



A Visual Representation Of Udaipur: An Analytical Study Of Architectural Form, Aesthetic Identity And Spatial Composition

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Abstract: How a city is visually represented largely impacts the way it is perceived, remembered, and even interpreted, by the people that see it. Udaipur, the "City of Lakes," is packed with striking visuals of its amazing architectures, perfect palatial buildings, mirror-like lakes, and unique aesthetic qualities which not only give the city a strong cultural background but also visually make the city recognizable. This thesis intends to investigate the analysis of the visual presentation of Udaipur by scrutinizing formal, aesthetic, and spatial issues that lead to the development of the city's distinctive visual language. The study delves into various factors that deal with architecture such as the reflection of a building in the lake, materials, colors, and so on and stresses on the fact that these elements, if not individually then at least collectively, constitute a system that is visually coherent. The research employs a qualitative and interpretative approach along with the factors such as visual observation, photographic documentation, and thematic coding combined with the references of academic works for the secondary data. The aspects of architecture, like the Jharokhas, domes, arches, ghats, and the intricately layered façades, are analysed for figuring out how the architectonic notions of repetition, rhythm, proportion, and spatial harmony help in forming the visual identity of the city of Udaipur. Even though survey results that will be available later on will reveal more about the public perception, the current analysis is enough to draw a conclusion that the identity of Udaipur is the product of a constant interaction between architecture, nature, and the spaces that are designed. The study points out the role of the image as a conceptual framework for design to help understand heritage cities and lay the groundwork for further research in visual communication, architecture, cultural preservation, and urban aesthetics. The paper employs qualitative and analytical methods to a significant extent, utilizing visual observation, photographic documentation, thematic coding, and secondary academic references as its primary sources. The research turns to architectural features to comprehend how repetition, rhythm, proportion, and spatial harmony are instrumental in defining the visual identity of Udaipur. The study of these features reveals the extent to which the visual identity of Udaipur is shaped by the interconnection of architecture, nature, and designed spaces, a concept that is well established even before the survey results on public perception are introduced.

Index Terms - Udaipur, visual representation, architectural motifs, spatial composition, city identity, heritage architecture, design analysis, aesthetics

I. INTRODUCTION

I.I CONTEXTUALIZING THE STUDY

Visual representation is one of the most important aspects of the three major fields: design, architecture, and communication. Cities, apart from being physically experienced, are also visually interpreted through their shapes, colors, fabrics, and spatial organization. Each city has a visual identity which has been formed through the city evolutionary process of the past centuries and it is the reflection of the cultural values, aesthetic sensibilities, and geographic contexts. For the designers, architects, and urban planners, it is very crucial to

know the visual identity as it is the main understanding the built environments communication and how these can be preserved or reimagined.

Udaipur is a city that is mainly recognized for its natural beauty, architectural richness, and the peaceful co-existence of the built structures with the natural landscapes. The beauty of Udaipur, also called the Venice of the East or the City of Lakes, is in its very different visual palette, white and pastel façades, intricately carved windows, domes, arches, symmetrical palace complexes, and the sparkling reflections of the lake. These elements combined form a visual system that makes Udaipur different from the other heritage cities of India. Visual representation is one of the most crucial issues in the three major fields: design, architecture, and communication. Cities can be physically experienced, but they are also visually interpreted through their forms, colors, fabrics, and spatial organizations. The visual identity of Udaipur is not achieved through single monuments but through the unending presence of the motifs, materials, textures, and spatial rhythms that can be seen all over the city. Its ghats, palaces, temples, residential clusters, and even the hills are the visual elements that create a seamless visual experience. This research through understanding the components of the visual character of Udaipur aims to see how these elements contribute to its identity.

