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Contemplation on Meaning Process of Historical Complex of Qazvin Saad-al-saltaneh and its Present Identity Reading from the View of Phenomenology*

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Abstract

A semantic look at an architectural space and analyzing its various layers of abstraction and objectivity are among significant areas in architectural studies. Regarding the current intellectual and philosophical methods for the in-depth analysis of the architectural space meaningfulness, a phenomenological approach to location includes a wide range of phenomena. Such an approach has a significant role in the accurate legibility of a place by considering the concepts of location, the centrality of human role, and human experiences. Therefore, a phenomenological method was used in this study to determine the relationship between the reflection of meanings of a historical environment and its identity for the legibility of the Historical Complex of Qazvin Saad-al-Saltaneh. This historical Complex was used as a caravansary in the Safavid Dynasty. Since it was renovated in recent years, it has been considered a dynamic site of architecture in a new form. The study aimed to determine how much different meaning aspects of Saad-al-Saltaneh affected the current importance and specific identity of the case study in comparison with other historical sites in an urban environment.

Accordingly, it is assumed that what brings about the dynamism and livingness of the current identity of Saad-al-Saltaneh is the affinity with social contexts resulting in cultural implications with subjective and perceptual interpretations of the site in addition to the creation of a rich sensory experience. Moreover, the valuable physical status of this historical complex is important in the phenomenological legibility of its identity, the specific aspects of which can be sought in subjective and conceptual implications.

According to the proposed hypothesis, this study aimed to analyze the roles of conceptual, subjective, social, cultural, and historical contexts of the site in relation with personal and perceptual experiences of the physical values of the Historical Complex of Saad-al-Saltaneh. The contexts were to be analyzed in phenomenological aspects to determine the causes of its sustainable identity in the present time.

Therefore, the necessity of meaning interpretation plays a major role as a research principle along with physical and social analyses. Accordingly, this is a qualitative study with a first-person and existential phenomenological approach to spatial foundations. The qualitative research methodology was selected by using a descriptive-analytical technique and employing open, axial, and selective coding methods.

The phenomenological legibility of the specific identity of Saad-al-Saltaneh indicated the important interactive relationship and amalgamation of this historical site with subjective-behavioral, cultural, and social implications of citizens. In fact, general features of historical sites such as visual attractions and architectural values affected the specific identity and public memorability of the case study in relation to meaningful attributes as well as the experiences and perceptions of the audience.

Keywords

phenomenology, meaning, identity, experience and sense perception from place, historical complex of Qazvin Saad-al-saltaneh.

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Introduction

The concept of place and its constituent factors can be realized in many studies by analyzing different physical, cultural, and social layers. The aim of this article was to test the current nature of the Historical Complex of Saad-al-Saltaneh and evaluate semantic criteria by employing a phenomenological method. For this purpose, the place-related foundations of the phenomenological approach will be explained to see if they matched the current status of the case study. Therefore, the phenomenological method will be employed in the legibility of the place and constituents of meaning in the architectural space to clarify the hidden and structural layers more accurately.

Statement of the Problem

In this study, a descriptive-analytical method was used to introduce certain components out of the foundations of a phenomenological approach for place-reading in relation to meaningfulness and the current identity of a physical sample worth contemplating on the research subject in a tangible and applied way. For this purpose, the most effective determinants of conceptual and meaning contexts should be considered to interpret the object more accurately with respect to the urban environment. Therefore, the specific identity of the case study was analyzed in the quality of experience and spatial perception by employing a phenomenological method and considering the audience subjectivity of the physical, conceptual, and semantic aspects of the building.

Research Background

According to previous historical studies, the emergence of a phenomenological approach to architecture was observed from the late 1970s onward with respect to the translated works of Martin Heidegger and Gaston Bachelard on architecture and urban development with a descriptive approach to qualitative research (Ansari, 2014: 5; Partovi, 2008: 13). Heidegger's most important paper is *Building, Dwelling, Thinking* (1951), in which he regarded building as the ideal form of living and a way of marking situations for

human memories (Mallgrave & Goodman, 2014:156). In many of the place-related studies in the 1990s, the place was considered the process of a spatial and cultural experience with an emphasis on the role of people in constructing the place (Ng(a), 2015: 26). In *Place and Placelessness* (1976), Relph discussed spatial phenomenology thoroughly. In the *Poetics of Space*, Bachelard dealt with axial topics such as the relationships of imagination, memory, and home. In *Genius Loci* (1979), Norberg-Schulz described the factors affecting the sense of a place from a phenomenological perspective. In the *Conditions of Postmodernity* (1989), David Harvey introduced the place as a social construct, and Low (1994) described the location as a culturally meaningful space. Gupta and Ferguson (1997) believed that the continuity of places, people, and cultures was formed by social and historical processes which had to be studied. In Alexander's pattern of language theory of social occasions and works of Harries (1997), Norberg-Schulz (1980), and Rykwert (1981), a place was conceptualized as a lived experience (Shirazi, 2010:126; Partovi, 2008: 213; Ng(b), 2015:27; Ng(a), 2015:27-28). In the last few decades, there were other instances such as Peter Zumthor referring to the poetic description of spaces and materials or Juhani Pallasmaa writing about the eyes of the skin (Sharr, 2010: 17-18). Regarding Iranian studies on the phenomenology of historical sites, there are a few works of research: reading Naqsh-e-Jahan Square (Isfahan, Iran) with a hermeneutics phenomenology approach (Ansari, 2014); phenomenology of historical context identity (Pourjafar, et al, 2011); hermeneutic-phenomenological approach to the discovery of the spatial organization of the Safavid garden city of Qazvin (Norouz Borazjani & Javadi, 2017). Previous studies and theories of spatial phenomenology point out the importance of subjective dimensions, imaginations, and sociocultural aspects in the detailed perception of a place as its original meaning. However, the aim of this study was to analyze the specific concept of place in relation to the continuity of a spatial identity, regarding the Historical Complex of Saad-al-Saltaneh,

