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THE ROLE OF URBAN DESIGN PRINCIPLES IN THE ENCOURAGEMENT OF CITIZENSHIP SKILLS LEARNING IN LEISURE TIMES

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Abstract

This paper aims to determine the role of urban design principles in the encouragement of citizens to learn the needed skills in their leisure times. When looking at cities from a gender perspective, one of the main differences affecting the use of urban space is in terms of female and male care-giving roles and responsibilities. Due to the gender-specific division of labor, women do most of the direct care-giving work within families and communities. As such, women are central to urban planning and development, both as key users of urban space in their role as home managers, and as key producers of residential environments in their role as community leaders and initiators of neighborhood networks. The current development of urban infrastructure and the built environment needs to be redesigned to promote greater gender equality in the use and benefits of urban space. Many of the past and present trends in urban planning and development reflect the male perspective regarding the role of women as primary caregivers. Viewing families, communities, towns, cities, and regions from a gender perspective requires a radical shift both in thinking and in actions. In doing so, we identified four urban design principles necessary for developing Iranian metropolises into learning cities: A) encouraging citizens to learn; B) encouraging citizens to transmit urban principles to others; C) encouraging citizens to comply with urban rules and regulations; D) encouraging creativity. Then, we identified six educational parameters to be used in Iranian metropolises: e-learning, public traffic behavior, respect for the environment, respect for urban behavior, respect for the safety, and respect for urban identity. We also reviewed the successful cases executed in different parts of the world. Finally, we investigated a few Iranian metropolises in terms of satisfaction of their citizens. The results indicated that the parameters of "respect for urban behavior" and "respect for the safety" with index of 43 were in a very poor level. The parameters of "e-learning" with index of 66 and "respect for the environment" with index of 51 were in a poor level. The parameter of "public traffic behavior" with index of 50 was in average level. And the parameter of "respect for urban identity" with index of 40 (35.7%) was in a good level. The results of this study denote a poor performance in urban design system, which calls for a reform of urban design and architecture.

Keywords: *Learning city, citizen, citizenship education, satisfaction of citizens*

1. Introduction

Education has always been an essential part of human life. With man becoming familiar with new concepts, the role of education has become more important. In the modern age, teaching and learning are regarded as essential cultural activities which are done in a cultural context. This cultural activity will normally produce a cultural product. Today, there exists a powerful interconnection between science and human life. With science becoming an integral part of every aspect of human life, education plays a vital role in the modern life.

In the modern age, most debate about citizenship is somehow related to the definition of T.H [1]. He defines citizenship as full membership of individual in the society. In this definition, the position of individual is independent of his relative value in economic process. Therefore, while citizenship is a non-economic concept, it directly affects the social structure [2].

Yang argues that citizenship is a set of intentional communications between individuals who avoid isolation and seek a social life. Citizenship is some kind of social contract which aims to promote social welfare and security. It defines how the members of a society should behave to achieve this goal [3-4].

Based on this definition, necessary educations must be provided to citizens in order to have an advanced city with intelligent and efficient citizens. Citizenship education has political, social and cultural dimensions. In political dimension, education should make citizens responsible for the interests of their society and people. Social dimension refers to development of mutual relationship between members of the society. In cultural dimension, education attempts to make citizens aware of cultural values which distinguish them from other nations [5,14]. In today's world, citizenship skills constitute a major part of skills needed by citizens. Given the increased population of cities, active participation of citizens in urban activities and programs is the key to development of a sustainable city [6,17].