

Original Research Article

## Formation of Taste in Society for Choosing Architectural Façade and its Relation with Consumer Market\*

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**Abstract** | The man-made environment can shape space users' behavior which consequently forms peoples' subjective constructs and influences their types of choices. Amongst architectural elements, the building façade appears in the form of a display that forms the individual's initial understanding of the building. This element can influence the individual's taste formation and plays a critical role in his goods preferences. This study aimed to investigate the factors influencing the formation of "taste" as regards choosing the building façade. These factors fall under individual, external, and consumer market-driving factors, which help to shape fleeting "fashions" by directing public taste. The study was a combination of fundamental and applied research and used a descriptive-analytical method (qualitative research) by collecting library data.

Based on the obtained results, according to Bourdieu's theory, character indicators, field, social classes and cultural, social, and economic capital of a person can affect a person's taste in the field of internal factors. The cultural-artistic factor of the facade can also be effective as an external factor in the formation of the taste of the chooser of the architectural facade in six semantic indicators; "Being a symbol and a sign, historical authenticity, functionality and beauty, impressiveness, innovation, and façade showiness as a medium". The third effective factor includes the measures taken by the market operators to guide the taste of each class and design a specific taste and produce and sell their products based on it.

**Keywords:** *Architectural Façade, Consumption, Cultural Capital, Society, Taste.*

**Introduction** | The pace of changes made to the architectural domain and relevant values has been markedly significant over the past centuries. As a multi-faceted subject, architecture is capable of influencing and being influenced by some circumstances. In this

connection, the form of the façade has undergone many changes and received the attention of observers more than any other elements, at least in terms of arrangement. Hence, peoples' tastes are formed as a result of observing the architectural landscapes of buildings and may greatly influence their future choices. In the same way, the current taste of people has led them to opt for such

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styles as neo-classic and Roman styles, which reaffirms the mutual effects of taste and façade in contemporary architecture. The subject becomes more outstanding when contemporary architecture is viewed as a part of modern-era accomplishments for the future generation (Mahdavinejad, 2017). For this, the investigation of the factors influencing the elective taste of building facades in the present era would usher in a new way to envisage contemporary Iranian architecture.

To understand tastes, the factors involved in the individual's creation of tastes should be determined and the external factors involved in changes made to tastes should be evaluated. The choices of the building façade, in addition to social and cultural capital, are informed by external factors such as the semantic elements of the façade and constructors' efforts to attract a consumer market could influence the user's taste formation. In this connection, Bourdieu's theories, taken from the Book "Distinction", were used: elective taste is formed based on the dispositions of peoples' habitus construct affinities under similar or semi-similar social circumstances, which also could pave the way for similar cultural preferences in social groups (Bourdieu, 2013, 342). In fact, the sum of the three components of individual factors, appearance, and meaningful factors and the factors driving the consumer market can form the people's tastes when it comes to choosing the façade and lead the city's architectural image toward a certain direction.

This study aimed to investigate the representation of the aforementioned three types of factors among social classes, façade-shaping semantic elements, and measures by drivers of the consumer market, by finally determining the relationship between these three factors as agents that guarantee and protect the formed tastes.

## Literature Review

Research shows two general directions: the first category concerns the way taste is formed and the factors influencing it, and the second concerns the architectural facades of buildings and the factors shaping these facades. In the first category, Bourdieu (1984)'s research titled "Distinction A Social Critique of the Judgment of Taste)" views taste as a reflection of the social class of people and thus establishes a kind of distinction of choice in the individual's social class-based taste. He also regards taste as a product of the individual's internalized knowledge and believes it concerns the cultural literacy of the field of diverse social classes.

Azizimehr & Piri (2018) also investigated the tastes of well-to-do classes in Tehran and concluded that there was a kind of cultural assimilation of their preferences which arose from the lack of knowledge and cultural literacy, as well as the pursuit of fashions and consumer product

brands. This factor has created a "cultural all-favoring" taste in them. Also, the category of taste in this social layer has become a display of the individual's social stature and thus created a taste called legitimate taste (as defined by Bourdieu), which can significantly affect the behaviors of people of other classes.

Pirbabaie and Soltanzadeh (2015) also applied Bourdieu's theory in architecture, arguing that building architecture is, depending on its nature, influenced by various fields. They also concluded that the relationship between the power field and the architectural field, as well as the objective structure of architecture and the effects of actors of this field on the changes of this structure, can be explained based on a system of habits and fields.

As regards components of architectural façade and the factors influencing the way they are shaped, Russell & Lanus (1984) considered the two dimensions of favorableness and impressiveness in their structural model of environmental preferences.

Devlin & Nasar (1989) also referred to semantic indicators such as complexity, clarity, novelty, meaningfulness, desirability, excitation, and the tranquility of the façade design, in addition to physical factors.

Akalin et al. (2009) identified some factors as pleasantness, impressiveness, saliency, complexity, and beauty.

Bently et al. (1985) considered permeability, readability, strength, visual proportions, visual enrichment, and personalization to be effective in choosing the building façade.

Mortazavi Ravari et al. (2022) considered the concepts of significance, originality clarity, order, complexity, favorableness, and artistic values as the factors influencing the façade.

