CRITERIA OF ASSESSMENT FOR MALAYSIAN SCHOOLS' MURAL PAINTING

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ABSTRACT

The research aims to identify criteria to evaluate mural painting in schools to improve the school environment and define the criteria most recognized as integral in creating high-quality mural paintings. This study used visual analysis to examine 20 mural designs with the topic of Malaysia Unity Road Safety, as well as another 10 murals with various themes from Malaysian secondary schools. This study also included in-depth interviews with three expert mural painters, observations, and document analysis. The results indicate that mural paintings can be assessed based on 11 major criteria: theme and message, originality, subject matter accuracy, creativity, colour, craftsmanship, mood, teamwork, environment, landscape, and scale. These criteria contribute to producing high-quality school murals and enhancing the school environment. However, six of these eleven criteria were particularly favoured by experts in the mural rubric assessment: theme and message, creativity, originality, craftsmanship, teamwork, and mood. Landscape criteria are defined as factors that enhance the beauty of a painted mural. Three-dimensional components are regarded as very valuable creative aspects. Rubrics and handbooks for instructors and students to develop great murals to beautify the school have been recommended.

Keywords: *Mural Painting, Assessment, School Environment, Criteria Analysis, Visual Analysis*

INTRODUCTION

Mural painting, as a creative and expressive art form, plays a crucial role in enhancing the aesthetic appeal of school environments while reinforcing educational and social values. As an initiative to improve school spaces, mural projects foster creativity, strengthen relationships, encourage collaboration, and positively impact students and teachers (Hayati, 2022; Ross et al., 2023; Taswadi & Santosa, 2021). Beyond their decorative function, murals provide a meaningful educational and social experience by actively involving students and teachers in the creative process. Empty school walls become dynamic canvases where artistic expression flourishes, fostering participation and a sense of community within the school environment (Caruso, 2003; Guillaume & Gastineau, 2022). The school setting significantly shapes students' perceptions, attitudes, and appreciation of visual culture, and integrating murals into these spaces creates an engaging and vibrant atmosphere that nurtures creativity, instils moral values, and strengthens students' sense of identity and belonging. The visual environment of a school profoundly impacts students' educational experiences, influencing their emotional well-being, social interactions, and overall learning engagement. Murals, in particular, serve as powerful tools for

transforming school spaces into reflections of the institution's values, culture, and aspirations. Therefore, understanding the key criteria for assessing school murals is essential to ensure they effectively communicate meaningful messages and contribute positively to the learning environment.

Murals are more than just decorative elements; they serve as important means of communication, education, and community engagement. A well-planned mural can convey clear messages that resonate with students, teachers, and the school community. In the educational context, murals can be a powerful visual language that speaks directly to students' hearts and minds, enhancing their emotional and intellectual connection to the learning process. A carefully executed mural can address important social issues, promote positive behaviours, and celebrate cultural diversity. However, to be effective, murals must be designed with clear objectives. These objectives should include promoting understanding, inspiring creativity, and providing a platform for students to engage with the content meaningfully (Abyzov & Chuieva, 2021).

Effective mural design requires careful consideration of various artistic and contextual factors, including theme clarity, visual impact, and alignment with the school's educational values and mission. The clarity of the theme is crucial, as it ensures that the message conveyed through the mural is easily understood and accessible to all viewers. Furthermore, the visual impact of a mural can significantly affect its effectiveness as a tool for communication. The use of colour, scale, composition, and symbolism can all enhance the mural's ability to convey its intended message powerfully and memorably (Eisner, 2002). When these factors are thoughtfully integrated, murals become more than just artistic expressions—they become vital components of the school's educational environment. Without clear guidelines or criteria for assessing murals, there is a risk that they may fail to achieve their intended purpose or may not fully resonate with the intended audience.

This study explores the essential criteria that can be used to assess murals in Malaysian schools, offering valuable insights into the elements that contribute to the effectiveness of these artworks. By identifying and emphasizing key factors such as theme relevance, originality, craftsmanship, and contextual significance, the findings provide a basis for developing murals that not only enhance the aesthetic appeal of school spaces but also serve as powerful educational tools. These murals can inspire creativity, instil positive values, and strengthen students' connection to their school environment (Hayati, 2022; Siregar et al., 2023). Identifying and understanding these criteria will ultimately support the development of visually impactful and meaningful murals within the broader educational context, contributing to a positive school culture that fosters learning, creativity, and community engagement.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Mural painting has long been recognized as a powerful medium of visual communication that extends beyond aesthetic enhancement to serve educational, cultural, and social functions. In school environments, murals are crucial in shaping students' learning experiences, fostering creativity, and reinforcing social values. The assessment of school mural paintings requires understanding artistic and contextual criteria to ensure that they effectively fulfil their intended purpose. Mural projects have been widely used in various educational and community settings to communicate identity, belonging, and inclusion. Sabeti (2019) examined mural painting as a tool for community arts education, specifically in understanding Marshallese children's experiences of displacement. The study highlighted how murals serve as platforms for expression and agency, shaping the process and outcome of mural development. This aligns with the need to assess school murals based on their ability to convey relevant and meaningful themes that resonate with students and the school community.

Beyond community engagement, murals have also been utilized as an effective tool for interdisciplinary learning. Kar et al. (2024) explored the integration of murals with science communication, emphasizing their role in enhancing scientific literacy through artistic representation. The study demonstrated how murals could be assessed not only for their visual appeal but also for their effectiveness in delivering educational content. This perspective is highly relevant in evaluating school murals, where integrating knowledge across disciplines can foster deeper engagement among students. Mural painting also plays

a transformative role in promoting social values and critical thinking. Ferrer (2022) discussed the potential of murals as a medium for cultural transformation and inclusive education, advocating for their role in promoting egalitarian values. The study highlighted how murals can be assessed based on their ability to challenge societal norms, stimulate dialogue, and encourage collaborative learning. In the context of Malaysian schools, this suggests that mural assessment criteria should include their contribution to students' critical engagement with social themes.

