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Relationship between Art Education and Government Policy towards Sustainable Urban Development in Tehran

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Abstract

The study aims to examine the relationship between art education and government policy towards sustainable urban development in Tehran. The mixed approach of quantitative and qualitative was adopted as the study design. Stratified sampling technique coupled with simple random sampling was used to sample 300 respondent for this study. Students, as well as development partners, were targeted. Both questionnaire and interviews for literate and non-literate respondents were used respectively. Likert scale questions were used to obtain the required data for the study. The study found that there is a strong relationship between art education and sustainable urban development in Tehran and hence more collaboration is required from the government and development partners to train engineers and Urban planners based on art education.

Keywords: Art, Education, Sustainable, Urban, Development, Relationship

Introduction

Art education is an essential programme of study which provides intervention for assisting policymakers in acquiring knowledge aimed at achieving sustainable development in some of the prominent cities in the Islamic Republic of Iran. Sustainable development planners the world over recognize that sustainable development trends could be achievable and that public awareness towards Art Education is key to propelling urban societies including Tehran toward sustainable development. Aure (2010) argues that sustainable development is not automatically attainable unless prudent measures such fostering Art education are instituted in a systematic and an orderly manner.

Illeris (2010) emphasized the fact that, factors that enhanced art education are a panacea for rectifying inefficient use of art knowledge in an explicit manner towards sustainable urban development. There are very important concepts that art education espouses to inspire education for sustainable development (ESD). We use ESD most often because it is the terminology used frequently at the international level and within UN documents.

It can, therefore, be inferred from the above narrations that, people's quest for development undoubtedly provides the basis and support for leaders and change agents in sustainable development issues to apply the

principles of art education better since encompasses a whole lot of strategies. By so doing, urban development experts are able to thoroughly have an overview of art education theory for effective leadership skills.

Pedersen (2010) put forward one useful principle of art education which relate to allowing the behaviors of individuals or systems to naturally emerge so as to dominate sustainable urban development discourses, rather than trying to control them. Also, setting broad orienting values, creating the condition for the system to generate the timeliest and appropriate specific individual needs are very essential towards sustainable urban development and finally cultivates habit of experimentation and having respect for novelty; this support the emergence of small successes that can become positive and foundation to be scaled across a system.

The overall vision for Art Education towards Social Development (ESD), as formulated by the UN, considers the urban communities as centers where everyone has the opportunity to benefit from quality standard of living, and could, therefore, be described as a fertile ground for the emergence of art education capable of assisting individuals in learning the values, behavior, and lifestyles required for a sustainable urban development. To realize this ambitious vision, art education for sustainable development is built around 'the three pillars of sustainability', namely society ('people'), environment (planet) and economy (prosperity).

In spite of the powerful social institutions in society that are responsible for the coordination of the three pillars of sustainability identified above, art education which is seen as the foundation for sustainable development appears to be less appreciative and undefined concept characterized by a lack of critical thinking and approval by those with political authority. Critics of sustainable development have referred to the inability of political leaders' failure to give credence to the promotion of art education. This indeed has rendered the concept vulnerable to mediocrity and counterproductive efforts (UNESCO, 2009,). It is against this background that this study is currently being undertaken so as to examine the relationship between art education and sustainable urban development.

Objective

To establish a relationship between Art Education and government policy aimed at achieving sustainable development.

Research Question

Is there any relationship between pedagogy applied in art education and the implementation in sustainable development?

Literature Review

The literature review in this study discusses the main thematic areas such as the relationship between art education and government policy aimed towards sustainable development, the principles of sustainable urban development.

Sustainable development as the dominant paradigm in recent decades has been theorized differently across various disciplines, namely: Equilibrium-Neoclassical, Neo-Austrian-Temporal, and Ecological-Evolutionary, Evolutionary-Technological, Biophysical-Energy, Systems-Ecological, Ecological Engineering, Human Ecology, Socio-Biological, Historical-Institutional, and the like. Sustainable development as a modern approach was introduced as a solution for development that connects the economic, social and environmental dimensions of multifaceted issues as they apply on local, regional and international levels. At these levels, it is crucial that developmental plans are evaluated and examined from the point of view of all the dimensions of sustainability.

