

# **Research on the Coexistence of Color between Buildings and Exterior Advertising that Create a Cityscape**

**~ focusing on the Okamoto district of Kobe ~**

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## **ABSTRACT**

In line with the Landscape Act of 2004, the Exterior Advertising Code was revised. At the same time, a new principle was put into place which includes not only improving aesthetic and scenic beauty but also the overall creation of a more favorable cityscape. There are a number of issues addressed by the Exterior Advertising Code, such as illegal signboards, restrictions on surface area, as well as delaying the rules to adjust to rapid growth in technology. Furthermore, in order to improve the cityscape, there is an increase in color restrictions being placed throughout the country. Indeed, many municipalities have implemented restrictions on color of high chroma for signboards. But could the solution be that simple? There should be a way to create an even better and more attractive cityscape by incorporating the colors of exterior advertising. Therefore, we reconsidered and studied the possibilities of a coexistence between the colors of buildings and exterior advertising. The survey was conducted by focusing on a mixed commercial and residential area in the Okamoto district of Kobe, Japan. We conducted a fact-finding survey on the colors of buildings and exterior advertising in the district, as well as a meeting with the Beautiful City Okamoto Council that drew up “The Exterior Advertising Rules and Guidelines.” As a result, we found out that with respect to the regional style of the buildings throughout the entire district, some cityscapes are actually being harmonized with the colors of signboards. Therefore, it is conceivable that the colors of signboards do not prevent a landscape from forming scenic beauty, yet rather become an important factor for beautification. This form of cityscape was even supported by the the local residents themselves, who led the town planning over many years to formulate the guidelines for conforming the colors of exterior advertising.

## **1. INTRODUCTION**

In line with the Landscape Act of 2004, the Exterior Advertising Code was revised. At the same time, a new principle was put into place which includes not only improving aesthetic and scenic beauty, but also the creation of a more favorable cityscape. According to Article 2 in the Exterior Advertising Code, the exterior advertising is “displayed outside in public permanently or a certain period of time and is presented on signboards, standing signboards, billboards, noticeboards, buildings and other structures and those similar thereto.” The Exterior Advertising Code itself does not contain detailed regulations. Thus, specific regulations are mostly determined by each municipality. This can be observed as a preceding example of decentralization. (Koide and Anpu 2007: 9-15). Once local

authorities have become a part of landscape administrative bodies, they are then allowed to set up regulations on exterior advertising independently. This enables them to adapt suitable advertising in accordance with the local characteristics of their region. There is a lack of accumulated research on the standard measurements regarding the control of exterior advertising. Therefore, even the municipalities that have a positive attitude towards the utilization of exterior advertising for the improvement of the cityscape find themselves in a cycle of trial and error. On top of this, there are a number of conflicting issues regarding exterior advertising, such as illegal signboards, restrictions on surface area that do not take regional character into account, as well as delaying the adjustment of rules in accordance with rapid growth in technology. In regards to colors, there is an increasing number of color restrictions placed throughout Japan with the aim to create a more satisfactory cityscape. A number of areas have implemented restrictions on color of high chroma for signboards. But could the solution be that simple? There should be a way to create an even better and more attractive cityscape by incorporating the colors of exterior advertising. Therefore, we reconsidered this principle and studied the possibilities of a coexistence between the colors of buildings and exterior advertising. The investigation was conducted in the Okamoto district of Kobe, the area of the Beautiful City Okamoto Council that drew up “The Exterior Advertising Rules and Guidelines” and have been taking an active part in utilizing exterior advertising for beautification.

## **2. METHOD**

The study method we performed involves a quantitative color analysis of the Okamoto district of Higashinada-ku, Kobe-shi. Based on the results from the survey, we examined how the coexistence of colors between buildings and exterior advertising influence the quality of cityscape color. We also studied the initiatives of the local residents who led town planning over many years in order to formulate the guidelines for conforming the colors of exterior advertising. Lastly, for the survey of the actual color condition, we employed a visual colorimeter supervised by Japan Color Research Institute. The survey was then conducted from 10:00 to 15:00 in August, 2014.