Ramzanpour et al. (2021) investigated the labeling of housing façade based on the social and economic status of the residents and considered the classes of people in society as effective in designing the façade.

Hence, despite various research on the factors affecting the formation of the façade, on the one hand, and sociological research on cultural taste and social classes (Bourdieu, 1985; Veblen, 2005; Simmel, 1971), on the other hand, there is an urgent need for studies on the relationship between the factors shaping the façade and peoples' tastes in social classes. The present study aimed to better recognize the factors influencing the formation of peoples' tastes in choosing the architectural façade and the mutual effects of these two categories on each other.

## Research Method

The study was a combination of fundamental and applied research and used a descriptive-analytical method (qualitative research) by collecting library data. To meet the theoretical

framework of the article and present an analytical model, we first defined taste and relevant basics, as suggested by scholars, using a content analysis approach. To make the meaning of taste clearer, the study also compared it with other internal factors influencing people's choices before describing differences and similarities. Then, the parameters forming taste in society would be mentioned and become specialized and turn into architectural criteria, as suggested by architectural literature. It is noteworthy that taste components were so selected to be recognized in architectural façade parameters. For this, the present study was an applied study in terms of outcomes and the subject under study.

### Theoretical Foundations

To explain the concept of taste in people's choices in a community, Bourdieu is a sociologist who devised such concepts as cultural capital, cultural reproduction, and most importantly, inter-class distinctions to provide a class-based analysis of taste. He holds that cultural consumption enjoys a social function of legitimizing the social distinctions of different classes (Storey, 2003, 268). Social distinctions stand out in a diverse set of social practices, elective tastes, and social habitus, thus shaping such concepts as social space (field), capital, and individual habits. Such preferences as house decoration, the selection of artistic and cultural products, and even clothing by people, which are called tastes, are analyzed by social distinctions. Analyzing tastes, the way they are formed, and the time at which tastes are established and spread would lead to the analysis of tastes in society. In the book "Distinctions", Bourdieu argues that various social classes produce various styles and tastes in choosing cultural products based on their capitals, habitus, and social classes, and the higher-class people of society, who enjoy greater cultural capital, choose excellent and elitist cultural consumption. In contrast, lower social classes have degraded cultural capital and thus enjoyed more popular cultural consumption. In this connection, there is a middle class that is culturally dependent compared to the other two groups and thus makes use of higher-class models, while considering the cultural preferences of those groups as their own. As stated by Bourdieu, the taste for choosing cultural products in people is said to be affected by types of capital that people would enjoy and by forms of habitus that have shaped these capitals. To explain the concept of taste, we need to first investigate such concepts as forms of habitus, fields, and social classes.

Field Theory posits that any social configuration is constructed by means of a set of various fields which are hierarchically organized. Hence, each field is relatively independent, though it may have a homologous structure with other fields (Parastesh et al., 2006, 7). A field is interpreted as a domain shared by people of a group while providing them with the opportunity to contend and debate with each other (Webster, 2010, 75). Each field is a space of power and competition; i.e.,

it is a fight for protecting or transforming people's "habitus" and competition for outperforming other competing "fields". What may give rise to powerful actors' interventions in fields are places of propagation and subjects which would be eventually chosen by other actors; i.e., the subjects they [actors] will get interested in and base their tastes on them. Under these conditions, the structure of objective relations between actors will be different and this difference can actually shape or intensify the sources effective in the field.

"Habitus" is also a central idea by Bourdieu that carries a significant theoretical load and incorporates the concept of the field. Habitus includes a category of human interests and tastes, which are variable but stable. Hinick considers "habitus" as a set of habits and behaviors shaped within the individual and through the unconscious copying and internalization of those behaviors and habits (Hinick, 2003, 76). Grenfell (2012, 107) maintains that "habitus" focus on our actions, feelings, thinking, and being". Not only is habitus influenced by social constructs but it also affects the representation of self in actors' actions, which would influence social constructs, and as Bourdieu put it, it is a construct that is both a constructor and is constructed. "Habitus is regarded as constructed since it is produced by social forces and is a product of the internalization of external constructs, and is a constructor since it reproduces external constructs in the form of various acts" (Parastesh et al., 2006, 55). Under different spheres of society, called fields, people use their habitus to make choices and perform reactions, called individual taste.

The concept of "capital" has a wide-ranging meaning in the thinking system of sociologists upon which four sub-capitals are introduced.

**Cultural Capital:** It refers to the accumulation of various types of culturally concrete products, the power to own these products, and the individual's talent to understand and use these means (Darini & Namdar joyame, 2015).

**Social Capital:** Such concepts as social trust, altruism, participation and involvement, networked relations, social relations, and belonging to special social

or religious groups are viewed as concepts of social capital. Pierre Bourdieu introduced social capital as an instrument that achieves economic capital and includes the communications and participation of members of an organization (Salehi Amiri, & Amirentekhabbi, 2013).

**Economic Capital:** It is quantitative in nature and can be measured by the level of assets and measurable properties. Types of ownership rights and whatever can turn into money or assets in commercial and economic markets could be some examples of economic capital (Darini & Namdar joyame, 2015).