with a distinct role in an urban space. Thus, the effects of spatial components were analyzed conceptually in relation to subjective, perceptual, and sociocultural dimensions pertaining to the specific identity of the complex. Accordingly, this study dealt with reading the current identity of a historical complex to analyze the effects of relevant factors in the place with the purpose of matching individual and subjective criteria of the audience and sociocultural structures in the current contexts and life of the site.

Literature review

• Phenomenology of the Place

Given the fact that a place is a phenomenon of everyday experience, it is prior to all of the academic concepts and interpretations. Phenomenology is an approach confirming the complexity of this experience. The goal of phenomenology is to enlighten the dimensions of this experience without narrowing it down to several specific models (Relph, 2010). Another feature of phenomenology is inseparability from subjectivity achieved through a link between an individual's past experiences and present ones or the experiences of one person to another (Merleau-Ponty, 2012: 21). Phenomenology can be traced back to the nature of a subject or object and help an individual to convert objective topics into subjective ones [mental images] by using the individual knowledge (Bachelard, 1994: XIX). "Based on phenomenological definitions, it can be claimed that the nature of space is specific in comparison with the nature of space which is more general. Such a specificity results from the attribution of meaning, emergence of social interaction, interconnection with memories, and the allocation of the identity of the place in brief. On the other hand, describing the place as safety and sustainability makes the space open, free, and unsustainable" (Daneshpajouh & Modiri, 2014:191). Therefore, the place is regarded as a matter of significant quality placing an important role in the identification of social identity (Massey, 2001:10). As a result of memories, social interactions, and a feeling of security, it has now been possible to make changes to the environment.

Emotional aspects are among the qualitative factors converting the space into the place in the relationship between an individual and an environment (Mangold cited in Giesecking, et al, 2014: XXVI) Accordingly, the subjectivity of audience is now considered very important in the phenomenology of space, a fact that points out the important subjectivity and quality of the audience's experience of an environment to analyze the specific identity of the historical complex. It also emphasizes the subjective perception of physical.

Experience and Sensory Perception of the Place

Regarding the phenomenology of place reading, the knowledge of an individual encounter and experience of the place and the perceived sensory richness are among the most important subjects in the physical characteristics of a building. "Hence, perception is an experience and a temporally aware process" (Zahavi, 2013: 79). The sensory perception is a kind of innate knowledge of qualities clarified within the experience. Such qualities may exist constantly in the mind (Carman & Hansen, 2012: 89). Thus, a human can communicate with the world through feelings, on which his or her world depends (Merleau-Ponty cited in Hooman, 1996: 39-40). Evidently, health-promoting architecture should deal with all of the feelings simultaneously and mix the mental image of humans with individual experiences of the surrounding world (Pallasma cited in Qods, 2016: 21). As a result, the perception of a building means observing it in a certain way, understanding it, and getting ready to give individual experiences of the presence of a building. Such a perception may vary in credibility with respect to the level of attention (Winters cited in Ross, et al, 2005: 39). Accordingly, the axial role of feelings can be pointed out in the original experience of a building. In other words, the more successful the building is in involving human feelings, the more entangled it becomes with him or her. Finally, a memorable experience is created in the audience's mind.

Meaning in Architecture

In architecture, the process of giving meanings depends

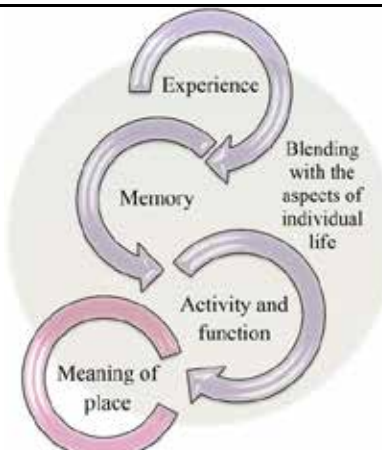
on the perception of an architectural space. According to Hall, the use of a space is greatly cultural. Different feelings matter in various cultures. Therefore, there is an essential relationship in the use of different feelings in interaction and distance between people, and the people of a specific culture make distinct use of a specific culture (Littlejohn, 2005: 192). Meaning has a significant role in the process of human perception. According to Lynch, a meaning emerges in the mutual relationship between a spectator and an object. Lynch believed that identity, structure, transparency, compatibility, and legibility are the factors forming the meaning of a place in the eye of a spectator (Lynch, 1995 cited in Ansari, 2014:80). Table 1 shows the viewpoints of theorists on the use of meaning in the perception of place:

