

## Opinions of Individuals In Hospitals on Visual Aesthetic Elements\*

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### ABSTRACT

Visual aesthetic elements in hospitals are considered to have positive effects for both hospital employees and patient/patient relatives. The research was conducted in a descriptive way to determine the views of patients and their relatives, who working health professionals at Gazi University Medical Faculty Hospital, on visual aesthetic elements of the hospital. Research was conducted with 20 health professionals (10 physicians, 10 nurses) working at Gazi University Medical Faculty Hospital, and 20 patients and patient relatives, each with 10 people. In the study, people were asked questions about aesthetic elements located at the entrance of the hospital, and the data were collected by means of question forms and interviews. The visual aesthetic element selected within the scope of the research at Gazi University Medical Faculty Hospital is the tiny waterfall located at the entrance of hospital. There are colorful flowers around the waterfall, an electronic indicator showing instant air temperature with the watch in the middle, and the emblem of Gazi University Medical Faculty on it. Patients involved in the study were outpatient patients and data from patient/patient relatives were collected by randomly interviewing them in front of the waterfall. It was observed that most health professionals had positive feelings about visual aesthetic elements in question. It was determined that health professionals think that visual aesthetic elements have positive effects not only for them but also for patients. The vast majority (89.0%) said artworks can have a positive impact on their professional lives, but only 25.0% of those can reflect it on their lives. Patient/patient relatives also expressed their positive views on the visual aesthetic element. Some of the expressions of patient/patient relatives on this subject include "morale-boosting", "it is morale-boosting to have woody rest places" (referring to the fact that there are visual aesthetic elements outside the hospital). Based on the results of the research, it is recommended that more emphasis be paid to visual aesthetic elements in hospitals due to the feeling of healing they give.

**Key words:** Health Professionals, Patient, Hospital, Visual Aesthetic Elements

## Hastanelerdeki Bireylerin Görsel Estetik Ögelere İlişkin Görüşleri

### ÖZET

Hastanelerdeki görsel estetik öğelerin hem hastane çalışanları hem de hasta/hasta yakınları için olumlu etkilerinin olduğu düşünülmektedir. Araştırma, Gazi Üniversitesi Tıp Fakültesi Hastanesinde çalışan sağlık profesyonelleri ve hastaneye gelen hasta ile hasta yakınlarının hastanede bulunan görsel estetik öğelere ilişkin görüşlerinin belirlenmesi amacıyla tanımlayıcı olarak yapılmıştır. Araştırma, Gazi Üniversitesi Tıp Fakültesi Hastanesinde çalışan 20 sağlık profesyoneli (10 hekim, 10 hemşire), 10 hasta ve 10 hasta yakını ile yapılmıştır. Araştırmada kişilere hastanenin girişinde yer alan estetik öge ile ilgili sorular sorulmuş, veriler soru kağıdı ve görüşmeler yapılarak toplanmıştır. Gazi Üniversitesi Tıp Fakültesi Hastanesinde araştırma kapsamında seçilen görsel estetik öge, hastane girişinde yer alan minik şelaledir. Şelalenin çevresinde renkli çiçekler, ortasında ise saat ile anlık hava ısısını gösteren elektronik bir gösterge ve onun üzerinde Gazi Üniversitesi Tıp Fakültesi amblemi bulunmaktadır. Araştırmaya dahil edilen hastalar, poliklinik hastaları olup, hasta/hasta yakınlarının verileri şelalenin önünde rastgele görüşülerek toplanmıştır. Sağlık profesyonellerinin çoğu söz konusu görsel estetik öge ile ilgili olumlu duygular hissettikleri görülmüştür. Sağlık profesyonellerinin kendileri dışında, görsel estetik öğelerin hastalar için de olumlu etkilerinin olduğunu düşündükleri saptanmıştır. Büyük çoğunluğu (%89.0) sanat eserlerinin profesyonel yaşamlarında olumlu etkisi olabileceğini söylemelerine karşın, bunu yaşamına yansıtabilenlerin yüzdesi sadece %25.0'dir. Hasta/hasta yakınları da görsel estetik öge ile ilgili olumlu görüşlerini dile getirmişlerdir. Hasta/hasta yakınlarının bununla ilgili bazı ifadeleri "moral verici", "ağaçlı dinlenme yerlerinin olması moral verici" (hastanenin önünde görsel estetik öğenin dışında bu alanların olmasına atıf yaparak) şeklindedir. Araştırma sonucuna dayanarak, verdikleri iyilik hissi (healing) nedeniyle hastanelerde görsel estetik öğelere daha fazla önem verilmesi önerilmektedir.

