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ASSESSMENT OF LANDSCAPE IMPACT ON WORSHIP: A FOCUS ON WORSHIPPERS' PERCEPTION

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Project: ASSESSMENT OF LANDSCAPE IMPACT ON WORSHIP: A FOCUS ON WORSHIPPERS' PERCEPTION

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Abstract

Landscape features exists in organized environments, like schools, residential buildings, offices, churches and other spaces where human beings inhabit for training, dwelling, work, and religious activities to mention a few respectively. In a religious environment like churches, the ambience, mood, sensual or psychological meanings created by landscape features differs from one another by the judgement of various worshippers. The aim of this study is to assess the worshippers' perception on the architectural landscape impact on their worship. The methodology engaged was qualitative approach. Also, data was collected from both primary and secondary sources. The study revealed significant perceptive impact indices of landscape design on worshippers' experiences like: inspiration for spiritual development, create atmospheric mood for worship, provision of spaces for gatherings and meetings outside the church buildings, environment of comfort for the worshippers, creates an atmosphere of godlines for worshippers' closeness to God, creates an effect on the psychology and mindset during worship, prepares the mind of worshippers for spiritual connectedness. It is therefore recommended that an ideal integrated approach be adopted; through

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WORSHIPPERS' PERCEPTION

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Abstract

Landscape features exists in organized environments, like s buildings, offices, churches and other spaces where human training, dwelling, work, and religious activities to mention a religious environment like churches, the ambience, mood psychological meanings created by landscape features differ the judgement of various worshippers. The aim of this study worshippers' perception on the architectural landscape imp The methodology engaged was qualitative approach. Also from both primary and secondary sources. The study reveal perceptive impact indices of landscape design on worshipp *inspiration for spiritual development, create atmospheric n provision of spaces for gatherings and meetings outside the environment of comfort for the worshippers, creates an atm for worshippers' closeness to God, creates an effect on the mindset during worship, prepares the mind of worshippers connectedness.* It is therefore recommended that an ideal ir adopted; through an inseparable architectural design-blend married with sustainable architectural masterpiece fitful for development. It suggested a holistic approach for other pla churches.

Keywords: Assessment, Impact, Landscape, Perception, W

1. Introduction

Assessment of landscape features in organized environments like school offices, churches and other spaces is important for advancement in progr way, progressive integration of landscape into a holistic design stimulates stimulus and evoke emotional responses, enhances well-being and orch both spiritual, physiological and psychological developments of individu of human endeavours. These activities include education training, environment religious buildings and environments. Specifically, in buildings like churches, temples or cathedrals, integrated landscap normally elicit a spectrum delivery of ambience, mood, sensual and psych

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worship; in order to improve users' satisfaction in church holistic architecture construction.

Globally, historic periods in the major parts of the year 2020 and the phobia to mankind by the noisome pandemic COVID-19 had left conspicuous fabrics of economy, political, educational, and psychological well-being timbers and calibers. But, aside religious bigotry and weightless criticist buildings with a well-integrated landscape designs had given great succor souls of worshippers in the time past. It is difficult to divorce from the realm the most intimate part of any spiritual being". Therefore, the spiritual effect outbreak cannot be neglected as the impulse injected by the pandemic made concern and panic, which engendered the actual epidemic of soul sickness

1.1 Physical, Psychic and Spiritual Effects of COVID-19 on Mankind

As at the present time, there are three categories of response to the humans physically, mentally and spiritually. The physical response emerged circumstantial phenomenon like self-isolation, social distancing and the second effect on human psyches, is experiential but accompanied with relief. Among many recommendations and escape roots are yoga, meditation, attendant regular experience of joy and comfort in one's life [6]. These practices embedded in an atmosphere of worship and much more in a well-landscaped environments. The spiritual effect of the outbreak is the third level of pandemic neglected by locking down churches and other religious centers. In the resolution-less global landscape when the daily statistics of death, quarantine discharge figures are on the increase - it evokes deep emotions and corrodes human souls. It is emergent at this point to realise that Spiritual well-being people's daily lives, and with the decline of organized religion, millions of sick soul, weariness of heart, existential dread and a sinking feeling [6], they in the face of clueless political, economic and medical helplessness. They seek for solutions that would engender spiritual vis-à-vis psychological through the weaponry and artillery of well-equipped integrated landscape buildings- in order to foster good experiences for worshippers globally.

