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Analysis of Fajr Festival Posters Based on Parsons' AGIL Theory: Strategies for Improving Educational and Cultural Effectiveness

Mohammadali Daneshsedigh¹ , Abolfazl Davodi Roknabadi² , Mohammadreza Sharifzadeh³ , Pejman Dadkhah⁴ 

1- PhD student of comparative and analytical history of Islamic arts, Department of Art, Kish International Branch, Islamic Azad University, Kish Island, Iran

2- Professor, Textile and Clothing Design Department, Yazd Branch, Islamic Azad University, Yazd, Iran.

3- Professor of Philosophy of Art, Art Department, Central Tehran Branch, Islamic Azad University, Tehran, Iran.

4- Assistant Professor, Department of Photography, Faculty of Art, Iqbal Lahori Institute of Higher Education, Mashhad, Iran.

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Abstract

This research aimed to analyze the educational and cultural effectiveness of Fajr Festival posters based on Parsons' AGIL theory (adaptation, goal achievement, coherence, maintaining patterns). The method of this research is based on the paradigm of pragmatism and from the perspective of the objective it is a developmental research that has been conducted in a single cross-sectional manner; the method of this study is qualitative/quantitative from the perspective of the result, such that the research strategy in the first step is qualitative content analysis of the interview text of the informants regarding the criteria for evaluating the educational and cultural effectiveness of Fajr Festival posters, and in the second step is fuzzy screening and the method of data collection was library in the first step and field in the second step using a questionnaire tool. The festival posters were evaluated by experts using the fuzzy screening method in the four functions of Parsons' theory and based on five key criteria: learning and knowledge enhancement, attitude and behavior change, participation and interaction, satisfaction, and long-term impact. The results showed that among Parsons' four functions, "adaptability" (attracting the audience and matching visual taste) is the most important in cultural educational effectiveness. After that, "achieving the goal" (conveying a specific educational message) and "maintaining the model" (promoting the values of committed cinema) are placed, and "coherence" (using national and religious symbols) has a moderate effect on cultural educational effectiveness, despite its strong presence in posters. This study has provided suggestions for artists, cultural policymakers, and managers interested in promoting the role of posters as an educational medium and a means of transmitting cultural values.

Keywords:

Fajr Festival, Parsons AGIL theory, cultural management, educational effectiveness, poster design, fuzzy screening

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Corresponding Author: Abolfazl Davodi Roknabadi

Email: davodi@gmail.com



Extended abstract

Introduction

As one of the most efficient visual media, advertising posters have always played a pivotal role in educational systems and the transmission of cultural messages (Pan et al., 2025). Studies show that posters, by combining visual and textual elements, have a unique capacity to instill educational concepts and shape the collective unconscious (Kumar et al., 2025). Especially in societies undergoing cultural transition, these visual media can serve as an efficient tool for educational management goals (Thakur et al., 2025). Recent research emphasizes that the design of advertising posters in recent decades has moved from purely advertising approaches to educational and culture-building models. This development has made posters a valuable source for analyzing cultural policies (Gelan, 2025).

The Islamic Revolution of Iran in 1979 was a turning point in redefining the educational and cultural system of Iranian society. By breaking with previous patterns, this development established new foundations for the production of committed and educational art (Takaloo & Darvishi Se Talani, 2021). Studies show that after the revolution, visual arts were especially used to serve educational and training purposes, and cultural analyses confirm that the Islamic Revolution turned concepts such as cultural independence and the fight against arrogance into the focus of artistic production (Majidi Vizane et al., 2022). These developments created a dynamic space for the creation of works of art with educational functions.

The Fajr decade, as a symbol of the victory of the Islamic Revolution, is considered an important vehicle for the implementation of cultural and educational programs in the calendar of the Islamic Republic of Iran. Research shows that the programs of this decade have become an opportunity to transmit revolutionary and educational values to new generations (Maqhsoodi & Alipour, 2011). Content analysis of the programs of this decade indicates that advertising posters have a major contribution to the reproduction of educational discourse; these works act as “visual educational media” that can effectively convey cultural concepts (Manifar & Haji Alimohammadi, 2022). Parsons’ social systems theory, emphasizing the four functions of “adaptation, goal achievement, coherence, and pattern maintenance,” provides an analytical framework for examining the role of posters in the educational system. Recent studies show that this theory can be used to analyze the educational functions of visual media (Hahighhatian et al., 2015). Researchers believe that promotional posters, within the framework of this theory, have the function of “preserving cultural and educational patterns” (Mahmoodi & Kichi, 2016).

Despite numerous studies on the Islamic Revolution, a systematic analysis of the posters of the Fajr decade from the perspective of educational management and cultural policy-making has been neglected. This research, using the screening method, examines the impact of Fajr Festival posters based on Parsons’ AGIL theory on educational and cultural effectiveness. The innovation of this research lies in screening the most important features of Parsons’ theory hidden in the posters of the Fajr Festival of the Islamic Revolution as one of the most important cultural events after the Islamic Revolution of Iran based on the main criteria of cultural and educational effectiveness, which emphasizes the undeniable importance of cultural/educational developments affected by changes in visual productions, especially the posters of this important Iranian event after the Islamic Revolution.

