



Observation and Analysis of the Signboard Design of Cuihua Road in Xi'an

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Abstract

The signage system is an important component of the information facility in the process of rebuilding the historic city's landscape. Furthermore, it is recognised as a significant medium for contact between members of the general public and tourists, particularly those from Asia. This study investigates the design of commercial signage systems based on the cultural history of Xi'an Midtown, as well as relevant literature and field visits to Xi'an Midtown. Finally, this study provides some insightful recommendations in the expectation that they would serve as a point of reference for the further development of the sign guiding system design in the Xi'an landscape renewal project.

Keywords: Urban Signage Design; Modernology; Xi'an Midtown; Signage System; Content Analysis.

1. Introduction

Reference [1] coined the term modernology (kogenkaku) to describe the documentation of their on-site observations of Tokyoites' changing daily urban life habits. Modernology is progressing steadily in the Midtown area of Xi'an. Xi'an has undergone a significant amount of urban regeneration in order to improve living conditions and to promote the city's image as a cosmopolitan centre. The decision of urban planners to "harmonise" the storefronts along the streets, giving them a uniform appearance, was one of the most controversial decisions [2]. Other examples include the removal of old areas, the restructuring and revitalization of deteriorating streets, and the reinstatement of storefront banners. Therefore, even though Xi'an has been around for a long time and is home to a diverse range of cultures, tourists are unable to appreciate the city's historical typographic layers and visual legacy.

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It is essential to employ the approach of optimization for signboards in order to stimulate the general expansion of the street. The bulk of signboard designers in Xi'an's commercial sectors are currently concentrating their efforts on the aesthetic expression of the individual signs. The design language is more important than the materials on which the signboard design is based, and it is also the central component of the signboard design. This is because the design language is an aesthetic expression.

A signboard is not only one of the items with which residents of an urban environment have the greatest engagement, but it is also one of the items with which they are most familiar. This is because signboards are commonly seen in urban environments. Not only does it serve as a method for disseminating information, but it also plays an important role in the aesthetics of the city by highlighting the many aspects of the metropolis [4]. The design of urban signboards is an industry that is still in its infancy, both inside and outside of China. There hasn't been much research done in this area, and there's not much in the way of established theory either [5]. Despite this, there has been a rise in the number of requests for urban type design planning in China due to the rapid development of the country's regions. It is necessary to do extensive research into the design of urban signboards in order to investigate a number of fundamental theoretical concerns in order to find solutions to the practical challenges. As a consequence of this, it is necessary to do research into urban typology and modernology, both of which are significant instruments for portraying the character and history of a city.

2. Literature Review

By utilising the identify function, individuals are required to demonstrate that they are capable of recognising particular establishments or locations. One of the most important aspects of signage for a store brand is its capacity for differentiation, or the ability to differentiate one store apart from another [6]. The proprietor of a store could also want clients to be aware of the kind of store they are now shopping in as well as the precise location of the establishment. The fact that the smaller percentage accounts for the majority of the more standardised the system is, the more comparable the individual stores are to one another, and the more challenging it will be to differentiate between them. In order for the district to successfully provide uniformity and a single identity for the entire area, it is necessary for the district to adhere to stringent design guidelines. The area now has a sense of cohesion and character due to the harmonisation of the sign systems for the various stores [7]. The problem is that customers of a certain store will only become customers of that store if the store is successful in capturing their interest and keeping it. When an undue emphasis is placed on uniformity, it is difficult for individual retail establishments to preserve their unique identities. It is possible that retailers will lack distinctiveness as a result of the retail sign system providing consistency and personality to the region. This is due to the fact that the retail sign system provides consistency and personality to the region. This is doable due to the fact that there will be very little distinction between the various establishments. It suggests that the ability of signs to perform their job of identification may be compromised when there is an excessive amount of uniformity within a sign system. A type of urban signboard is an example of an element of urban design. As a consequence of this, it is of the utmost importance to identify prevalent issues with the current state of urban design as well as a variety of solutions to these issues. Analysis of the current condition of the urban environment is conducted by architects, urban planners, users of the built environment, philosophers, and landscape designers. There are three primary concerns that need to be addressed.

