Identifying and Analyzing the Factors Affecting Responsive Environment in Neighborhoods from the Perspective of the Islamic Worldview

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Abstract

Increasing the city’s population and changing human’s life to mechanical style, leads to fading out to pay attention to public life and ultimately degrades the quality of human life. Today’s, responding to the material and spiritual needs concurrently, as two important needs, is the main issue in the urban environment management. In this regard, due to the traditional structure of the Islamic cities, which was formed by a number of neighborhoods, tasks of these neighborhoods are such as communication, solidarity creation, and the resident’s needs satisfaction. In this context, this study aimed to extract criteria, in order to the environmental response of neighborhoods from the perspective of the Islamic thought, was formulated with the citations to the Islamic reliable sources. This article tries to answer these fundamental questions, including: First, from the perspective of the Islamic worldview, the responsive environment in terms of human presence includes what kind of guidelines and criteria? And second, how these principles and criteria in the neighborhoods are defined?

The concept of the responsive environments was proposed by Bentley for the first time in the Western studies. Bently established the specific criteria of the aforementioned concept and finally, its related criteria were used widely in their own meaning. In this study, bringing up the mentioned issue and using the particular expression of it, actually does not mean the positive attitude of all the aspects of that completely and by default. Because, if there is a positive view on the environmental responsiveness before expanding it, then all the points of that issue, as well as derived theory and expression, are accepted. However, the main purpose of this study is to identify and evaluate the Islamic response criteria in the neighborhoods based on the extension and customization of the general criteria of response environment which are proposed by Bentley. In addition, the criteria which are derived from the Islamic response were compared comprehensively with the Western ones. The aim is not acceptable in the Islamic Studies. Meanwhile, the correct way to enter these issues and present its criteria will be possible only by relying on the original definition of the environmental responsiveness. The definition of environmental responsiveness is as follows: the responsiveness capacity of any environment is in relation to its aspects of its design features. Therefore, the responsiveness condition can affect users’ satisfaction and their quality of life. The main emphasis here is on the quality users’ satisfaction, which can be raised as the main issue of the challenge between considering the Islamic and non-Islamic thoughts. In this study, the main theoretical argument is that the satisfaction of what human aspects should be considered in the Islamic environmental plan. It can be established better and more accurately related to the Bentley theory and can be carried on an issue by focusing on the common and different aspects.

The first step in this research is conducted via using a qualitative approach to the study of descriptive-analytical method, which is based on documentary research, library content analysis of the literature on the responding approach from the perspective of the Western studies and the Islamic thoughts. In order to better understand the Islamic aspects, it is needed to assess the western view similarly. Then, after identifying and defining the criteria, which would base on the Western studies, an extensive interdisciplinary study related to the Islamic thoughts is conducted. In this regard, among the available resources of the Islam religion, the Quran is the encyclopedia of the Islam religion, hadiths, Fiqh, narrations and sayings of great contemporary Islamic scholars interacting with architecture and Urbanism resources are used. In addition, the criteria of the aforementioned approach are extracted and the comprehensive theoretical framework is developed. The introduced criteria among the reliable resources, which are extracted from three main parts, are presented as follows: 1. Referring to the text of the Quran and extracting the verses related to the mentioned issue, 2. Studying hadiths which are directly or indirectly referred to the considered discussion and have offered recommendations or suggestions, and 3. The sayings, the narrations of the Islamic researchers in this field via considering available resources have stated their interpretation and inferred to better represent the issue’s literature.

Due to the nature of the fundamental theoretical research, first, the qualitative approach was discussed, using the content analysis of issue’s literature on the environmental response approach from the perspectives of
the Western and Islamic thoughts. In addition, the criteria of these approaches were extracted, among these criteria which could be referred to linking with nature and the manifestation of heaven on earth, due to the various reasons such as magnitude, geometry, proportions, simplicity, moderation in construction, hierarchy, introspection, social solidarity, compliance with residents’ needs, vitality, vibrancy and dynamism, security, identity and sense of belonging, the basis for the formation of the unified Ummah and holding ceremonies, basis for thinking, and justice in the allocation of facilities from the perspective of the Islamic thought. Then, these criteria are presented into four general categories includes physical, functional, perceptual, and finally spiritual characteristics. Finally, a comparative study was carried out between the responsive environmental criteria from the perspective of Islamic and western thought focuses on neighborhoods design and discussed the way of manifestation. These criteria can be descriptive and prescriptive. Descriptive criteria aim to describe the Islamic environment, which means that there is a criterion and should be displayed. The concluded criteria which were recommended and prescribed for the Muslims means that there is no criterion and should take steps to create it. The axioms of the Islam thoughts cover both approaches because the Islam can provide both a worthy description of the humans’ insights and accordingly prescribe. Therefore, the Islamic principles will be responsive, if applied to all of the humans’ needs. The responsiveness will go ahead, in order to satisfy God, which is a main goal in the responsiveness. So even a person may be dissatisfied, apparently of the criteria implementation, but will benefit in practice from the responsiveness of it. Due to the adoption of the Islamic thought in achieving a responsive environment in neighborhoods, all aspects of human life were considered. Extracting the criteria of the environmental responsiveness from the perspective of the Islamic thoughts and comparing them with the criteria of the Western studies show that some of the western responsiveness criteria had close links with the Islamic responsiveness criteria.

As in a research category which relates to the physical aspects, it could be seen the mentioned linkage includes: 1. Visual proportions relate to the magnitude, geometry and proportions, and 2. The density of land use with relates to the simplicity and moderation in construction and as the same way in functional and perceptual aspects, which these communications exist. The obtained results show that in contrast to the Western views, which was focused only on the physical and sometimes carnal aspects during the life of humans. The Islamic criteria of the Iranian-Islamic neighborhoods have a significant impact on three spheres include the physical, carnal and spiritual life of man. In addition, they have a special attention on the spiritual aspect and could be used to better respond to transcendent needs of citizens in the neighborhoods.

Keywords: responsive environment, Islamic worldview, Human, urban neighborhoods.