**Symbolic Capital:** It refers to respect and status that people acquire in relation to other capitals. Legitimizing other capitals is one of the key roles of symbolic capital. In other words, it is the transformed type of any capital regarded as

a symbol and carries for its owner some respect and self-esteem. Symbolic capital does not necessarily mean capital, for example, an individual with lower economic capital may enjoy a great economically symbolic capital.

Bourdieu's great legacy was the analysis of a combination of types of capitals for explaining consumption patterns in social classes, which are thought of as the origin of propagating "pretensive consumption" as the class basis of cultural consumption tastes. He argued that embodied, objectified, and institutionalized cultural capitals greatly contribute to peoples' choices and even determine their social classes. Therefore, people of the middle classes strive to adjust their cultural choices under the influence of superior-level class states and utilize the cultural capital of this class to promote their symbolic capital.

**• Concept of class**

The classes depend on the economic differences between popular groupings- equality and ownership and control of material resources (Giddens, 2009, 241). Hence, the dividing of society into classes or groups that construct the hierarchy of power and prestige is referred to as the general attributes of a social construct that has drawn the attention of social philosophers and theorists throughout history (Ansari, 1999, 19). A class structure is not a mere hierarchy; rather, there are various branches inside each of the classes which firstly relate to the combination of types of capital and secondly relate to the origin of capital and the period in which the individual has possessed this combination. For Bourdieu, there is a multiplicity of groups in society that have occupied various social positions. These groups are in some cases similar, which results from the similar habitus of members of the groups. These underlying structural similarities create the homogenous cultural preferences of social groups. Similar elective tastes arise from within the structural similarities and involve three functions: 1) giving people perception based on their position in society; 2) classifying and bringing people with similar tastes closer, and 3) distinguishing through identity-giving tastes. In essence, taste is a common concept through which "habitus" gets closer to other forms of "habitus" and creates a kind of group identity. It is finally through distinguishing tastes that humans group themselves and others in society.

**Discussion**

Nicos Polantzias held that the class limits of the capitalist system and the people of each class are defined by a circumstance that exists in production and economic domains. He recognizes two main class terms of bourgeois and proletariat in the advanced capitalist system and argues that these classes are predominately separated from each other by economic relations; i.e., the fact that the bourgeoisie exploits the proletariat for profit. In other words, the class structure is maintained by ideological political processes

(Grabb, 1984, 174). Max Weber argued that the class refers to a group of people with similar life opportunities; i.e., opportunities determined by people through their power to sell products and skills for gaining income (Lipset, 1966, 143). For him, economic classes include associations with similar economic interests. Hence, the class is a group of people with shared unique economic characteristics. Once an economic class turns into a social class, its members enjoy similar subjective characteristics and this process contributes to the formation of a real group.

The concept of class, for Bourdieu, is mainly a combination of Karl Marx's and Max Weber's ideas. Under the influence of Marx, Bourdieu considers the relationship between class position and production tools, while using Weber's concept of status groups, i.e., lifestyles, tastes, and positions. He established a theory about class in which he insists on economic causality in the formation of classes from a Marx point of view, arguing that it incorporates Weber's understanding of cultural order differences and Durkheim's classification (Stones, 2017, 338). He divided people based on their type and level of the above-mentioned four types of capitals into three groups 1) higher, 2) middle, and 3) lower. He also classified each class into certain sub-classes based on the duration of owning the four capitals. This theory states that when encountering products, especially artistic and cultural goods, people of each class would have certain and similar choices, called tastes, and that can be predicted. Hence, as regards façade designs, it is said that factors of the consumer market determine the taste of each class and intensify the meaningful elements of each product to not only sell their products but also to contribute to the formation and consolidation of the said taste.

**• Indicators influencing tastes of social classes**

In society, people are classified under the influence of various factors such as forms of habitus, fields, and types of capital they possess. In each class, they find special tastes; however, certain indicators that exist in various classes or are weak can help form the individual's taste. In each class there are tastes that are found with special features on the taste of that class (Table 1).

**• Summarization of the indicators influencing the taste of social classes based on individual capitals**

Social classes are divided into subclasses, each of which has special cultural, social and symbolic capitals, and according to the corresponding capital, they show behaviors in social contexts that indicate their taste. In Table 2, the indicators influencing the formation of the taste of each subclass are explained based on the three capitals.

**• Façade components based on taste**

A façade can be considered an artistic-cultural work associated with the world of engineering through architectural materials and instruments. It is a three-dimensional element that is the intersection of functional

Table 1. Indicators affecting the taste of social classes and their effects on habits in each class. Source: Authors.

