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A house of art and music for Enhancing the interaction between the youth in Rasht

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ABSTRACT

Nowadays, with the development of technology and the changes in some aspects of life and culture of community and as its result, the increase in individualism, paying attention to public physical spaces as the spaces which can be a place of social and local interaction for different types of activities and also be a proper place for all groups of society, seems necessary. One of the most important characteristics of public spaces is their sociability and in other words, it is to create the opportunities for social interaction. On the other hand, from the past to present, art and music have been of the relaxing and refreshing elements and even they have been used to treat diseases. Now, unfortunately, more than half of the young population suffers from depression in Iran. Gatherings of people, especially young people, in the form of art groups or gatherings of those who interested in art, can strengthen the social relations and increase the interaction between them, but, it seems that existing public spaces (especially in Rasht) don't provide required opportunities for social interaction for young people. So, in this study, it is tried to achieve the indicators to design the sociable space for the youth and to use them in designing the house of art and music. In this study, the sociability of the architectural spaces for the youth was examined theoretically and experimentally. After reviewing the literature, the research has been firstly started by studying the library documents and reviewing the theoretical basis on the sociability of the space on the one hand and studying the specific psychological and behavioral characteristics of the youth on the other hand. Then, after achieving the indicators affecting the sociability of the space, the research has been completed by hypothesis-testing, field observations, interview and fulfillment of the questionnaire. Finally, the indicators affecting the sociability of the space were identified and prioritized. It was seen that some physical characteristics of the space including security and comfort, variety of activities, readability and visibility and etc. have greater influence on the sociability of the space used by young people.

Key words: sociability, public space, the youth.

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INTRODUCTION

From the past to present, art and music have been of the relaxing and refreshing elements and even they have been used to treat diseases. Now, in Iran, the youth population is accounted for a large proportion of society and unfortunately, according to the statistics, 60% of them suffer from depression. A part of this depression can be due to non-use of art and music; being deprived of art in life may be due to the lack of proper space for people's participation in society and artistic associations. Gatherings of people, especially young people, in the form of art groups or gatherings of those who interested in art, can strengthen the social relations and increase the interaction between them. From the past to present, art and music have been of the relaxing and refreshing elements and even they have been used to treat diseases.

The impact of environment on the health has been considered from the era of ancient Persia and even it had been considered in ancient societies of China, Egypt and Greece. In several centuries, patients were treated in the temples of the god of treatment and also, in the nature with dramatic art and music. The issue of the interaction between the humans and space is one of the basic items of designing. In Iran, the society is facing with the growing wave of young people and tendency of individualism is becoming more visible in them and one of its reason can be depression due to the lack of joy and entertainment and also due to the lack of the spaces which can provide joy, happiness and entertainment by creating proper

social relations. According to the statistics, in Iran, 60% of the youth suffer from depression and this is the cause of their despair about the future. Many people don't consider the lack of happiness as a problem, so, creating an atmosphere of joy and excitement to reduce the concerns has been forgotten.

Another factor for living happily is to increase social interaction and communication with others. In public space, there is an opportunity to explore some social boundaries and some unformulated interaction can be happened and the people can interact with each other in a new social environment. A basic condition for a public space to be considered as an urban space is that social interaction and conflict happen in it. So, creating a space based on interaction to attract the users to have long engagement in such space can promote their social relations and also, can be effective in making the space dynamic.

"With the review of social interaction patterns and the capabilities of the built environment, it is found that built environment affects the human social process as much as the environment design and the materials of its components affect the communication channels of the members in each behavioral loop" [1].

"That atmosphere is considered lively where people come in arbitrarily and spend a few moments there during a day. In order to attract people to specific space and then, to keep them there, there must be firstly attractive factors and elements in it and also, people have no problems to stay there and they are completely satisfied" [2].

"The existence of environmental capabilities and qualities for perceiving the space and as its result, for the pause and attendance of people in urban areas leads to see and be seen at a low level and also at the level beyond the social interactions and relationships" [3].