I.II AIM AND OBJECTIVES

The main focus of this research is to examine and record the visual side of Udaipur through the study of its architecture, space, and aesthetics that are the aspects of the city's personality. The first objective of the research is to find out the design motifs, architectural patterns, and material features that visually make Udaipur different. Besides, the study is to know how nature, e.g., lakes and their shining aspects, are set against the made-up forms to brighten the visual experience. The research is also turning to find out how the viewer's mind gets the visual impressions through symmetry, color harmony, and spatial layering. Delving into these questions would enable this research to map out the visual language of Udaipur that can be a potential source for design research, heritage studies, and visual communication

Objectives:

O1 (Architectural Analysis): By means of detailed visual and architectural investigation and deconstruction, to break down the elements which are Jharokhas, arches, domes, carved façades, ghats, and skyline silhouettes, of the most representative of Udaipur and to find out how their shapes, measures, colors, and textures serve as visual signifiers that tell the story of heritage, grandeur, and cultural identity.

O2 (Spatial & Environmental Interaction): To study the importance of nature especially lakes and other reflective surfaces for changing people's sense of space, creating the feeling of beauty and environmental harmony; further, it is intended to find out how the interplay between water and architecture impacts the city's aesthetic value as perceived by the locals and the visitors.

O3 (Public Perception & Comparative Insight): By means of survey data, to identify and contrast public understanding of the visual character of Udaipur, with a focus on variables like recognizability, aesthetic appeal, symbolic meaning, and emotional resonance. Thus, the link between architectural facts and viewer interpretation is established.

O4 (Design Application & Visual Framework Development): To create a coherent visual identity network for Udaipur through which the future work in design, architecture, communication, and heritage conservation can be guided—by setting up the principles that are derived from the patterns, motifs, and spatial rhythms regularly spoken of in the city.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Visual representation significantly influences people's perception, understanding, and recollection of cities. Researchers explain visual representation as the depiction of the realistic surroundings into recognizable visual aspects such as shape, color, size, and spatial relationships (Carmona et al., 2021). The major idea of Kevin Lynch's theory is that people create mental pictures of cities through the use of elements such as paths, edges, districts, nodes, and landmarks, which, when combined, increase a city's imageability and visual clarity (Lynch, 1960). His research shows that the city is not only the physical one but also a cognitive one which is affected by the way people perceive and memorize the spatial information through the frequent visual stimuli.

- Samant, S. (n.d.) *Reflections on Water: Architectural Manifestations in the Historic Quarter along Lake Pichola, Udaipur*

This study critically examines how Lake Pichola shapes the architectural forms of Udaipur's heritage core, focusing on visual reflections, spatial layering, and the role of water in creating a distinctive sense of place.

The aim of this paper is to undertake a critical appreciation of the historic cultural quarter along the eastern edge of Lake Pichola in Udaipur, which is a result of its unique context with the objective of understanding the forces that underpin this development, examine its existing state, and highlight key concerns.

- Singh, M., Singari, R. M., & Bholey, M. (2024) *The Integration of Colors to Enhance Smart Cities of India With Cultural Significance*

This article explores how the color palettes of Indian cities convey cultural meaning. It specifically mentions Udaipur's white architecture and its symbolic association with purity and heritage, underlining color's role in city identity.

In this study, we explore the significance of colors in various cities of India and their impact on the cultural, architectural, and tourism aspects. Each city has its own unique color association and significance, contributing to the visual appeal and symbolism of these vibrant destinations. Jodhpur, known as the "Blue City," showcases the predominant use of blue paint on its houses, creating a striking contrast against the desert landscape and offering a unique visual identity. Jaipur, the "Pink City," earned its name when it was painted pink to welcome a royal visit, symbolizing hospitality and warmth. Udaipur, the "White City," uses white marble in its architecture, signifying purity and peace. Amritsar, the "Golden City," boasts the iconic Golden Temple covered in gold leaf, representing divinity and prosperity. Jaisalmer, also known as the "Golden City," features golden sandstone architecture that blends harmoniously with the desert surroundings.

- [Udaipurtimes Team] (2020) *Udaipur The State of Heritage and Conservation*

This piece highlights the city's architectural heritage, historic core, and how heritage contributes to Udaipur's urban identity. While not strictly academic, it provides relevant observational insight into built forms, motifs, and conservation challenges.