## **3. RESULTS**

### **3-1 Community Development of the Beautiful City Okamoto Council**

The Beautiful City Okamoto Council was formed on September, 1982. According to the community development agreement of Okamoto district, the area includes the entire area of 1-chome Okamoto, Higashinada-ku, Kobe-shi and a part of 5-chome Okamoto and 3-chome Kitamachi, Honzan. The Beautiful City Okamoto Council established rules such as, “Community Development,” to form a community that allows citizens to play a part in making decisions about their own city. It has been over thirty years since the establishment of the council and the cityscape in Okamoto has shown a dramatic change.

In recent years, the soaring land prices have accelerated the increase in national chain stores, while the number of privately-owned local shops continues to decline. This is indeed the case in Okamoto city, whose cityscape of common signboards is being infiltrated by the growing number of stores that are putting up unnecessarily gaudy and thoughtless signboards with harmful colors. Due to these factors, in 2009 the authorities of Okamoto city began research for the formation of “The Exterior Advertising Rules and

Guidelines for Okamoto.” This set of rules was finally approved at the 32<sup>nd</sup> general meeting in 2014. The rules outline that signboards are an indispensable element of what construct the cityscape. This also explains that signboards that harm the beautiful landscape are unsuitable for the city and will be restricted under the rules.

Moreover, “The Exterior Advertising Rules and Guidelines for Okamoto” aims to increase suitable signboards for the overall image of Okamoto. Attractive signboards should enhance the city’s charm so that citizens will be even more proud of their city – in turn, this would eventually make the city more appealing for outside visitors as well.

There are three keywords that symbolize the universal elements and essential values of the city of Okamoto. These are the following: open sky, Mt. Rokko, and stories told by unique paved stones. Naturally, colors significantly influence these images. Considering these aspects, Okamoto city determined the suitable colors for exterior advertising as a way to maintain its fine cityscape. The city took on the positive challenge to place the colors of signboards in a way where they can coexist with the founding characteristics of the city.

Through the hearing surveys provided, various measures have been taken, such as the publication of the quarterly magazine, “Beautiful Town Okamoto,” and a signboard contest that follows with the purpose of drawing up “The Exterior Advertising Rules and Guidelines.” These were all conducted to specifically visualize how the city should appear. The hearing surveys revealed that it takes steady efforts and enthusiasm to achieve successful community development.

### 3-2 The color investigation result of the Okamoto district

We performed the color investigation of the Okamoto district. We analyzed it with the quantitative investigation into outer wall (79 places) of the building and outdoor advertising goods (219 places) and grasped the characteristic of the color.

#### 1) The color investigation result of buildings

We measured the color of the outer walls of 79 buildings. As a result, a building of the hue of YR and Y accounts for 60%. About the value, 8-9, 50% and less than 3 are 7%. About the chroma, 1-3, 63% and 4-6, 14% and 7-13, 0% and 14 are 1%. Achromatic color accounts for 22%, but black isn't and white is 13%. There are a lot of YR and Y of the high value and the low chroma overall. Light beige, white and gray of the high value are admitted the local color of this district.