In fact, meaning and spiritual ideas will finally consider social values and result in the durability of a place because of improving social relationships and interactions and independence of individual interests (Pourjafar, 2003 cited in Pourjafar, et al, 2009: 10). As a result, an urban space refers to the adaptability of

an environment to sensory and subjective capabilities in addition to cultural structures (Lynch, 1997 cited in Daneshpajouh & Modiri, 2014: 138). Therefore, meaning is a parameter which puts more emphasis on the subjective characteristics of individuals rather than the apparent form of an environment. In fact, the quality of meaning can not emerge independently of subjectivity, memories, and an observing culture in relation to cumulative environments (Pourjafar, et al, 2009: 2). Accordingly, it can be concluded that meaningfulness is related to spatial perception, which is in turn related to the mind and sensory, cultural, and social structures of an individual in relation to the physical features of the space. Perception can let the audience comprehend meanings from a space by directing audience subjectivity. Table 2 represents this relationship:

Hence, there can be an interactive relationship between human subjectivity and culture, environment, and physical. The relationship will finally equip the urban space with features of place and durability. Table 2 indicates the relationship among

Table 1. Components pertaining to the perception of the meaning of a place. Source: authors.

| Theorist | Definition of Meaning | Characteristic | Result |
|---------------|---|--|---|
| Norberg-Shulz | Meaning is a special mental concept depending on identity and referring to a feeling of attachment. It builds up the base and foundation of dwelling (Norberg-Shulz, 2012:235). | -The base and foundation of dwelling -Meaningful experience -The most basic need of humans |  <p>The meaning of place in relation to different aspects of individual life (activity, function, experiences, memories)</p> |
| Castells | Meaning is thought to be an experience and a memory for people (Castells, 2001 cited in Pourjafar et al, 2009:9). | -Experience -Memory | |
| Rapoport | Meaning is thought to be a part of an activity referred to as the hidden function of an environment (Rapoport, 2005 cited in Ansari, 2014:80). | -Activity -The hidden function of an environment | |
| Lynch | Meaning is a characteristic of an environment which can relate an individual to other dimensions of life. Meaning, identity, and structure are three contexts in which mental images of the environment can be analyzed. Therefore, it is the emotional or practical usefulness of environmental elements (Pourjafar et al, 2009:8; Pakzad,2010: 99). | -Relating an individual to the aspects of life -Emotional or practical usefulness | |

environment, experience, and the rich perception of environment regarding the perception of architectural meaningfulness and the effects of subjective, cultural, and social contexts. Therefore, it is justified to use sociocultural dimensions along with the legibility of subjective contexts, sensory perceptions, and personal interpretations of the audience in the meaningful perception of the environment.

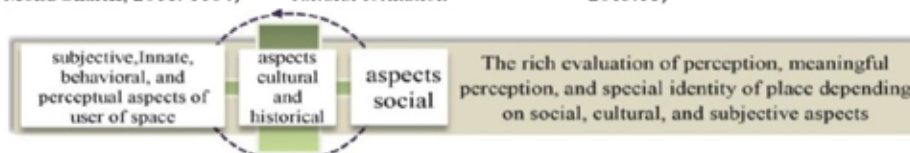
Phenomenology of Place Identity

Identity is subject to an individual, a group, and a

social perception of a place (Relph, 2010:73). What distinguishes a place and gives meanings to it is the meaning of physical identity (Danesh pajouh & Modiri, 2014: 137), which is directly related to the interaction between human and place (Ansari, 2014: 84). In other words, every element or phenomenon becomes distinguished with a spatial identity when it is placed in the space. This element or phenomenon can have a physical, social, or subjective characteristic (MahmoudiNejad, 2009:170). In fact, spatial identity means the mental image, experience generation,

Table 2. The Relationship of Culture, Environment, and Environmental Perceptions in the Eye of Theorists. Source: authors.

| | View | Characteristic | | View | Characteristic |
|--------------------------------|---|---|-------------------|--|---|
| Bahrainy | -Analyzing urban spaces in relation to the consumer behaviors (Bahrainy, 2002 cited in MahmoudiNejad, 2009: 155) | The importance of behaviors shown by space users | Partovi | - Accompanying meaning and culture with place and creating feelings of attachment and place (Partovi, 2008: 240-241) | Feelings of attachment and place in relation to the effects of meaning and culture |
| Mojabi | -Innate characteristics of individuals affected by a spatial identity -Spatial identity rooted in nature, history, and culture (Mojabi, 2009:84) | The relationship of user innate characteristics, history, and culture with spatial identity | Barati | - Environment is the most important product of culture -Ecosystem is a structure consisting of physical and subjective dimensions (Barati, 2003: 45) | The relationship of environmental structure with physical, subjective, and cultural dimensions |
| Ansari | -Understanding and matching the place in addition to the human perceptual comprehension resulting from sociocultural contexts (Ansari, 2014:85) | The importance of human perceptual comprehensions and sociocultural contexts in the perception of place | Pakzad | -Consistency of space with sociocultural habits and behaviors -Recognition of space affected more by sociocultural forms rather than architecture (Pakzad, 2010: 148) | The priority and effect of sociocultural components in space recognition |
| Lefebvre | -Mixing subjective and real spaces in a social context (MahmoudiNejad, 2009:140) | The importance of social dimensions in mixing subjective and real spaces | Meiss | Cultural and resultant products create specific characteristics in the signs of each place (Meiss, 2011:182) | The effect of culture on the creation and specific quality of spaces |
| Hall | -Culture forms the quintessence of human existence (Hall,2008:222) and diversity in human environments (Daneshpajouh & Modiri, 2014:78) | The importance of culture and human belongings in the creation of diversity in place | Grutter | -A building representing cultural evaluation -The responsibility of a building as a part of culture for objectifying subjective thoughts due to physical (Grutter, 2009: 53-54) | The reflection and relationship of culture and subjective thoughts in the physical form of a building |
| Hegel | -Perception and experience affected by culture (Babai, 2013: 695) | The effects of cultural dimensions on the process of experience and perception | Ando | Architecture belonging to culture and a background to history, tradition, climate, and natural forces (Shirazi, 2016:105) | The relationship between space and cultural and traditional contexts with natural factors |
| Najafi& Kamal Bin Mohd Shariff | -Understanding the nature of human interactions with the environment formed by culture (Najafi& Kamal Bin Mohd Shariff, 2011: 1104) | The relationship between human interactions and the environment in cultural formation | Bondi & La Mantia | Culture serving as the main factor in cognition, experience, and perception (Bondi & La Mantia, 2015:11) | The major role of culture in cognition, experience, and perception |