Effective indicator	Signs of indicators affecting taste in each social class
Cultural and educational capital	Expertise in art that is the result of educational capital. Educational capital is the product of the consequences of unintentional cultural transmission of “character” in the family. Educational capital is the product of transferring and instilling values in the school (Bourdieu, 2013, 50).
Form follows function	Popular feelings are based on the connection between art and life. Folk sensibilities are based on the refusal of the starting point of high sensibilities, i.e. the decisive and clear separation of normal sensibilities from the distinctly aesthetic sensibilities of the upper class (Bourdieu, 2013, 63).
Aesthetic distancing	The reaction of popular distance is the opposite point of detachment of the art lovers of the upper class, which whenever they become one with the popular items of popular taste, creates a distance and a gap - which is their unattainable distinction and individuality - between themselves and the “first hand” and directly. For this reason, they direct their interest and attention from the “content”, characters, story, etc. to the artistic form and effects, which can only be understood about other works and through the comparison of these works (Bourdieu, 2013, 66).
Material-cultural legacy	What comes from daily contact with works of art, drawings, and paintings, as well as frequent visits to galleries or ancient places is definitely a kind of taste, which is nothing except for immediate familiarity with works and forms of art. It is however a sense of belonging to a brighter, more honorable, and more protected world whose perfection and totality, as well as coordination and beauty, would justify its existence. Finally, there comes a kind of immediate loyalty to historical and artistic works within the most profound habitus of the individual which constitutes the unconscious unity of one class.
Lack of recognition and confirmation	The conformity between taste and legitimate fake culture is viewed in the abundance of unconditional choosing of cultural obedience, which is often incorporated into a sense of unworthiness and is balanced by the value and respect of whatever is given the title of culture. The middle class fully assumes humbleness against culture. This pure but void of respect and veneration, which does not know which road to take due to the lack of necessary principles and guidelines for its application, subjects the middle class to cultural misperceptions and bases their taste according to the recognition and misrecognition of culture. Misconceptions are so experienced as if they were widely accepted traditions and arose only via respect and praise where enthusiasm and anxiety get mixed (Dortier, 2002, 140). This middle-class culture that is viewed by the middle class, who form the main consumers, owes part of its allure and charm to implications given to the legitimate culture and encourages and justifies the confusion of these two. The middle-class culture, which is popularizing the legitimate culture, cannot accept their actual identity as it seeks to unconditionally recognize the legitimate culture, without having a true recognition of this culture.

architectural aspects (e.g., establishing security, protecting residents from climate, and determining ownership limits) and communication aspects (e.g., introducing the owner and being part of an overall body of a city) (Pakzad, 2003, 2). It is indicative of the cultural identity of society.

Christian Norberg Schultz takes a phenomenological approach to consider architecture as other products of humans that serve to give meaning to the environment. That said, “a set of symbolic systems creates some common order that can be regarded as culture, and involvement in culture means that humans know how to receive and represent symbols of culture” (Schultz, 1974, 536). Consistent with the representation of architectural façade based on human tastes, scholars refer to some indicators that are meaningful elements of façade and influence and are influenced by the tastes of people in society. These indicators include being a symbol and sign, historical originality, functionality, beauty, impressiveness, and innovation, and finally façade showiness as a medium, which greatly contributes to the formation of current popular tastes, along with factors of the consumer market.

#### • Being a symbol and sign

Symbolism, or let’s say, symbols serves to influence culture and society. Schultz maintains that symbolism is aimed at

releasing meaning from its immediate status, considering the symbol to be a “cultural affair” (ibid., 30).

Rene Guenon holds that “any formulated expression is a symbol of thoughts that express a meaning” (Guenon, 2003, 78). In the same way, symbolism is a prelude to understanding the universe as initial signs that can make humans aware of the mysteries of the universe (Torabi et al., 2015, 10).

Grutter also claims that “a symbol is a semantic sign capable of being semantically analyzed and a means for the formal objectification of some subjective content” (Grutter, 1987, 510). To receive these concepts, one should be familiar with the language of symbols and establish a profound bond with myths and archetypes, as well as concepts hidden in stories and anecdotes. Hence, learning experiences and cultural proficiencies internalized in people of superior classes can help decode the meanings of symbols. This is an effect that the façade leaves on the individual’s taste; this denotes that the pleasant factor of decoding the existing symbols on the building façade leads the taste to further search for the façade, thus offering him the reward of cultural enrichment. However, regarding the mutual effects of taste on façade, the distinguishing features of taste conceive façade elements as symbols of cultural and social

Table 2. Indicators influencing the taste of classes based on capitals. Source: Authors.

Type of class	Sub-class	Cultural capital	Social capital	Symbolic capital
Superior	Old generation	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Learning experiences</li> <li>2. Cultural proficiency</li> <li>3. Intrinsic aesthetic taste</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Leadership power</li> <li>2. Power to express opinions and cultural records</li> <li>3. Artistic separation from popular culture</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Type of goods consumption</li> <li>2. Manner of goods consumption</li> </ol>
	New generation	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. One's and family's education</li> <li>2. Inheriting family's cultural legacy</li> <li>3. Inheriting family's artistic legacy</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Individuality and distinction</li> <li>2. Power to present one's and family's cultural-artistic background</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Luxurious consumption</li> <li>2. Consumerism display</li> </ol>
Middle	Tending to superior	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Individual's education</li> <li>2. Imitating the dominant culture</li> <li>3. Continuous and new transformation based on the dominant culture</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Distinctions</li> <li>2. Limited knowledge and unconditional obedience to the dominant culture</li> <li>3. Distancing from lower classes</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Imitating the common consumption patterns</li> <li>2. Perception of the symbolic rarity of worthiness</li> </ol>
	Tending to inferior	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Evaluating the cultural work based on educational and sensory pleasure</li> <li>2. Sense of incompetence, neglect, or cultural worthlessness</li> <li>3. Expecting the element of charm and emotions in a cultural work</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Failure to fully recognize and confirm the dominant culture</li> <li>2. Observing the dominant culture along with combined enthusiasm and anxiety</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Perception of failure to achieve symbolic capital</li> </ol>
Inferior	-	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Expecting simple functions from a cultural work</li> <li>2. Expecting educational morality from a work of art</li> <li>3. Form follows function in a cultural work</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Few implications to the dominant culture</li> <li>2. Wrong substitution for the dominant culture</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Failure to focus on symbols</li> <li>2. Failure to recognize signs</li> </ol>

