

Analyzing the role of configuration of educational spaces on students' life experience (Case Study: Primary Schools in Isfahan)

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Abstract

Introduction: From the point of view of geographical sciences, the concept of space can be seen as a phenomenon resulting from the relationship between humans and the environment; In such a way that all the studies and subjects of this science are manifested in the framework of the concept of space. In general, space in the real sense includes a specific geographical area that consists of one or more man-made places. In the human dimension of space, there are places with a common function that serve to meet the needs of human beings. Therefore, the geographical space represents the relationship between man and the environment in a tangible way, and the mutual influence of these two components leads to the creation of an objective and real phenomenon.

Educational spaces can be considered among the man-made places that have a close relationship with the main users, that is, students. In other words, until the rules and regulations for the design of educational spaces are established by adults, the quality of students' relationships with educational spaces will be questioned. In fact, the research about the desirable quality of students' lived connection with the school environment has often been done by seeking the opinions of experts and architects who have considered different definitions according to different times and places. While students are fully aware of the environment and its events, they are trying to understand and improve the quality of their communication with those around them; Because users understand their environment by interacting with the space and reproducing and interpreting their experiences from personal, social and cultural lenses. Now the question arises, how to improve the quality of communication between students and the school environment? It is obvious that the analysis of the relationship between students' lived experiences and the physical configuration of these spaces is one of the most important effective factors.

With these interpretations, the aim of the current research is to improve the quality of the relationship between the configuration of educational spaces and the students' lived experiences, and it seeks to answer the question, what are the characteristics of the configuration of the educational space compatible with the students' lived experiences? Therefore, regardless of the characteristics that have been raised about the desirability of various aspects of educational spaces, it seeks to improve the quality of the human relationship of students with their school environment. Therefore, the hypothesis of the research is based on the fact that by receiving the experiences of students through interviews and observations, as well as by analyzing the configuration of the space in which they study,

it is possible to achieve effective principles on the interaction between educational spaces and students' lived experiences.

Methodology: The studied community includes children aged 7 to 12 and primary schools in Isfahan city. The reason for choosing this age range can be seen as the importance of middle childhood, after which the child's relationship with the environment, nature and society is formed. The selection criterion of the studied schools in the present research can be considered as their high level of spatial and social quality and purposeful design according to the use of an educational space. The tools used in this research include Depthmap software, observation and interview. In the observation process, a behavioral map is prepared; Behavioral maps are used in researches related to the mutual influence of the spatial characteristics of the environment and behavior. Children's lived experiences and perspectives have been collected using semi-structured interviews and focus groups and analyzed with open and axial coding. In this method, the interaction between the group members and their exchange of opinions about their experiences is preferable to the centrality of the interviewer's questioning.

Results and discussion: Interactions between humans and the environment is one of the issues that has received the attention of various sciences such as human geography and architecture. An interdisciplinary category that not only studies the relationships of people with each other and with the environment, but also pays attention to the impact of people on man-made environments. Schools are considered as man-made places that can influence students' relationships and lived experiences based on how they are spatially configured. The common and dominant model of schools usually leads to the impossibility of active presence, exploration and interaction of students with each other, which at the same time imposes restrictions on the students' lived experiences, and at the same time determines the minimum human relationship of students with their surrounding environment. Creating a lived experience in education with an emphasis on skills, learning from peers through social interactions and the importance of the power of choice and responsibility of students, seeks to reduce the gap between the space and the needs of users. Therefore, educational spaces responsive to students' living world can provide an interpersonal interactive space for their active presence. The physical aspects of the space should be effective in not exercising power to control the social relations involved in the space. This requires increasing the interconnection of spaces, increasing the students' control over the space, improving the permeability of the space, and increasing the accessibility of students to different educational situations.

Conclusion: The results of the research indicate that the features of spatial configuration including 1. collective activities; 2. Legibility; 3. A sense of ownership; 4. Environmental sensory elements; 5. Natural factors and open space; 6. Physical and climatic comfort and 7. Various activities can have an effect on improving the quality of students' relationship with the environment and increasing their lived experience.

Keywords: Space Configuration, Educational Spaces, Lived Experience, Elementary School, Isfahan

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