By analyzing sustainable development, planning direct intervening actions towards sustainability. It is possible for such an analysis to improve the sustainability within all economic, social and environmental dimensions. As Gonzalez and Smith (2013) stressed an indicator model to evaluate the process of sustainability with regards to

environment, energy, efficiency, and economics of the developmental plans. Falamaki, (2010) developed a practical model for measuring the progress of sustainable rural tourism in the areas and others such as Iran and proposed indicators of sustainability within individual tourism and addressed various complex aspects of the political, economic, socio-cultural, and environmental impacts on the tourism industry, and the quality of tourist experiences. Scerri and Holden (2014) also proposed a framework for assessing the Ecological Modernization Plan as the main contributor to sustainable development in ecological, economic, political and cultural areas. By using a family of tools called the Compass of Sustainability (CS), which covers aspects of the technical and process management in the development framework, defining process, assessment, and progress of sustainability, planned projects are evaluated in a consistent, comparative and comprehensive manner with respect to their ecological, economic and social impacts. International sustainability according to AtKisson (2015) has developed and named the format of the CS for its core image and framework, in which the four directional points (North, South East, and West) have been replaced by four key dimensions of sustainability: Nature, Economy, Society, and Well-being. Such a replacement is a way of representing different dimensions of and expertise in sustainability, and therefore calls for multi-stakeholder engagement AtKisson (2015). CS has the potential to predict and develop the indicators of sustainability as well as assess the performance of a specific sector of sustainability and transfer its basics to others in an easy way to understand.

Indeed, the CS aims to provide a simple method of obtaining a qualitative evaluation of the impact of important plans on the sustainable development of a given region or community and to produce a clear evaluation of the potential effects of those plans on the dimensions of sustainability. However, it should be noted that the CS does not examine the complex interaction between individual indicators. As a qualitative tool, it does not analyze complex interactions or requires comprehensive basic data. It merely processes the available information and the assessments of people using it in a clear and transparent manner. The CS is one of the recent to sustainability designed to orient strategic planning and sustainable development initiatives in the direction of systemic sustainability within a region (Hodge et al. 2015). It also reflects the status of critical elements in a system and the direction the system is heading, helps us determine how healthy the system is, and whether the trends in the system are moving in a healthy direction.

The CS also can be used to provide a general picture of the impact of a plan on its sustainable development. Folch (2015) emphasized that, by using a profile of strengths and weaknesses provided by the CS, plans can be analyzed more precisely and can be optimized specifically to emphasize the plan's strengths and reduce its weaknesses in relation to the many aspects of sustainable development. On a long-term strategic level, the CS is suitable for comparing the impact that various models have on development as it defines where you have been, and what your goals are after implementing your developmental plan's policies (Folch, 2015).

The use of the CS is recommended mainly for plans that have diverse effects on the environment, economy and society and does not make sense to use for activities or plans with a small range because the effects of such a plan on the whole system (environment, economy or society) are very limited (Holsti, 2012). National policies and development plans (which are based on the felt needs of a society's and nation's fundamental goals) play a substantial role in sustainable development and will remain on a nation's agenda and continue to play a crucial role for every nation aiming towards economic prosperity, social welfare and resource efficiency (Holsti, 2012). Policies create transparent mechanisms and tools that help policymakers to be more accountable for the success of their policies by providing the basis for reporting progress on sustainability objectives. Thus, policies become a key tool in managing sustainability.

Consequently, Bagheri and Hjorth (2014) argued that plans for sustainable development need to go beyond traditional planning and strategy making. The concept of the processes of those plans plays a key role in the definition, planning, and practice of sustainable development, and it requires a substantial shift from the prevailing practices to a transformative planning paradigm that focuses on processes, instead of on fixed goals. In the last 50 years, developmental planning has played a significant role by facilitating the improvement of a nation's situation in terms of economic prosperity, social welfare, and resource efficiency; though different nations have used various planning methodologies. For example, in Iran, massive economic, social, and structural problems and other similar issues have resulted in the development of a plan called the "Tehran

Strategic Structural Plan” to reduce the problems by presenting development strategies for the country (Redclift and Sage, 2014). In Iran, the major “Strategic Water Plan for Melbourne” (the Sustainable Water Strategy for the Central Region) was established several years ago, the “Ecological Modernization Plan” (Tehran’s Greenest City Action Plan) was proposed in order to develop sustainability for those regions. However, not much has been done to understand how these plans have gone about reaching their objectives and if they have actually been helpful in encouraging the overall activities of the society towards their favored goals. Such planning in Iran dates back almost 65 years when Iran’s first developmental plan was launched in 1948. After the Islamic Revolution in 1979, five other plans have been implemented to date. It was only after the imposed Iraq-Iran war ended that the government found a new chance to introduce the first Iranian economic, social and cultural developmental plan (IDP) (Turner, 2013). Up to now, the five IDPs have been planned and executed; the first from 1989 to 1993, the second from 1994 to 1988, the third from 1999 to 2003, the fourth from 2004 to 2009 and finally, the fifth from 2010 to 2015 which is still in progress.

