An Experiential Study on Empathic Design in Interior Architecture Education

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ABSTRACT

Design students should be able to design living environments according to diverse users’ needs, problems and expectations. The research is to explore the role of empathy as a design learning in architecture education. Moreover, the intention is to determine and reflect after the role-playing technique is experienced. This study with the graduate design students and three tasks were assigned to first task, the students took visually impaired people’s role and activities in a café. Then, they expressed their role-playing reflections through semi-structured interviews. Lastly, Verbal Prot is used in determining and categorizing the relevant affective empathic expressions that were recorded. Color and light, orientation, accessibility were mostly expressed as design issues in reflections. Findings indicated that cognitive empathic expressions were with affective expressions.


1. Introduction

Designers have a responsibility to respond to diverse user’s needs, problems and expectations. In order to achieve this goal, designers need to empathize with users. Since empathic understanding serves designers in immersing in the lives, experiences and ways of living of the users. So, designers need to cognitive empathy and affective empathy. Strayer (1987) stated, cognitive perspective, empathy is either understanding the psychologist (i.e., their thoughts, intentions, feeling more specifically, their feelings). Affective empathy is a process of understanding others’ emotions and responding