1.2 Conceptual Definitions of Integrated Landscape, Mankind and Architecture

The word 'landscape' with diverse objective and abstract ideas and broader physical angles has consistently been of extraordinary enthusiasm to specialists identified with ecology, geography, urban design, landscape architectural disciplines [12]. Landscapes have become largely domesticated as the world populated and controlled by humans which results in the alteration of environment. Increasing population growth has led to significant ecological and environmental the world, without the exception of depletion of biodiversity, global warming, erosion, water pollution and air contamination, and deterioration of minerals.

According to United Nations [16], a large part of projected population growth

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will be built at all times. Hence, global sustainability will be more dependent on architecture, planning and management, which will result in landscapes built for sustainability [18]. Landscape architecture, a contextual discipline that integrates various disciplines and theories. It is described as the understanding of nature with a focus on design with an aim to make good and aesthetic outdoor spaces [10]. Landscape architecture is defined by the American society of Landscape Architects [4]:

"Landscape architecture encompasses the analysis, planning, design, and stewardship of the natural and built environments. Types of projects include parks and recreation; monuments; urban design; streetscapes and public spaces; transit corridors and facilities; gardens and arboreta; security design; hospital and institutional; academic campuses; therapeutic gardens; historic preservation; reclamation; conservation; corporate and commercial; landscape art and architecture; and landscapes; and more."

Landscape is gradually becoming a noteworthy matter in spatial architecture due to open air and outdoor convenience and the leisure economy. This trend is influenced by various philosophies in the development of sustainable landscape, where the first is focused on preservation of landscape elements, while the second highlights functional links among ecosystem services as well as human comfort. Landscape architecture discusses conservation and preservation of existing features, as well as the creation and alteration of landscape characters (Simon, 2012). In spite of the variety of many societies across the globe, ethnographical accounts reveal popular human-dominated world and the divine and spiritual dimensions intersect, therefore birthing the ideology of "spiritual landscape" or "sacred geographical space". Potent places, pathways, rivers, gardens, mountains and other natural features in "spiritual landscapes" highlight the attachment and link in-between spiritual and physical location in the landscape [1].

Landscape, as a concept tends to be defined or used in three ways. Firstly, landscape can be used in the realism of natural environment, which includes a variety of other natural terrains [9]. Secondly, landscape can also be used to represent unique characteristics. Landscape magnifies the importance of natural features [5]. Lastly, the landscape can also describe neither an organic phenomenon nor a societal image, but a historic system of amalgamation between people and the environment wherein they are fashioned. There is an integration of the environment and the landscape [15]. Landscapes are progressive, historic sites and paths. They are intertwined with human life in a cycle of relentless dynamism [7]. Hence, there is a distinct difference that can be obtained with regards to the "natural" characteristics wherein a "social and cultural" representation is engrained in the landscape [2]. This may seem like an unusual statement to make. However, when Southeast Asian landscapes are observed, one would comprehend the essence of the relationship between Landscapes and human existence are intertwined in dynamic ways [11]. Sites are bound up with ideas and behaviors relating to location of anthropology, religion, relationship and morality. This can be undoubtedly observed in e

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locations at varying levels and in varying ways. Landscape adds value to people and these involve economic values (farm produce and tourism) (ecosystems, and environment value for species), social values, cultural and spiritual values [13].

1.3 Didactics and Dynamics of Spiritual Landscape- Church Architecture

The concept of Spiritual landscape focuses both to the way people and energies and people's attitudes displayed to the unseen or unknown realm. Spiritual landscapes are associated with the tension between existence, efficiency, formation and interpretation of something intangible experienced [3]. The concept of spiritual landscapes creates opportunities to be granted the duty of spiritual roles, even in the ever-dynamic state of habitation. Hence, a major benefit of the idea of spiritual landscape from anthropological perspectives to the importance of "holy" places and landscapes said to be 'sacred' or 'spiritual' if it is thought that it possesses certain power, reverence or rituals. The idea of spiritual landscapes is directly related to the concept of Spiritual landscape defines a view of the world that is distinct from the everyday life. A spiritual landscape does not compulsorily identify as 'religious' a place of deaths or burials as a result of or during military conflict. People engage in spiritual activities with spiritual landscapes, or in a more contemporary way, in their everyday life. Sacred natural sites are physical structures and natural landscapes including mountain tunnels, rivers that are distinguished as holy by ideals of culture. The ideas of 'sacred sites' and 'ancestor worship' inspired by Christianity, attitude and meditation towards an ancestral, aboriginal and other spiritual landscapes.

In a nut shell, to capture the essence of this study, a well- integrated methodology is considered in the church architectural designs for conceptual framework and methodology of this work. More so, the two terms "effect" and impact were considered in this study.