**Anahtar kelimeler:** Görsel Estetik Öğeler, Hasta, Hastane, Sağlık Profesyonelleri

## INTRODUCTION

According to the Dictionary of the Turkish Language Society, the concept of aesthetics is a sub-branch of philosophy that addresses the effects of beautiful sense, aesthetic, aestheticism, beauty on human memory and emotions (TDK, 2020). Visual aesthetic elements make the environment beautiful, as well as to enjoy the environment where people are present and feel good feelings. For example, environmental characteristics of shopping malls or restaurants, and presence of visual elements are one of the factors that encourage people to come back this place. In hospitals and clinics, with the use of visual aesthetic elements, regardless of the patient/patient's relatives or employees, individuals are expected to feel good feelings (Çobanoğlu, 2009). Today, visual aesthetic elements are used in many hospitals and clinics.

For visual aesthetic elements to evoke good feeling in humans in hospitals, the color and brightness of the image must have



**Figure 1.** Canakkale Mehmet Akif Ersoy State Hospital Psychiatric Outpatient Clinic (Reference: [www.rehbercanakkale.com](http://www.rehbercanakkale.com), 2019)

It has been observed that there are limited studies on the effects of visual aesthetic elements on healthcare professionals, patients and their relatives. In this respect; it is thought that this research will contribute to the literature. This research was carried out to get the opinions of health professionals and their patients/patient relatives about visual aesthetic elements.

## MATERIALS AND METHODS

### Research Type

The research was conducted in a descriptive way to determine views of physicians and nurses working at Gazi University Medical Faculty Hospital, and views of patients and their relatives regarding visual aesthetic elements of the hospital.

### Research Population and Sample

Research population constitutes of physicians, nurses working at Gazi University Medical Faculty Hospital, patients and patient relatives. Before sample selection, individuals who agreed to participate in the study were included into the sample. Sample for the research was determined by simple random sampling method. Research was conducted with 20 health professionals (10 physicians, 10 nurses) working at the hospital, and 10 patients and 10 patient relatives.

### Preparation and Implementation of Data Collection Tool

In the study, data were collected from health professionals with a questionnaire consisting of four sections, and from patients and patient relatives with a questionnaire that created by researchers consisting of three sections. In the first section of questionnaire, there are 6 questions about the introductory characteristics of individuals (such as age, professional position, profession, years of working in this institution or years visiting the hospital as patient/patient relatives). The questions asked in following two sections were common, and 15 questions about aesthetic elements located at the entrance of the hospital were asked to health professionals, patients and patient relatives (such as "did you pay attention to the artwork/s in the space?", "Are there any changes in your work pace/your feelings coming to the hospital due to use of environment and visual aesthetic elements?"). In the fourth section for health professionals, additional questions about aesthetic elements were asked (such as "Have you noticed the benefits of the environment and art works on the healing processes of patients?"). For the research, permission was obtained from Gazi University Faculty of Medicine Ethics Board and Gazi University Faculty of Medicine Center.

In addition to asking questions about a specific visual

aesthetic element in the research, participants were asked questions about the environment and artworks in general. The visual aesthetic element selected within the scope of the research is the tiny waterfall located at the entrance of Gazi University Medical Faculty Hospital (Figure 2-3).