People living in Gilan have had excellent culture from a very long time ago. According to Khomamizadeh "they knew themselves and tried to be themselves". These characteristics have caused that artistic and cultural spaces would be welcomed by the people but there has been lack of cultural spaces. So, to resolve this problem, considering a space which can meet this need seems necessary. In this regard, the art and music house of Rasht in a site with cultural land use, located at the corner of Tohid Boulevard- Tohid Bridge intersection, was considered to enrich the level of art education in addition to be used as a center for gathering different art groups in the province. Also, the services such as museum and galleries are provided in it. The aims which can be followed in this complex are educational, research, information and leisure aims.

RESEARCH METHODS

According to the studies on the characteristics of the youth and their social and psychological needs related to public environment and spaces and also physical-spatial characteristics affecting the sociability of the space, we found some indicators, now to examine the factors affecting the desirability or non-desirability of the space and the indicators affecting the sociability of the space in the view of adolescents, the targeted group will be examined to prove the research hypothesis and finally to prioritize the criteria to achieve the sociability of the space used by the youth using the survey method.

To evaluate the indicators affecting the sociability of the space used by the youth and to collect the data, observation, interview and questionnaire will be used. To analyze the data, correlational research will be used to examine the type and intensity of the relationship between the research variables.

Research variables are classified into two groups: independent variables and dependent variables. The only dependent variable of this research is "the sociability of the space used by the youth". In this research, it is tried to measure the variations of dependent variable and the correlations and relationships between the dependent and independent variables by examining the variations in the independent variables.

The variations of the independent variables are measured in field study and the research hypothesis is evaluated. These variables are: access and relationship, readability and visibility, security and comfort, visual charm and beauty, good facilities (furniture, etc.), compliance with the users' needs, natural landscape, light, active doings (walking, talking. ..), inactive doing (seeing and watching others), providing privacy and territory, cleanliness and hygiene, color and texture of materials, components and decorations, space of pausing, gathering and sitting, symbolic perception and sense of place, smell, sound and etc.(to stimulate the senses), variety of activities, the identity and the collective memory, coordinating the services according to the views of the users (type and style of music and art), modernization.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Observation method and questionnaire are used to measure the variables. These variables are qualitative variables and since they cannot be measurable, they must be converted to quantitative variables. Since Likert scale is one of the most common tools of data collection in survey research and it consists of a set of

targeted questions which examine the respondents' opinions and visions, it was used to quantify the qualitative variables and to evaluate them through the questionnaire. Quantifying the qualities requires the recognition of sub-indicators and the factors involved in each indicator so that the quantitative concepts hidden in them will be recognized and calculated. These factors are determined with literature review and with the use of conceptualization process, which is, in fact, to create the abstract concept to understand a fact. A question corresponded to each of the studied variables arises.

Accordingly, the indicators are provided in a form of a questionnaire with 36 questions about 21 independent variables and also dependent variable (sociability of the space for the youth), Likert scale was used in the questionnaire and the answers of 33 questions were valued in 5 groups: very little, little, moderate, much, very much. Given that the data obtained from the questions with Likert scale, are of ordinal data, suitable statistical tests must be used to analyze the data. Three questions were about the personal information of the respondent. To verify the reliability of the questionnaire, Cronbach's alpha was estimated using SPSS software. Firstly, 20 questionnaires were used and then with the calculated Cronbach's alpha (0.9), the reliability of the questionnaire was verified as desirable questionnaire.

The art and music house of Rasht will be designed with the approach of increasing social relations between the youth and the research studies will be done in Rasht. The population of the research includes the youth living in the Rasht town, so the questionnaires are filled out by 80 young people in Rasht. So, the population of this study included the youth (female and male) living in the Rasht town. 55% of them were female and 45% of them were male and both groups were between 18 to 30 years old.

Location of the design

Climate

The climate of the coast of Caspian Sea is called Caspian temperate. It is surrounded in the form of strip by Alborz Mountains and Caspian Sea. The main climatic characteristics of the region, humidity, moderation of temperature and precipitation are high.