thoughts, memories, immediate feelings, and purposeful interpretation of what exists and what should exist (Amin Zadeh, 2010 cited in Daneshpajouh & Modiri, 2014: 200). Table 3 shows a brief account of spatial identifying factors in relation to the identity of historical sites. According to the definitions presented in Table 3 and considering the fact that the identity of a place is given meanings in interaction with the audience, the subjective structures of the audience can be used to define human, experiences, perceptions, and sociocultural and subjective attachments of human, pointed out in the previous definitions of phenomenology of place and meaning in architecture. According to Table 3, Fig. 1 can be taken into account regarding human attachment and social, cultural, subjective, and perceptive aspects of the audience of a space in addition to the rich physical characteristics of the experienced space. According to the theoretical foundations of the study regarding the importance of the audience's individual perceptions of the space in the phenomenology of place, experience and sensory perception should also be taken into account. In a general point of view, Fig. 1 indicates that the specific spatial identity is a factor affecting the interaction with the original concept of place and its significant aspects by considering social, cultural, and perceptual aspects of a place by the audience. According to Figure (1), the principles of analyzing the case study can be classified as perceptual-subjective and behavioral, cultural, and social components in order to define the general indices of legibility of a specific spatial identity.

Research Methodology and Research Hypothesis


The aim of this study was to analyze the meaningful characteristics of a historical site in a case study and the legibility of its specific identity in the perception of its audience. Therefore, this is a descriptive-analytical qualitative study with a first-person¹ and existential phenomenological² approach to the analysis of specific dimensions of the identity of the historical complex. Regarding the first-person phenomenology,

the researcher's first-hand experience is based on the specific features of the case study which can be identified by taking a walk into the place, looking around, and taking notes on human, environmental, and architectural characteristics of the place to turn it into a specific place. Nevertheless, the existential phenomenology is used to generalize the research results so that the phenomenon should not depend on the researcher's personal experience. Therefore, the special experiences of people and groups were used in the case study (Partovi, 2008: 169-170) so that the common aspect of the audience's experience of similar conditions can result in more meticulous knowledge of a specific identity in combination with the researcher's perceptions. Since a large size of information is required in qualitative studies, data analysis benefited from open³, axial⁴, and selective⁵ coding methods (Groat & Wang, 2007: 193). So that key data of perceived theories could clarify meaningfulness and specific dimensions of identity regarding the case study. For this purpose, data were collected from documents and books through observations, images, and footages in order to match meaningful and conceptual patterns of theoretical foundations with the case study and space user behaviors. The research theories were meant to be discussed by referring to the meaningful aspects of the sample physical worth paying tangible and applied attention.

Introducing and Analyzing the Case Study

Traditional places have meaningful symbols rooted in culture and society. Such places are considered as the beating heart of cities, resulting in social interactions and increasing the feeling of attachment, memorability, and improving identity of dynamic and lively spaces (Daneshpajouh & Modiri, 2014:205). The Historical Complex of Qazvin Saad-al-Saltaneh is now continuing to be a dynamic urban place in addition to having a unique place due to special architectural features. It is also considered to bear the importance of an urban element due to the relationship with the historical identity of its audience, presence in social life, cultural memory, and functional aesthetics of a unique

Table 3. Identifying Spatial Factors of the Case Study in the Eye of Different Theorists. Source: Authors.

| Theorist | Identifying Factor | |
|-----------|---|---|
| Relph | Specific natural factors and their apparent manifestation, observable activities and functions, concepts or symbols (Relph,1986 cited in Shakuie, 2006: 275); The appearance of buildings and sceneries; relationships between society, beliefs, and values (Relph, 2010:45,60) |  <p>-Important events -Relationship with citizens and attachment(URL1)</p> |
| Schulz | The effectiveness of events and accidents in the analysis of place identity, shapes, colors, and textures (Norberg-Schulz, 1981) | |
| Heidegger | Individual perception, experience, and subjectivity (Heidegger cited in Sharr, 2010: 104) | |
| Lynch | Feeling of security, memorability, and a feeling of attachment (Daneshpour cited in Ansari, 2014:85) | |
| Alexander | Occurred activities (Alexander, 2003:56); obtaining natural and logical relationships between individuals and environment and detecting the environment in details (Ansari, 2014:85) | |

