

Sustainability | Poster

PP - (21142) - THE SPATIAL EXPERIENCE OF THE VISITORS OF THE PAVILION OF KNOWLEDGE IN LISBON - AN EXPLORATORY STUDY

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Research or practical problem and objectives

One potential goal of the architectural design process is to predict and control or influence spatial experience, often to enable creating restorative environments. Visiting a building induces a complex set of mental activities, involving specific restorative effects and spatial preferences. The study focuses on the level of engagement with space, as well as on the affective content and the presence of ambivalence when reflecting on spatial experience. The exploratory research was conducted among the visitors of the Pavilion of Knowledge in Lisbon.

Methods and process (for empirical research)

Based on an architectural analysis, we identified the key conceptual features of the building considered to be crucial in shaping spatial experience. These characteristics were incorporated in three pairs of statements. Each pair consisted of antithetical and complementary experiences. The first pair contrasts the importance of moving through a series of spaces with one central space being prominent in the architectural experience of the building. The second pair contrasts familiarity and repetition with novelty and variety. The third pair relates to the relationship of the inside of the building with the surroundings, and whether there is continuity or separation. The respondents (n=27) described their experiences in an open-ended form and selected one or both statements of each of the three pairs. The intensity of the affective content and the level of engagement was measured by a coding system developed by an interdisciplinary team (architects and a psychologist) based on the qualitative data analysis .

Main results preview and importance (or main arguments in the case of critical reviews)

Participants expressed both implicitly and explicitly their engagement level in relation to each spatial experience statement. Many answers showed parallelism and ambivalence between pairs of statements, meaning that respondents experienced conflicting spatial experiences simultaneously. Our results can be interpreted in the framework of Kaplan's Attention Restoration Theory, showing that restoration can be also related to successfully designed built environments.

Palavras-chave : spatial experience, restorative effect, architectural interpretations, space perception