The implementation of the first plan, which dealt with national development projects proceeded at a rapid pace but eventually slowed down. While the estimated average period for implementation of the first plan’s projects was seven years, in practice they lasted 10 years. In the course of the second plan, only 60 percent of annual targets were achieved, with half of the developmental projects remaining behind schedule. The third plan was different from the two previous ones in terms of both nature and quality and although income figures predicted were optimistic, practical figures proved to be different (Turner, 2013).

In further development planning, the designated policies were somewhat in harmony with sustainability that demanded new ways of collective thinking and decision making, as well as new and inclusive ways of acting to achieve and evaluate developmental improvements (Bossel, 2014). Indeed, sustainability is based on the well-known triangle of “environment-society-economy”, though, in the eyes of many, it still represents another version of ecologism. The fifth plan is still in progress and cannot yet be analyzed completely. As stressed by Bossel (2014), given such diverse implementations and impacts, the main goal of this study was to conduct a content analysis of the IDPs based on the CS theory in order to understand how the direction and conformity of Iran’s developmental plans, expressed in policies, matched the sustainable development theory as the dominant paradigm of recent decades.

Method

The objective of this study is to examine the relationship between Art Education and government policy aimed at achieving sustainable development in Tehran. Tehran is the capital of Iran and Tehran Provinces. With a population of around 8.4 million in the city and 15 million in the larger metropolitan area of greater Tehran, Tehran is the most populous city in Iran and Western Asia and has the second-largest metropolitan area in the Middle-East. It is ranked 29th in the world by the population of its metropolitan area (Naghizadeh, 2012).

The mixed approach of both quantitative and qualitative was used in this study. The City of Tehran which is made up of different communities with a number of Central Business Districts (CBDs), the researcher considers each community as a stratum, and as a result, stratified sampling technique complemented by simple random sampling, the right contacts were made with the target respondents so as to select a representative sample. Instruments of data collection such as questionnaire and interview were applied in this study.

Two main sources namely primary and secondary were utilized for data collection. The primary sources provide first-hand information from instruments such as the questionnaires and the interview. The secondary sources which deal with processed data were used particularly during the literature review. A sample size of 300 respondents was selected from students and development planners making sure that, no respondent is sampled twice. Both questionnaire and interviews for literate and non-literate respondents were used respectively. Likert scale questions were used to obtain the required data.

The researcher also ensured that the respondents were not psychologically harmed by making sure that, questions to be asked are not offensive. Confidentiality of the information was also assured by making sure that the names and addresses of respondents were not attached to the responses provided.

Results

Relationship between Art Education and Government Policy towards Sustainable Urban Development

In this section, the study concentrates on the various determinants of art education and how it leads to a practical model for measuring the progress of sustainable urban development, art education and the assessment of the ecological modernization plan towards sustainable urban development, art education and how it defines compass of sustainability which covers aspects of the technical process urban development, the status of critical elements in a system and the direction in urban development planning and art education plans for sustainable urban development to go beyond traditional planning.

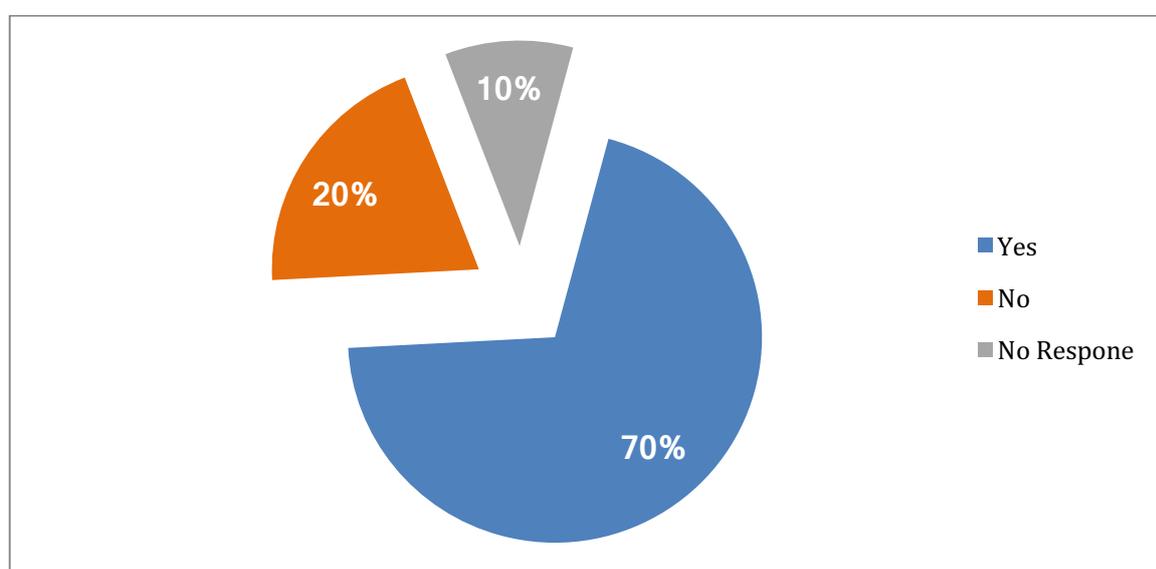


Figure 1: Relationship between Art Education and Government Policy towards Sustainable Development