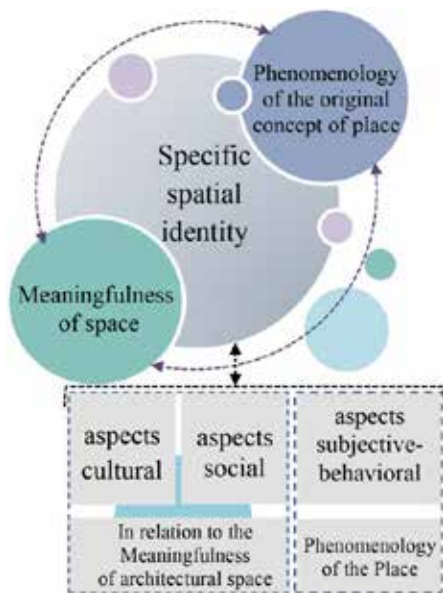


Fig. 1. The Research Area of a Specific Spatial Identity Based on the Theoretical Foundations. Source: authors.

architecture. With a prior caravansary function, the Historical Complex of Saad-al-Saltaneh is the greatest and most complete urban caravansary in Iran. This historical complex includes many sectors, balconies, yards, a camel stable, a marketplace, a bathroom, and four corners. It is located in the east of Qazvin Market on Imam Khomeini Street (Administration of cultural Heritage of Qazvin, 2016). With an area of 22000m², this historical complex was established by Aqa Baqar Saad-al-Saltaneh, the then Isfahani ruler of Qazvin, at the end of Nasser al-Din Shah Qajar’s dynasty (1894 AD) (Mojabi, 2009: 240). Table 4 introduces different parts of this historical complex.

Research Conceptual Model and Hypothesis

In this study, it is assumed that the valuable physical of the building was considered in the phenomenological legibility of this historical complex due to the creation of a rich sensory experience, resulting in its current dynamism and livingness. In addition, the affinity with social contexts was taken into account with cultural implications and subjective and perceptual interpretations of the space in the eye of the audience to seek specific aspects of the complex in subjective and conceptual implications. Given the research hypothesis on the importance of affinity and the concept of place considering subjective, social, and cultural contexts in addition to the audience’s rich experience of the place, the proposed research methodology was the first-person and existential phenomenology approach at the site of the case study. Then, the coding technique was employed for data analysis to match theoretical studies and observations with the case study. Regarding inference and the principal components, data were freely divided into different sectors by using the open coding method after collecting information in the theoretical research framework. Then, the open codes were connected in a new combination based on similarities and differences by employing an axial coding method and considering the conditions and contexts in which codes would emerge (Strauss & Corbin, 2011:98; Zakai, 2002:63). The resultant codes were then summarized by employing a selective coding method in relation to

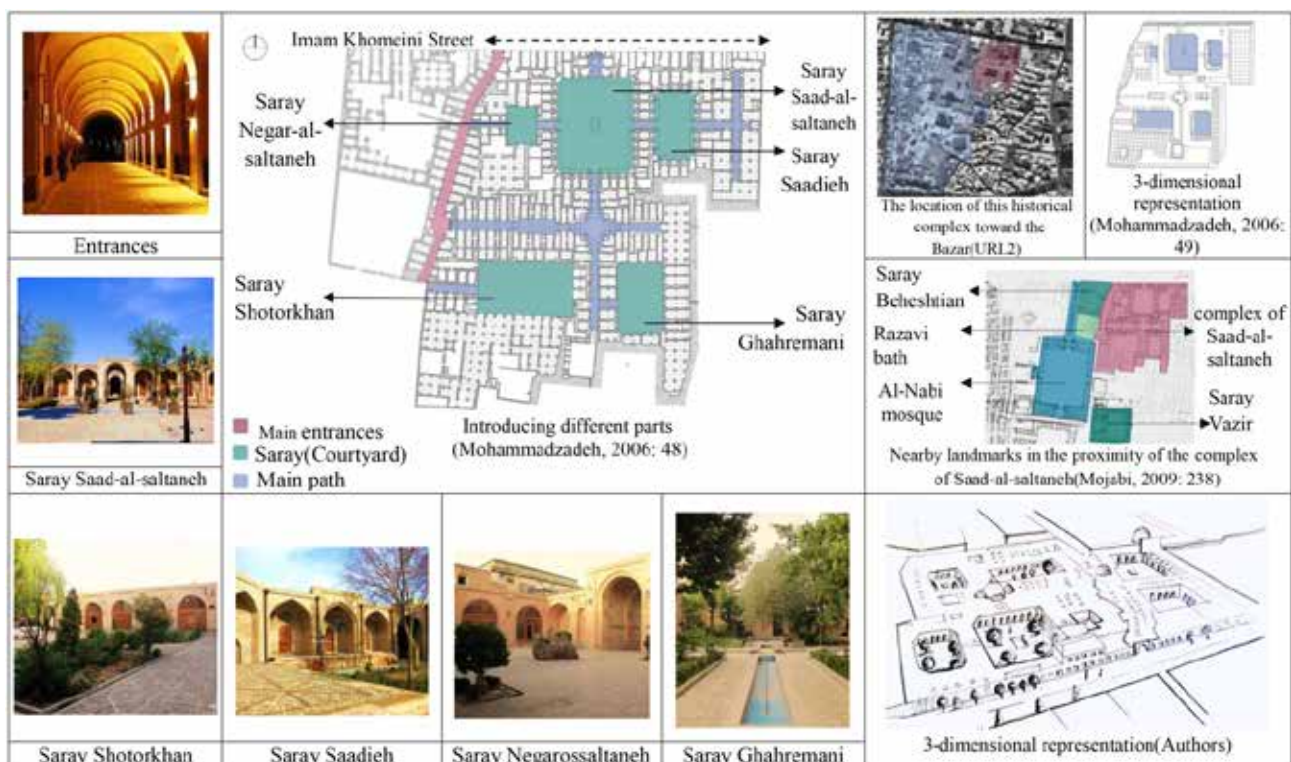
the main research topic by introducing the specific dimensions of spatial identity in subjective, cultural, and social aspects. Then, they were introduced in a complete way. Table 5 shows the final research components obtained from selective codes, research notes and observations, and citizen behaviors in the first-person and existential phenomenology approach to the case study. The research components were used to determine the effects of sociocultural and subjective contexts on the creation of the specific identity of the case study. In other word, codes of basic definitions were introduced in the theoretical foundations in three areas including place phenomenology, meaningfulness of architectural space, and phenomenology of place identity freely in the first step using open coding. Then, the axial coding technique was used to classify all of the previous codes as subjective-behavioral, cultural, and social aspects, based on similarities, differences, and emerging contexts in accordance with the concept of each code. They were introduced briefly. Then selective coding method was employed by collecting axial codes to achieve the research goal totally by considering a wide variety of subjects to summarize the research theoretical

