

Prioritizing Strategic Alternative for Improvement of Neighborhood Attachment Using Qfd Prrcess (Case Study: Golsar District, Rasht City)

Seyed Abdolhadi Daneshpour*

Associate Professor, Department of Urbanization, Faculty of Architecture & Urbanization, University of Science and Technology (IUST), Tehran, Iran

Aliakbar Salaripour

Ph.D. Student in urban studies at Iran University of Science and Technology (IUST), Tehran, Iran

Received: 2016/12/09

Accepted: 2017/05/17

Extended Abstract

Introduction

Neighborhood is second social environment after family In Iranian Islamic culture. Neighborhood attachment can motivate engagement in local affairs; it also can lead to high level of perceived security, and improvement of other wellbeing factors among its inhabitants. Therefore, many studies have been trying to find ways to facilitate positive relations between person and his living place .In the past, neighborhood was a place for children intellectual, moral growth and development of their religious beliefs. It was a place to learn basics of social life and cultural values of society. After experiencing lived neighborhood, one gradually starts exploration in the city as a larger community. The modern age of mobility and the growth of communication technologies have led to essential changes in both of physical characteristics of city and urban life styles. Thus, defined neighborhood, and its features of attachment or unattachment is altered for children. Recent researches have shown that children's first experiences in neighborhood can extremely affect their attitudes toward neighbors, neighborhood and the city. Due to the criticality of this issue, this article is dedicated to find and prioritize strategic alternatives for enhancing place attachment among children residents of Golsar neighborhood in Rasht city. It is necessary to hear children's voice about their attachments to the neighborhood. Lack of attention to the needs of stakeholders can lead to the waste of money without attaining expected results.

Methodology

This study has utilized a combination of qualitative and quantitative research methods in achieving its goals; that includes of integration of Resident Employed Photography (REP) into the Quality Function Deployment(QFD) Process. Therefore, needs and interest of stakeholders should be identified and applied as the input of the process. This step is done by application of REP and in-depth interviews with children. They were described that they should take photographs of places, people, features or anything that cause them like their neighborhoods, so that, if those things or characteristics were destroyed they may feel sadness. Taking pictures

* Corresponding Author:

E Mail: daneshpour@iust.ac.ir

triggered deep thinking about their neighborhood and themselves, therefore they had many more things to say in the in-depth interview. Interview started with simple questions about the reason for taking each photograph, then, it entered into various related topics smoothly, and many questions were asked about different living experiences in neighborhood. Therefore, pictures had provided common points for discussion, and have led to deeper interviews; also they increased children's motivation to talk about their sentiments about neighborhood. As a result, interview transcripts were so rich and contained information about other important aspects of neighborhood life plus useful information about places that were attached by children. Content analysis of pictures, including their location and subject, and their related essays clarified the neighborhood definition for children and most important thematic contexts of children needs in neighborhood. These needs should be rated by children and their parents in next step. To ensure statistical significance, 400 Stakeholders are surveyed for each need using a 5-point scale. Information of the detailed plan of the region and Nominal Group Technique is applied for development of strategic alternatives. Relationships between strategies and need are determined in relationship matrix which shows that how each strategy affects each need. Finally, strategies are prioritized and described.

Results and discussion

Analysis of pictures taken by children residents of Golsar and their accompanied essays demonstrates that meanings related to neighborhood attachment can be divided into four thematic contexts: playing, relation with nature, services and neighborhood landscape. Children's needs in neighborhood can be classified using these main thematic contexts. Therefore, strategies that facilitate children's play in neighborhood, or form their relationship with the nature, or engage them in cultural events and creative works, would be the most efficient ones.

Conclusion

Urban neighborhood is losing its role in satisfying both psychological and physical needs of children, but some kinds of needs are remained to be satisfied at neighborhood level. They include psychological needs like: feeling rootedness, attachment and neighborhood pride, symbolic needs in term of neighborhood related identity, and social needs of fostering a generation with high level of place attachment and place identity.

Yet, there is a bright point that our children have positive feelings toward their neighborhood. They wish to be proud of their neighborhood; they wish to feel rooted in their neighborhood. Thus, urban practitioners should consider the processes of children neighborhood relations to design those neighborhoods that satisfy needs of children.

REP is a useful tool in study of person neighborhood relations. In depth photo-based personal interview will help the memory of participant to remember his personal experiences, better than non-photo-based interview. This method helps to reduce power differentials between researcher and participants, especially children, because empowers them to transfer their messages and symbols better and let them to make their voices heard. Therefore, REP can be a reliable instrument for citizen empowerment in participatory planning process. Application of this method with Golsar neighborhood children has cleared that physical and social dimensions of place are intertwined in construction of place meaning and cannot be separated. Living experiences in neighborhood shape meanings that simultaneously have social and physical dimensions. Synergy of these dimensions alongside of preparing better opportunities for children to be present in their neighborhood environment, and participate in its affairs, can be helpful in fostering place attachment among them.

Key words: Prioritizing, Place attachment, Golsar neighborhood, Rasht, QFD