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Investigating the significance of landscape in designing library by emphasizing on the enhancement of learning

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Abstract Numerous studies have been carried out related to landscape, landscape architecture and urban landscape and it indicates the significance of this issue among designers and scholars. These studies have been dealt with different aspects of landscape and investigated the reciprocal effects between landscape and human. In fact, landscape is recognized as a part of environment; thus as environment and human have a dynamic and reciprocal relationship, landscape has such an affordances. Indeed, landscape can create peace and cheerfulness for users due to its affordances. According to this view, the following research investigates the significance of landscape in designing library and clarifies the different aspects of its influence on the library space. Therefore, the outcomes of this research present a conceptual model from the integration of landscape and library space with the purpose of enhancing learning process. The research method is qualitative and it is based on descriptive–interpretative approach. This study investigates initially the concept of landscape and landscape architecture; then, it deals with the analysis of the relation between landscape and environment. After studying the affordances of environment and landscape from different perspectives, the environment of the library and the circumstances in which users study are analyzed. Finally, the findings of the research are presented based on the investigation and analysis.

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Introduction

Landscape is one of the important and fundamental issues which have been the center of attention recently. Landscape has had a unique position in discussions related to sustainable development in architecture and urban designing and it has been studied largely so that landscape is regarded as one of the crucial elements in urban sustainable development. Additionally, this issue has been studied seriously due to the

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consequences of urban development and environmental problems. In micro scale, landscape represents itself as the architecture of a building and in macro scale, as a city and urban designing. In fact, landscape makes up the major part of human environment and has an impact on the quality of life of people. Landscape is the entrance of nature to people's lives. Thus, with the intention of clarification, this research is intended to investigate the concept of landscape, landscape architecture and different views in this regard. Next, the relation between landscape and architecture is being studied. Then the impacts of landscape, environment, and their elements on individuals are being explored. After investigating the characteristics of library as an educational setting, the environmental factors contributing to successful learning in library are examined. Eventually, the results of this research are concluded based on the nature of landscape and its impacts on library. The research methodology is qualitative and based on descriptive–interpretative approach.

Concept of landscape and landscape architecture

Landscape literally means a picture of nature that can be seen from a distance [1]. In fact, landscape is a part of nature where we settle in and can be perceived due to our senses and this direct relation largely affects quality of our lives [2]. Although the concept of landscape is different for people, human has understood that nature comprises of dependent elements that represents the fundamental aspects of being. Human has rooted in nature and depends on natural forces [3]. Here, landscape means the environment in which nature is dominant [4]. In nowadays world, landscape is a live and dynamic entity which is affected by human, the way he interacts and also association with memories for a long period of time. Thus, landscape is a concrete mental phenomenon [2]. Furthermore, the growth of human mental capabilities is continued from achieving the disperse qualities to more coherent experiences in which components and reciprocal relationships are perceived generally [3]. Landscape has an important role in making relationship between nature and both human and human communities and also has a significant role in deepening this relation [1]. In giving the definition of landscape architecture, different views have been put forward. Some of them have been presented in Table 1.

In addition, the three-dimensional and environmental field of landscape design requires the designer to produce beautiful, practically useful, and well-functioning end products [5].

In a general sense, landscape architecture can be introduced as a designing and planning of open spaces around human dwellings in different scales and based on their cultural perspectives [6]. Landscape architecture, with the purpose of organizing environment desirably, deals with designing open and outer spaces [7]. To put it simply, landscape architecture is the art and science of organizing land, spaces, and the elements on them to be used by human in an appropriate, healthy and pleasant way [8]. Accordingly, designed environment from landscape architecture should be efficient, beautiful, safe and enjoyable [9]. Indeed, landscape design makes meaningful contributions to culture [10].

Analyzing the presented definitions by landscape architects is indicative of the great closeness of the purpose of this field

with that of an architecture in creating and physical organizing of human spaces, although the techniques and tools for achieving these goals are different [11]. In fact, one of the main purposes of landscape designing is integrating human technology (building) and natural environment [12], although natural environment and its elements, especially land, have received much more attention [11]. The main purposes of landscape architecture have been summarized in three esthetic, functional and cultural clarification aspects [1] in which two factors of human and nature along with their elements are obviously in a reciprocal relationship [11]. The elements of Landscape architecture can always be found in a complete and harmonious urban planning and a lot of stimulus plans (infrastructures) are the projects of landscape architecture and vice versa [13]. Landscape designing includes both visual aspects and biological, hydrological and geological concepts; therefore, the greeneries of cities is one of the main parameters of urban sustainability. Thus, the instructions of landscape architecture, as an integrated part of designing framework, should be considered in advanced or in parallel with designing process [14].

Landscape and environment

Environment can be attributed implicitly to everything around us, whether man-made or natural [15]. Landscape is part of an environment which is a place of our current actions and we can interact with it at the present moment [1]. In fact, environment and nature are the main contexts of landscape architecture [16]. One of the differences between environment and landscape is that “landscape”, as one of the facts of daily life, has a function and flexibility which is more understandable in comparison with environment [1]. Considering landscape as a phenomenon, one of the factors in its perceiving is finding out the structure and understanding the principles among its components [17]. Accordingly, it can be mentioned that landscape architecture is the art of integration the form of land, water, plant, buildings, flooring and climate with each other to make a pleasant outer space [18].

The main emphasis of landscape architecture is placed on the elements of land in outer and public spaces [7]. Therefore, landscape architecture deals with all types of outer spaces, large or small, urban or rural, by using hard and soft materials. In fact, a designer of landscape design must consider the relation among the building and surrounding environments and be aware of the climate impacts and the relation among land, plants, water and building materials in order to create a landscape fit to natural environment by human [12].

The comprising elements of landscape can be classified as follows [19]:

- *Physical elements*: the elements comprise context of space and include artificial elements (body, flooring, furniture) and natural ones (water, vegetation, topography).
- *Non-physical elements*: climatic factors (temperature, radiation, wind, humidity) and non-climatic factors (light, smelling, noise, weather).
- *Human elements*: human factors, individuals and their activities in space are integrated parts of space (type, location, shape, required facilities).

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