structure. Due to matching the resultant theories with the case study, certain explanations were provided in the first-person and existential phenomenology approach based on notes, observations, audience’s behaviors, and important events in the case study. Finally, meaningful components of the Historical Complex of Saad-al-Saltaneh were introduced to match the conceptual dimensions of space in addition to subjective, cultural, and social aspects, based on selective codes, for the legibility of its specific identity.

Findings

Due to the interaction between appearance (physical features) and nature (social, historical, and cultural components), the Historical Complex of Saad-al-Saltaneh has a significant role in empowering the rich mental image in the minds of the audience. According to the research hypothesis, consistency with the audience subjectivity and specific sociocultural contexts of this building had a major role in introducing it in an urban space. Therefore, the research conceptual model and final codes pointed out the centrality of subjective, conceptual, cultural, and social components of a

Table 4. Introducing and Analyzing the Location of the Historical Complex of Saad-al-Saltaneh in Qazvin. Source: authors.



specific identity. Table 6 shows the research findings in the current conditions of the case study.

According to Table (6), based on selective codes and the first-person and existential phenomenology matching the features of the case study, the legibility of the unique identity of the Historical Complex of Saad-al-Saltaneh requires paying attention to physical, functional, and meaningful attributes. Such attributes are associated with the subjectivity and experience of the audience in addition to their perception of social and cultural components. The components of unique identity introduced the historical complex as empirical, perceptual, social, and public space. Such components are rich and relevant to the reaction and emotions of the audience experiencing a feeling of attachment and affinity between citizens having a familiar and durable memory in mind. The factors are also associated with the context and equipped with meaningful events and activities.

Conclusion

With a semantic analysis of the unique identity of historical spaces through a phenomenological approach to place identity, an interactive relationship could be seen between the unique identity of historical spaces, resultant sensory richness, and coordination of the place with subjective-behavioral, social, and cultural contexts. The current research path was based on the fact that association with social contexts of a place and cultural implications with subjective and perceptual interpretations of the space regarded as the principal components of the unique identity. Therefore, the special role of this complex was discussed in the form of a dynamic urban environment affected by subjective, cultural, and social implications associated merely with the valuable physical and general characteristics of the complex in the form of a public identity. Thus, the case study was regarded as an urban space to evaluate the selective components in the coordination of the current status of the Historical Complex of Saad-al-Saltaneh from a subjective and perceptual perspective.

According to the open, axial, and selective coding analysis and the phenomenological approach adopted in this study, the current role of the case study was evaluated in an important urban space by considering certain characteristics such as empirical space, perceptual diversity, attachment, affinity, tendency for experience, subjective familiarity, durability, space of events, social space, public space, and provoking nature. The research findings also indicated the sensory richness and quality of activities. The unique identity of the Historical Complex of Saad-al-Saltaneh could be generalized in an urban space based on the research hypothesis depending on specific dimensions.

It originated from subjective, cultural, and social implications in consistency with sensory experiences and physically-rich experiences to give identity to the place and let it live meaningfully (Fig. 2).