**Figure 2.** Visual Aesthetic Element in Front of Gazi University Medical Faculty Hospital (The photos were taken by the researchers)



**Figure 3.** Visual Aesthetic Element in Front of Gazi University Medical Faculty Hospital (The photos were taken by the researchers)

There are colorful flowers around the waterfall, an electronic indicator showing instant air temperature with the watch in the middle, and the emblem of Gazi University Medical Faculty on it. In winter, this waterfall does not flow its water,

and there are no flowers. Data from patient/patient relatives were collected at times when the waterfall flower and flowers were found. Each interview lasted an average of 15 minutes. During the interview not recording and the answers were noted by the researchers. Patients involved in the study were outpatient patients and data from patient/patient relatives were collected by interviewing them in front of the waterfall. Before the interview, individuals' general situation was taken into consideration, people who were noticed to be anxious and unhappy were not offered to interview. Prior to the interview, the individual was informed about the research and verbal permission was obtained. What individuals said during the interview was noted on the questionnaire by researchers. Health professionals' data was also collected in the services they worked. The data collection form was given to people who agreed to participate and were expected to fill out the form and collected immediately afterwards. In this way, there was also the opportunity for health professionals to get their views on the subject verbally.

### Assessment of Data

For the assessment of data obtained from the study, SPSS 15 program, Frequency Analysis and descriptive statistics were used.

### RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

80.0% of the health professionals surveyed are female, and 55.0% of them are between the ages of 20 and 39. While 35.0% of individuals work as service nurses, while 25.0% work as professors. Health professionals who are professors, associate professors and research assistants are all physicians. The nurses involved in the study work as service nurses or service manager nurses. Considering the professional experience of individuals, it was determined that 45.0% of them had been working for more than 20 years, and their working time in this institution was between 5-20 years with a maximum rate of 45.0%. Most of the participants in the study (95.0%) noticed the visual aesthetic element mentioned, and most (89.0%) said that they noticed it in more than one (Table 1).

**Table 1.** Health Professionals' Descriptive Characteristics (n=20)

DESCRIPTIVE CHARACTERISTICS	N	%
Physician	10	50.0
Nurse	10	50.0
<b>Gender</b>		
Female	16	80.0
Male	4	20.0
<b>Age</b>		
20-39	11	55.0
40-59	8	40.0
60-79	1	5.0
<b>Academic Title</b>		
Professor	5	25.0
Assistant Professor	1	5.0
Research Assistant	4	20.0
Service Manager Nurse	3	15.0
Service Nurse	7	35.0
<b>Occupational Experience</b>		
Less than 1 year	2	10.0
1 year-Less than 5 years	2	10.0
5 year-Less than 20 years	7	35.0
20 years and more	9	45.0
<b>Working History in the Institution</b>		
Less than 1 year	3	15.0
1 year-Less than 5 years	3	15.0
5 year-Less than 20 years	9	45.0
20 years and more	5	25.0

Situation of Attention to Visual Aesthetic Element		
Yes	19	95.0
No	1	1.0
<b>Count of Attention to Visual Aesthetic Element*</b>		
Once	2	11.0
More than one	17	89.0
<b>TOTAL</b>	20	100.0

\* Not everyone has answered this question

Considering descriptive characteristics of patients/patient relatives who participated in the study, it is observed that 55% of them are male and between the ages of 20 and 39. 40.0% of the participants work as self-employed, and 40.0% of them have a 5-year arrival period in this institution. Interviews with patient/patient relatives have also revealed that most people (80.0%) noticed the visual aesthetic element, and most (81.0%) noticed more than once (Table 2).

According to the research data, most health professionals and patient/patient relatives have expressed positive views on visual aesthetic elements. Positive perspectives of patient/patient relatives ( $\bar{x}=4.2$ ) were found to be higher than those of health professionals ( $\bar{x}=3.2$ ). 70.0% of health professionals want the mentioned visual aesthetic element to remain in place, while this rate was found to be 95.0% in patients/patient relatives. However, analyzing effects of visual aesthetic elements on individuals' working pace or feelings of patients/patient relatives while coming to the hospital; it was observed that this effect is mostly positive, and when you look at the difference between health professionals and patient/patient relatives, positive exposure rates of health professionals ( $\bar{x}=4.8$ ) are higher than those of patients/patient relatives ( $\bar{x}=4.6$ ). A physician made the following explanations regarding his working pace:

*"I have seen the benefit in terms of employees as well as for students. These elements are motivating and contribute to embracing where they work."*

**Table 2.** Descriptive Characteristics of Patient/Patient Relatives (n=20)

DESCRIPTIVE CHARACTERISTICS	N	%
Patient	10	50.0
Patient Relative	10	50.0
<b>Gender</b>		
Female	9	45.0
Male	11	55.0
<b>Age</b>		
20-39	11	55.0
40-59	6	30.0
60-79	3	15.0
<b>Profession</b>		
Retired	3	15.0
Officer	5	25.0
Undergraduate Student	2	10.0
Self-employed	8	40.0
Housewife	2	10.0
<b>Duration in the Institution</b>		
Less than 1 year	6	30.0
1 year-Less than 1 year	1	5.0
1- 5 years	5	25.0
Over 5 years	8	40.0
<b>Situation of Attention to Visual Aesthetic Element</b>		
Yes	16	80.0
No	4	20.0

Count of Attention to Visual Aesthetic Element*		
Once	3	19.0
More than one	13	81.0
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Although health professionals' rates of positive effects by visual aesthetic elements are higher, the fact that the percentage of physicians who indicate that their rates remain unchanged compared to those of the patients/patient relatives may be related to possible problems or problems experienced since the visual aesthetic element is at the entrance of the hospital. As a matter of fact, during the data collection phase, three health professionals stated that the fire truck could not approach to hospital for this reason during the fire. It can be concluded that most health professionals care about their functionality when a choice between aesthetics and functionality is required. This is an expected result in this profession, which is prioritized by human health.

The study also found that most health professionals (90.0%) thought that the environment and artworks had a positive effect on the morale of their patients, such as themselves. Health professionals' ideas that environmental characteristics have positive effects are also consistent with the research carried out by Salderay and Gönülçay-Çalimli (2019).

In our study, it was observed that female health professionals consider visual aesthetic elements in question as more friendly (Female  $\bar{x}$ =12 Male  $\bar{x}$ =4.5) and more understandable (Female  $\bar{x}$ =11.94 Male  $\bar{x}$ =4.75) and more vivid (Female  $\bar{x}$ =12.06 Male  $\bar{x}$ =4.25) compared to male health professionals. Despite the positive effects of health professionals and positive views on the ability of art works to be in their professional lives (89.0%), it was found that only 25.0% of people used this feature. In addition, the rate of female health professionals using visual aesthetic elements in their professional lives was higher than male health professionals (Female  $\bar{x}$ =11.75, Male  $\bar{x}$ =5.50). Those who used art works in their professional life indicated that they also shared paintings they liked with patients and students, used them in their scientific presentations or put pictures and flowers in the service corridor.

In addition, the study found that physicians have higher rates of visual aesthetic elements than nurses in terms of realizing the positive effects of these elements for healing process in patients (Physician  $\bar{x}=13$ , Nurse  $\bar{x}=8$ ). This difference may be due to the fact that physicians have practice experiences. The environmental arrangement of the office is carried out according to the physician's request. In this way, both patients/patient's relatives and physician feel well.

A physician has had statements on the subject as follows:

*"Patients already have a moral impairment because of their illnesses. They connect them to life. Patients are depressed, such items in the patient's relatives, the employee feels better. Physician will feel better if he is in a good environment."*

In addition, physicians' professional experiences and working times in this institution and the rates of realizing the effects of the environment and art works on the healing processes of patients were found to be statistically significant. It was also determined that professional experience ( $\bar{x}=14.89$  for over 20 years,  $\bar{x}=8.86$  for 5-20 years,  $\bar{x}=5$  for less than 1-5 years,  $\bar{x}=2$  for less than 1 year) and as working time increased in the institution ( $\bar{x}=16$  for over 20 years,  $\bar{x}=11.56$  for 5-20 years,  $\bar{x}=5$  for 1-5 years,  $\bar{x}=3.67$  for less than 1 year), these rates also increased.