capital, while historical elements are chosen to enrich the social position and represent the symbolic capital of the building's user.

Bourdieu essentially considers the function of taste to be divided into three aspects: first, it gives people a perception of their position in society; second, it classifies and brings people with similar tastes closer and third, it distinguishes them through tastes that give identity; in other words, taste converts peoples' functions and choices into distinct signs and makes use of them to group people in society.

Ferdinand de Saussure provides a "two-faceted" model in which the sign is constituted: 1) the signifier and 2) the signified, i.e., the concept signifying the signifier. For Saussure, a language sign links signification to an audio image, and an audio image, is the psychological conception of the hearer of the sound, as it is received through senses. "A sign is a totality caused by the link between the signifier and the signified" (Ahmadi, 1992, 52-72). Peirce's semiotics reveals a "three-faceted model" of 1) representation: the form the sign takes (not necessarily material), 2) interpretation: the meaning arising from the sign and 3) subject: to which the sign implies (ibid.).

Umberto Eco uses Peirce's system of semiotics and the social aspects of Saussure's thinking to suggest that meaning and interpretation have some behavioral, historical, and social roots and change during their application in communication processes (Carmona et al., 2012; Larsen, 1994; Barthes, 1985; Eco, 1986; Krampen et al., 1987; Innis, 1985). Therefore, according to scholars' semiotics, architecture as a cultural phenomenon has a special place in semiotics. In semiotics, two approaches, namely, semiotics of communication and semiotics of signification emerged. In the semiotics of communication, human communications and consequently language are at the focal point; in the semiotics of signification, however, the realm of semiotics spreads to all signification phenomena (Bagheri & Einifar, 2013, 4). The signs that the individual's taste represents on functions and choices can underlie both semiotics of communication and signification, which would finally lead to a kind of distinction by which taste can always classify its choices. Roland Barthes explains two key concepts of explicit and implicit signification; the former refers to a

kind of sign-based relation established directly between a signifier and a signified and the latter refers to a more complex sign construct in which a sign containing a signifier and a signified serves as a signifier for another signified. As regards signing a building façade through people's tastes, one would say that both significations may apply. In terms of the explicit signification, the feasibility of some impressive constructs can be a signifier to the signified of the individual's economic capital; on the other hand, the signifier and the signified can by themselves be a signifier to the individual's rare choices of distancing from lower social classes and creating a sense of worthiness in the mind. In terms of implicit signification, the individual's taste aims to make a sign for a special style of the façade as a special label or a sign of a special class of people in society, with this sign contributing to taste in classifying people as well as ranking choices.

The difference between the effects of symbol and sign in the individual's elective taste arises from the boundary between the two. In symbolic architecture, there is a unity of perceived meaning and the symbol enjoys less impressiveness and less explicitness in transferring concepts due to the contractual nature of the type of the signifier and signified relationship (Jorgen Dines & Larsen, 2009). In sign architecture, however, we observe the plurality of the meanings perceived by the viewer. Thus, discovery is not just made by being aware of the creator's rules as the number of observers' discoveries based on taste would create unique interpretation and ranking. On the other hand, there is greater impressiveness and explicitness in connecting the signifier and the signified, which would help produce stronger fields and better subjective consolidation. Thus, it is more likely to get connected to individual memories and thus turn into tastes.

#### • Historical originality and familiarity

In architecture, the user's choice is a product of the coherent and integrated perception of things that are valuable and significant in his mind and are internalized in his taste. If this taste were developed under the educational system or the family's material-cultural heredity, it would immediately get familiarized with works of art and perhaps be informed of the historical approaches of past eras. This would consequently help form a kind of historical originality, along with design identity in the individual's taste, thus leading to more original choices.

Much research on façade has reported preferences based on few changes and discrepancies in familiar historical and non-historical samples (Abu-Obeid, 2006; Kalayci & Celik, 2014; Imamoglu, 2000; Devlin & Nasar, 1989; Erdogan et al., 2013; Nasar & Devlin, 2000; Purcell & Nasar, 1992;

Wickelgren, 1979; Stamps & Nasar, 1997). Wickelgren and Imamoglu's research concluded that "We still prefer stimuli which are within our scope of prediction" (Imamoglu, 2000; Wickelgren, 1979). Devlin & Nasar (1989)'s research concluded that the styles that fully conformed to peoples' knowledge constructs were less preferred, the styles that showed medium-level differences with the knowledge construct were highly preferred and the styles that showed no relation to the knowledge construct held the least preferences. This model was in line with "Purcell's difference" model, which suggested that preferences arose from preferences in different familiar designs.

