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The Evaluation of Architectural Education in the Scope of Sustainable Architecture

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Abstract

In this study, examining the course contents (syllables) in undergraduate and graduate degrees in the departments of architecture at universities in Turkey, the extent they give place to the sustainability issues has been determined. A literature survey dealing with the topic was made, the studies carried out were analysed, and the current situation was compared with the results of these studies. In conclusion, the courses of “sustainable architecture” content in the course syllabuses have increased, but this improvement has been quite incomplete.

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1. Introduction

The way of our and future generations’ sustaining life conditions in the natural balance of nature or at least protecting the present day situation passes through increasing our environmental sensitivity. The building sector, which consumes a significant part of the world’s existing sources, should also be a pioneer to other disciplines.

The architect who designs the artificial sites we will live in the future should consider building as a part of the natural environment not as a single component. The qualities of the sites we live in are affected by the environmental factors surrounding them. Therefore, it is necessary to make designs that take the natural environment in architectural implementations into account.

Architects face different kinds of user demands in the rapidly developing world in every aspect. Giving the desired replies to the changing demands depends upon the architect’s knowledge and experience. The institutions where the vocational knowledge of an architect is taught are the universities. However, the responsibility of the architects is not only to meet the user desires in the best way but also to be responsible for the social life and local/regional/global issues as an intellectual. In particular, the environmental problems whose increase is triggered considerably by the building activities must be of special interest to the architects. While meeting the user needs, it is also possible to protect the natural sources of the earth and contribute to the protection of the environment. For

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this, it is adequate that the preferences are environmental impact oriented in design and practice. The ability of the architect to make “sustainable” designs that have environmental sensitivity is closely dealt with obtaining knowledge, skill, and capabilities about this subject during the education process.

Therefore, in the education of building environment disciplines, the topic of sustainability with its sociocultural, economic, and environmental aspects is a basic priority while mentioning the dramatic hardships people confront. Today, those who have graduated from the architectural disciplines need multidisciplinary skills, knowledge, and capabilities in the wide range from creative design to detailed theoretical and technical specialty. By researching, implementing, and expanding the new pedagogical methods and proficiency criteria, which will catch up with the distance between sustainability “sciences” and the architectural design, the agenda of architectural education must be reorganized in a way to answer the current problems (Altomonte, 2011).

To improve the comprehension of sustainable approach in environmental design, beyond the technical issues dealt with energy consumption and carbon emission, the principles of resource management, carrying capacity of the planet, cultural and biological variety, and equality between generations are necessary to be adopted in a socially, economically, and ethically applicable design process. Such kinds of values must penetrate into every aspect of architecture job ranging from the idea, building, and management stages of a construction (Altomonte, 2011).

So that the graduates who have started architecture practice can have the necessary skills to be able to answer the market expectations, it seems that the value of adopting the environmental sustainability as an obligatory condition in the syllabus of higher education and vocational proficiency frames seems to be increasing across the world day by day (Altomonte, 2011).

The architectural education has two basic goals:

- To grow the man of future,
- To grow the architect of future.

For this reason, the issue of “sustainability” needs to be adopted as a philosophy of life not as a matter that is mandatory to be handled in the syllabus (Esin, 2011).

In the architectural education, there are various studies that handle sustainability from different aspects (Altomonte, 2011; Esin, 2011; Oktay, 2011; Ciravoğlu, 2011; Karaosman, 2011; Gökmen, Sayar, & Süer, 2007; Bala, 2009; Esin, Coşgun & Oral, 2007). In this study, within the architectural education in Turkey, the extent by which the sustainability topics have been given place in undergraduate and graduate degrees was determined and compared with the previous studies. For this purpose, in the higher education institutions in Turkey, the undergraduate and graduate programs of architecture departments that have students under the body of a different faculty were analyzed in terms of sustainability contented courses. Besides, the graduate theses of sustainability content, which were made in the field of architecture, were analyzed numerically. In interpreting the analyses made, the position of sustainability in architectural education tried to be ascertained.

2. Analysis of architectural education in Turkey in relation to sustainability

In Turkey, the architectural education is given at four-year undergraduate and graduate (master and doctorate) levels. On evaluating master and doctorate education separately, graduate education is composed of 21-credit course, seminars, and thesis study. Although the courses change according to the universities, they are mostly elective courses depending on the student’s interest and thesis study.

2.1. Architectural education and sustainability in undergraduate degree in Turkey

In Turkey, architectural education at undergraduate degree is carried out in 67 universities according to the 2012 data of SSPC (OSYM) (OSYM, 2012). In a study made in 2011, this number was determined as 42. In one-year period, there has been an increase of more than 50% in the number of architectural departments.

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