

RECOGNITION OF THE CONCEPT OF URBAN IDENTITY THROUGH THE PLACE ATTACHMENT CASE STUDY: KONYA, ALAADDIN HILL

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ABSTRACT

The “place attachment” is a definition by the meeting point of activities, functional elements, and abstract meanings of the place. A place can come to the scene by the place attachment which has emotional and behavioral characteristics for people. Squares, plays an important role in conceptual, functional and physical aspects at the point of increasing the quality of urban spaces. In this context, it is an important issue to consider the impressive factors that connect people to the space and the square, in the case that the squares are desired, preferred and identity-possessed. This research examines the concept of place attachment through the process of environmental psychology, explains the factors of feeling belonging to the place, and examines the role of place in the formation of the desired and identifiable urban squares. It is based on a cognitive approach aimed at evaluating space perception on Alaaddin Hill in Konya city. This research and field study was carried out by observation and questionnaire on square users, and as well as by analyzing descriptive and inferential statistics. The findings of the study show that most of the users have place attachment. Thus, the user's perception and mind, proves that this square has an impressive role in gaining identity. The article thus prove that there is a relationship between place attachment and space identity, which can be addressed in the design of urban squares.

Alaaddin Mosque from the Seljuk period is at the center of this square and is considered as an important factor in the user's place attachment. The easy and convenient access to the meadow enhances, the presence of trees, plants and landscapes, cafes, walking routes, located in the square of the city center and appropriate abstract and concrete landscapes increases the feeling of being connected to the place. It is expected that the results of this research will be effective in designing new squares of contemporary cities.

Keywords: Place attachment, Spatial Identity, Environmental Psychology, Social Interaction, Alaaddin Hill.

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1. INTRODUCTION

The creation of strenuous, boring and unqualified urban spaces has become an indispensable feature of contemporary cities. The emotional, cognitive and behavioral interaction of the place where the people live is defined as one of the most important dimensions of the relationship between human and space, called "place attachment" (Pirbabaei and Et al, 2015). Today, people's feelings and imagination about the place has changed because of the inconvenient and inappropriate development and weakening of the desire for attachment to the place. In most cases, changing the physical environment (Function and Activities) has led to the loss of space values and space concepts. This research explains the importance of the attachment to space in the process of acquiring space in a public, cultural and social environment. Thus, it identifies and explores the characteristics of urban squares in order to perceive the factors that affect the user's commitment to urban squares. In this context, the Alaaddin Square, which has social, physical and historical values in the city of Konya, has been chosen as an example for evaluating the principles of establishing the institutions and thus designing the squares in contemporary cities through more appropriate subjects and methods.

2. THEORETICAL BASICS

2.1. Place Attachment

Attachment (loyalty, commitment) in literature means love, passion, friendship and inclination. Place attachment or a sense of belonging to place is a multidimensional and interdisciplinary concept that connects people and space. Today, the concept of place attachment, provides an important role and impact based on research in design, psychology, environmental psychology, cognitive psychology, sociology and communication. This concept means the chain between human and the environment (Sajjadzadeh, 2013).

Place attachment is the emotional bond between person and place and is a main concept in environmental psychology. It is highly influenced by an individual and his or her personal experiences. There is a considerable amount of research dedicated to defining what makes a place "meaningful" enough for place attachment to occur. Schroeder (1991) notably discussed the difference between "meaning" and "preference," defining meaning as "the thoughts, feelings, memories and interpretations evoked by a landscape" and preference as "the degree of liking for one landscape compared to another."

Place attachment is organized in a three-dimensional framework (Scannell and Et al, 2010). The spatial dimension of place attachment includes spatial arrangements and physical-social features of the space. Process dimension of place attachment involves the emotional, cognitive, and behavioral dimensions and the individual dimension of place attachment focuses on social or individual concepts (Pirbabaei and Et al, 2015).

According to the nature of place attachment, people are involved in space both in individually and socially relation. Individually, this relationship involves the individual's personal experience of the space. For example, the environment and space can stimulate the individual's private and personal memory (Twigger and Uzzell, 1996). The research on private and personal memory is examining "Memory of the past". Memory of the past includes memories, individual knowledge, and individual meaningful experiences, and is important in the formation of the individual's personal identity (Conway and Playdell-Parce, 2000). Thus, the level of place attachment varies from person to person (Riley, 1992), and individuals choose places based on conscious preferences resulting from their personal characteristics (Low and Mc Donogh, 2001).