Stereotype Design Even though the signboard has been cleaned up, it still maintains its typical and consistent appearance [8]. Nevertheless, the signboard is unable to adequately convey the store's personality or the features of the surrounding area. The design seems to adhere to a pattern. As a result, it is essential to carry out research on these issues and to provide certain solutions to them. Following an investigation and research, the author makes the suggestion that the development of "signboard rectification work" should not be carried out in a passive manner with a policy that is dictated from on high, but rather should fully mobilise the enthusiasm of local residents to participate in it [9]. Besides that, there ought to be some kind of strategy involving general planning. It is ingrained in everyday life in order to steer clear of designs that are stereotypical, and it is dedicated to the establishment of a culture of signboards that is characterised by bottom-up spontaneity. For instance, in the city of Xi'an, many of the street stores use the same fonts, materials, and even colours for their signboards. They are standard, yet they are packed with aspects of the local culture; moreover, there is no sense of design at all [10].

Human nature is at the root of the problems that currently plague the urban sector. Due to the notable cross-border aspects that urban types possess, they engage a varied array of academic subjects, such as city planning, architecture, culture, art, ecology, psychology, physiology, sociology, anthropology, and philosophy. Some examples of these academic fields include: (aesthetics). In our day and age, when scientific disciplines are getting ever more specialised, there are not many people who are knowledgeable in science and technology, as well as literature, history, and philosophy[11]. This is because scientific fields are becoming ever more specialised. Therefore, even if some scholars discover the significance of typefaces on a philosophical level, it is difficult to quickly integrate them with urban planning and architectural design. This is because typefaces are a visual element. This is especially the case when one takes into consideration the philosophical aspect. An urban type is a term that refers to a generalised style of type design that shows a connection between time and place. Any particular urban type will, over time and across locations, experience continual modifications, and these transformations will be related to the sort of urban environment in question. At the macroscopic urban scale, the characteristics of urban type design can only be exposed through comprehending a series of font relationships and scopes. This is the only way in which these characteristics can be revealed. This is the only way that something like this could be done. The accomplishment of "design" is obviously evidenced by the precise and definite type and its combination as the only viable alternative for the solution to the problem of independent items. This combination is the only viable option for the solution to the problem of independent things. The accomplishments of urban type design should also be conveyed using a set of "type relationships" because doing so can maximise the diversity of the city. This is because of the significance of the matter.

The two levels of theory that can be utilised to analyse the challenges involved with urban type and signboard design are form composition and practise. People have an insufficient level of comprehension when it comes to urban types, and this level of understanding almost never reaches the philosophical level that is discussed in the literature on urban types. The significance of "type," much less "urban type," has not been acknowledged to the degree to which it is capable of being. It is the superficial aspect of matter when examined through the prism of scientific type, and as such, it is subordinate and secondary. However, when we examined the type in philosophical writing from ancient China, we came to the realisation that the appearance of type matter reflected a spiritual essence. This was the case when we looked at the type. This transpired as a result of our examination

of the type in the philosophical type. As a direct consequence of this, types were utilised extensively across the entirety of social life in ancient China [12]. There have been actions that are not conscious but are practical that have been taking place in metropolitan environments. The vast majority of contemporary cities are still in the process of developing, and there are ongoing efforts to enhance the quality of the surrounding ecological environment and minimise the amount of material scarcity. Academics have only in the last hundred years begun to research the topic of people's attempts to capture the essence of urban life. This is a relatively new field of study [13]. In point of fact, the revival, nurture, and formation of a new urban spirit should be the ultimate goal of urban development when looking to the future of the city. This should be the focus of urban development. This is the purpose of urban planning and design. Even if the language that they use to describe the spiritual level differ, academics have been pointing to it for almost half a century now, even though the words that they use to describe it vary.