Another essential aspect of mural assessment relates to their psychological and emotional impact on students. Ezenwaji et al. (2021) investigated the influence of mural art on social anxiety, demonstrating that murals can have therapeutic effects by creating welcoming and inclusive environments. This indicates that school murals should be evaluated based on their ability to foster a positive and supportive atmosphere that enhances student well-being. Additionally, the preservation and sustainability of murals must be considered in the assessment criteria. Dong (2022) explored the conservation challenges of ancient Chinese murals, emphasizing the importance of scientific and technological advancements in mural preservation. Although school murals are temporary, ensuring their durability through material selection and maintenance practices is crucial in sustaining their long-term impact.

Mural projects also contribute to broader knowledge dissemination and public engagement. Animbom et al. (2024) highlighted how mural-making in university settings promotes inclusivity and research awareness. This study reinforces the idea that school murals should be assessed based on their ability to engage diverse audiences and encourage active participation from students, teachers, and the surrounding community. Furthermore, murals have been recognized as effective tools in environmental education. Sanchez et al. (2020) examined the role of muralism in raising awareness of aquatic ecosystems and water conservation. Their findings indicated that murals convey sustainability and environmental responsibility effectively among younger audiences. This underscores the importance of assessing school murals concerning their ability to instil awareness and encourage responsible behaviours among students.

Lastly, the intersection of mural art and social awareness has been explored in the medical education field. Balhara and Irvin (2021) described how murals were used in emergency medicine education to spark discussions on social determinants of health. This study suggests that murals can serve as a medium for complex discussions, making them valuable tools for fostering critical awareness within the school setting. Therefore, the assessment of school murals should consider their potential to encourage reflection and engagement with broader societal issues. In summary, this highlights the multifaceted role of mural painting in education, culture, and community engagement. Effective assessment of school murals should incorporate criteria that evaluate their thematic relevance, educational impact, emotional influence, preservation, inclusivity, and ability to stimulate critical thinking. By establishing comprehensive evaluation criteria, Malaysian school murals can be developed as meaningful artistic and educational assets contributing to student's holistic development. It is important to identify and apply the necessary criteria to achieve the program's awareness objectives, ensuring that mural paintings are beautiful and high-quality.

This research addresses two research questions:

1. What are the criteria for assessing mural paintings that contribute to beautifying school environments?
2. Which criteria are most commonly recognized as integral to the creation of high-quality mural paintings within Malaysian secondary schools?

METHODOLOGY

This study uses a qualitative approach incorporating in-depth interviews, observations, and document analysis. Data were collected through interviews with three experts renowned in visual arts, mural painting, and art education (Table 1). These in-depth interviews aimed to explore the essential criteria identified by experts for both the creation and evaluation of effective mural paintings. The interview

questions were carefully developed and validated for content accuracy by three subject-matter experts. The data were transcribed, and thematic analysis was conducted to identify recurring themes. Direct field observations were carried out on selected murals for the observational component, documenting their artistic elements and current conditions. In cases where on-site visits were not possible, the researcher analysed photographs provided by the respective schools. A total of 20 mural samples were selected and examined as part of the study. Source triangulation was applied to enhance the credibility of the findings, ensuring a well-rounded analysis. Data analysis involved three key steps: data reduction, verification, and conclusion drawing. Data reduction focused on filtering and selecting relevant information from interviews, observations, and document analysis while maintaining accuracy (Miles & Huberman, 1994). Data verification involved cross-checking the collected data to ensure reliability. Finally, conclusions were drawn based on the findings, aligning with the study's objectives. This approach provided a comprehensive understanding of the assessment criteria for mural paintings in Malaysian schools, ensuring that the insights gained were reliable and meaningful.

Table 1. *Expert Criteria*

Informant	Expert	Background Experiences	Year Experience
1	Visual Art Teacher & National Art Galery Artist	• Visual arts expert • Active art activist, specializing in fine arts, landscape, and mural painting. • Deputy Chairman of the Fine Arts Society Malaysia. • Member of the National Art Gallery Artists. • Visual Arts teacher and Head of Panitia Seni Visual in Petaling Jaya. • Recognized achievements in national-level fine arts, murals, and art's landscape • Engaged in solo exhibitions at the National Art Gallery. • Actively involved in giving lectures and facilitating visual arts education. • Serves as a judge in various national painting competitions.	42
2	Mural Artist, Cartoonist & Illustrator	• Experienced artist specializing in mural painting. • Experience in the field of fine arts. • Head judge for the National Level Competition Mural Malaysian Unity Road Safety among Secondary Schools in Malaysia, organized by Pluss Sdn Bhd . • Actively participates as a judge in national mural competitions and assesses mural artworks. • Honour personal mini art gallery in Setapak, Kuala Lumpur. • Active participant in various art exhibitions. • Known as a Malaysia cartoonist and illustrator.	47

		• Notable work includes the cartoon series "Usop Sontorian" (1994-1997) in collaboration with Kharisma Pictures .	
3.	Visual Art Teacher & 3D mural artist	• Excellent Teacher Award, Selangor in 1997. • Excellent Teacher in Co-curricular Award in 2013 and 2014. • An expert in visual art with nearly 30 years of experience in architectural drawing. • Actively involved in painting murals around the school, contributing to the school's recognition with an innovation award in the Environmental Cheerful School competition. • Participated in the National Mural Competition Malaysian Road Unity Road Safety among secondary Schools in 2016.	40

FINDINGS

The findings revealed that 11 key criteria for assessing mural paintings in Malaysian schools were identified through in-depth interviews with three experts. These criteria are crucial for evaluating the impact of murals in beautifying the school environment. The first research question aimed to explore the elements of assessment criteria that contribute to this process. After analyzing the qualitative interview data, the researcher organized the findings into codes and presented them in Table 2. The identified criteria are theme and message, originality, subject matter accuracy, creativity, colour, craftsmanship, mood, teamwork, environment, scale, and landscape. Each of these criteria is discussed in detail in the subsequent sections of the article, providing a thorough analysis of their relevance and significance in assessing school murals.