Therefore, the Historical Complex of Saad-al-Saltaneh plays a role in conveying its historical background to citizens – in the form of an architectural physical – along with the acceptance of ecological and cultural experiences and affinity with the lives of citizens. Hence, it has been moved beyond its physical meaning as a result of meaning evolutions in

Discussion

The research results of phenomenological approach to the Historical Complex of Saad-al-Saltaneh for the analysis of meaning dimensions and specific identity indicated the rich interaction and identity between the features of place along with the subjective interpretations of the audience. Such dimensions are also linked to social and cultural components, converting the current complex into a place with sustainable identity in an urban space in addition to maintaining the historical importance of the site. According to the analysis of the case study, the unique identity of this historical complex made the place a dynamic and unique space due to the effects on the placement and quality of activities, importance of national events, and creation of subjective images in the minds of citizen in comparison with other historical sites of the city. The unique identity of this site intended to rehabilitate the place for the use of citizens as an urban space.


urban functions such as the acceptance of participation of citizens and affinity with daily events of their lives. It has also achieved a dynamic identity encountering subjective-behavioral, historical, social, and cultural implications in a thought-provoking meaning.

Table 5. Research Conceptual Model: Analytical Indices of the Case Study in Consistence with Theoretical Studies and Field Observations. Source: authors.


| | Open Coding | Axial Coding (Code Relationships Based on Similarity, Differences, and Context) | Selective Coding (Completing Previous Codes for Research Purposes) | Codes of Observations and Events Occurring in Historical Collection of Saad-al-Saltaneh | Final Codes |
|---------------------------------------|--|--|--|--|---|
| Phenomenology of Concept and Place | Experience through Senses | Original Experience due to the use of senses | Audience's Subjectivity on the Place | - Observing various activities in the functional capabilities of the collection (artistic activities, relaxation, sight-seeing, satisfaction of requirements, etc.) | -Empirical Space |
| | Routine Experience | The Importance of Individual Awareness of the Space | The Quality of Audience's Experience of Place | -Ensemble of Individuals and Groups (Friendly Meetings and Communications) | - Perceptual Diversity in Experience |
| | Social Interactions | Innate and Subjective Characteristics | Perceptual Experience of Space or Feelings | -Livingness (observing different age groups: children, adolescents, the elderly) | -Attachment, Affection, and Tendency for Experience |
| | Activity | Feeling of Attachment | Attachment and Affinity with the Space | -A familiar and durable element in Urban Space (urban sign) in the eye of citizens | -Subjective Familiarity and Durability |
| | Importance of Individuals Awareness | Memorable and Familiar | Relationship with Historical Memory | -Capability of the collection in presenting itself to citizens and tourists who can visit and attend the space | |
| | Memory | Importance of User's Behavior in Encounter with the Place (understanding the effect of a place in a specific behavior of the audience) | The Effect of Special Quality of Space on the Audience's Behavior | -A public space for the simple acceptance of different strata (local people, artists, tourists, students, etc.) | |
| | Relevant to the Aspects of Individual Life | Relationships with Different Aspects of Individual Life | Emergence of Significant Events in the Space | -Affinity with the Place in the observation of simplicity and easiness of frequency of the audience, willingness to remain in the space and spend spare time at different times of the day | |
| Meaningfulness of Architectural Space | User Behavior in the Encounter with Place | Relationship with Values | Historical Values and Aspects | -Peace due to being away from chaos and the logical relationship with an open space (nature and its valuable physical) | -Space of Events |
| | Innate Feature | Considering Habits | Possibility of Social Interactions in the Space | -The interaction between Historical Collection of Saad-al-Saltaneh and sociocultural contexts (significant events such as national festivals; for instance, Nowruz, Yalda Night, etc.) | - Social Space |
| | History and Culture | Importance of Beliefs | Observing Diversity of Activities | -Willingness to experience the space and do sight-seeing to know it | -Public Space |
| | Habits | Importance of the Historical Aspect | Functional Richness in Cultural, Social, and Daily Events | -Affinity and coordination with placement contexts (Placement context: historical and central fabric of the city coinciding the continuous participation of citizens) | -Action Provoking Space |
| Phenomenology of Place Identity | Social Contexts | Inducing a Meaningful Concept through Symbols | | -A sensory experience which is rich in the experience of different parts (diversity in communication paths, motor circulation, and relationships between mass and space in the collection) | -coordination and Lack of Paradox with Context |
| | Subjective Dimensions | Meaningful Events | | -The capability of the collection to accompany the audiences with themselves (Observing different behaviors of the audience in different parts, hesitation, movement, etc.) | -Emotional Richness |
| | Activity and Function | Social Interactions | | -Stating the relationship between Spatial quality and audience's subjectivity | -Quality of Activities |
| | Beliefs and Values | Providing Activities | | | |
| | Providing Activities | Functional Richness in Social Context | | | |
| Phenomenology of Place Identity | Special Appearance | Coordination with Different Aspects of Social and Daily Life of the Audience | | | |
| | Having a Concept and Symbol | | | | |
| | Experience Subjectivity | | | | |
| Phenomenology of Place Identity | Attachment and Affinity | | | | |
| | Memorability | | | | |
| | Meaningful Event | | | | |

Table 6. Analysis of Research Components in the Historical Complex of Saad-al-Saltaneh. Source: authors.

