

Experiencing The Place, Experimental Learning At Architecture Studio 4

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Abstract

This study aims at presenting the study of experiencing place conducted with undergraduates studying architecture within the scope of the course of Architecture Studio 4. The undergraduates were asked to design a culture street in their campus. They were assigned to design 40 rooms for faculty members, 10 rooms for student clubs and societies, book selling space and seminar hall for 50 people. Before the design, an experiential study with design area and users was set up with undergraduates. The undergraduates were separated into two groups. They were given 45 minutes. They moved as groups in given time and tried to fulfill the 15 duties. The duties were determinant in making the participants communicate with users and determining the shortcomings of the place. It was targeted to examine the participants' experiences with place-human and the relationship of final product. Within this context, this study was organized under the title of architect-design-user relation. It was tried to reveal the connections between findings-experience and product.

Introduction

According to Lefebvre, three moments effect the process of place production. Perceived, designed and experienced (Lefebvre, 1974, pp. 68,231). Our experiences play a major role in making connections with the place. Therefore, the architects try to connect with the place they are designing, experience it and discover the clues about that place before they actualize their designs. The first input of design is the subject of project. Experiencing the design in everyday life is an important start for the designer to obtain the project inputs at the start-up stage. It is necessary to ask some questions about the users and place while starting the design. Who will use the designed places? What are their beliefs, habits and cultural characteristics? What are the climatic and topographical characteristics of the place? Etc... . Sri Nammuni developed an alternative architecture education approach for the undergraduates to realize themselves and have used it since 1981. This method can relieve the undergraduates from cloning approach according to Sri Nammuni. It aims at raising architects thinking in their own ways rather than their teachers'. This method is called as Moratuwa Experiment (Dayaratne, 2013, p. 317). As an educator taking place in this program in his study years, Ranjith Dayarathne conducted an experiment in Bahrain inspiring from Moratuwa experiment. He thinks that architecture is a place enabling acts (Dayaratne, 2013, p. 317).

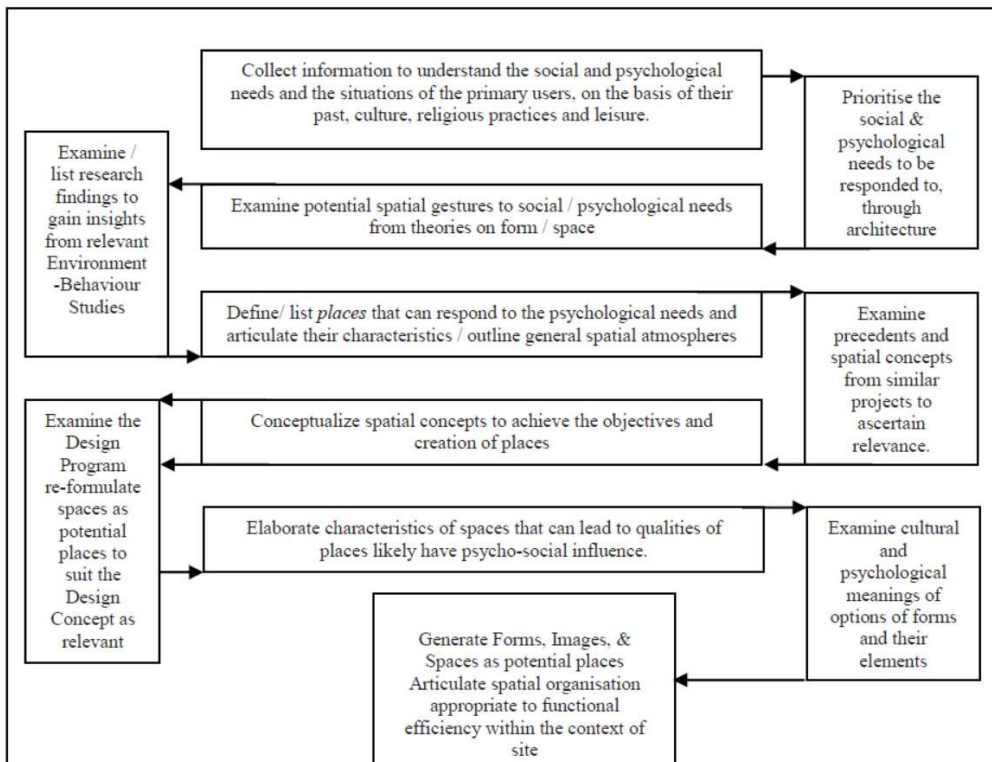


Table-1 Dayaratne's design sequence (Dayaratne, 2013)

Dayaratne uses the results obtained from the sources by developing strategies for space-place connections.