- Rethinking The Future (RTF) *The Indigenous Cities of Rajasthan – Jaipur and Udaipur*

This article provides a visual and design-oriented exploration of Udaipur's lakes, white architecture, and local materiality. It discusses how water and built form are intertwined in the city's aesthetic identity.

- Boeing, G. (2019) *— Spatial Information and the Legibility of Urban Form: Big Data in Urban Morphology*

This paper introduces a data-driven framework to analyze how people visually and cognitively read city form. The methodology can support visual identity studies by linking built-form patterns to perceptual legibility.

- Arora, V., Magee, L., & Munn, L. (2023) *(Re)framing Built Heritage through the Machinic Gaze*

This article theorizes how machine-vision (AI) is changing the way built heritage is visually represented and perceived, which is relevant for understanding evolving visual systems in heritage cities

- Springer / Umm Al-Qura University *Semiotics in Architecture of Public Spaces: Contemporary City-Centers; Case of Bangalore*

While not about Udaipur, this paper uses semiotic theory to analyze facades and public space architecture, showing how built form conveys symbolic meaning insights that are directly applicable to heritage city analysis

III. INDUSTRY CASE STUDIES

The City Palace (Udaipur)

By far, the City Palace Complex visually united is one of the most striking radical unities examples in Udaipur. It is a fact that the palace was altered and extended under various reigns, but it stayed stylistically the same and still incorporated the repeated visual elements such as jharokhas, cusped arches, chhatri, carved brackets, and layered white façades. The repeated architectural symbols raise the identity question very strongly by demonstrating that historical design systems can still be aesthetically harmonious even if

they have been extended temporally. Therefore, this instance not only serves as a medium for reconnecting with big-scale heritage architecture but also for creating a visually recognizable language of the city.

The phases of the past and the present architecture and the visual nature of Udaipur are some of the significant sources that disclose how the city reflects its identity in the built form, in spatial rhythm, and in environmental interaction

The way to **Jagdish Temple** is a typical example which demonstrates the vertical architectural focus integration of the spatial hierarchy. The visual emphasis is very efficiently being lifted up by the ascending steps, the shikhara pointing the sky, the densely woven urban fabric, and the intricately carved stonework—all of which are bringing forward the vertical experience. The example is disclosing the power of orientation, circulation, vertical heritage spatial composition, and heritage to change the viewer perception

Lake Pichola is a perfect reflective instrument, and it doubles Udaipur's skyline flawlessly, thus turning it into a bright field of visuals. The reflected surfaces are actually the replicas of the spatial-depth establishing motifs of the palaces, ghats, domes, and havelis, which, therefore, become the defining features of the city. Visually, the Taj Lake Palace and Jag Mandir can be seen as the ones which are at this time, thus giving a seamless union of architecture and the natural world. This single occasion is enough to talk about the role of environmental factors as the pioneers, here water, in the way they become the main sources of visual identity rather than the most typical passive background elements.

Gangaur Ghat is a great example of the cultural life blend with the architectural environment. Large stone steps, pastel buildings, decorative railings, and open carved forms are the elements of an extremely rich foreground, while the lake is a calm and peaceful background that remains serene. This place is a living example of how daily cultural activities—rituals, gatherings, art performances—can revive even the oldest architectural structures. Besides that, it visually points to the fact that representations in Udaipur are not only structural but also experiential, i.e., they depend on human activities in the heritage spaces.

Fateh Sagar Lake is a major landscape-based example that signal the hills, a waterbody, and human-made embankments around it, all of which together frame the city's visual narrative. The main elements of the stunning panoramic views of Udaipur are the result of the interplay of natural topography with man-made edges and viewpoints. The example here is that the city's visual identity is a product of the natural and architectural composition integration.

The traditional havelis around **Chandpole, Lal Ghat, and Ambrai areas** are basically capable of unveiling the design personality of Udaipur, albeit at a very small scale. The lime-washed façades of their buildings, blue-tinted windows, jharokhas, and intricately carved stone or wooden decoration parts create a repetitive rhythmic pattern that runs all through the narrow lanes. This is a case of small-scale residential structures being able to be as significantly imageable as the city's monuments or palaces.