How elements made up this familiarity in the taste of superior classes also attract the attention of people of other classes, especially the middle sub-class that tends to be the higher class. In this way, superior class choices turn into a model for the formation of the elective taste of other classes, and each class, proportionate to its knowledge, imitates the principles and styles of the said functions and establishes a construct that corresponds to its economic and cultural capital abilities.

#### • Functionality and beauty

The middle-class taste is founded on the consolidation of art and life; for this class, taste is meant to be formed following functions. In other words, middle-class taste is based on not viewing a subject simply by some aesthetics and artistic aspects, i.e., the definite separation of function and beauty is based on function preferences. In this taste, logic, and clarity are the core applicable dimensions and even the means for aesthetics (Bourdieu, 2013, 63). This is while architecture praises the combination of function and beauty and regards it as a sign of originality, as the unity of these two would promote the architectural work. "Aiming to achieve originality, architects sought local architecture; i.e., the architecture that sees beauty and application united" (Schultz, 1980, 7). Numerous theories have been presented about beauty and its significance in line with efficiency, including Aristotle determining the limits of beauty to "size, order and balance, proportions and symmetry, on the one hand, and functions, proportionality, profits, and applicability, on the other hand" (Kelly, 2014, 322), or Kant arguing that "generally, beauty referred to what makes our sensibilities into a coordinated form" (Grutter, 1987, 99). For him, quality, quantity, proportion, and direction were the four main steps in "analyzing a beautiful thing", while taste was only considered to be a factor that distinguished beauty from non-beauty (ibid., 101).

In modern times, writes Hutchison: "We enjoy beautiful objects for benefiting from a kind of "internal senses", and beautiful objects create enjoyment by "unity in plurality" (Jafariha, 2015). Pakzad maintains that aesthetic enjoyment arises from satisfying a set of design ends, not simply from the external representation of designs (Pakzad & Saki,

2014, 13). This reaffirms the unity of beauty and function. This unity is so explained in the middle [class] taste that makes the functional aspect stand out, as the entire realm of the artistic-cultural work should be based on this reality; meanwhile, in the superior taste, each aspect possesses its special representation, effects, and significance, and a work that best blends beauty and functions would be more outstanding. For this, in the consumer market's taste-makers' imitation of the cultural taste of the superior class, the part of work that reveals a considerable functional aspect and produces a superficial imitation of outstanding works in artistic domains would be more interesting to the middle-class taste, thus becoming their taste as a whole. By looking at the architectural image of the city, one would see the facades, which have wrongly imitated the main style and have attracted the attention of constructors and become commonplace, have turned into a sign of the affluent class, with the help of the artistic-cultural information of various classes. This explains the discriminatory imitation of the middle- and lower-class people of the lifestyles of the superior class, as they hope to become members of this class.

#### • Architectural façade as a “Medium”

In the early 20th century as the focus of the Formalism School shifted to form, the manner and angle of view were also stressed, and the focus on the signs which the work's fabric referred to shifted to the work itself. Robert Venturi posits each medium, including architecture, goes through its period and there should be a medium that has the highest conformity to the variable current-time circumstances. A medium of this kind will have necessarily “greater semantic purity and less statics” (Jenkins, 2006), i.e., it is constantly changing. Charles Jenkins considers the attitude towards architectural forms as depending on time and being transformational, relative, and functional of the cultural background (Pakzad & Saki, 2014, 87). But will these accelerating changes that cause the façade to be regarded as a medium does not create profound changes to the culture? This will influence the peoples' tastes and affect their formation of choices. On the other hand, following the creation of accelerating changes, there will be generally no room for acquiring information and professional knowledge for creating, evaluating, and choosing an artistic and cultural product. For this, failure to recognize and confirm the cultural background of the artistic style, which afflicts most of the middle and inferior classes, will tend to cause deviation from the chosen criteria. This will cause the middle class's taste to inevitably fill the gap of sense of incompetence, neglect, and cultural unworthiness with imitation, confirmation, and the common culture and to entrust its choices to the dominant culture. In the same way, outstanding measures in designing architectural façade patterns that evaluate the taste of the social middle class

to seek the tendency of this taste for constant changes and momentary similarity with the superior class will remove the cinematic curtain of the building façade for spreading the common culture of the superior class.

#### • Impressiveness and novelty

Studies on the visual preferences of the building façade have emphasized the element of impressiveness. To maintain our focus of attention on a new thing, each object, sense, landscape, or frequent and continuous sound falls under the threshold of attention. Therefore, the only difference, lack of continuity, diversity, or novelty can create emotions and stimulate the senses in people (Chan, 1998). The homogeneity of geometric shapes contradicts our nervous biology, because the majority of the cells, both in the retina and in the visual cortex of the brain, will not get excited in response to the background that is similarly shaped (i.e., an empty area that lacks any characteristic attribute) (Hubel, 1988; Zeki, 1993). The brain and the eye systems get lazy in a neurologically homogenous environment because the shortage of excitation degrades their activities (Salingaros, 2021, 156).