Table 2. *Data Findings' Interview for Assessment Criteria in Mural Painting*

Criteria Assessment	Informant 1	Informant 2	Informant 3
1) **Themes and message**	Mural should convey a clear message.	Selection of images and adaptation of theme.	Theme and message should be appropriate to the school environment.
2) **Originality**	Must show a distinct trademark and unique identity.	Emphasizes the importance of originality.	Implies innovation for creating a unique identity and trademark.
3) **Subject matter accuracy**	Appropriate subject matter for the chosen theme.	Creative arrangement of images to fit the theme.	Smart arrangement of subject matter to align with the theme and message.
4) **Creativity**	The outcome should stand out on its own.	Can cultivate creative ideas through the theme.	Presents messages visually in alignment with the theme and message.

5) **Colour**	Neatness of color enhances the mural's beauty and visual appeal.	The choice and layout of colors are carefully planned.	Exciting and bright colors create an unforgettable atmosphere.
6) **Craftmanship**	Neatness in craftsmanship is key for aesthetic value.	Emphasizes drawing skills: stroke lines, technique, and balance.	Focus on technical skills, perspective, 3D elements, and spatial awareness.
7) **Mood**	Neatness contributes to a calm mood.	Mood significantly impacts how the audience perceives the mural.	The environment is designed to effectively convey the intended mood and message.
8) **Teamwork**	The variety of strokes in the mural reflects the teamwork involved in the creation process.	Different brush strokes emphasize collaboration and teamwork.	Various strokes highlight teamwork and the overall quality of the mural.
9) **Environment**	Selection of location is crucial to the mural's impact.	Importance of location for effectively conveying the mural's message.	The location should be chosen to ensure audience appreciation and attention.
10) **Scale**	A larger mural size enhances its development and visibility.	Thematic relevance of large-scale murals is critical for success.	Large scale is advantageous if the theme and technical execution are sound.
11) **Landscape**	Landscape elements enhance the aesthetic value of the mural.	Landscape can elevate the mural's visual impact.	Landscape complements the mural, creating an immersive and engaging setting.

Theme and Message

All three respondents emphasized the importance of selecting subject matter that aligns with the mural's theme and message. Their statements highlight how these elements contribute to the overall effectiveness of mural assessment.

"In assessment, we must determine whether the mural conveys a message because a mural is not just an ordinary painting. The selection of images plays a crucial role in defining and adapting the theme".

(Informant 1)

"There should be a clear message intended for the public… The selection of subject matter must be carefully considered to ensure it effectively highlights the theme and message of the mural."

(Informant 2)

"A mural should have value and purpose. In a school setting, the theme should be relevant to the environment, ensuring that the message is effectively communicated to its audience."

(Informant 3)

Figure 1. *Mural painting SMK Dato Harun, Petaling Jaya.*

These responses indicate that theme and message are essential in evaluating mural paintings. Two respondents specifically emphasized that the selection of images and subject matter directly influences the accuracy of the theme and message. This suggests that subject matter is not a separate criterion but an integral part of theme representation.

A theme defines the overall subject of a painting, whether it portrays nature, history, patriotism, religion, abstract concepts, or a particular social message (Cohen, 2012). For example, Figure 1 illustrates a school mural visually representing different eras in art history. The mural includes the names of renowned artists and key movements such as Impressionism, providing an educational perspective on the evolution of painting styles. This demonstrates how murals can serve as artistic and educational tools, effectively delivering messages to students.

Originality
Two respondents emphasized that murals should demonstrate originality. Their statements highlight how originality is assessed in mural painting:

> "……Originality should establish a trademark and reflect own identity".

(Informant 2)

> "In my opinion, originality is the most important criterion. While mural may reference other sources, they should incorporate improvisation and innovation to showcase a unique identity and trademark".

(Informant 3)

These responses indicate that originality in mural painting is defined by the ability to create a distinctive artistic identity rather than merely replicating existing works. However, no information on originality was provided by the first respondent.

Subject Matter Accuracy
All three respondents discussed the importance of selecting subject matter that aligns with the theme and message of the mural. Their statements suggest that subject matter accuracy closely relates to these elements:

> "The selection of images or subject matter should be appropriate to the theme and message".

(Informant 1)

"…Be strategic in arranging the selected subject. The chosen subject must align with the end message".

(Informant 2)

"The selection of subject matter is crucial and should relate to the theme and message. The mural is evaluated based on its overall production"

(Informant 3)

These responses confirm that subject matter accuracy is not an independent criterion but rather an integral part of conveying the theme and message. The selection of subject matter influences the clarity and effectiveness of the mural's intended message. Figure 2 below illustrates an example of a successful mural that effectively communicates a message to the audience. Each element within the mural contributes to storytelling, enhancing the delivery of the intended message, such as road safety awareness.

Figure 2. *Mural painting SMK Dato' Mahmud Mat Pekan, Pahang, National Malaysians Unity Road Safety Mural Competition 2013*

Creativity

All respondent agreed that criteria in creativity should have in mural painting, such as the statement below:

"Creative Mural is produced in perfect, neat and beautiful…. can stand on its own even without the use of typography".