The lack of integration between the ideas of "type" and "city" is the most important problem at the conceptual level of urban type[14]. This is not to say that there are not other important problems at this level. Even though a large number of researchers have investigated the true value of types in great detail, he did not pay attention to the city. Even though some works will also describe some urban type phenomena, he did not really put forward from a theoretical point of view how the spiritual core of types can contribute to the cultivation of urban spirit and how it can contribute to the future development of the city. He did not pay any attention to the city, despite the fact that some of his works will describe urban-type phenomena. As a result, the worth of various urban settings has not yet been clearly defined, nor has the conceptualization of criteria that may be used to judge the benefits of urban environments been finished[15].

The preceding inquiry came to the conclusion that there is a wide range of needs in modern China for urban-type research and implementation. On the other hand, there is a major deficiency in the amount of theory, the creation of administrative forms, and practical practise. It will not be feasible to discover solutions to all of the problems that are brought up by this work due to the limitations of time as well as the variances in the academic backgrounds of each individual. In order to carry out in-depth research, the authors of this study make the conscious decision to concentrate their attention on the level of form composition; afterwards, they make an effort to present some theoretical knowledge based on this foundation[16].

The urban type composition level has the ability to play a role in carrying both the top and the bottom since it acts as an intermediate connection between the top and the bottom. This research was conducted with the goals of investigating (1) the theoretical interpretation of urban kinds; (2) the value of urban types when applied to specific case studies; and (3) the provision of various tools for analysing urban types. These analytic tools are utilised concurrently to examine planning practise methods and to make an effort to answer specific challenges associated with urban type design operations. These two pursuits are carried out side by side at the same time. The extent to which the type can seize the spirit of the matter at hand will, without a shadow of a doubt, be given a great deal of weight in the evaluation process. Academics who were conducting research on the topic practically simultaneously came to the conclusion that the ultimate purpose of urban development is the building, maintenance, and regeneration of the city as they were gazing into the future of the city. The most significant issue with urban type theory is that it does not adequately account for the relationship between "type"

and "city." He did not pay attention to the city, and he did not really put forward, from a theoretical standpoint, how the spiritual core of typefaces plays a role in the cultivation of urban spirit and how to contribute to the future development of cities. He did not pay attention to the city because he did not pay attention to the city, he did not really put forward, from a theoretical standpoint [17]. This is despite the fact that a great number of academics have conducted in-depth research on the true importance of typefaces. Regardless of this, he did not bother to pay any attention to the city. As a direct result of this, the significance of urban fonts has not been examined, nor has a theoretical benchmark for evaluating urban typefaces been devised. Neither of these things have occurred.

The absence of in-place management of architecture styles and features degrades the community of architecture and structures, as well as local characteristics; the skyline appears to be in chaos due to out-of-order high-rise buildings; the absence of a unified and distinctive signage system allows the appearance of improper installation of non-profit billboards, which has a negative impact on urban landscapes; the absence of a unified and distinctive signage system allows the application of inappropriately placed advertisements, which has a negative impact on urban landscape

As a consequence of this, the purpose of this study is to investigate the typefaces and signboards that can be found in Xi'an Midtown, in addition to opening up unexpected places linked to the cultural arena and visual geographies for the establishment of learning spaces in the field of art education and also introducing urban signboards for the general public. Xi'an Midtown is located in the centre of Xi'an, which is the capital of Shaanxi Province in China[18]. Visual arts educators have access to an unique graphic resource in the form of typography, which can be used to convey the intricate communication network of streets. This resource can be utilised to express the intricate communicative network of streets.

3. Methodology

This study aims to understand the complicated information that is sent by urban signboard design by using modernology to analyse the contents of urban signboard designs in Xi'an Midtown. The goal of this study is to understand the information that is accumulated by urban signboard design. This study aims to solve the complex social structures of urban signage design by employing the evolution of modern Chinese society and the modernization of signboard fonts as historical contexts, as well as by recommending some practical applications for Xi'an Mid Town commercial signboard fonts [19]. This will be accomplished by using the historical contexts to study the development of modern Chinese society and the modernization of signboard fonts.