According to Bader, most people aren't aware of the architectural objects around them in everyday life. The integration of everyday life and architecture becomes possible through cultural studies and philosophical perspectives. Bader proposes a model for the architectural experience in everyday life (perception, attention, awareness). The model uses the terminology of Aran Gurwitsch (theme, thematic field and marginal consciousness). Bader designed a everyday life workshop for the model. Each participant reported their experiences in four different areas (street, faculty building, an area neighboring the campus, and the way back to home). They focused on especially the architecture and defined their experiences. Within this context, experience related part of everyday life was listed and grouped (Bader, 2015, pp. 244-267).

Rice problematizes the Federation Square experience. According to Rice, Tafuri's just doing architecture and Allan's position allow us to engage with the concept of experience as a way of discussing the renewed status of the built work (Rice, 2005, p. 324).

In architecture education, workshops conducted through methods such as experience of visual perception (Kornienkoa, et al., 2015) and mimesis are used (Yıldırım, et al., 2012). Published under the editorship of Karina Van Herck and moderated by Lieven De Caeter, in a session participated by Judy Attfield, Mary McLeod, Bart Verschaffel, Hilde Heynen, Gülsüm

Baydar, Irene Cieraad and Eric De Kuyper, the relationship between the woman and home was discussed through meaning and experience. According to the article, the relationship between woman and home is based on experience (Herck, 2002).

Used in the experience study of visual perception, Bee (Built environment education) model presents three basic approaches. Exploration /Sensation, Sketch/Design, Presentation /Discussion (Uttkea, 2012, p. 7) . The first part of the model, exploration /sensation, should involve experience. Experience is the only way to develop the relationship between the architect and the area that will be designed. Within this context, the study of place experience recommends and conducts a game that will enable students to develop bounds with the place based on Sri Nammuni's Moratuwo Experiment, Ranjith Dayarathne's design sequence, Bader's experience study, and Uttkea's Built environment education model.

Place Experience Study/ Experience Game: Aim, Method

Place experience study was conducted with undergraduates taking the course of Studio 4 at KTO Karatay University, Faculty of Fine Arts and Design, Department of Architecture. They were asked to design a culture street in KTO Karatay University campus. They were assigned to design 40 rooms for faculty members, 10 rooms for student clubs and societies, book selling space and seminar hall for 50 people.

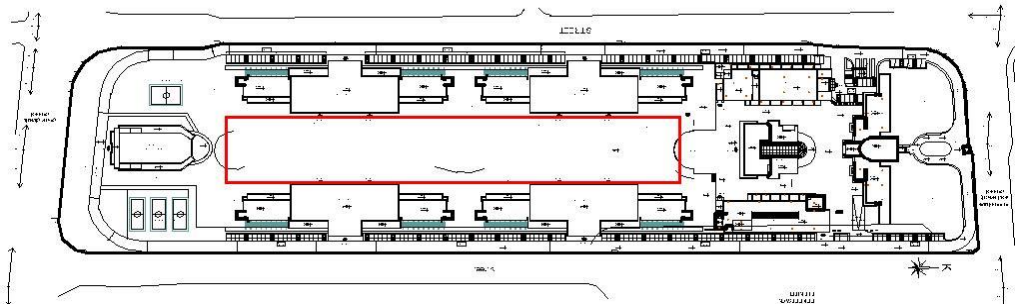


Figure 1. Layout plan of the area to be designed

Before the design, a game that would enable undergraduates to establish a bound with the place. The undergraduates were separated into two groups. They were given task lists to be completed in 45 minutes. The first group to complete the list would become the winner. The tasks are listed below:

1. Count the number of steps on the stairs in the school.
2. Take a selfie with Asst. Prof. Ayşegül Tereci.
3. Write a song involving architecture, project and culture street lasting two and a half minutes, and sing it with a chorus composed of 5 individuals. Also, record it.
4. Order tea for 5 friends in tea house. Drink your tea there and obtain information about the workers of tea house.
5. Take a photo of a designed object in the building. Get information about the designer.
6. Make a list of the books about architecture in one shelf of the library.
7. Count how many trees there are in the campus.
8. List where the teachers in the department are from.
9. Walk around the campus and determine how many worship place there are.

10. Find Mr. Ahmet in IT department. Learn the question and answer it.
11. How many white stools are there in the Department of Architecture?
13. Find where the previous janitor now works.
14. How many meals are there in the menu of Lavazza (café in the campus)?
15. What is the name of secretary of Faculty of Social Sciences?
16. Submit a petition to the Deanery about the difficulties of architecture education.

The undergraduates completed the tasks in 45 minutes. Within this context, this game aimed at: increasing their awareness about the place, making them realize the roles while designing the environment, making them realize their rights and responsibilities, making them realize the relationship between the building and its surroundings, making them research how to make the place a social space, making them work in groups, making them realize that architecture is a branch designing the social life, making them determine the needs of users, and making them communicate with the actors of the place. This study aimed at examining the relationship between the place experience and the objectives.

The Relationship between Architect, Design, and User

When the relationship between the architect and the design is examined, it can be seen that experience has an important place. When a project subject is given, the architect imagines himself/herself in that place and develops empathy. This process steers the concept and project process. Therefore, the gains of the architect obtained through presence in the place are the indicator of a metaphysical dimension in design education. Considering three basic approaches (Exploration /Sensation, Sketch/Design, Presentation /Discussion) proposed by Uttkea in Bee (Built Environment Education) (Uttkea, 2012), Exploration and sensation involve an active experience of the place. Awareness of architectural elements such as smells, surface structures, shapes, textures and materials is increased. The project process was started with exploration and sensation as in Built Environment Education program. With the place experience study, the green texture, building surfaces, smells, surrounding worship places, social facilities, café, and ground texture were tried to be discovered. At the same time, the undergraduates faced with the user profile and needs by interacting with the actors of the place. They especially had a chance to meet the people who use the university as a place during their working hours. They learned about their cultural codes, and become sensitive about the necessity of designing a place in accordance with the needs. (The workers in tea house spent 9 hours a day in a space of 2 m². This situation worried them. Moreover, they told about the difficulties in reaching Mr. Ahmet in IT department.)

Set up for the undergraduates to comprehend the social dimension of architecture, place experience study led students to assess the program during the beginning process of design. After learning that the tea house workers had to spend their days in a space of 2 m², they wanted to add a more comfortable space for those workers. The undergraduates were both the users and the designers. After the place experience study, they indicated their own needs by proposing some places such as reading area, exhibition area, and movie theater (Table 1). Along with the technical information, the undergraduates added photos that indicate bounds with the place on the environmental analysis sheets.

| Program | Program Suggestions |
|--------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Rooms for Faculty Members (40) | Terrace for Faculty Members |

| | |
|-------------------|-----------------|
| Seminar Hall (50) | Tea House |
| Bookstore | Reading Area |
| | Movie Theater |
| | Exhibition Area |
| | Outdoor Studios |
| | Cafe |
| | Library |
| | Snack Bars |
| | Concert Area |