"Creativity can also be evaluated in the composite image, layout of subject, the selection of an appropriate subject thematically"

(Informant 1)

"The outcome of mural painting capable of applied messages in visual form…Can cultivate the idea by theme, …. can present messages in a visual form with the requirements of the theme or message in the mural".

"For my opinion creativity can be judged in terms of how to apply art skill and ingenuity used in conveying the message".

(Informant 2)

"The ability to generate new ideas, can produce different mural than expected".

"Creativity is assessed from the point of originality. Each work of art can imitate but need innovation to make it into something new".

"…It is assessed from the point of how the mural produce to be something different, there is an additional element, such as element 3 dimensions."

(Informant 3)

The above statement shows the creativity criteria used for assessment in mural paintings. However, the element of creativity is assessed from various angles. Creativity was assessed based on neatness, image composition and subject matter layout, theme, and art skills. Through the statement, the mural is a creative mural that has characteristics that are unique and different from the usual, such as 3-dimensional elements.

Figure 3 is an example of a mural that has elements of creativity. Three-dimensional (3D) elements are successfully exhibited through the additional car element appearing from the wall. The selection of subject matter coincides with the theme of road safety to convey to the audience.

In Figure 4, the criteria in creativity are seen from the perspective view highlighted on three dimensions of the road built in the mural that seemed to spring from the wall. This mural won first place and received awards at the national level for the most beautiful mural in the Mural Painting School Competition Malaysian Unity Road Safety 2013 (Berita Harian, 2013, Harian Metro, 2013).

In contrast, the idea of creativity is presented in Figure 5, where a Curtain flag is hung around the murals to evoke a different atmosphere. Three-dimensional signs affixed to the mural add an interesting element of creativity.
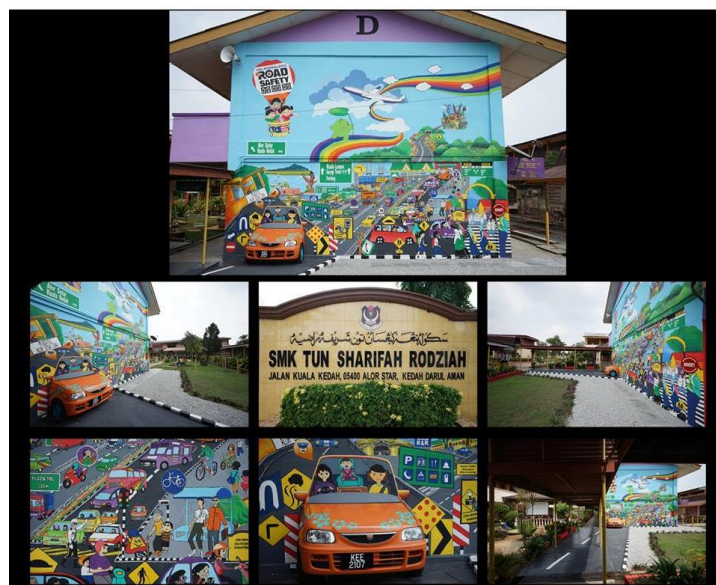
Figure 3. *Mural painting SMK Tun Sharifah Rodziah, Kedah, National Malaysians Unity Road Safety Mural Competition 2016*

Figure 4. *Mural painting SMK Mergong Alor Setar, Kedah, National Malaysians Unity Road Safety Mural Competition 2014*

Figure 5. *Mural painting SMK Seksyen 16, Shah Alam, Selangor, National Malaysians Unity Road Safety Mural Competition 2016*

Colour

According to all respondents, colour is an important criterion in the assessment of a mural. There are many statements that describe the colour as below:

"Neatness of colour can make it a beautiful mural…The colour selection and perspective colour should be planned…."

"……. there should be the composite interesting colours. Perspective colour should be emphasized".

"……. Use of the shading and tone or flat colour depend on the drawn image. If the subject is realistic paintings, the tone and shading play an important role. If the mural is a basic shape, pattern or motif tone and shading were not required.

(Informant 1)

"Colour selection should be exciting and bright colour so it can be an unforgettable environment and attract an audience…. If the selection of subject matter is good but the colour is not strong, it will affect the beauty of the murals".

(Informant 2)

"To be wise in the use of colour. Always use bright colours to attract students and give feelings to the students. Students or children prefer bright and cheerful colour".

"Use bright colours perfectly suited to the concept of mural painted at the school. Students interested in the use of bright colours".

(Informant 3)

Through the information obtained, the colour may be the result of the mural being beautiful. The colouring technique depends on the painting to be produced. The selection of bright colours can attract students or children. This opinion is also supported by previous studies by Awad et al. (2024) and Soliman et al. (2024), suggesting that colour selection can influence mood and behaviour and stimulate the brain and body.

Figure 6 is an example of a mural that used bright colours to attract students and children. This mural was awarded the best colour in the Malaysian National Unity Mural Competition Road Safety 2013. (Plus, 2014)

Figure 6. *Mural painting SMK Puncak Alam, Shah Alam, Selangor, National Malaysians Unity Road Safety Mural Competition 2013*

Craftsmanship
The following is a discussion about the criteria of craftsmanship from informant.

> *"Although good in terms of subject selection, if the craftsmanship artwork is no neatness, mural was no have aesthetic value".*

(Informant 1)

> "*Drawing skills are very important aspects. Stroke lines, painting technique, accuracy, neatness, balancing objects, proportion, a balance must be emphasized in a mural".*

(Informant 2)

> *"The mural painting from the various skills, perspective, three-dimensional elements, control lines, the impression of space in the mural should be emphasized".*

(Informant 3)

Most respondents agreed that craftsmanship criteria can assed via drawing skills in terms of stroke lines, painting technique, accuracy, neatness, balancing objects, proportion, balancing, perspectives, and space.