Source: Author's Field Survey, 2018

Table 1: Correlation co-efficient in determining the relationship between art education and State Policy towards Sustainable Urban Development

| Independent Variables | Dependent Variables | | | | | | | | | | Total | |
|---|--|-------|---------|-------|-----------------|-------|-----------|-------|----------------|-------|----------|-----------|
| | State Policy Towards Sustainable Urban Development (Y) | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Art Education (X) | Very Related | | Related | | Neither Related | | Unrelated | | Very Unrelated | | Freq (X) | Score (Y) |
| | freq | Score | freq | score | Freq | score | Freq | score | freq | score | | |
| Model for measuring sustainable urban development | 25 | 125 | 30 | 150 | 35 | 175 | 10 | 50 | 06 | 30 | 101 | 530 |
| Assesses the ecological modernization plan | 20 | 100 | 35 | 175 | 25 | 125 | 22 | 110 | 04 | 20 | 101 | 530 |
| Defines compass of sustainable development | 40 | 200 | 35 | 175 | 10 | 50 | 15 | 75 | – | – | 100 | 500 |
| Reflects the status of critical historical | 50 | 250 | 30 | 150 | 10 | 50 | 06 | 30 | – | – | 96 | 480 |

| | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|----|-----|----|-----|----|----|---|---|---|---|----|-----|
| elements | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Create transparent mechanisms for policy makers | 32 | 160 | 28 | 140 | 05 | 25 | – | – | – | – | 65 | 325 |

Source: field data, 2018.

Table 2: Relationship between Art Education and Government Policy Towards Sustainable Development

| Responses | Frequency | Percentage (%) |
|---|------------|----------------|
| Art education leads to a practical model for measuring the progress of sustainable urban development | 15 | 15 |
| Art education assesses the ecological modernization plan towards sustainable urban development | 25 | 25 |
| Art education defines compass of sustainability which covers aspects of the technical process urban development | 20 | 20 |
| It also reflects the status of critical elements in a system and the direction in urban development planning | 10 | 10 |
| Art education create transparent mechanisms that help policy makers to be more accountable on the success of urban development planning | 12 | 12 |
| Art education plans for urban sustainable development to go beyond traditional planning | 18 | 18 |
| Total | 100 | 100 |

Source: Author's Field Survey, 2018

Discussion

On whether there is any relationship between art education and government policy towards sustainable development, figure 1 indicates that 70% of the respondents comprising the academia, planners, and engineers answered in the affirmative, authenticating the fact that, there is a practical, explicit and determinate relationship between art education and government policy towards sustainable urban development. Conversely, this view was opposed by 20% of the respondents who responded by expressing their skepticism on the determinate of the relationship between art education and government policy towards sustainable development. Astonishingly, 10% of the staff could not provide any response to the discussion pertaining to the determinants of variables defining the relationship between art education and government policy towards sustainable urban development. It was also of interest to note that, 10% of the respondents declined comments but I had to respond to their rights not to comment or answer the question since participation is voluntary. In the ensuing discussion, the various determinants of the relationship between art education and government policy towards sustainable development are illustrated in table 4.3 below.

The summations required for the calculation of the correlation and the regression coefficient is an extract from Table 1.

The computed regression coefficient which is represented by a value $r = 0.99$ and lies in the range of $r = -1$ to $r = +1$ in Pearson's correlation, therefore, indicate a strong relationship between art education and the state policy of sustainable urban development in the Islamic Republic of Iran.

Given the correlation value $r = 0.99$ a decision can, therefore, be made to the effect that, irrespective of the application of art education by the academia. It appears not to be sufficient enough to influence state policy towards sustainable urban development.

The strong positive relationship discovered between art education and state policy towards sustainable urban development in Iran is in line with Newman and Kenworthy (2015) argument which points to the fact that, sustainable development focus on consumerism lifestyle and the process of making decision that is only based on economic efficiency and also evaluate behavior infrastructures more than economic and environmental requirements. In fact, sustainable development as a comprehensive and innovative process needs to have a stable development.

