knowledge is one of the most effective tools to effect on citizenships, and with visual design and relation it can return identity to audiences and seek to reform it based on components such as religion, rite, ethnicity, culture, customs and social contracts, economic and political trends and so on.

What is notable in environmental graphic is its role in shaping the face of city in structural relationship with identity body. Environmental graphic as a branch of graphic has an important role in reaching to distinctive goals and involves main part of commercial and promotional activities. Our surroundings, home where we live, street where we traffic, green space where we walk, park that we go there to fun, all need to making formal, logical, and exact organized relations based on principles and foundations of visual expression.

Actually human speaks to his environment and communicate with others through environmental graphic. Ibrahim Haghighi says that " graphic in urban area increases the level of people visual literacy and can organize city identity in order to citizen receives belonging sense to city according to himself identity, and even it undertakes the role of organizing and reconstruction in build and ancient spaces and can be designed for distinctive purposes.

5. Theoretical of Identity

In Oxford dictionary Identity means: "The fact of being whom or what a person or thing is" [6].

Identity is the something that person aware it. In other words, identity of person is not something that delegated to him in more social actions, but is something that one must makes continuously and routinely and should support and protect in his reflective activities [7].

Identity is character and truth of object, person or city that included its essential traits and characteristics. The traits are shaped by different factors that effect on urban identity. Thus it can be said that every city identity is expression of culture in environment. It is necessary to say that city identity has differences with city shape. Today we have many cities that appear beautiful but are null of identity elements. Identity and character are meaningful if special indicators of city, rooted in place and time and linked with tradition, beliefs, and generally with knowledge and culture of society, are appeared.

Therefore identity implies the different aspects which everyone appears and develops in society. It can be known as change and modernity because it is continuous, gradual, and released in time and what is current in time, is dynamic.

On the other hand, identity is non-sharable to others. In other words, this dynamic and current at the time concept belongs to independent entities.

Lynch (American urban planner, teacher, and theorist) in his book, "The Face of City", stating image and its constituent five elements, presented a simple definition of identity that could be considered as a basis of experts' definitions and researches about this subject, in the years after 1960. He stated the identity as follows:

What provides independent existence for place or makes a single and distinctive form of others places, and it acts as a context to recognize its generality [8].

The simplest form of identity in city is that the person can recognize a place as a distinct place from others. Feeling, touching, listening sound, seeing colours and shapes, and other cases similar to formation factors of cities identity such as citizens' culture, religion, geographic climate, dialect and language, special event, city people's prominent livelihood, special condition of city, history and events of city, and current activities and performances can effect on identifying of space. For example, it can mention to meaningful and understandable spaces which are proper support that personal memories, feelings, and values are based on, and place identity links closely to personal identity, and also urban events such as special ceremonies and religion and cultural ceremony, which can be identifying.

Identity of an event or a place can be recognized, described, analyzed, and approximately measured by simple tests. Today such tests are compiled. The tests must be completed into field descriptions, which introduce and explain recognized events, and they must create a base to analyze reasons of perceived identity [8].

6. Theoretical of Public Space

One of the urban space classifications is:

- Public spaces: urban spaces considered for public.
- Semipublic spaces: urban spaces designed and suggested for relatively distinctive groups of public such as schools, universities, and offices.
- Semiprivate spaces: limits and spaces selected and designed to the special group.
- Private spaces: limits and places, such as housing, designed for special and completely private group.

In fact, urban spaces play the important role as an effective element in the people life. Every place, which there is around us, has own special functions. Meanwhile some places have different usages and respond to different needs. The spaces, named so-called multifunctional space, can be used differently in different conditions. Subways, considered as public spaces, have the ability to use as multifunctional and multipurpose space.

For more explaining of the public space, it must be mentioned that which spaces, used freely by different groups of people and not limited to select audience, are public. The spaces such as markets, shopping centers, stores, hospital, exhibitions, and subways, are designed in such way that people can use them freely.

Public spaces are environments to cultural exchange, enjoyment, fun, leisure, social life, exchange thoughts, views, beliefs, and comments. The spaces play the important role in providing social harmony and practical realization of join citizens in community, because the spaces are multi purposes and provide many activities and usages for residents.

Matthew Cermano in his book "Public Places, Urban Spaces", which is discussed and recognized about components of public places, stated six important aspects included social, physical, functional, visual, perceptional, and time aspects of environmental quality in urban life; this components are shown in Table 1 [3].