Generally, the temperature is not variable due to its proximity to the sea and the temperature changes less from one area to another one. Also, the difference between the temperature degrees of day and night isn't significant. The mean annual temperature is 17.16 C and for the warmest months of the year, it was measured 38 C. But, totally, the range of changes is nearly small (Master plan of Rasht Town, 2006, p. 277)

According to the climatic characteristics of Rasht Town, following notes must be considered:

1. The normal flow of air or drafts are important to reduce the moisture content and to create natural ventilation. Given the high temperature in summer and high humidity, if mechanical ventilation systems are not used, tolerating the air temperature will be very difficult in summer.
2. To cope with high rainfall and to reduce the impact of crooked rain on the buildings, the direction of prevailing winds in winter must be recognized and the surfaces exposed to wind and rain can be minimized by designing, landscaping and placing the building correctly.
3. Creating open architecture on all sides (except for the West and Northwest) and using wide but narrow and long plan is highly efficient in using the wind in the creation of natural ventilation and repelling the moisture.
4. East-west stretch of building can provide the maximum use of the sun light in the spaces from the South.
5. It is better to use light construction materials with low thermal capacity, because the daily temperature fluctuation is low and heat storage is not important. Additionally, heavy construction materials reduce greatly the effects of air conditioning.
6. Due to the high volume of rainfall, the sloping roofs are often built with the steep slope.

It should be noted that some of mentioned notes can be implemented in the plan with the use of other ways. For example, the roof with low slope can be used and in this case, more measures should be considered to seal the roof.

Locating

Preservation and survival of any land use depend on the use of it (Rangzan, Mokhtarpour, Taghizadeh, 2009, p.30). This is very important in locating the cultural complexes which are designed for maximum use and utilization (both in terms of duration and extent of use). So, the more interaction of these complexes with the citizens is necessary. According to above, correct location of the complex becomes increasingly important. So, the aim of this part of study is to select and introduce the site according to the criteria affecting the location of cultural centers, including art and music house.

a. Factors affecting the location

1. Compatibility

The most important feature of a public space is that the residents and citizens use it. The complex with cultural land use should be naturally able to spontaneously attract the residents for leisure, celebrations,

mourning and holidays. So, it should be located in a place in which this feature is easily and always considered as the essence of it. Thus, about the compatible and incompatible land uses, proximity to surrounding land uses is examined.

Compatible land uses are those land uses that proximity to them is not conflict with the studied land use and sometimes, they are beneficial and lead the citizens to use the studied land use. Some of these land uses are streets and tourism and shopping squares, parks and urban green spaces, tourism centers and malls. The less the distance between the cultural centers and park is, the more appropriate, the cultural center is. One of the main criteria in locating the cultural center is the proximity to educational centers (high school, secondary school and higher education's) which are the main users of cultural centers (Lotfi, Irankhahi, Dashti Brenjeh and Sadeghi, 2010, p.60).

Incompatible land uses are those land uses that their proximity to cultural center is inappropriate or it interferes with the characteristics of the cultural center and because of them, people don't use the cultural center more and if they are placed surround the cultural center, they make problems for it. Some of these land uses are administrative centers and axes, industrial and semi-industrial centers and axes, airports and crowded centers.

b. Suggested site

Suggested site is located in District 1, northwest side of the Tohid Boulevard- Isfahan Boulevard intersection, in following aerial imagery, suggested site is shown. According to the conducted examination, the land use of elementary school is not correctly located in the master plan of Rasht Town and cultural, sport and recreational land uses were neglected in this area in the Master plan.



Map of Rasht Town (Master plan of Rasht, 2006)

Given that there are attractive land uses such as shopping centers and restaurants surrounding the site, with selecting this site, the potential of the area can be used to attract the population. Suggested site is examined as the site for the art and music house in terms of the factors of location as follows.

c. Examination of suggested site in terms of the factors of location

In this part, the weaknesses and strengths of the site are examined. Its positive characteristics are:

