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Participatory Design Approach in Architectural Education, a Field Survey About User Satisfaction

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Abstract

This study aims to emphasize the importance of participatory design approach in architectural education via user satisfaction through recently applied public project. The field study is conducted in 2013, and Kucukcekmece Urban Square Project is chosen to examine the users' meanings and the responses of the designs. Observation and interview were used in the study. Following the search, it's seen that majority is not satisfied with the new organization. Users compared the new one with the old square and said that the new square could be better. In conjunction with architectural design education, participatory design approach should be involved to the studio. With participatory design in education, students will learn to respect rights and thoughts of users and so, there will be satisfied users and this situation will contribute to provide social sustainability.

Keywords: architectural education; participatory design; user satisfaction .

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1.Introduction

Architects, designers, planners take responsibility because of their huge effects on community and individual lives with their designs and actions. That became aim to design the right one and thus to ensure people's happiness with right designs. Architects thought they have the cares of the future of built environment on their shoulders. Habraken (1990) stated that thought of "If architects designed the right cities, there would be no war." had influence and architecture students are trained by this thought. In time, designers focus to designs that enable people to live how they want to live, instead of trying to make utopias real.

Subjects such as the definition of architectural products, how they should be and the role of users in the production of space came to forward. While discussions on involving users to design process continued, individuals demanded to be active on environment that they live and participatory design approach started to get across. In architectural education, user satisfaction is a worth-stressing point. When student who gets training product-centered instead user-centered graduates and involves projects, there is lack of communication between user and architect.

Actually, it is seen as a natural and inevitable result that mass of student who is a part of community gives on to community also after the end of educational process, does not drift apart, relays information that obtained to them with various ways and is useful (Kortan, 1969). To make this real, it's so important to teach participatory design approach during the education. When the students that know participatory design approach are graduated, they realize that don't have to design alone, moreover it's necessary that don't be alone, have to listen users who live with the final product. In this way, there will be a project that is suitable for users' desires and needs, both designers and users will be satisfied. In the field study that made in 2013, Kucukcekmece Urban Square Project that one of the project that be implemented without asking users' thoughts and the effect of this project on users was examined. Kucukcekmece Urban Square attracts notice with the location. Kucukcekmece has cultural, tourism, trade and housing area at the same time and lots of urban transformation projects.

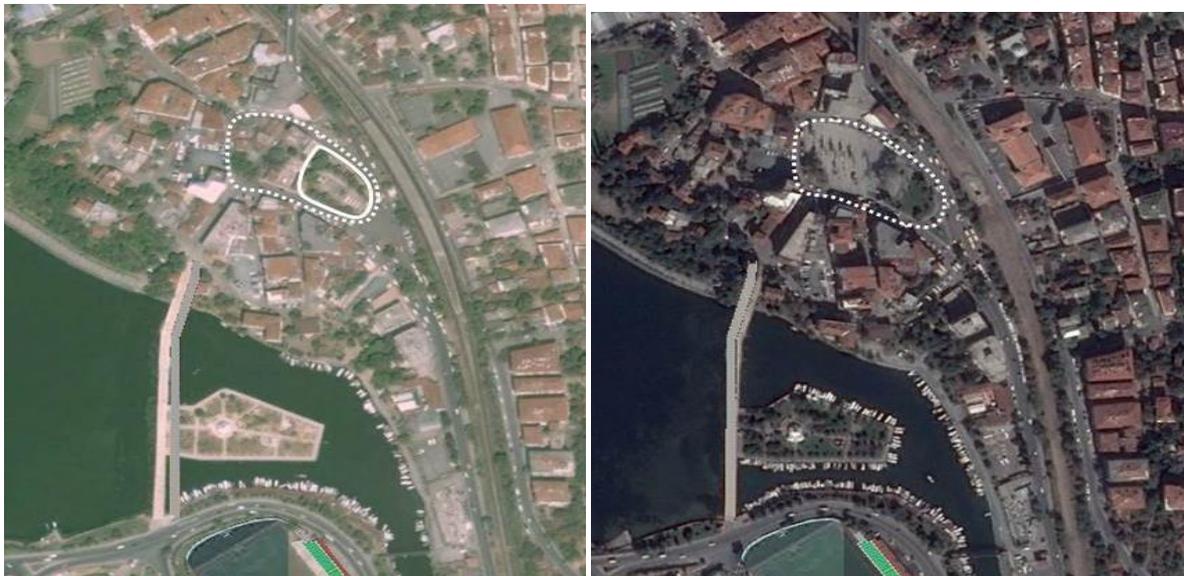


Figure 1. Kucukcekmece Urban Square 2008 - 2013 (Google Earth)

Usage of the square is mostly passing-purpose with the huge effect of its location. Square is like a vital point to reach public transport vehicles. With the regulation, many buildings around the square were pulled down and the square extended. Instead of pulled down buildings, parallel seating benches were placed and between these benches, there were planted trees and flowers.

Things that wanting to implemented are to regulate green field, seating benches, rest areas, ceremony area and to renovate two historic fountains. It's also purposed that pedestrians have a

voice on the square, to enable accessibility for disabled and to put the urban square which becomes integrated with Mimar Sinan Bridge into use (<http://www.buyukhaber.com/m/?id=4903>).



Figure 2. Kucukcekmece Urban Square (C. Cangul)

The starting date of project is 2010, the end date is 2012. The Project is awarded in good implementation competition.

2. Field Survey

Kucukcekmece Urban Square is brought into service after implementation process. With research conducted, it's purposed to reveal that;

- Whether project gains its ends,
- Connection between users and regulated square,
- Data for participatory design approach.