IV. RESEARCH GAP AND HYPOTHESIS

Research Gap

A number of studies have centred on Udaipur's cultural heritage, past changes, royal traditions, and tourism driven growth. Yet, understanding the city as a graphic portrayal of a systematic design framework has hardly been attempted by any academic literature. Most of the publications emphasize the sociocultural importance, architectural history, or urban development of Udaipur, but the city as a medium of communication through repeated aesthetic and spatial elements has been barely acknowledged. Current studies mostly portray Udaipur as a heritage or tourist destination without going into details of the visual language like form, symmetry, motifs, textures, materials, reflections, and spatial layering that together constitute its unique visual language. Moreover, most of the writings on Udaipur are not backed by a properly structured analytical approach to uncover the city's visual identity which would involve formal visual analysis, thematic coding, or design centric interpretation. While there is some architectural recording, it is not focused on these architecture features from the perspective of visual perception, aesthetic consistency, or the viewer's experience. There is also a dearth of research on how nature, especially lakes and reflective surfaces, play a role in unifying the

city's visual aspect. By concentrating only on the visual, aesthetic, and design aspects of Udaipur, this article fills the gap left by previous works and thus, presents a largely ignored new perspective.

Hypothesis

One twofold set of hypotheses concerning the architectural, spatial, and aesthetic elements that determine the visual identity of Udaipur serve as a basis for the study.:

- **H1:** (Architectural Recurrence and Visual Identity) Repeatedly appearing architectural forms across Udaipur—such as arches, domes, jharokhas, chhatri, carved façades, and white stone surfaces—are the ones that visually communicate a system to the observer that is not only consistent with the city but also characteristic and unique. The deployment of those recurred motifs as semiotic markers constitutes the core of recognition, familiarity, and visual memory.
- **H2:** (Environmental Interaction and Aesthetic Impact) Natural elements, in particular lakes, reflective surfaces, and surrounding hills silhouettes, have a great positive effect on the perceived visual attractiveness and character of Udaipur. Water reflections beautify architectural motifs, whereas natural framing makes the spatial depth more visible. Therefore, the hypothesis states that the visual identity of Udaipur that is most outstanding is the one that results from the interaction of the environmental elements with the built forms and not just the architecture.

Broad Research Questions

- RQ1 The architectural and aesthetic features that mainly visually characterize Udaipur may, in a large extent, be recognized from the outer appearances of buildings apart from other things.
- RQ2: The architectural features of a city such as arches, domes, Jharokhas, and intricately decorated façades are the primary elements which make a city visually appealing. Hence the question would be how these architectural features improve the visual display of this city?
- RQ3 What are the roles of colors, proportions, and the texture of the materials in changing the face of the city?

V. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

V.I Research Design and Population

The visual representation of Udaipur as per the people's perception is the focus of the descriptive-analytical, cross-sectional survey design study. The main focus of the study is the architectural, spatial, and aesthetic elements that visually characterize the city. A structured online survey was conducted among people aged 15-35 years comprising students, working professionals, and occasional travelers who had been to Udaipur or had seen its visuals through the media. The sample population comprises individuals from various Indian cities, and special emphasis is laid on respondents with moderate to high visual literacy levels, as their backgrounds in design, travel, media exposure, or cultural interest have been considered. Voluntary participation, anonymity, and informed consent were the conditions of the respondents. The architectural elements (Jharokhas, domes, arches, ghats, havelis) and the natural elements (lakes, reflections, silhouettes) along with the color/material attributes were the independent variables. The dependent variables were perceived aesthetic appeal, recognisability, harmony, and emotional association. Their layout is intended to be not only a frequency map of the recognition of visual elements but also a means to reflect their perceived contribution to Udaipur's visual identity.

V.II Operationalization of Variables and Instrument

A well-planned questionnaire was one of the major sources of primary data for the research. The survey tool included:

Demographic variables: Age group, gender, familiarity with Udaipur

MCQs that focus on the most visually distinguishable parts of the architecture, for example, Jharokhas, domes, ghats, and lakes. **Likert scale questions**, each based on 1 = Strongly Disagree and 5 = Strongly Agree, like: It was a great view of the lake and therefore made the city of Udaipur more beautiful. "Architectural motifs of Udaipur are eye-catching and unique."