A nurse's statements are as follows:

*"Hospitals are like homes where patients come when they get sick. As much as people care about their houses from an aesthetic point, hospitals should be turned into a peaceful and beautiful environment by caring hospitals in this sense..."*

Expressions of patients/patient relatives on this subject also included "morale-boosting", "it is morale-boosting to have woody rest places" (referring to the fact that there were visual aesthetic elements outside the hospital).

60% of patients/patient relatives found it appropriate to spend money for visual aesthetic elements, while 25% said it may be appropriate if it is not expensive. When we looked at the answers that health professionals gave this question, it was found that they all found it appropriate.

During interviews, a father with a patient's relative shared the following feelings and thoughts:

"A father just took a picture of his children in front of that tiny waterfall. I thought that I wish I would take pictures of my kids

as this. If I would take pictures of my children in a nice place, like the Emblem of Gazi Medical School. I mean, of course I took pictures of them, but not like that."

Visual aesthetic elements are known to attract children more than adults (Köksal Akyol et al., 2015). Examples of the following event observed during the data collection phase can be given as follows:

A mother and her 6-7-year-old daughter are coming down the stairs to the hospital. Little girl said:

- Mom, isn't the waterfall so beautiful?

The mother, who appeared to be absent-minded by facial testimony, did not hear her daughter say it. When her daughter did not get any answers from her mother and came closer to the visual element, she was more excited and happier, and said:

- Mom, isn't the waterfall so beautiful?

Her mother raised her head this time and looked at the visual element and said "yes," and then the mother and daughter passed in front of the element and quickly left the hospital.

Whether in Turkey or in other countries, children's services, children's outpatient clinics are separated from their adults in terms of visuals. For example, children's outpatient clinics and clinics are filled with cartoon heroes, fun pictures, as well as playgrounds, and working health professionals often wear colorful uniforms instead of white. In addition to visual aesthetic elements, having playgrounds/rooms in the hospital helps children cope with the disease.

The following moment can be given an example of the effects of visual aesthetic elements on children.

### **Museum Hospital**

"I am 10 years old. My mom and I were on the way to the hospital, and I was going to go to that hospital for the first time. When I walked into the hospital, I asked my mother: "Mom, are you sure this is the hospital? Isn't this a museum?". I remember asking this question repeatedly, that I was not convinced by my mother's answer: "Yes, of course, this is the hospital.

" Because there were mosaic decorations on the walls at the entrance to the hospital, the columns, which were not the images I expected in a hospital, and I liked them very much. Of course, I understood that this was the hospital from the

medical procedures that were done to my mother, but throughout my childhood, the name of that hospital was the Museum Hospital for me.”

Activities and projects are carried out in hospitals to help children to have morale in the healing process in connection with visual aesthetic elements. Some of these are the way the hospital's glass cleaners are disguised as superheroes or new games in the hospital (Simpson, 2016; Orhan, 2017).



**Figure 4.** Superhero glass cleaners (Reference: Simpson, 2016)

Child-friendly hospital projects are another example of the construction of the subject. For this reason, a child-friendly hospital project spent in Antalya can be given as example (Öztuzsuz, 2017).



**Figure 5.** Antalya child-friendly hospital project (Reference: Öztuzsuz, 2017)

Gazi University Medical Faculty Hospital in 2016 launched a project called the Sky Chamber. The Sky Chamber of Gazi University Faculty of Medicine was opened in memory of Prof. Dr. M. Kemali Baykaner who lost his life. This room was organized to contribute to the healing process of children between the ages of 3 and 15 (Prof. Kemal's Sky Room, 2016).



**Figure 6.** Gazi University Medical Faculty Hospital Sky Room (Reference: Prof. Kemal's Sky Room, 2016)

## CONCLUSIONS

It has been observed that the use of visual aesthetic elements in hospitals has positive effects for both patient/patient relatives and hospital employees. Therefore, it is thought that such items should be given more space in a way that does not prevent health care. Visual aesthetic elements can be at the entrances of the hospital, as well as especially in children's service/outpatient clinics and psychiatric service/polyclinics. In selection of these elements, it is recommended to pay attention to colors and focus on landscape paintings containing natural colors such as blue and green.

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