Mood

Mood is also one of the criteria that can be evaluated in the assessment of mural painting. The following statements address this aspect:

> *"Precision and neatness of a mural painting is closely related to mood and feelings. When painting produced with neat and beautiful will arouse a calm and pleasant to look at the mural".*

(Informant 1)

> "*Mood of the mural should be taken care of in terms of proportion, for example drawing figure, should be drawn in the right proportion so as not to affect the mood of the painting when the audience sees on it".*

(Informant 2)

> "*Mood is important in a mural painting. To turn the mood of the mural, the environment space near the mural must turned against students for appreciate the message to be conveyed".*

(Informant 3)

Most informants have a different opinion on the mood criteria as it is related to the feeling. This opinion is supported by previous studies that say the mood is how it makes the audience feel. Bright and cheerful colours can put the audience in a good mood, otherwise for brooding, dark and depressing colours. The structure of the painting can also suggest mood: horizontal lines in a mural painting are more restful than vertical or slanting lines. Light, pastel colours are gentle, whereas bright colours can be stimulating. Figure 7 shows the suggested mood when buying nasi lemak. Owning the booth in pairs out of the wall had raised a 3-dimensional perspective and made the painting look alive.

Figure 7. *Mural painting SMK Seksyen 16, Shah Alam Selangor*

Teamwork

"An assessment of a mural can be seen during the process of making the mural occurred. Cooperation is not visible from the visuals alone".

"Stroke painting in a realistic mural is the work done by one individual compared with mural paintings that have a variety of stroke involving the work of a teamwork. Maybe it is just an assumption".

(Informant 1)

"Teamwork is the commitment to produce a mural."

"It is can identify stroke in realistic murals painting involves only a single painter Rarely, many artists have the same stroke."

"In producing a mural at the school by students, the concept of teamwork is very important in producing the murals and it can be identified from the various stroke in the artwork of the mural."

(Informant 2)

"The concept of the mural in the school, is the teamwork and monitoring will be performed by teachers on an ongoing basis."

"Everyone has a different stroke. Realistic painting on a mural can't involve more students than painting using flat colour which is have a more student can involve in painting process."

(Informant 3)

Most informants agreed that criteria teamwork is one criterion that needs to be when you want to produce a mural at the school. The concept of collaboration among students and teachers is an environment awareness value which emphasized in the mural painting.

Environment

"Location selection is very important to place a mural. The location should in places that areas of particular interest or crowd walkways".

(Informant 1)

"The location selection is very important. Mural was considered a failure if drawn in a sheltered location, because the mural has its own message to be conveyed to the public".

(Informant 2)

"Location selection is an important factor in ensuring painted mural can be seen and appreciated by the audience… "Should choose a location that is the main route or choose a location and then turned on with many creative ideas to be a focus places and can attract audience" … "However, if painted in a sheltered spot, mural should be switched to beautiful environment to attract audience to see and appreciated it".

(Informant 3)

Per the interview findings, the environment criteria were identified as the location of choice to place the mural. The choice of location is very important, relating to the message conveyed to the public through the mural.

Scale

"Mural in the large scale is better but it depends on the work and neatness. If the work is not neat and beautiful, it has no value and futile".

(Informant 1)

"Mural produced in high places can give high marks but also depends by theme had produced. If the mural has a huge scale, but not thematically it is also considered as failed".

"Ratings mural cannot rely on a large scale, but it can give advantage if the excess is produced at a high place because it more complicated".

(Informant 2)

"Size is not a major factor in production. Through experience, the elements should be emphasized is space, colour, and aesthetics. Accuracy can't be applied on a mural in detail because it is too large a scale". "The priority is the message to be delivered even has a small size…."

(Informant 3)

Figure 8. *Three level of Mural painting at SMK Kluang Tinggi, Johor*

Figure 8 is an example of criteria emphasizing mural scale. Most respondents agreed that scale murals are not a main criterion in this assessment because most informants believe that a large scale will be of no value if the theme, finishing, and art skills are not applied.

Landscape

"Mural can beautify the school landscape, but the criteria should not be included in the competition assessment. This is because ratings can be evaluated on a mural itself and the landscape is becoming an additional element to beautify the mural is produced".

"Landscape environment can be an advantage for the mural to create a beautiful environment"

(Informant 1)

"Environmental mural landscape can help a good outcome of mural painting, but it is not the objective of the mural was produced. The main objective of the mural is to educate people through the message to be conveyed in the mural painting itself".

(Informant 2)

"Landscape and mural need each other. The existence landscape near the mural can turn on the environment so the audience can appreciate the mural painting is an example of creating a lounge in front of mural, create the park, students will better appreciate the mural when have a meal or resting". "Landscape is not a requirement directly, but it is an element of creativity that will give a great impact to the appreciation of the mural itself".

(Informant 3)
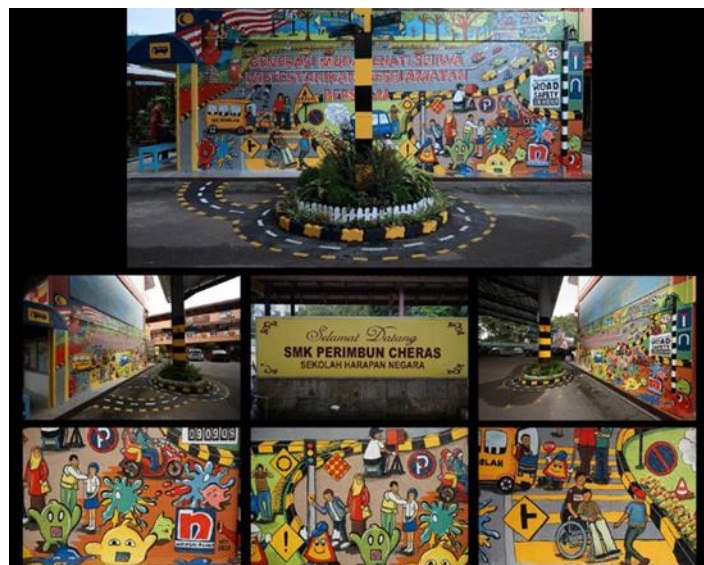
Figure 9. *Landscape build in Mural painting SMK Perimbun, Selangor*