1. Pirbazar tourism axis is located beside the site with at least 6 km length and also, with diverse land uses including restaurants and traditional and modern gardens and also, it was defined as the most important tourism axis in the Rasht master plan.
2. Tohid park was established as a behavioral setting area for the youth in Golsar region
3. Since suggested site is located in the distance of 100 meters to Pirbazar tourism axis, it has an appropriate access and also it is far from the bustle of traffic and noise on special occasions and holidays.
4. There is parking in different directions and also it is close to the site.
5. Fire and police station are located near the site with the distance less than 3 minutes.
6. Proximity to urban rapid transit networks in the East and South of complex
7. There is a possibility of pedestrian access from the South and East of the land
8. There are no barriers for the site on both Southern and Eastern sides, so, it can completely use the sunlight during the daylight hours and there is no barrier to see and shade.
9. Since there are no barriers for the site on both Southern and eastern sides, the façade of building can be displayed.
10. Since 1. The population of Golsar always use Tohid park and 2. The population of Golsar and Pirbazar pass the site and Tohid Bridge and 3. There are high density residential neighborhoods near the site, there is proper population distribution in necessary hours of the day.

11. No noise limitation and visual pollution caused by garbage, industries, public terminals and etc. were observed around the site.

Some of its negative characteristics are as follows:

1. Suggested site is not considered as urban free land and purchasing it to build the complex requires financial resources.
2. Pirbazar old context has no appropriate view and its reconstruction depends on the country's economic problems and the urban planning.
3. Pirbazar street- Tohid Boulevard intersection is not still widened.
4. Due to the high cost of land in Golsar Region and high density, if constructing tall buildings is not controlled, visual and climatic barriers will be highly influential in the design.

Site analysis

Some of the issues related to the site were examined in the part of location. In this section, the site is examined in terms of possible locations to access the site, the views to the site, the views of the site, appropriate placement of the building on the land, vegetation and elevation levels. The area of the site is equal to 17,879 square meters (considering the margin of the river).

A. Proximity

Suggested site is limited by residential land use in North and Zarjub River in West. It is also limited by Tohid Boulevard in South and Tohid bridge in East.

B. Access

There is a main boulevard on the eastern side of land that any type of access (footpath, road, services) to site can be placed. But on the southern side, given that there is a bridge, there is no possibility of making any basic access. Also in the south-west corner of the site, given that there is a bridge- Boulevard intersection, creating the main access is not possible. As a result, the main entrances to the site should be located in the northern half of the eastern side. However, for ease of access to the site, multiple pedestrian entries can be considered in the southern and eastern parts. But it should be noted that the main entrance on foot (a temporary stop place for cars to mount and dismount and a place to welcome special people) and all of the roads should be located in the northern half of the eastern side.

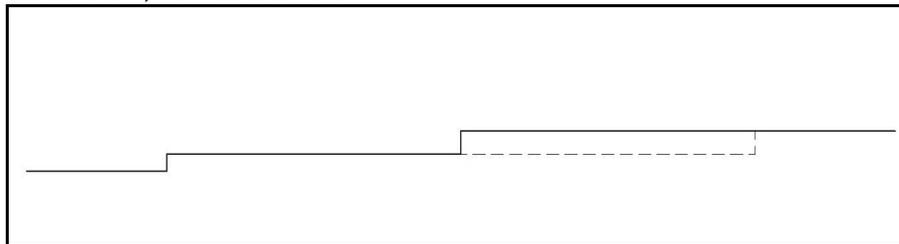
C. View and landscape

Different views of site are shown in following figure. The prospects of building from out of the site should be paid special attention in the design of building, because a part of the mental image formed in the mind, depends on the original views of building. The views from the inside out are very important in shaping the spaces that need the perspectives. The river located in the west of the site and the green space located in the south of the site (the southern part of the bridge) are two suitable landscapes for this purpose.

(D) Elevation levels

There is altitude difference of about 4 meters from East to West. This means on the eastern and southern sides (along access routes), the site is at the level of the streets and on the western side (Riverside) it is below the street level for about 4 meters. This difference is in the form of the trench and is created from the center of site. The following figure shows a cross-section of the site.

River, western half of site, eastern half of site



Cross-section of site (source: author)

Implementation of design strategies of social relation approach on final design

To design a complex with social relation approach, the interest and needs of the group who will use the complex are considered as the top priority to attract them to the place. According to this description, a questionnaire was provided to identify the young people's interests and needs.

