Explaining the Model for Promoting the Position of Professors in Contemporary Architecture Education Case Study (Selected Universities in Iran and Giliçim University, Istanbul, Türkiye)*

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A B S T R A C T

Research Problem:
Architectural education, as one of the pivotal frameworks in shaping the future identity and capability of architects, plays an undeniable role in determining the quality and direction of the built environment. In countries with rich architectural heritage such as Iran, this role becomes even more crucial. Iranian traditional architecture, rooted in principles of sustainability, harmony with nature, spiritual meaning, and social cohesion, offers a valuable knowledge system. However, in the context of rapid modernization, globalization, and transformation of academic paradigms, architectural education in Iran and similar contexts finds itself caught in a tension between preserving identity and adapting to contemporary demands.

Among the elements of the education system, the teacher element is the most important one, so professors and teachers are the underlying agents for the renewal of pedagogy. It is hoped that the lack of effective position of man in traditional education of architecture is removed in contemporary architecture education by investigating the human component, profound vision, and principles that architect masters acquired when they were solving the problems ruling the implementation of the building, creating a relationship between new building and teaching these principles in details and accurately to their students.

One of the critical gaps in contemporary architectural education in Iran is the diminishing centrality of the professor as a mediator of knowledge, skill, and wisdom. While curricula are increasingly shaped by global standards and technological progress, the personalized, value-oriented role of the teacher as a mentor and guide is losing prominence. The educational system seems to have departed from traditional models while inconsistently embracing the structures of modern pedagogy. This inconsistency has led to an educational environment where students often lack a coherent framework that integrates practical skills, theoretical knowledge, and ethical or cultural wisdom all of which were present in traditional architectural apprenticeship. Given this context, it is crucial to understand how the role of professors can be redefined and strengthened in the current educational landscape, in a way that bridges this gap between tradition and modernity and contributes to the formation of competent, aware, and creative architects.

Research Question:
This study is guided by the central question: How can a conceptual model be developed to enhance the role and position of professors in contemporary architectural education, in a way that synthesizes traditional values, modern competencies, and a future-oriented educational approach?
Subsidiary questions include:
What are the strengths and weaknesses of current educational practices in architecture faculties in Iran and Türkiye in terms of the role of professors?
How do students perceive the influence of professors on their learning outcomes, creativity, and professional identity?
What elements should be included in a desirable model of architectural education that integrates knowledge (science), skill (practice), and wisdom (ethics and culture)?

Research Method:
This research adopts a descriptive-analytical methodology, combining both qualitative and quantitative approaches. The study is applied in nature, aiming to provide practical solutions for the improvement of architectural education frameworks.The research process includes the following stages:
Literature Review: Analysis of historical, theoretical, and philosophical foundations of architectural education, with particular attention to the traditional Iranian model and contemporary global trends. This also includes reviewing comparative case studies and educational theory in relation to the teacher-student dynamic.
Theoretical Categorization: Based on the literature, three educational structures were developed for analysis:
Traditional Structure: Based on apprenticeship, master-student relationships, holistic learning.
Contemporary Structure: Technologically integrated, studio-based, globally informed curricula.
Desirable Structure: A hybrid model that incorporates tradition, innovation, ethics, and pragmatism.
Field Data Collection:
Questionnaire Survey: A structured questionnaire was distributed among 194 architecture students in selected Iranian universities and Giliçim University in Istanbul, Türkiye. The questions focused on student experiences, perceptions of professors, and the effectiveness of different teaching methods.
Observation and Semi-structured Interviews (supplementary): Classroom observations and informal interviews were conducted to contextualize the data.
Data Analysis: Quantitative data were analyzed using statistical tools to identify trends, correlations, and significant differences between the two educational contexts.
Qualitative responses and observations were coded and thematically analyzed to enrich the interpretation of findings.

The Most Important Results and Conclusion:
The findings reveal a clear divergence in the perceived and actual role of professors between Iranian and Turkish students. Students from Giliçim University generally reported a more active, engaged, and mentorship-oriented relationship with professors, who not only delivered technical knowledge but also fostered creativity, independence, and ethical considerations. In contrast, Iranian students often described a more hierarchical and less interactive dynamic, where the focus remained on delivering content rather than facilitating a holistic learning process. Iranian students expressed a stronger desire for their professors to act not just as evaluators or content providers, but as guides, role models, and mentors.
From the comparative analysis, several key insights emerged: The importance of balanced teaching, where professors integrate technical skills, theoretical foundations, and critical thinking. The need for institutional support and training for professors to update pedagogical methods. The value of cultural identity and traditional educational values, such as mentorship and moral responsibility, even within modern frameworks.
As a result, a conceptual model for desirable architectural education was proposed. This model emphasizes: A triadic educational goal: Knowledge Skill and Wisdom
The central role of the professor as a facilitator of this triad, who connects past and future, tradition and innovation. A flexible yet rooted curriculum that promotes both academic excellence and cultural continuity. The model is adaptable for architecture faculties across similar contexts, where educational reform must address not only the content of what is taught but who teaches it, how, and with what values.

KEYWORDS