Through interviews, most experts agreed that the landscape criteria cannot be taken into the mural scoring rubric. Assessment can only be done on mural painting. Landscape is an additional criterion that can help beautify the area around the mural only. Figure 9 shows a mural with the composition criteria evaluation according to the importance of the mural presented in a diagram. Table 3 shows that Expert 1 chose creativity as the most important criterion in a mural painting assessment. This is because the element of creativity benefits the works of art produced by the work of others. This opinion is also supported by Glaveanu (2014), who stated the criteria for creativity can attract an audience should something be created outside of the box. According to Expert 2, if the drawings were made beautifully but did not follow the theme, the result is considered a failure. Normally, the theme is emphasized in a mural contest. Participants must comply with the theme because there is a message to be delivered. Expert 3 chose originality as the most important element in the assessment because, according to the respondent, originality plays an important role as a trademark and identity, elements which indirectly show the mural's high value.

Table 3. *Mural Criteria Assessment Finding from Expert by Ranking*

Ranking	Expert 1 Criteria	Expert 2 Criteria	Expert 3 Criteria
1	Creativity	Themes	Originality
2	Themes	Creativity	Themes
3	Craftmanship	Originality	Creativity
4	Color	Color	Color
5	Subject Matter Accuracy	Teamwork	Craftmanship
6	Mood	Craftmanship	Subject matter Accuracy
7	Scale	Subject matter accuracy	Teamwork
8	Environment	Mood	Environment
9	Landscape	Environment	Scale
10	Teamwork	Scale	Landscape
11	-	Landscape	-

The findings from the expert rankings in Table 3 highlight several key criteria deemed important in assessing mural paintings in schools. According to Expert 1, creativity is the paramount criterion, followed by themes and craftsmanship. Expert 2 prioritizes themes, creativity, and originality, while

Expert 3 values originality, themes, and creativity the most. All three experts consistently ranked colour as a significant factor, placing it fourth. Subject matter accuracy, teamwork, and mood also appeared in their rankings, though with varying importance. Interestingly, scale, environment, and landscape were included by all experts, albeit with differing priority levels. Teamwork was notably ranked higher by experts 2 and 3 compared to expert 1. This diversity in rankings underscores the multifaceted nature of mural assessments, where creativity, themes, and originality are commonly valued, but other factors such as craftsmanship, colour, and teamwork also play crucial roles in creating impactful and educational mural artworks.

The assessment findings in Table 4 highlight the percentage scoring of mural painting criteria provided by three informants. For all three informants, the theme or message of the mural was given significant importance, with Informant 1 and Informant 3 allocating 25% and Informant 2 assigning 30% to this criterion. Creativity was another crucial factor, scoring 30% by Informant 1 and 25% by Informant 2 and Informant 3. Originality was only scored by Informant 2 and Informant 3, with 15% and 30%, respectively, indicating its varying perceived importance. Craftsmanship received equal recognition from all informants, although it was rated lower by Informant 2 and Informant 3 at 10%, compared to 25% by Informant 1. Colour was assigned a consistent 10% by Informant 2 and Informant 3, whereas Informant 1 rated it higher at 20%. Other criteria, such as subject matter accuracy, mood, teamwork, environment, scale, and landscape, were not scored by any informant, suggesting a lower priority or different evaluation focus for these aspects. This distribution of scoring percentages underscores the varied emphasis on thematic and creative elements by different evaluators, reflecting diverse perspectives in mural assessment.

Table 4. *The Statements of Percentage Scoring Given by Selected Criteria in Rubric Mural Painting Assessment*

Informant 1		Informant 2		Informant 3	
Assessment criteria	**Scoring Percentage**	**Assessment criteria**	**Scoring Percentage**	**Assessment criteria**	**Scoring Percentage**
Theme/message	25	Theme/message	30	Theme/message	25
Originality	-	Originality	15	Originality	30
Subject matter accuracy	-	Subject matter accuracy	-	Subject matter accuracy	-
Creativity	30	Creativity	25	Creativity	25
Craftsmanship	25	Craftsmanship	10	Craftsmanship	10
Mood	-	Mood	-	Mood	-
Colour	20	Colour	10	Colour	10
Teamwork	-	Teamwork	10	Teamwork	-
Environment	-	Environment	-	Environment	-
Scale	-	Scale	-	Scale	-
Landscape	-	Landscape	-	Landscape	-
Total score	100%	**Total score**	100%	**Total score**	100%

Figure 10 illustrates the diverse perspectives of three informants on the essential criteria for evaluating school mural paintings in Malaysia. The data reveals a profound appreciation for the thematic depth and creative ingenuity of murals, with 'Theme/Message' and creativity receiving the highest scores from all informants. This underscores the importance of a mural's narrative and message to the audience. Similarly, 'Creativity' is highly regarded, reflecting a collective emphasis on innovative and imaginative designs that captivate and inspire. The criterion of 'Colour' also stands out, particularly for Informant 1, who scored it at 30%, signifying its critical role in the visual appeal and emotional impact of the murals. 'Originality' follows closely, highlighting the value placed on unique and distinctive artistic expressions.