The designers start the design process with a clear and in-depth understanding of urban signage design because they first undertake a systematic evaluation of the application characteristics of commercial signboard fonts. The results of studies can provide an explanation for concepts such as psychology, architecture, and the environment. This study presents a considerable number of instances of commercial signboard typefaces in Xi'an, taking into consideration the morphological aspects of the fonts as well as the criteria for visual communication. Figure 1 shows the research methodology.

This investigation of urban signboard design difficulties in Xi'an Midtown started with the identification of problems in order to find solutions. In order to acquire a comprehensive understanding, the researcher acquired data from primary sources. In the first phase of the study, the researchers went on an observation and picture walk to get a better understanding of the impact that outdoor advertising has on the environment of urban areas. In order to gain a more personal understanding of the topic at hand, I plan to take a few walks. While she was on her walk, the researcher snapped photographs and recorded her thoughts. Ten different pictures of sign boards were taken in Xi'an and taken from various storefront and retail signs. Storefronts can be seen on a variety of different types of companies, including restaurants, motels, pharmacies, hardware stores, and more[20]. After obtaining ten different pictures of the storefront signage, the researcher conducted an analysis to determine their authenticity and dependability. The first objective of the research was successfully completed.

During the course of the actual study, one hundred photographs were taken at various retail establishments and signs in Xi'an. In addition, the researcher conducted interviews with five Xi'an public officials, two Xi'an business owners, and two Xi'an sign designers. This content analysis of sign boards and font types in Xi'an City was conducted with the intention of determining urban storefront signage design problems, morphological qualities, and commercial classification. The identification of urban signboard designs in Xi'an Midtown was the second objective of this research, and it was successfully completed thanks to this. Approaches based on content analysis are necessary for determining which components contribute to or detract from progression. These methods are important in and of themselves, but they can also be used to improve more traditional methods of statistical analysis and to identify new ways to collect data for type design on urban signboards. Although these methods are important in and of themselves, they can also be used to improve traditional methods of statistical analysis.

Case study methods offer a solid basis upon which to build a framework for guiding the implementation of best practises. There are also specific protocols for data statistics; the primary source of data was the written solutions to issues that were submitted by participants during problem-solving sessions. In order to delve even further into the source data, participant interviews were utilised. The only data that were directly analysed were the notes and remarks that were taken during the interviews.

After the data were collected, each participant's replies were categorised, and then, based on the unit of analysis, which included competence category, task, and sub-task, common themes were identified. Significant focus was placed on the topics that concerned the visual tools that the participants reported using while attempting to solve problems.

The findings are summarised using one or more of these categorizations, depending on the number of observations. Through the process of organising the data, each of the research questions may be answered. Table 3.1 provides a breakdown of the many methods and descriptions utilised in content analysis research. The research approaches that were utilised in the first phase of pilot testing and the second phase of actual testing are outlined in Table 3.2.

Table 1

Criteria	Descriptions
Study sample	A total of 100 photographs of sign boards were collected from Xiao Zhai area of Xi'an
Research Sites	Xiao Zhai area main street and road: 1. Chang'an Road 2. South Second Ring Road 3. Yanzhan Road in the south, 4. Cuihua Road 5. Zhuque Street
Inclusion criteria	Photographs of various types of retail sign boards and font type in Xi'an City.
Sampling tool	A digital camera was used to click the photographs of the sign boards and advertisements on main roads of storeront in Xi'an City.
Time and Scheduling:	Date The present study was conducted over a period of one month in December 2021 during evening hours 4 PM onwards till 9 PM. The schedule was designed allowing the flexibility to accommodate any foreseen circumstances.
Pilot study	A pilot study was done 2 days before the start of the actual study and 10 photographs were captured in order to check the feasibility and relevance of the prepared format. The sample for pilot study was not included in the main study.
Actual Study	Researcher conducted observation and photographs walk from 10 December 2021 to 17 December 2021 to collected a total of 150 photographs. After filter and select the photographs, there are total of 100 selected.
Data analysis	Researcher also conducted semi-structured interview with 5 publics, 2 store owners, 2 signage designers from Xi'an. Similar sign boards and font type were eliminated so that the final dataset comprised of single representation. Through qualitative analysis of contents of sign boards and font type, researcher identified and explored categories, type of fonts, business types. Each photograph was coded for its visual details such as size, design context and content. Then the inferential meaning and main theme of each were identified.