Theoretical Framework

As one of the most effective visual communication tools, advertising posters play a pivotal role in educational systems and the transmission of cultural messages (Kobayashi et al., 2018). Studies show that these visual media, by intelligently combining visual and textual elements, have a unique capacity to instill educational concepts and shape audience attitudes

(Gee et al., 2018). From the perspective of educational management, posters not only play an advertising function, but also an educational-promotional role and can serve as an efficient tool to serve learning goals (Zanjanbar, 2025). New research in the field of educational communication emphasizes that analyzing posters from the perspective of cultural policymaking can reveal effective patterns in designing educational content. Comparative studies have shown that the design of cultural-educational posters in different countries follows the principles of learning psychology and visual communication (Salman & Ali, 2025).

The concept of educational/cultural effectiveness as a multidimensional construct (Majda et al., 2021) in the literature of educational and cultural sciences indicates the success of integrated programs in achieving predetermined goals by creating desirable changes at three levels of knowledge, attitude, and behavior (Kim et al., 2020). This concept can be evaluated using five key indicators: the learning index, which measures the extent to which cognitive and skill goals are achieved using quantitative and qualitative methods; the attitude change index, which measures changes in the beliefs, values, and cultural orientations of the audience; the active participation index, which evaluates the level of interaction and involvement of stakeholders in the implementation process; the satisfaction index, which examines the perceived quality of the program from the audience's perspective in various content, method, and implementation dimensions; and the impact sustainability index, which evaluates the sustainability and institutionalization of the program's achievements in the long term (Aldowah et al., 2015). These main evaluation criteria allow for comprehensive and systematic evaluation. It provides the effectiveness of educational-cultural actions, content, approaches and programs at the micro, meso and macro levels (Biesta, 2015).

Talcott Parsons, as one of the most systematic theorists of structural functionalism, has presented the AGIL model for the analysis of social systems. By proposing four basic functions of adaptation, goal attainment, integration and pattern maintenance (Latency), this model provides a powerful analytical tool for examining educational institutions (Maghsoodi & Tonadvoli, 2014). Recent studies show that this theoretical framework is very useful for analyzing the educational functions of visual arts (Baloch et al., 2022). Especially in examining the relationship between cultural productions and the educational goals of social systems, Parsons' theory provides valuable insights (Sciortino, 2021). Numerous studies have used this framework to analyze educational content and systems. For example, studies have examined the function of preserving educational patterns in visual media (Weichelt, 2024) or the cohesive role of educational posters (Nabavi-Zadeh Namazi et al., 2024). Research has also been conducted on the analysis of educational posters in China (Suglo, 2022) and Iran (Rastegar et al., 2019) with this theory. In the field of education in Iran, studies such as the study by Ghadiri et al. (2022) have examined the representation of educational concepts in visual media.

Research Method

The method of this research is based on the paradigm of pragmatism and; from the perspective of orientation, is fundamental on the one hand because it seeks to find criteria for measuring the effectiveness of educational culture in media productions, including poster art; and on the other hand, it is applicable in that it uses a questionnaire tool to try to apply Parsons' theory in analyzing the content of Fajr Festival posters as the most important event after the Islamic Revolution of Iran. This research uses an inductive approach and was conducted as a single cross-sectional study and adopted two qualitative/quantitative research strategies from the perspective of the results, such that the research strategy was content



analysis in the first step and fuzzy screening in the second step. The data collection method was library in the first step and field in the second step using a questionnaire.

Research findings

This study aimed to analyze the educational and cultural effectiveness of Fajr Film Festival posters based on Parsons' AGIL theory. The importance of this study is that posters, as powerful visual media, can play an effective role in conveying educational messages and promoting cultural values. By combining qualitative and quantitative methods, this study provided a systematic approach to evaluating this effectiveness. In the first stage of the research, key criteria for the educational and cultural effectiveness of posters screened for the Fajr Islamic Revolution Festival were identified through interviews with 18 academic and artistic experts. The most important of these criteria included learning and knowledge enhancement, attitude and behavior change, participation and interaction, satisfaction, and long-term impact. These findings indicate that festival posters should not be seen as mere advertising tools, but can have a high capacity for indirect education and shaping cultural attitudes. The results of the second stage of the research, which was conducted using the fuzzy screening method, showed that among Parsons' four functions, "compatibility" (attracting the audience and matching visual taste) is the most important in cultural educational effectiveness. After that, "achieving the goal" (conveying a specific educational message) and "maintaining the model" (promoting the values of committed cinema) are placed. Interestingly, "coherence" (integrated use of national and religious symbols) despite its strong presence in posters has a moderate effect on cultural educational effectiveness.

Conclusion

Visual attractiveness (compatibility) is a necessary condition for increasing the effectiveness of posters as effective content from a cultural educational perspective, but it is not sufficient alone and must be accompanied by targeted educational messages (achieving the goal). The mere use of national and religious symbols (coherence) without an organic connection with educational content does not have the desired effectiveness in the field of cultural education. It is suggested that poster design committees for this important festival in Iran use these findings to create a balance between visual appeal and depth of content; also, holding joint workshops between poster designers and cultural educators can lead to the creation of works that are both pleasing to the eye and carry effective educational messages that can help effectively convey the cultural values of the Islamic Revolution. Policymakers and macro-decision makers in cultural fields can develop a "smart design framework" for Fajr Festival posters to create a design guideline based on the findings of this study that combines visual appeal (compatibility) and targeted educational messages (goal achievement). They can also work towards forming a joint committee consisting of graphic designers, educational experts, and cultural specialists to monitor the content of the posters, holding specialized workshops on "Posters as Educational Media," as well as training poster designers on the principles of conveying educational and cultural messages through visual elements, and inviting media psychologists to analyze the impact of colors, symbols, and compositions on learning and changing attitudes toward designing interactive posters with links to cultural educational content.