In addition to the above, art knowledge-based cultural development of a society is part of the growing framework of sustainability and societies have the opportunity to present their stories and also complete their innovative skills and actively participate in developing culture (O' Hala, 2012).

Table 2 contains the determinants of the relationship between art education and government policy towards sustainable development. Out of the total respondents, 15% responded that art education leads to a practical model for measuring the progress of sustainable urban development. The second determinant of the relation between art education and policy on sustainable urban development is that art education assesses the ecological modernization plan towards sustainable urban development as 25% of respondents indicate. Another determinant is that 20% of the respondents revealed that art education defines the compass of sustainability which covers aspects of the technical process of urban development.

The respondents numbering 10% also mentioned that it also reflects the status of critical historical elements in a system and the direction in urban development planning. This as they further revealed requires the application of fair and transparent rules for the selection of engineers and contractors as a useful determinant of value for money in urban planning and development. The results revealed 12% of the respondents attesting to the assertion that, art education create transparent mechanisms that help policymakers to be more accountable on the success of urban development planning. In terms of art education having plans for sustainable urban development to go beyond traditional planning, 18 % of the respondents substantiated the above assertion. Such ambitious plans have enabled the city planners and engineers to ensure value for money in the execution of their planning and development projects. It thus implies that urban planning and development activities Tehran are simple and timely resulting in value for money for the achievement of the development goals.

The six determinants of art education and urban planning and development activities identified in Table 2 certainly determine value for money during procurement processes of the city authorities since they ensure that Tehran planning and development authorities procures its products or services with the lowest costs that are 'fit for purpose' and thus satisfies the requirements of government. The determinants identified above also represent a set of evaluation criteria for ensuring the most competitive pricing and cost are obtained during procurement process of service of planners, engineers and even academicians so as to ensure effective utilization of art education in urban development planning. This finds expression in Mills and Brown (2014) proposition that, the available set of evaluation criteria which determines a value for money are very relevant to the public contracts, which therefore prevent added value that gives a good reason for a higher price must flow from these defined criteria. Thus, the finding on the determinants of value for money concurs with Ostrom work.

Also, Value for Money in procurement process ensures that whichever costs are incurred is said to ensure the quality of the goods or services to meet the planning and developmental specifications. This inseparably connects again with Mills and Brown, (2014) assertion referring to the determinants as the most favorable combination of costs and quality that are fit for purpose in the procurement of goods or services works that aimed at satisfying the stipulations in procurement.

Besides, the results obtained from respondents in the administration of the questionnaire, some one-on-one interviews were made with the two deputies public entity heads (Deputy CEOs). The responses during interviews with the deputies' CEOs point to this:

To prevent fraud, waste, and corruption, or local protectionism, the government of the Islamic Republic of Iran through the various Ministries, Departments, and Agencies (MDAs), City planners and engineers' inclusive

designs policies to regulate government procurement to some extent. The policies set out laws which usually require the procuring authority to issue public tenders if the value of the procurement exceeds a certain threshold. Government procurement is also the subject of the agreement on government procurement, this then directs the City Authorities to link its budgets to procurement activities owing towards the achievement of value for money which serves as a check against unplanned procurement activities.

The responses received from the authorities also confirmed that the City planning and development unit work closely with the appropriate authorities and agencies towards achieving value for money in the procurement of good, services and works aimed at modernizing Tehran as a city that befits the status of being the capital city of the Islamic Republic of Iran. Also, the city authorities adopt measures that prevent leakages and acts of corruption by strict adherence to thresholds and linking City's budgets to procurement activities towards achieving value for money. Despite the successes, there are some challenges in the drive towards achieving value for money.

Conclusion

The study has demonstrated that there is a strong relationship between art education and sustainable urban development planning and so therefore, collaborative efforts from government and the stakeholders in sustainable urban development planning based art education are expeditiously expedited to develop appropriate needs of training of engineers and planners so as to instill in sustainable urban development planners the principles of art education from academia so that in the end, cost-effective are implemented, especially in Tehran and its adjoining communities and across the entire country are carried out. This is aimed at securing the public purse, hence the concept of value for art education be considered as a top priority to all public development planning entities across the Islamic Republic of Iran and in some countries in Middle-East with similar socio-political setting and characteristics to Tehran in particular and the Islamic Republic of Iran.

Recommendation

Since there is a general awareness of art education and its influence on sustainable urban development planning, efforts should be made by government to ensure that art education is made compulsory in all existing tertiary educational institutions and those that are yet to be established to inculcate in students the beliefs and attitudes of the citizens are firmly rooted in art education towards the achievement of sustainable urban development planning.

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