2. Methods and Materials

The methodology employed a qualitative approach. The instrument included guides and observation schedule. Also, data was collected from both primary and secondary sources. The study population included the selected church buildings and members of study. Also, the data was also collected from interview conducted with church personnel connected to the church; they were Architects, Clergymen and church members. A total of 50 respondents were interviewed and these respondents comprises of 15 architects and 35 church members. A limitation faced in this study was that a few respondents were unable to be interviewed adequately as they were busy exiting the church. It was not easy to link up with a few architect-designers who did the design work. These led to less amount of information than expected in the study work.

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The findings were based on the conceptual framework of this study and extracted from the interview guides and observation to capture the essence. There were eight questions in all, they were: (i) Have you been involved in design or Orthodox church landscape design? (ii) Do you incorporate landscape elements in the design of orthodox churches? (iii) What elements do you integrate? (iv) Why did you integrate these elements? (v) How do these landscapes benefit users? (vi) Do you think the addition of landscape to your church benefits worship? (vii) Would you prefer to worship in a church with or without landscape? (viii) Do you enjoy praying or having spiritual activities outdoors, in a garden of yes, why?

3.1 Landscape Elements in Church Architectural Designs

In question 1, “have you been involved in any Orthodox church design or landscape design? 100% of the architects interviewed have at one point or another been involved in the design and construction of Orthodox churches. In question 2, “Do you incorporate landscape elements in the design of orthodox churches”? Results: 100% of the architects interviewed, incorporate landscape elements into their Orthodox church design. In question 3, “what elements do you integrate into the design of Orthodox churches? 100% of the architects interviewed, integrate a combination of hardscape and softscape elements into their designs. It was discovered from the research that different architects integrate different aspects and elements of landscape elements. 100% of the architects interviewed, integrate a greater attention to car parks, curbs and in some cases, walkways. Figure 1 shows the percentage of landscape elements that the architects interviewed integrate in their designs of Orthodox churches. As in Figure 1, 100% of the architects interviewed, reported to have integrated extensive uses of walkways and car parks in their designs of Orthodox churches (as in Figure 1). 100% of the architects interviewed, testified to the use of vegetation in their designs, while only 20% incorporate pavilions. Of all the architects interviewed, none of them have introduced water bodies in their designs of Orthodox churches.

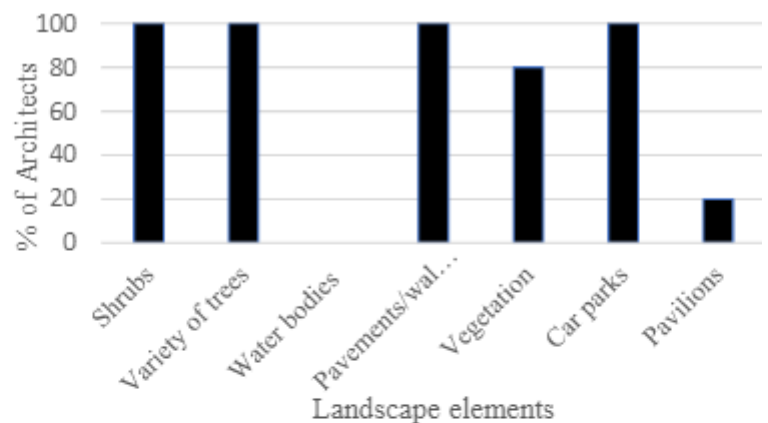


Figure 1: Landscape elements

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During the interview, it was asked in question 4 that “Why did you integrate these elements into the architectural designs of churches?” The interview guides revealed that the architects integrate these elements into their designs like (i) the need to infuse nature and life into the buildings, (ii) the need for a natural arrangement, (iii) the need for aesthetics, and (iv) the need for a natural and efficient design for efficiency purposes. These were ingredients considerable in holistic design.

3.3 Effect or Impact of Landscape on Worshippers' Experiences

Question 5 helped to advance the investigation by asking “How do these landscape elements affect the worshippers/ users experience?” and it revealed six (6) indices with which architects integrate these elements to enhance the architectural designs of churches. The respondent (architects) revealed that these elements have effects on the worshippers. The impact highlighted were as follows: (a) Landscape creates a space for gatherings and meetings outside the church building, (b) Landscape creates an environment of comfort for the worshippers, (c) Landscape creates a sense of Godliness which should make the worshippers feel closer to God, (d) Landscape affects the psychology and mindset when it comes to worship, (e) Landscape creates a conducive place that prepares the mind for worship, and (f) Landscape enhances the beauty of the church.