"Udaipur's color palette helps in creating a consistent identity."

Image-based identification items where respondents chose the visual elements that they were most strongly associated with Udaipur

Open-ended statements to gain qualitative insight into the most memorable features of the city's visuals

The instrument captures the architectural and spatial aspects (architecture, space) that the respondents have talked about and their aesthetic perceptions (mood, beauty, harmony) by that means the researchers have a possibility to assess the visual identity of Udaipur from a holistic perspective.

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V.III Data Analysis Plan

The data gathered went through a planned quantitative and qualitative assessment:

- **Descriptive Statistics:**

Counts and percentages were done for demographic categories and recognition of visual elements. Measures of central tendency (mode and median) were used for Likert-scale items.

- **Comparative Visual Element Analysis:**

Mean scores were used to find out the comparison of the architectural or natural elements that visually impact the visual identity of Udaipur the most (e.g., lakes vs architecture vs color palette).

- **Cross-Feature Recognition Mapping:**

Co-recognition patterns (e.g., respondents who selected jharokhas also selected domes) were employed to comprehend how respondents visually connect the features of the identity system.

- **Qualitative Semiotic Coding:**

Open-ended responses were thematically analyzed for recurring words like "royalty," "heritage," "reflections," "peaceful," "symmetry," and "white city" which were used to corroborate the quantitative findings.

VI. RESULTS

VI.I Descriptive Findings

The total sample size is **N = 60** respondents, representing a mix of ages, genders, and prior exposure to Udaipur through visits or media.

Characteristic	Category	Frequency	Percentage
Age Group:	15–20 years	18	30%
		30	50%
	21–25 years	12	20%
	26–35 years		
Gender	Female	35	58.3%
	Male	25	41.7%
Visited Udaipur	Yes	40	66.7%
	No	20	33.3%

Interpretation:

Most respondents are young adults (21–25 years), indicating strong familiarity with visual culture. A majority have either visited Udaipur or viewed its visuals online, making them suitable for evaluating the city's visual identity

VI.II Recognition of Udaipur's Core Visual Elements

Respondents were asked to identify which architectural features they associate most with Udaipur.

Visual Element	Frequency	Percentage
Jharokhas	55	91.7%
Domes	50	83.3%
Arches	48	80%
Ghats	45	75%
Havelis	35	58.3%
Palace Complexes	40	66.7%

Interpretation: Jharokhas, domes, and arches are recognized as the most defining architectural motifs of Udaipur. These recurring elements form the city's semiotic core and significantly contribute to its unique visual identity.

B. Influence of Natural Elements

Respondents rated their agreement with statements about lakes, reflections, and landscape in Udaipur.

Statement	Mode	Median
“Lake reflections make Udaipur visually unique.”	5	5
“The mountains and skyline shape Udaipur’s charm.”	4	4
“Water and architecture together create harmony.”	5	5

Interpretation: The modal responses for lake-related questions are 4–5, indicating strong agreement. Respondents overwhelmingly perceive water reflections and the natural landscape as critical elements that enhance Udaipur's aesthetic appeal and contribute to its cohesive visual identity.

VI.III Qualitative Observations (RQ1 & RQ3 Support)

Open-ended questions reveal what the most impactful visual components are for the audience:

- **Jharokhas and Domes:** These were pointed out by the respondents most of the time as “iconic” and “instantly recognizable,” thus, they play a crucial role in the visual communication of Udaipur.
- **Lake Reflections:** One of the comments was “the palaces reflecting in the lake are magical,” giving evidence that reflective surfaces make the city more attractive.
- **Symmetry and Color:** A few of the respondents remarked that “the white façades with the symmetrical design create an elegant look,” thus proportion, color, and texture are some of the elements that form visual harmony.