Some of the strategies have been used in the design are as follows:

Security and comfort: with the use of open plan, the buildings are not connected to each other rigidly and it is tried to prevent the creation of extreme closeness.

Readability and visibility: with the use of transparent latticed shell covering the entire volume, porosity and transparency are created in the body. For workshops and many spaces used for group work, some measures including terrace and veranda are considered so that trainees will enjoy the open space and the landscape and the pedestrian can watch the activities done in the complex and be willing to enter it.

The dome of the complex and the element located at the beginning of the entrance enhance the readability and visibility.

Creating space for sitting, pausing and gathering: the central lobby and the lobby of each building have made it possible.

Natural landscape and view: designing suitable site, cleaning and restoring Zarjub River and building the ponds and fountains have made it possible.

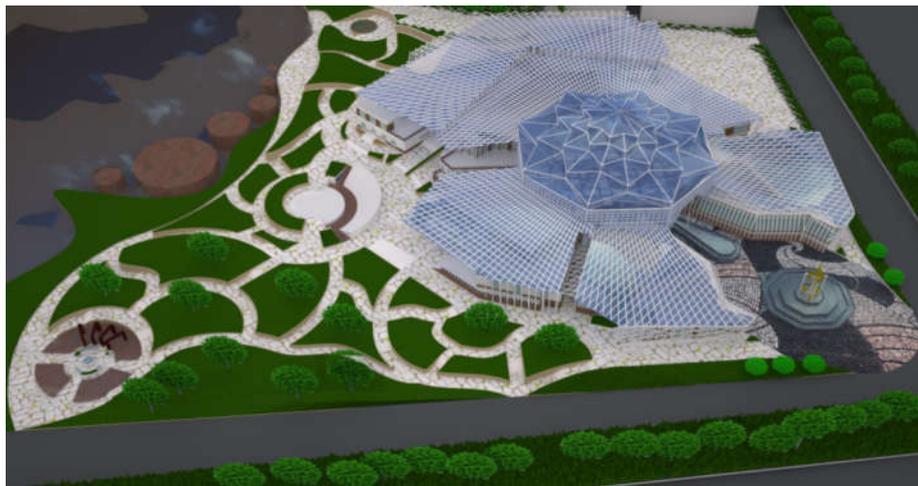
Identity and the collective memory: using symbolic elements such the element placed in the entrance including music sheet leaf as a symbol of greenery Gilan, paisley form of leaf as a symbol of art and placement of these elements out of the frame as a symbol of young people which are not enclosed in any form, laminated form that its wicker mode is a symbol of traditional industries of Gilan and disorganization in some areas reflects the excitement of young people.

Active doings (walking, talking, etc.): considering open spaces for eating and talking and anticipating the possibility of walking, standing and watching, listening and talking and etc. with others in the space.

Young people have different characteristics, but one of the common characteristic of them is the passions of youth that because of it, they can not be confined within a rule or law. Also, they have a certain flexibility that they can be guided in the right way with this characteristic. So, with different volumes connected to each other, this characteristic and process of gathering young people will be shown.

According to the questionnaire, the majority of young people interested in modern architecture in harmony with the climate and traditional architecture. This expectation is answered using inclined latticed shell consisted of self cleaning glass, composites and the slopes used in the dome.

Also, it is tried to place various volumes in the center and to link them in the form of octagonal, which is one of the elements of traditional architecture of Iran. The pilots, porches and distances created between the volumes are used for air conditioning which is proportional with the climate of Gilan.



Location of land uses

1. The glass-walled gallery and music buildings are placed at the beginning of the complex so that the pedestrians can watch what happens inside the building and also, they are motivated to enter the building.
2. Given that artistic doings need to space with proper view and landscape, the galleries and artistic workshops are placed on the southern side which has a good view to site and the river.
3. The restaurants and cafes are located in a way that they can serve to the lobby of theater and music hall in addition to all parts of the complex and also have suitable view and landscape.
4. theater and music hall are located on that part of the site that they can't be a barrier to view to other parts and also, they create the desired view.

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