Table 1. Current Program and Program Suggestions

| STRATEGIC TASKS | SCENARIO | OBJECTIVE |
|--|---|---|
| 1. Count the number of steps on the stairs in the school. | Counting the steps of a total of 13 vertical axels, 2 vertical circulations and 2 fire-escape stairs in three buildings of the studio campus. | Examination of the current vertical circulation solution in the building, design of vertical circulation for the program. |
| 2. Take a selfie with Asst. Prof. Ayşegül Tereci. | Firstly, the undergraduates should find out which courses Asst. Prof. Ayşegül Tereci instructs. Then they will find the studio and ask permission for a selfie. They will find a suitable place for selfie. | The relationship between the vertical circulation and studio in the current building. |
| 3. Write a song involving architecture, project and culture street lasting two and a half minutes, and sing it with a chorus composed of 5 individuals. Also, record it. | Inquiring music using a mobile phone and writing lyrics. | Musicalization of experience |
| 4. Order tea for 5 friends in tea house. Drink your tea there and obtain information about the workers of tea house. | Giving tea house a place in plan plane. Observation of the conditions of tea house workers. | Awareness of needs of place users from different cultures |

Table 2 Strategic Tasks, Scenario, and Objectives (1)

| STRATEGIC TASKS | SCENARIO | OBJECTIVE |
|---|--|--|
| 5. Take a photo of a designed object in the building. Get information about the designer. | Finding a designed object in the Faculty of Fine Arts, and getting information about its designer. | Evaluation of the relationship between object and place |
| 6. Make a list of the books about architecture in one shelf of the library. | Journey to the books in the library | Awareness of architecture books |
| 7. Count how many trees there are in the campus. | Counting all of the trees in the campus | The relationship between the green and the current building |
| 8. List where the teachers in the department are from. | Making a list of all the teachers in the department through internet. | Determination of the user profile |
| 9. Walk around the campus and determine how many worship place there are. | Experiencing the campus by walking | The relationship between the environment and the campus. Bus stops, intersections, roads, streets. |

Table 3 Strategic Tasks, Scenario, and Objectives (2)

| STRATEGIC TASKS | SCENARIO | OBJECTIVE |
|--|---|--|
| 10. Find Mr. Ahmet in IT department. Learn the question and answer it. | Finding Mr. Ahmet in IT, and asking him what the question is. The question is how many parts there are in a computer. Looking up the answer online. Mr. Ahmet will tell the answer and where he is from to the first group to find him. | Experiencing the place through the IT department |

Table 4 Strategic Tasks, Scenario, and Objectives (4)

| STRATEGIC TASKS | SCENARIO | OBJECTIVE |
|--|--|--|
| 11. How many white stools are there in the Department of Architecture? | Finding the janitor in the Faculty of Fine Arts, and learning how many white stools there are in the Department of Architecture. White stools are used as a base for models during jury process. | Experiencing the relationship between object, user and the place |
| 13. Find where the previous janitor now works. | Learning where the previous janitor works now. Finding the Personnel office, and find it out. If one of the students met him before, he/she would already know it. | User awareness |
| 14. How many meals are there in the menu of Lavazza (café in the campus)? | Counting the meals in the menu of Lavazza | Realizing the different 102 meals in the menu |
| 15. What is the name of secretary of Faculty of Social Sciences? | Looking up the name of the secretary of Social Sciences Faculty online. | User awareness |
| 16. Submit a petition to the Deanery about the difficulties of architecture education. | Writing an appropriate petition, and delivering it to the Deanery of Faculty of Fine Arts and Design | Awareness of scale in place |

Table 5 Strategic Tasks, Scenario, and Objectives (5)

Strategic tasks, scenarios and objectives of place experience study are summarized in Tables 2, 3, 4, and 5. The tables are the lists of possible scenarios of strategic tasks and the objectives to be achieved.

Beginning the design is a difficult process for architects. After the preliminary examinations and environment analysis, the first idea and concept predestinate the design. Along with the

technical work, adding its essence to a design makes designing both a scientific and an artistic field. The place experience study is also considered to help students develop concepts.

Conclusion

Conducted before designing a culture street within the scope of Studio 4 course in the department of Architecture, Faculty of Fine Arts and Design, KTO Karatay University, the study of place experience is much like an experimental and experiential study rather than making definite judgments. The undergraduates were taught that they could obtain necessary clues for the design by experiencing the place. Within this context, place-object, place-scale, place-user, and place-program relations were assessed through experiencing. Moreover, the relation with the place was strengthened through an entertaining game.

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