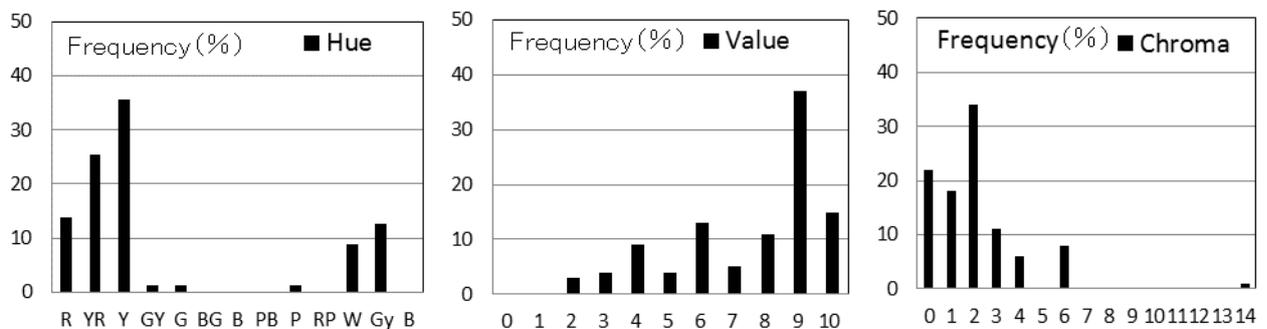


Figure 1: Color distribution map of buildings

## 2) The color investigation result of exterior advertising

We measured the color of exterior advertising goods of 219 places. As a result, it was white (29.2%) that there was the most. It accounts for 47.5% only by achromatic color. There are a lot of R (14.6%) and YR (8.7%) by chromatic color. Low and medium value is 43.9%. The medium and high chroma accounts for 35.1%. There are a lot of achromatic color, vivid red and orange for the feature of the overall color.

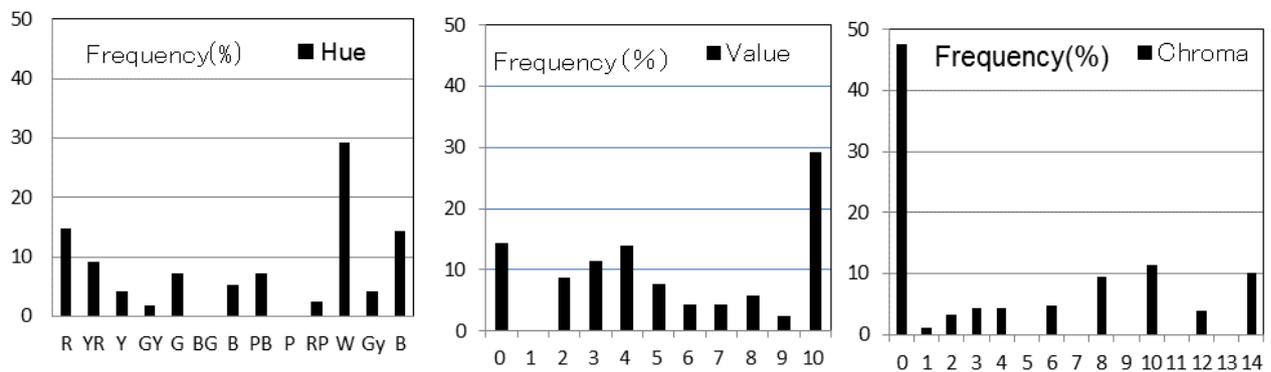


Figure2: Color distribution map of the exterior advertising goods

## 3) The features of the colors in Okamoto district

We found out that the local color of the building is admitted clearly. A commercial store and housing are intermingled in this Okamoto district. We can think a possibility that the color of the exterior advertising goods influences the quality of the color landscape in this whole district is high. A color of medium-high chroma is used for most of colors of the outdoor advertising goods backed by the white that is a local color.

Because the use area of those colors is small, the color of the outdoor advertising goods is accent color. In the Okamoto district we can recognize it to be a local color including the color of the outdoor advertising goods as well as buildings.

## 4. CONCLUSION

In the Okamoto district, the signboard colors harmonize with the building colors that were already established in the whole city over the years. That means exterior advertising colors have naturally and successfully created a part of the cityscape without becoming detrimental. We can conclude that this achievement was only made possible through the tremendous effort put forth by the local initiatives of The Beautiful City Okamoto Council, who have successfully made an ideal city come true.

## REFERENCES

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