3.4 Future Aspirations of Holistic Church Architecture

Although, in spite of the constraints and limitations posed by church management, the respondent (Architects) were also asked (Question 7-What type of landscape elements do you aspire to integrate in church architecture?) about their aspirations to improve church architecture and landscape integration. Majority asserted that if opportunity comes in the nearest future, they will integrate landscapes that will have vast lawns, sit-outs, an array of flowering trees, and various shapes for church architecture. It was also stated that there are compatible landscape elements that may create an ambience of closeness and immediacy to the worshippers.

3.5 Attendance to Landscape in Church Architectural Design

In question 8 when asked “How much attention do you pay to landscape elements in church architecture?” All the architects interviewed responded that a great deal of attention is paid to the design of landscape in church architecture depending on the available landscape elements.

The reactions from the respondents-clergymen like Priests, Seminarians and Deacons were as follows:

As requested in Question 1, “are there any landscape practices in place in your churches?” All the priests interviewed claim to have landscape practices in their churches. However, the extent of these practices varies from church to church, from the presence of a single tree to the presence of a well design landscape.

3.6 Nature and Pattern of the Existing Landscape

The results in figure 2 answered the questions asked about “what is existing in your churches?” The results harnessed from the interviews conducted with the priests revealed that 50% of the priests suggested that there were shrubs, hedges, waterbodies, and trees present in their churches. 100% of the priests expressed that there were a

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are pavements, walkways, road networks, statues, and sit-outs in their chu

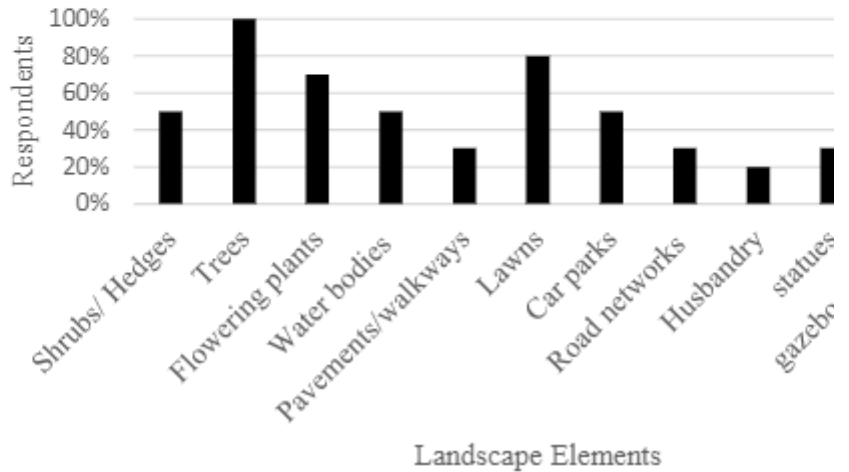


Figure 2: Type of Landscape elements

3.7 Effectiveness of Landscape Practices in the Design of Church Arcl

In response to how the effectiveness of the existing landscape practice, it is claimed that the landscape practices in their various churches are claimed to have numerous ways. Some respondents reported that the landscape practices for the organization. Some also reported that the present landscape practices create a pleasant church environment. Some respondents also reported that the landscape practices promote spiritual reflection and recreation. While others described the present landscape practices as insufficient, however, being effective to a certain extent.

In response to question 4 on the impact of worship on spiritual inclination, 80% of respondents reported that the presence of landscape in their church environment affects their worship while only 20% of the respondents differed in their opinions. It is reported that 80% of respondents stated that the presence of landscape in their churches affects their worship impacts are as follows: (i) The creation of a conducive environment, (ii) the promotion of liturgy, (iii) promotion of cleanliness which is next to Godliness, (iv) encouragement and reflection, (v) creation of a mental, physical and spiritual ambience, and (vi) personal concentration in spiritual realm, (vi) the presence of landscape is beneficial.

Question 5 investigated the landscape elements believed to have an effect on worship. The results reveal the various landscape elements that could potentially affect the worship positively. 86% of the respondents stated that the presence of shrubs, hedges, and trees in the landscape of their churches has affected their worship. 100% of the respondents stated that the presence of trees, flowering plants and lawns in their churches has affected their worship. 80% of respondents stated that the presence of pavements, walkways, car parks, statues and sit-outs in their churches affects their worship, and another 38% stated that it was the presence of the husbandry that affected their worship and 25% claim the road network also affects their worship. 30% of respondents expressed that a combination of all these elements in their churches affects their worship.

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
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