Meanwhile, 'Craftsmanship' and 'Subject Matter Accuracy' are deemed moderately important, suggesting a balanced appreciation for technical skill and the fidelity of the depicted subjects. Interestingly, criteria such as 'Landscape' and 'Teamwork' receive minimal attention, indicating they are less critical in the evaluative process. The varying scores for 'Environment,' 'Mood,' and 'Scale' reflect subjective

differences among the informants, showcasing a range of personal biases and preferences in their assessments. Overall, the graph provides a clear visual representation of the varying importance of different criteria in assessing school mural paintings in Malaysia. The findings suggest that aspects concerning the message, creativity, and visual appeal are prioritized over technical and collaborative aspects. These insights can guide future mural projects to focus on the elements most valued by evaluators.
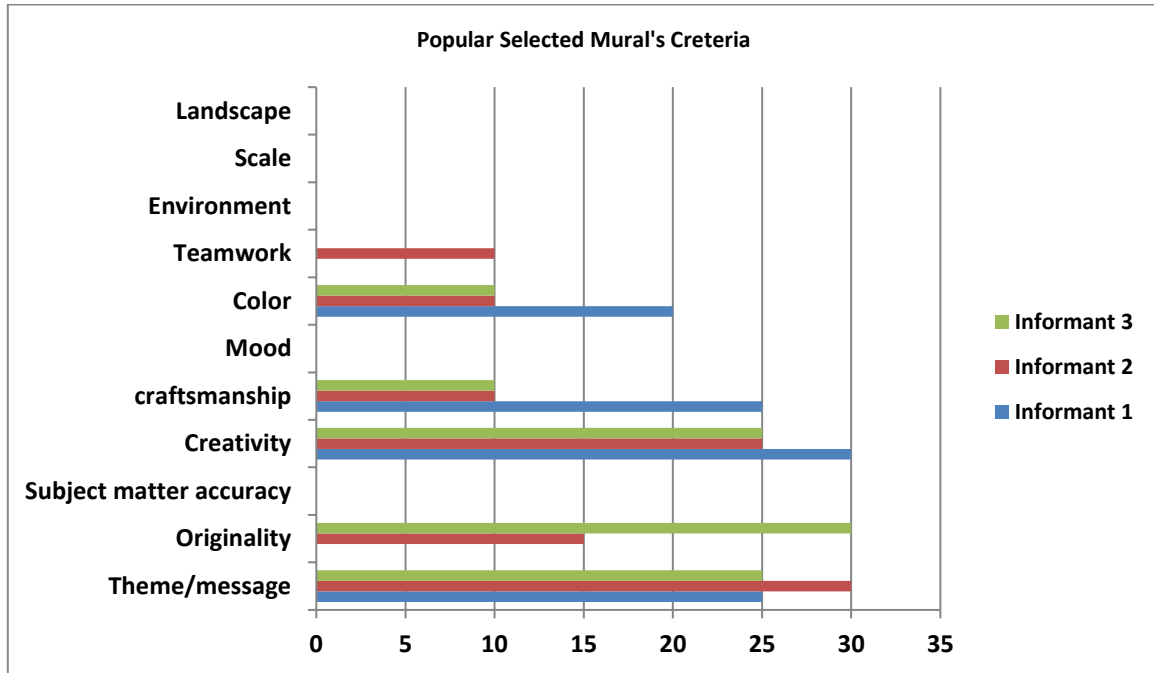
Figure 10. *Score Percentage of Popular Selected Criteria in Mural Rubric Assessment*

Figure 11 represents the composition criteria for mural assessment as determined by experts. The experts' evaluations revealed a consensus on several critical aspects of mural composition. Creativity and themes consistently emerged as top priorities, underscoring the importance of innovative and conceptually rich designs. Originality was also highly valued, highlighting the necessity for unique and fresh artistic expressions. Craftsmanship and colour were deemed essential for the technical and aesthetic quality of the murals. Other significant criteria included subject matter accuracy, teamwork, mood, scale, environment, and landscape, though their importance varied among the experts. This assessment indicates that while artistic creativity and thematic depth are paramount, technical execution and contextual relevance also play crucial roles in the effectiveness and impact of mural paintings in educational settings.
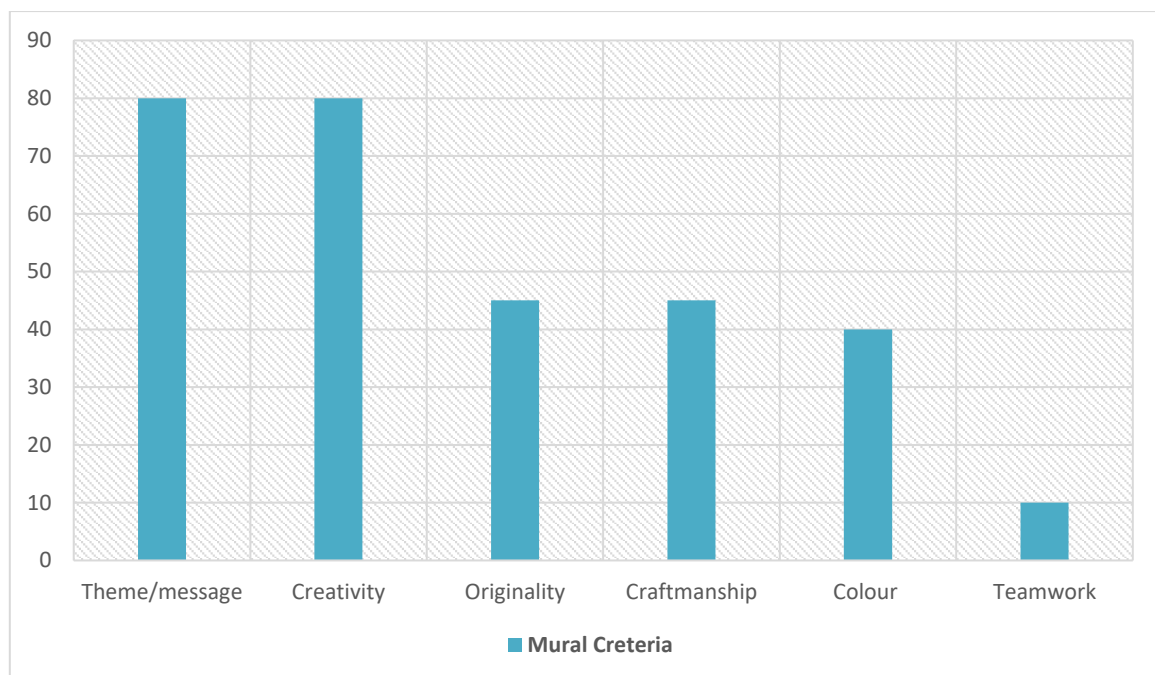
Figure 11. *Composition Mural Criteria Assessment Base on Experts*