Table 1. Components of public spaces

Components	Description
Social component	Impacts of space effect on people performance and how adjust and control behaviour of environment residents.
Physical component	States qualities addressing to environment body, segmentation, and blocking.
Functional component	Emphasizes to activities existed in space and own space function.
Visual component	Visual dimension includes qualities that observing the space by observers and the present people effects on them.
Perceptual component	Includes qualities of space which effect on the human perception.
Time component	Included usage of functional and time cycles such as living at day, night, and different seasons and factors affecting on functions formation and spatial changes.

7. Discussion and Conceptual Model Presentation (Experimental Development)

In community, identity states common beliefs, norms, and interests which link person to others. Creating public spaces is one of the ways to create identity for city which fits with current time and place of city. Designing of public spaces is

very important, because public spaces create higher background to communication and social relationships for people, and they also can be places for collective memories of citizens that citizen using of public spaces full of collective memories can communicate with his cultural past and gain social identity.

Also all components of public spaces, entitled in Table 1, have an important role in identifying; so the factors should be considered in creation of an environmental work. Actually, when we talk about identifying and modifying it by using environmental graphic in urban public spaces, we mean all systematic structural, functional, aesthetic, side, main, and completive cases in city. It is necessary to mention that all elements and tools of environmental graphic can be located in every one of the areas. For example, urban furniture can have main or side role in a place and even can be created through completing a work or another purpose, and urban advertising, which is inseparable part of urban graphic and has applied role, can effect on beauty of city. Indeed what are important here are relations and effects of these factors on each other.
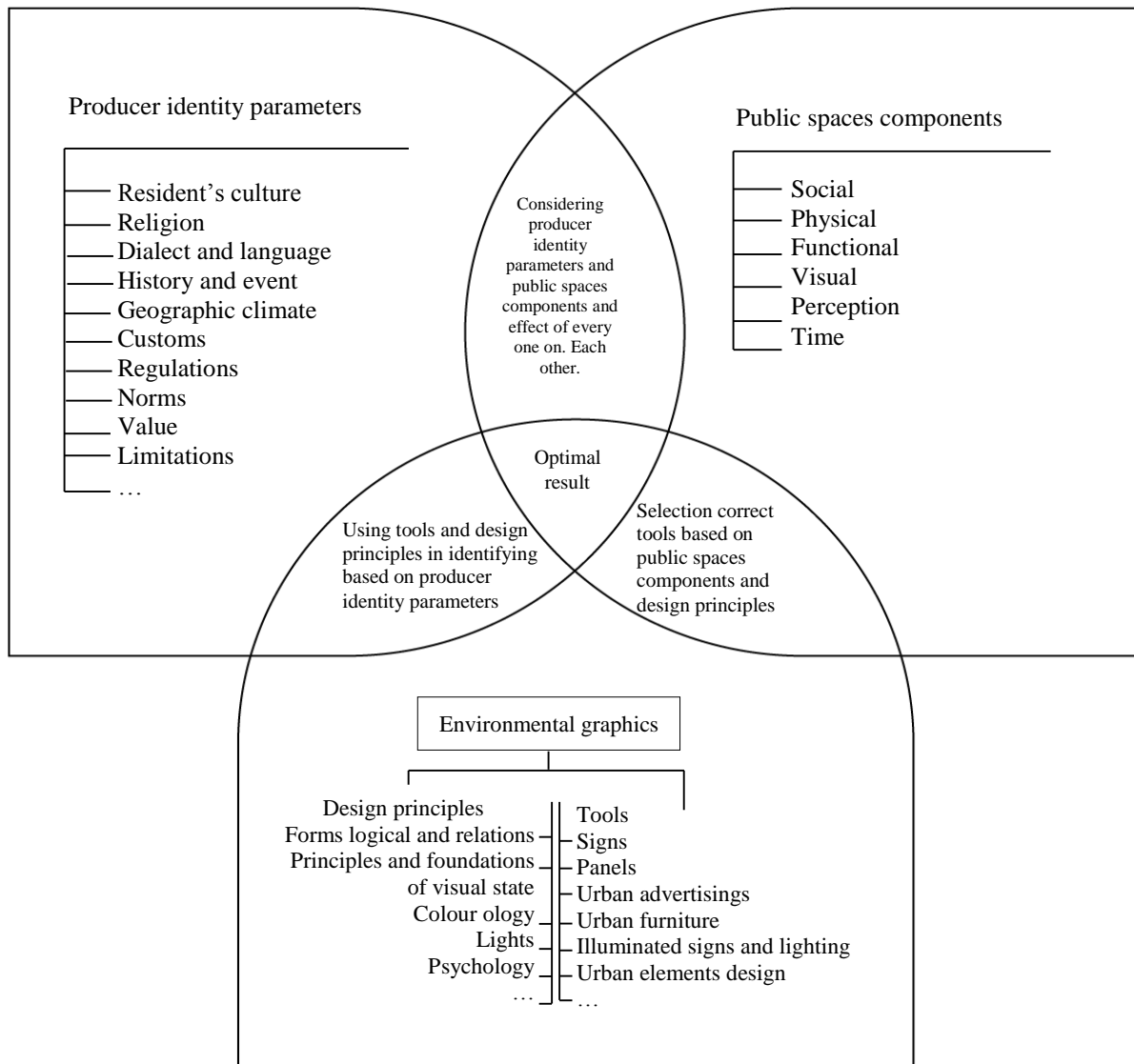