| Components | Examples in the Case Study |
|---|---|
| Empirical space | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Willingness of the audience to look around in the complex and discover different parts for diversity in movement circulation and paths -Repetition of closed and open areas (sectors and central yards related to every sector) |
| Perceptual Diversity in Experience | <p>A rich spatial experience through five senses for the special application of materials and their features in the creation of different feelings for the audience in material, color, form, etc.; relationship with the nature and diversity of old and original functions such as carpentry workshops, carpet weaving techniques, etc.</p> |
| Attachment, Affinity, and Tendency for Experience | <p>Observing the feeling of attachment among the audience to the space through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Their reliable presence as a familiar spatial experience -Willingness and comfort in the behaviors of the audience to know different parts of the complex -Willingness to stay in the space and spend a long spare time at different hours of the day in the complex |
| Subjective Familiarity and Durability | <p>Introducing the complex as an urban symbol in the minds of the audience for durability</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Rehabilitating the previous mental image of the space in the minds of the audience -Converting the complex into a familiar element in the urban space for the audience to visit and attend |
| Atmosphere of Events | <p>Public reception of the complex in national, religious, and regional events held (Yalda Night, Nowruz, Qazvin Day Festival, etc.) in the Historical Complex of Saad-al-Saltaneh and the energetic presence of citizens due to the understanding of the association between such events and the atmosphere</p> |
| Social Space | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Social interactions -Ensemble of individuals and groups -Friendly encounters and meetings |
| Public Space | <p>Simple Acceptance of Opposing Strata(Local citizens, tourists, students, artists, etc)</p> |



Willingness to experience space




Sensory-Perceptual Experience




Willingness of the Audience to participate and spend time in the complex



A Familiar Element in the Minds of Citizens



(URL3) (URL1)
Reception of Citizens for the Qazvin Day Festival



Social Encounters and Interactions for Every Social Stratum

| | | | |
|--|---|--|--|
| <p>Action Provoking Space</p> | <p>-The capability of the complex to direct the behaviors of the audience based on key physical concepts -Observing the continuous movement in the space of directions, hesitations, and willingness to stop the audience in the space of four corners and central yards -Defining the movement hierarchy and directing the viewpoint of the audience through light holes of the ceilings, floors, and hallways towards open areas -Willingness to search for and discover different parts due to the unclear end of paths and repetition of open and closed areas</p> | | <p>Defining a Movement Hierarchy through Ceiling Light Holes</p> |
| <p>A Context Related Space</p> | <p>A function beyond historical space merely meant to match the complex and surrounding contexts (market and historical fabric of the city), and placement in relation to the market and an accessible passage between the historical complex to the market boundaries, sectors, and nearby streets due to the presence of citizens and dynamism of the complex</p> | | <p>An Accessible Passage between the Historical Complex of Saad-al-Saltaneh and the Market</p> |
| <p>A Space with Emotional Richness</p> | <p>-Livingness due to the observation of different age groups: children, adolescents, the elderly -Spatial peace away from chaos due to the spatially logical relationship between closed and open areas</p> | | <p>Presence of different age groups</p> |
| <p>A Space Equipped with the Quality of Activities</p> | <p>Observing various voluntary activities due to the functional capacities of the complex (artistic activities and handcraft workshops, recreation, visiting different sectors, museum and art gallery, sight-seeing, etc)</p> | | <p>(URL1) Observing Different Activities</p> |

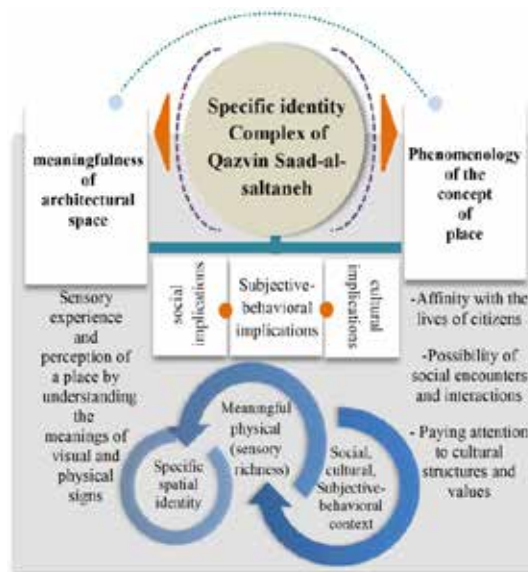


Fig. 2. Factors Affecting the Unique Identity of the Historical Complex of Saad-al-Saltaneh. Source: authors.

Endnote

1. The first-person phenomenology is based on the researcher's direct contact with and experience of the phenomenon (place) (Seamon, 2000: 163). The researcher has tried to identify the human, environmental, and architectural quality converting the site into a special place by taking a walk into the place, looking around, taking notes, and drawing sketches (Partovi, 2008: 169-170).
2. The existential phenomenology includes the expression of common aspects of individual experiences and those of groups in real and similar conditions and situations for generalization (Partovi, 2008:170).
3. In this study, the research analysis was based on open, axial, and selective coding methods introduced by Strauss and Corbin. In open coding, data are divided into separate sections for accurate evaluation so that their similarities and differences are determined. Briefly, it can be stated that data are split, analyzed, compared, and categorized in this step (Strauss & Corbin cited in Zakai, 2002:63; Abbaszadeh & Hosein pour, 2011:156).
4. In axial coding, the previously-split concepts are reconnected in a new combination. It is also clarified how a single category is related to other categories. Therefore, the contexts and conditions of an event are considered (Strauss & Corbin cited in Zakai, 2002:63; Strauss & Corbin, 2011:98).
5. In selective coding, the initially-codified categories of the theoretical framework are combined with each other. Therefore, the theoretical foundations of contexts are based on the relationships between different categories and the main category (Zakai, 2002:63; Abbaszadeh & Hosein pour, 2011:156).

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