

THE IMPACT OF VISUAL ENVIRONMENT ON ILLUMINANCE LEVELS PREFERENCES CROSS-CULTURE CASE STUDY ON OMANI AND PORTUGUESE FORTS IN OMAN

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Abstract

The objective of this research is to investigate the cross-cultural differences with regard to the illuminance levels preferences. Illuminance level preferences are directly related to and based on visual environment impact that differs according to different geographical locations. Therefore, the cross-cultural difference is a common term that relates directly to the different visual environment of each region. Toward this aim a field study carried out a comparison of daylight illuminance levels of internal spaces, in a definite region (Muscat, Oman), built and used by two groups of people from different climatic and cultural backgrounds. Forts and citadels built and inhabited by Omanis and Portuguese in Muscat region represent a good case study to test the stated hypothesis. The two inhabitant groups are from totally different climatic and luminous environments that directly affecting their perception and need of daylight; that is regarding their long-term adaptation to natural light level of their regions. The comparison utilized a hypothetical framework of lighting preferences to compare the similarities and differences in visual attributes between the mentioned cultures. Findings confirm the influence of climatic and cultural backgrounds on lighting levels preference that show that the lighting preferences are not universal. Accordingly, the global standards of lighting levels recommendations might be NOT suitable to be applied all over the world regardless the difference of environmental impact on human adaptation. These findings are useful to practitioners who are designing to effectively address the diversity of user's lighting levels preferences in our globally connected society.

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