According to Walker's psychological theory of Complexity and Desirability (1980), the desirable mental complexity level is a relatively stable characteristic of an individual. Its similar concepts include optimal impressive level, optimal risk degrees, and information processing capacities. Researchers have emphasized that the desirable evaluation of facades arises from the enjoyment and impressiveness created by the building façade (Aspinall, 2001; Mehrabian & Russell, 1974). Therefore, impressiveness in a work of art is a necessary element that, in addition to conformity to the observer's subjective and intrinsic construct of stimulating his senses, will stimulate his aesthetic taste and enrich the work's cultural and artistic aspects. However, when this impressiveness is aimed at deceiving the user or creating ignorance in him by means of certain emotions, it will be regarded as a practice to stimulate middle-class taste. On the other hand, replacing original and well-known structures with seductive structures, including luxurious but non-original designs, materials, and elements, would be a guideline for deceiving the user and ensuring demands for products.

#### • Innovation and Unexpectedness

Theorists of information processing have considered the recency of details as being innovative, different, surprising, and unpredictable (Chan, 1998). A continuous focus on uniform levels of facades afflicts the mind with boredom, dispersion, and depression. This can disrupt the residents' encounter with residential facades. Berlyne (1974) states that environmental stimuli feature some characteristics such as being novel, inconsistency, difference, and unexpectedness. These characteristics lead the user to investigate and compare accurately. Characteristics of an architectural work may include 1) physical and psychological nature; 2) ecological nature and 3) structural and social nature (such variables as

simplicity and complexity, expectation or impressive, clarity or ambiguity). “These characteristics attract the human attention and influence aesthetic judgment through the need for seeking pleasure or stimulating “sense of suspicion”. The scenes involving novelty and innovation, inconsistency and differences at a medium level are more beautiful than other scenes of the environment” (Mortazavi Ravari et al., 2022, 14). According to the middle-class taste, the feeling of a permanent need to align with the dominant taste and the tendency to continuously imitate the formative changes of the cultural products in society will lead people to confirm and imitate novelty and novation in all their formative dimensions, without having perfect knowledge of them. This is evident in the abundance of unconditional choices people make. If the components of novelty (innovation) and unexpectedness are directed at forms of appearance and turn into fashions socially, they could be seductive factors designed by agents of the consumer market.

## Findings

According to the research on taste, architectural façade, and the factors influencing them, this section gives the indicators of a cultural work based on the taste corresponding to façade components in Table 3.

## Findings Analysis

The following covers an analysis of the findings:

Based on sociology, we believe that five indicators affect the formation of the taste of each class: a) cultural and educational capital that generally gets richer and deeper by the rise of the class and affects the taste of the work; b) the obedience of form of functions that increases with the fall of the class; c) aesthetic distancing that deviates the superiors class from the inferior class in an artistic analysis; d) material and cultural inheritance that paves the way for the formation of proficient-nurturing taste in the superior class and e) failure of recognition and confirmation displayed in the form of pretensive imitation in the middle class.

Based on previous research and architecture theories, six semantic indicators affect the formation of user tastes: a) being a sign and symbol; b) having historical originality (which has the highest effects on shaping and forming the façade based on meaning and culture, thus overshadowing the cultural identity structure using the effects of the historical originality indicator on façade elements). These two indicators have had the highest effects on the formation of taste in the superior class, and due to its cultural originality, have affected the educated class, including the old and new generations and the middle-class generation tending to the superior class; c) functionality and beauty: it is an indicator that mainly distinguishes aesthetic tastes from tastes that lack such privileges and is assumed to be an indicator of

determining the middle-class taste from the superior class taste; d) impressiveness and e) innovation: depending on the extent to which it is used in a cultural-artistic work, innovation in peoples’ natural taste (without imitating the common culture) is in a way that it involves few preferences as a result of so much impressiveness and the highest preferences as a result of a balanced form of it; f) the indicator of façade as a medium that is revealed following continuous changes of architectural façade without historical or cultural criteria serves as a symbol of the middle-class taste which is blended with the factor of fashion and efforts to distance away from lower classes and increase the examples of this taste.

According to the individual and external factors influencing taste, and generally the factors helping form the façade, the conformity of supply and demand in the cultural market is neither the simple effect of production being imposed on consumption nor the effects of conscious attempts to secure consumers’ needs; rather, it is the result of the concrete congruity of two types of logic: one is the logic of specialized fields of production where products are processed and social fields where tastes are developed. The conformity of these two fields is made by the factors driving the market.

## Conclusion

This study aimed to investigate the factors influencing the formation of peoples’ tastes in choosing the architectural façade of buildings. For this, it aimed to explain that the three individual, appearance, and meaningful factors of the façade, as well as the driving factors of the consumer market could affect peoples’ taste in society.

It should be known that a cultural product is a consolidated taste that turns into reality in an objectification process and has enjoyed the capacity of legitimization. This observable and influential reality can represent the taste of part of people in society and influence the taste of other people. Also, since it is chosen by a special group of people and considered a symbol or sign of its cultural choices, it may leave an ever-abundant impact on social taste tendencies and play a determining role in popular taste. On the other hand, taste is indicative of the link between some products and their consumers in a regionalized social space. Therefore, in addition to the appearance and semantic characteristics of the product, the manner of consumption and people consuming it would be involved in the public’s choosing and formation of collective taste.