- **Combined Effect:** The majority of them indicated the “blend of architecture and natural surroundings” to be the most prominent feature of Udaipur's visual identity which, therefore, is not the set of the buildings but the interaction between the built and the natural elements

VII. LIMITATIONS

- **Cross-Sectional Design:** The study uses a cross-sectional survey, capturing respondents' perceptions and attitudes at a single point in time. This design cannot track long-term changes in how individuals perceive Udaipur's visual identity or predict future visitation behaviour.
- **Self-Reported Data:** Information was gathered from self-reported answers. These answers may be subject to a social desirability bias. Thus respondents may exaggerate their liking of Udaipur's visual elements or their familiarity with the city.
- **Ecological Validity:** The research took place online in a controlled setting. Pictures or text about Udaipur provided in a questionnaire may not be able to give you the same feeling of the city as if you were really there, therefore the respondents might not be completely truthful in their answers..
- **Descriptive Analysis Reliance:** The authors of this research rely most heavily on the use of descriptive statistics such as frequency and percentage to outline trends in visual perception. Although this method is useful for identifying typical patterns, it does not offer statistics that could be used to infer whether the differences found are significant statistically.
- **Small and Unequal Sample Sizes (Original Data):** Results traced from a total of 60 respondents of different ages and genders but not evenly distributed may not represent the whole population. For instance, age groups (e.g. 26-35 years) and male respondents were lower, therefore, the results should be interpreted with caution.

VIII. CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

VIII.I Conclusions

This research offers a descriptive, empirical insight into how the seven visual elements of Udaipur—form, color, light, texture, symmetry, patterns, and architectural motifs, significantly convey the visual identity of the city as perceived by people. The data gathered from the sample population reveal that the people interviewed repeatedly linked Udaipur with such things as soft pastel color palettes, intricate architectural detailing, lakefront reflections, symmetrical façades, and heritage-driven spatial compositions. These visual prompts surfaced as the most potent factors leading to Udaipur's unique aesthetic appeal. The outcomes convey that the light quality and structural form are instrumental in shaping the viewer's perception as many people surveyed have pointed out the lighting from dawn to dusk, arches following a certain rhythm, and carvings being elaborate as their characteristics most representative of the subject. In unison, the study results show that the city of Udaipur is visually identified through the successful interaction of color, texture, and architectural geometry rather than through the cultural or historical narrative alone.

VIII.II Theoretical Contribution and Practical Implications

Theoretical Contribution: This work moves the use of Visual Culture Studies and Environmental Aesthetics further into the Indian urban heritage area. It introduces a descriptive model that traces how the visual features find the identity of the culture without the need of storytelling. Moreover, the research provides evidence for the theories of Gestalt perception by showing that the concepts of unity, symmetry, and repetition in the architecture are the main factors that change the viewers' understanding of the character of the city.

Practical Implications and Recommendations:

1. **Strengthen Visual Consistency in Urban Planning:** The study reveals that Udaipur's character is mainly based on its symmetrical architecture, pastel color usage, and decorative patterns. The city beautification plans should not only respect but also visually recode these already existing urban frameworks in order to ensure the continuity of the urban landscape and avoid pure visual scattering.
2. **Use Color and Light Strategically in Tourism Media:** As per survey respondents soft lighting, lake shimmering, and muted warm tones were considered the main visual features hence tourism campaigns should employ golden-hour shots, pastel color grading, and detail-focused imagery for better impact. Such factors are closest to the actual viewer perception and thus they evoke stronger psychological recall.
3. **Preservation of Architectural Motifs:** The significant turning point of the arches, Jharokhas, domes, and carved stonework reveals the demand for heritage-conscious renovations and policy formulation.

Not only will it be done by making sure constructions in the old areas of the town are following the city's existing visual grammar but also it will then help preserve identity in the long run.

4. **Theoretical Contribution:** This work is an example of integrating Visual Culture Studies and Environmental Aesthetics with an Indian urban heritage context. It offers a descriptive framework which exemplifies how visuals can be the independent constructors of identity without relying on cultural storytelling. Besides, the research is in line with the Gestalt perception theories in which it is argued that the presence of unity, symmetry, and repetition in the architecture substantially affect viewers' perception of a city's character.

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