Research Sites

Xi'an has more than 16 stores per square kilometre, and the total number of shops has surpassed 160,000. This is higher than the cities of Kunming, Guiyang, Lanzhou, Qingdao, Jinan, and Fuzhou, as well as other cities in the centre and east of the country. In terms of population volume and population density, Xi'an ranks among the top 20 cities in China. According to the data, Xi'an has the highest geographical and per capita density among the 20 cities. There are 16.14 stores per square kilometre in Xi'an, and there are 184.47 shops per 10,000 people in the city. About one-third of the establishments provide catering services. Shops are commercial assets that can be as large as supermarkets or as small as a milk tea store, and they can provide a wide variety of options for business.

Shops can range in size from full-service supermarkets to milk tea shops. In this region, gourmet shops are the most common type of commercial establishment, accounting for between 25.5% and 38.3% of all types of businesses in the 20 cities that were analysed. In that instance, around thirty percent of the businesses, regardless of whether they are located in a city renowned for its snacks, such as Xi'an, or in a city known for its seafood, such as Qingdao or Dalian, offer catering services.

There are the most commercial shops in the city centre, Xiaozhai, High-tech Zone, South Second Ring Road, Dayan Pagoda, and Qujiang, Jingkai, Chengdong, and Chengxi. Some of these shops include H&M, GAP, and other quick-fashion brands. The retail brand has a substantial amount of loyal customers (refer to Figure 3.2).

The Xiaozhai region is the focal point of this particular research endeavour. Xiaozhai area; this area is centred on Chang'an Road and extends to the South Second Ring Road in the north, Yanzhan Road in the south, Cuihua Road in the east, and Zhuque Street in the west of the area. One of the most rich areas in Xi'an, it is home to 15 colleges and universities and a number of young consumer organisations. After decades of development, this area has emerged as the premier destination for shopping, amusement, and entertainment among the younger generation in Xi'an. This paper explores signage as an aspect of physical urban culture and its function in the emergence of Midtown Xi'an using the Xiao Zhai region as a case study. The paper focuses on Midtown Xi'an and the Xiao Zhai region. Cultural identity is significant in areas because it impacts how individuals perceive, organise, and use the built environment. This is why cultural identity is important. Xiwu Road, Lianhu Road, Chuihua Street, Xida Street, and Dongxin Street are the streets that make up the area that is the subject of the current inquiry, which is seen in Figure 3.2. The principal roadways of the several places in Xi'an that were analysed for this study are depicted in Figure 1.

4. Findings and Results

There are some typefaces that are utilised in a disorganised manner, are wordy, and have the wrong colour, despite the fact that the bulk of the commercial signboard fonts on the commercial streets of Xi'an are diversified. In addition to problems with standardised urban planning or commercial sponsorship, patterning or immobilisation can occur as a result of typeface usage. Handwritten, deformed art letters, and printed typefaces are utilised in a staggered pattern in unplanned districts that are more irregular and uneven. On streets that have been designed regularly, printed fonts in bold or regular scripts are widely used. The public's education is the primary goal of the words that are shown on signboards. On the other hand, some signboards are quite verbose and packed with a lot of information. According to the findings of the experts, it causes everything in the surrounding surroundings and on the streets to appear differently.

One of the aspects that can most accurately reflect a city's economic, cultural, artistic, and political outlook is the font that is used for commercial signs. It has become an essential component of the urban landscape, exhibiting aspects of urban culture and civilization, and will directly represent the overall image of a city as a whole. When people are walking through the streets of Xi'an, they are exposed to a significant amount of visual pollution as a result of the isolated expression techniques employed by a variety of signboard fonts and the chaotic colour matching. The commercial signs of various stores are stacked on top of one another in a manner

that is not organised (Figure 1). It's easy to become disoriented looking at the fonts, shapes, and colours used on commercial signs and outdoor advertisements.