With the knowledge of the ability to influence cultural products and identification of taste-making indicators of social classes, the driving factors of the consumer market begin to construct tastes and create strong tendencies to consume certain goods.

### • Suggestions for future research

To improve the facade of the building in the present era, shaping the social taste by the architectural community can

Table 3. Indicators of a cultural work on the taste corresponding to façade components. Source: Authors.

Signs of peoples' tastes based on class	Representation of tastes in classes as based on consumer market measures	Indicators of a cultural/artistic work	Theorists	Criteria of architectural façade
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Individuality</li> <li>2. Cultural proficiency</li> <li>3. One's and family's education</li> <li>4. Power to present artistic-cultural backgrounds</li> </ol>	<p>Taking possession or applying products in a prestigious position (symbolic position)</p>	<p>Cultural products as evoking "symbols"</p>	<p>Grutter, Eliade, Cassirer, Langer, Arnheim, Rapoport</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Using historical elements</li> <li>2. Applying a special style of architecture in a perfect and accurate form and observing the principles of that style</li> <li>3. Evoking cultural meanings</li> </ol>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Distinction</li> <li>2. Rarity as a symbol of worthiness</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Creating contrast and contradiction between classes</li> <li>2. Making goods as signs by representing a special class of people</li> </ol>	<p>Being a sign</p>	<p>Rapoport, Johansen, Werner, Arnheim, Gibson, Clive Bell, Santayana</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Façade character and cohesion</li> <li>2. Presence of foci on the façade</li> <li>3. The façade being a sign in neighborhoods</li> <li>4. Evoking memories</li> </ol>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Level of education</li> <li>2. Inheriting cultural and artistic legacy</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Cultural-historical worthiness</li> <li>2. Representing the recognition of historical elements in the position of "cultural capital"</li> </ol>	<p>Significance and historical originality (familiarity)</p>	<p>Wellville, Berlyne, Nasar, Kaplan, Schultz, Herzog, Evans, Vitruvius</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Readability</li> <li>2. Identity</li> <li>3. Familiarity in the mind of the observer</li> <li>4. Façade materials</li> <li>5. Golden proportions, order and symmetry</li> <li>6. Human scales</li> <li>7. Harmony and making symmetry</li> <li>8. Controlling axes of vision and perspective</li> </ol>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Cultural proficiency</li> <li>2. Aesthetic intrinsic taste</li> </ol>	<p>Representing the proper culture of consumption in a work of art</p>	<p>Functionality with beauty</p>	<p>Schultz, Grutter, Pakzad, Aquinas, Hutchinso, Hume, Noel, Augustine, Vitruvius</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Unity of beauty and functions</li> <li>2. Attention to visible components and texture</li> <li>3. Cohesion and integration</li> <li>4. Balance and proportion</li> <li>5. Clarity</li> </ol>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Effect evaluation A culture based on learning and sensory pleasure</li> <li>2. Expecting the form to follow the function in a cultural work</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Separation of artists from the folklore culture</li> <li>2. Failure to pay attention to symbols</li> <li>3. Failure to recognize signs</li> </ol>	<p>Function lity precedes beauty</p>		
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Continuous changes and novelty based on the dominant culture</li> <li>2. Restricted understanding and obedience of the dominant culture</li> <li>3. Sense of incompetence, neglect, and cultural unworthiness</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Constructing false cultural values</li> <li>2. Constructing false economic values</li> </ol>	<p>A work of art as a medium</p>	<p>Venturi, Jenkins, Zu, Chomi, Eisenman</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Impressiveness</li> <li>2. Dynamism</li> <li>3. Being outstanding</li> <li>4. Decentralization</li> <li>5. Contra-rule design</li> </ol>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Intrinsic aesthetic taste</li> <li>2. Expecting the element of seduction and emotions in a cultural work</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Focus on the element of seduction and neglect from the cultural aspects of the work</li> <li>2. International substitution of impressive factors for known cultural elements</li> </ol>	<p>Effects of environmental information on human perception and his impressiveness</p>	<p>Chan, Salingars, Berlyne, Stephen, Russel, Kaplan, Lasswell, Lang</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Lack of uniformity</li> <li>2. Creating visual stimuli</li> <li>3. Creating a sense of pleasure and visual enjoyment</li> </ol>

be delved into and the legitimate taste of the society can be sought. In doing so, the association of historical authenticity and Iranian symbolism in the facade of contemporary architecture can be scrutinized and the role of taste building of the architectural façade can be compared with the factors of the consumer market. Future research can use field

studies to gain quantitative data on the effects of each of the factors influencing the formation of social taste in choosing architectural facades across cities or regions.

#### • Declaration of non-conflict of interest

The authors declare that there was no conflict of interest for them in conducting this research.

## Endnotes

\*This article extracted from Ph.D. thesis of “Batoul Azimi” entitled “Recognizing the influence of culture in shaping architectural facades in contemporary residential buildings based on people’s taste (a case study of contemporary residential facades in

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