Figure 2. Conceptual model

Regarding to mentioned materials, it can be said that environmental graphics can identify public spaces, using own tools, and also confront with chaotic conditions of spaces not designed based on identity, regarding to factors such as formal logical relationships, principles and foundations of visual state, chromatics topic, light and psychology, and so on can modify visual abnormalities created in city public spaces as possible as. In this regard, creating his work, designer should notices to producer identity parameters and components of city public spaces.

This importance is possible by studying of every components of being designed space, producer identity parameters of the city, and recognition of design principles and environmental graphics tools and their relations with each other.

8. Summary and Conclusion

Prioritization of goals is significantly important in environment design. Although different factors affect on the process, cognition of environment and identify its needs and goals can affect on design type and used tools. In fact, reaching optimal result needs to identify and study effective factors. According to research, environmental graphic introduce as a knowledge that can implement identifying of special space and even reform identity of space by own tools based on design principles and with considering components of public spaces. For example, as mentioned before, one of the important parameters is paying attention to urban culture formed by present of people, and as Mirzayi Nasab said in Chideman Magazine "this culture can be inherited or produced by people". Now if we want to have a public space, which is implement identifying based on urban culture by environmental graphic, components of the space should be considered. For example, an idea in field of advertising or particular ritual can gather people together, and interested identity can be created or maintained and one can implement in promotion or performing the special ceremony, in addition, to evoke the concept of being together.

Next example refers to the role of color which is one of the design principles, and different factors affect on its selection; for example, climate considerations can cause to selecting the cool color for tropical zone while considering other parameters maybe recommend using warm color. Therefore it can be acknowledged that every component of public spaces, producer identity parameters, design principles, and environmental graphic tools can make possible changing of design, in relation with each other. Attending to priority in recognition, need, and purpose is very important to obtain optimal result. Then, helping of environmental graphic, identifying and modified identity in public spaces are possible, if their relations and effects were studied before design. It is worth mentioning that this principle involves answers of the project questions.
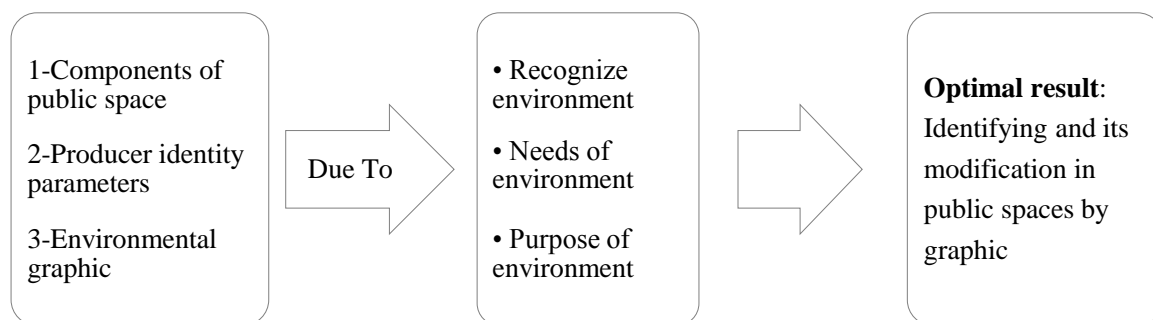

Figure 3. Optimal result

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