Study is made in 2013. Observation and interview are used in the study that made in square. Users are chosen from the environment and are asked five questions. The chosen users and the others who used the square are observed. Obtained analyses are evaluated.

2.1. Interview

In this study, it's had interviews users of the square; weekday and weekend, morning, noon, evening. It's talked with 30 people. 26 of them are users who spend time in the square, 4 of them are tradesmen who have workplace around the square.

Interview questions are;

- Why do you use the square?
- How often do you use the square?
- Which one is your route?
- Do you prefer to pass by the square?
- If you define the square with one word?
- Your age, your job, do you live in Kucukcekmece? (if yes) For how many years?

2.2. Evaluation of Interview

1. "Why do you use the square?"

In weekday and weekend, “passing” is the most performed action among “taking a walk”, “meeting”, “skateboarding”, “waiting”, “resting”.

2. “How often do you use the square?”

This question has various answers but the most getting answer is “everyday”.

3. Answers about route:

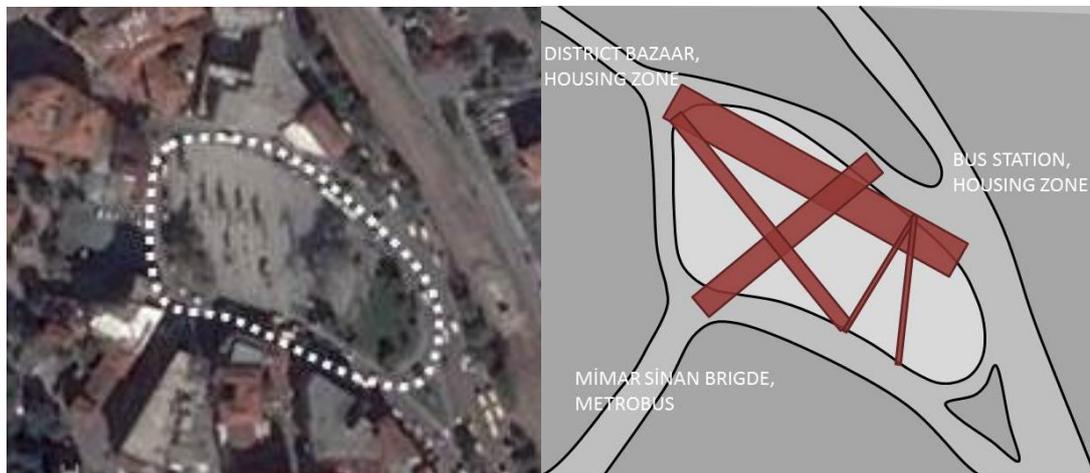


Figure 3. Kucukcekmece Urban Square, Routing

In the end, it's attracted notice that design of the square is conflict with the results.

4. “Do you prefer to pass by the square?”

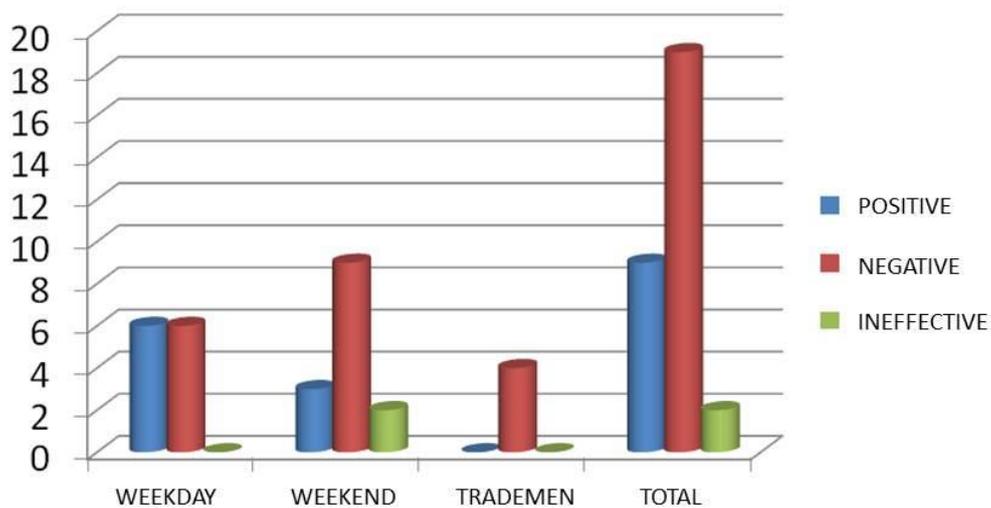


Figure 4. Answers of “Do you prefer to pass by the square?”

5. “If you define the square with one word?”

The most getting answers are “beautiful”, “empty” and “unnecessary”.

2.3 Observation

It's detected that;

- Water feature in the square catches people's attention, especially children's.



Figure 5. Kucukcekmece Urban Square (H.B.BULUT)

- Seating benches are not proper for groups, people sit alone usually.



Figure 6. Kucukcekmece Urban Square (H.B.BULUT)

- Traffic is heavy around the square all time.



Figure 7. Kucukcekmece Urban Square (H.B.BULUT)

3. Conclusion

Following the search, it's seen that majority is not satisfied the new regulation. Users compared the new one and the old square and said that the new square could be better.

In conjunction with training students with participatory design approach, there will be satisfied users and this situation will contribute to provide social sustainability. With participatory design in education, students will learn to respect rights and thought of users and so, in the end of the project, everybody will be satisfied.

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