MODALITY SHIFT IN DESIGN PROCESS: UNDERSTANDING THE RATIONALE BEHIND MODALITY SHIFT AND ITS EFFECT ON ARCHITECTURAL DESIGN

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ABSTRACT

Architectural design is a deliberate act of creativity without any definite starting point. Critical analysis of any design process reveals its basic stages. It is obvious that design stages are not necessarily linear but can be examined as such. In search of effective solution designers often tend to switch between modalities. The purpose of this study is to understand how design students rationalize their modality selection and factors causing modality shifts as well as the impact of these shifts on design outcome.

This study examined different form of externalization of design ideas; identified any deviation from initial design ideas that occurred due to modality shift; analyzed final design outcome by comparing initial ideas and its follow through on the basis of their visualization and representation, and finally looked into correlations between the modality shift and design outcome. Observation and analysis revealed that students tend to shift between modalities not necessarily for facilitating problem solving only. Individual style, instructions, project requirements, context, culture, competency, ambiguity and cognitive aspects also play a significant role. It was also evident that the amplitude of shift has a positive correlation with designers’ experience and accordingly impact final design outcome.

The result of this study would help to identify reasons and effects of modality shift in design process thus benefit design pedagogy and practice. By developing effective design method and process through meaningful incorporation of traditional and technologically advanced tools, students of the digital age would benefit and enhance their design perception and decision-making.