Many streets in Xi'an have been given a "unified design" makeover in recent years as a direct result of the urban unified planning process that has been going on there. This study summarises the origins of the signboard as well as its evolution in order to investigate the historical and cultural significance that it possesses. This study investigates the history of the store sign, the culture that it represents, the changes that occurred after the unified change of the sign, as well as the benefits and drawbacks of the "unified design" of the store sign in urban planning, using the store sign on the west side of Cuihua South Road, Yanta District, Xi'an City as an example. The study also investigates the changes that occurred after the unified change of the sign. The problems that arose from the "unified design" of storefront signs in urban planning were examined from a variety of perspectives, and the value of combining common and unique storefront signs in urban planning was also investigated.



Figure 1: The commercial signs of various stores are piled up in a disorderly manner.

In addition, in order to reduce manufacturing costs and make fonts larger and more eye-catching, many commercial tenants, particularly small commercial stores, disregard the professional features of the designs of signboards. This results in a disorder in the design relationship between fonts and signboards, which in turn leads to a reduction in the effectiveness of the relationship between the two (such as font selection, colour utilisation, format design, and technique demonstration). As a direct consequence of this, many different streets exude an air of distinct confusion. Certain aspects of the signboards, including their sizes, shapes, colours, and methods of fabrication, do not correspond to the general architectural style of the streets. This makes it difficult to tell the difference between billboards and buildings and puts strain on both the eyes and the mind (see Figure 2). For instance, the signage of the chemist or pharmacy shop is depicted in Figure 2. The text "Tai He Pharmacy Shop" can be found at the very top of the sign. Researchers experience a negative impact due to the confusing nature of the side sign that is displayed at the front of the shop.

Signs that have a detrimental effect on amenity values may also have a detrimental effect on people's appreciation of the ambiance and aesthetic coherence of an area. Not only is there an increase in the number of

signs, but also there is a decrease in the quality of their design, colour, location, size, and placement. This has significant negative consequences.



Figure 2

A detrimental effect on the cityscape can be caused by commercial signs that stick out too much from the rest of the built environment and do not blend in. When this occurs, they have the potential to have an effect on the aesthetic values of the area, interfere with the safe and effective operation of the road network, and add to the visual clutter. It would appear that oversized signs, in particular, have a detrimental effect on the operations of the city (See Figure 3). Consequently, business signs must be governed. The current strategy is to limit the design, size, placement, and frequency of signs. Another method would be to ensure that sign designers are aware of their responsibilities and possess the skills necessary to design acceptable signs.



Figure 3: Oversize Signage.

5. Conclusion

The purpose of this study is to investigate, on the basis of the concept of urban visual order, what form design of Xi'an commercial signboards ought to be presented in front of the public in order to have the desired impact of creating visual order. In order to find a solution to the problem of business signs on most of Xi'an city's streets being confusing for pedestrians and disrupting the visual order, this project was undertaken. This thesis studies the usage of a variety of fonts on a variety of signboards, as well as the typesetting and design of those fonts, and it analyses the influence of particular merchant signboard fonts on the visual order formation of urban streets. The positioning and layout of storefront signs has to be done in accordance with the principles of environmental coordination, which include the combination of uniformity and variety. To enhance the city's reputation and make day-to-day operations more efficient, the design of storefront signage ought to begin with the urban landscape as a whole. This should be accomplished through the application of the concepts of environmental coordination and beautification. As a component of the urban landscape, storefront signage are required to be subordinate to the architectural space surroundings. Because it is an accessory to the structure, its location cannot have an effect on the primary environment of the architectural space. It is necessary to coordinate with the building's type, scale, form, style, material, and other factors, and organically integrate it into the architectural space. This is necessary in order to strengthen and enhance the cultural characteristics and image appearance of the urban architectural environment, and it is also necessary in order to form a natural unity to transformed urban landscape.

In order to fulfil the requirements for development, the general planning of the city must be unified and coordinated. In accordance with the modernology principle, significant urban areas, such as commercial concentration areas, characteristic blocks, landscape protection areas, and other similar places, should display regional characteristics in their entirety. Furthermore, regional environmental and cultural characteristics should be maintained and improved.

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