DISCUSSION

The findings of this study highlight the essential criteria for assessing mural paintings in Malaysian schools, emphasizing their role in enhancing the school environment and fostering students' artistic and educational engagement. The results indicate that murals should be evaluated based on eleven key criteria: theme and message, originality, subject matter accuracy, creativity, colour, craftsmanship, mood, teamwork, environment, landscape, and scale. However, experts particularly emphasized six criteria: theme and message, creativity, originality, craftsmanship, colour and teamwork, as the most significant in determining mural quality.

Among these, theme/message emerged as the most crucial aspect, as they dictate whether a mural successfully communicates its intended meaning. The selection of subject matter must align with the chosen theme to ensure the message is effectively conveyed. This finding supports previous research indicating that murals are powerful educational tools, conveying social, historical, or moral values to students (Adrienne et al., 2022; Benay, 2024; Khairul, 2024). Furthermore, a well-defined theme enhances the coherence of the mural, making it more engaging and meaningful to its audience.

In addition to theme and message, creativity and originality were identified as fundamental assessment criteria. Experts agreed that murals should demonstrate innovation and uniqueness rather than replicating existing designs. Instead, students should be encouraged to incorporate their artistic identity and personal interpretations into their murals. This aligns with studies that emphasize creativity as a core component of visual arts education, which is crucial in fostering problem-solving skills and self-expression. Moreover, originality ensures that murals remain distinctive and reflect the student's perspectives and artistic capabilities.

Furthermore, craftsmanship is vital in mural assessment, as it determines the artwork's overall aesthetic quality and longevity. Experts highlighted that brush technique, line precision, colour blending, and composition are crucial indicators of a well-executed mural. A high level of craftsmanship not only enhances visual appeal but also showcases students' technical skills and attention to detail. Additionally, murals that exhibit strong technical execution are more durable and maintain their impact over time, contributing to a lasting impression on the school community.

Another important factor in mural assessment is teamwork and collaborative engagement, as mural projects often require collective effort. Experts noted that successful murals reflect a harmonious integration of different artistic contributions, demonstrating effective student collaboration. This reinforces the importance of teamwork in school-based artistic initiatives, where students learn essential skills such as communication, coordination, and shared responsibility. By working together, students develop a sense of ownership and pride in their artwork, further enhancing its significance within the school environment.

In addition, mood and emotional impact were identified as key aspects influencing how viewers perceive and engage with murals. Experts emphasized that an effective mural should evoke appropriate emotions: inspiration, reflection or unity. Using colour, composition, and subject matter carefully can enhance the mural's emotional resonance, making it a more immersive experience for students and teachers. When murals successfully capture a certain mood, they become more impactful and memorable, reinforcing their role as artistic and educational tools.

While all eleven criteria contribute to mural assessment, some aspects, such as landscape and scale, were considered secondary factors. Landscape elements were considered beneficial in enhancing mural aesthetics but were not deemed essential in rubric-based evaluations. Similarly, scale was recognized as a factor that could impact mural visibility, but its effectiveness depended largely on execution quality rather than size alone. These findings suggest that although landscape and scale may enhance a mural's presentation, they are not as critical as the core artistic and educational components.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, these research underscores the importance of structured evaluation criteria in assessing murals in Malaysian schools. By establishing clear assessment standards, educators can ensure that mural projects not only beautify school environments but also serve as meaningful educational and artistic experiences. Furthermore, fostering creativity, teamwork, and craftsmanship among students can enhance their appreciation for art and its role in cultural and educational development. Future research could explore the development of standardized rubrics or handbooks to guide educators and students in creating impactful and high-quality murals that contribute to school aesthetics and student learning.

RECOMENDATIONS

In light of these findings, it is advisable to produce a comprehensive handbook that encapsulates creating high-quality murals from inception to completion. This resource should encompass the stipulated mural painting assessment criteria, enhancing accessibility for educators and students. Furthermore, this handbook could include guidelines for mural assessment and a scoring rubric, supporting teachers and students participating in mural competitions or undertaking mural projects within educational institutions.

Future studies may examine the long-term effects of mural exposure on pupils' attitudes towards the environment. Longitudinal research can offer valuable insights into how prolonged exposure to murals affects sustainable behaviours. Moreover, delving into various mural topics that are expressly designed to tackle urgent environmental issues provides a chance to expand the boundaries of creative creativity. Partnerships between artists and subject-matter specialists can help create topics relevant to local circumstances. Furthermore, investigating cutting-edge mural technologies, such as augmented reality, shows potential for fostering students' curiosity and engagement through appealing mediums. Through the pursuit of these investigative paths, scholars may enhance our understanding of the influence of mural painting on environmental awareness and education.

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