Social attachment on place focuses on cultural values, common historical symbols, and experiences of the place among people. Culturally, social memory causes individuals to adapt themselves to systematic thinking, beliefs, and cultural purposes (Conway, 2000). Researchers such as "Low" and "Altman" (1992) in the spatial dimension have emphasized interactions and socio-cultural relations by emphasizing the social role of the space and have examined a kind of dependence in terms of social dependence, and memories of humans (Low and Altman, 1992).

"Riger" and "Lavrakas" (1981) reported the importance of physical attachment in their research. According to this theory, a person remembers the environment together with its physical components. Proshansky (1983) defines the physical elements of the human being as a part of the social element of the environment, which emphasizes "the identity of the place" and defines the cause of human interaction with space and environment. According to this idea, physical elements are the parts of individual and mental identity. According to Rappaport (2005), attachment to the place is shaped by social-cultural-physical symbols. Person discovers these symbols according to their cultural memory and rituals and establishes personal and individual relationships with the environment.

The dimension of process describes how the interaction of individuals with their social and physical location and their attachment to the environment are in the form of cognitive, behavioral and emotional interactions (Bonaiuto and Et al, 1999: 29-32). As time goes on, human-space relation becomes enriched and cognitive, behavioral and emotional interaction takes place (Brown and Perkins, 1992). Meanwhile, the emotional connection of the individual depends on the individual's judgements, experiences, preferences, and how he recognizes the place (Conway, 2004). Thus, attachment to the place depends on the positive feelings and beliefs that the individual interacts with in the place (Milligan, 1998).

Table 1: Dimensions of Place Attachment

Dimensions of Place Attachment		
Space	Process	Person
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Spatial arrangements • Physical factors • Social factors • Cultural interaction • Individual-mental identity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emotional, Cognitive, Behavioral interaction • Emotional connection • Individual experience • Individual preference 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Personal memory • Social memory and experience • Cultural values • Historical symbols

2.2. Spatial Identity

The identity of the space is defined in a "self" concept and expresses the individual identity of the person consciously and unconsciously with respect to the space by means of beliefs, preferences, emotions, goals, behavioral inclinations. The identity of the space reflects the special place where the individual and even the groups live, depending on the socialization of the individual's special experience (Sajjadzadeh, 2013). The physical environment creates values and concepts for them through interdependent concepts such as individual's internal psychology and social processes (Canter, 1977: 159). According to Altman, place attachment depends on the emotions of the people and the experiences they have gained through the cultural activities of the place where they live (Altman & Low, 1992). The identity of the place means a sort of emotional relationship based on the symbolic importance of the place. This identity imparts meaning and concept to the individual's life in the form of feelings (Williams & Vaske, 2003: 330). Research on the sense of space is based on three concepts - place attachment, space adaptation and space identity (Stedman, 2003). However, attention has not

been paid to the meaning and the identity of spaces that have a strong sense of space and a sense of commitment to space. The perception of the space is an experimental current. So the elements that connect people to a place in the process of perceiving this current need to be examined.

2.3. Features of Place Attachment

The features of place attachment are discussed in different theories. Place attachment consists of environmental features and mental facts of individuals. This concept occurs from the physical reflection and the evaluation of the user, and every person perceives this concept according to his / her own experiences (Riley, 1992). Therefore, the level of place attachment has a direct link with people behaviours and social characteristics of the users, and how they relate to each other in the space and to the common contribution of social activities (Sajjadzadeh, 2013). In this way, people's social classifications as kinship, regional relations, economic classifications, lifestyle, etc., play an important role in the constant existence of human in the place. It is not easy to break up from the place due to this positive interaction and the feeling of social connection.

If a space is felt entirely by the users and satisfies their functional needs, at the same time adapting to their behavioral goals, a profound connection can be established between the space and the user (Williams, 1995: 85). Thus, the feeling of place attachment occurs by the interaction between people and space, and from environmental features that motivate the human to operate a space. In this context, the designer should be aware of the need for a psychological response to the change of urban centers affected by global cultures and forms, and incorporate the features and dimensions of the place attachment into the design. According to this situation, important factors of place attachment can be shown in the Figure 1

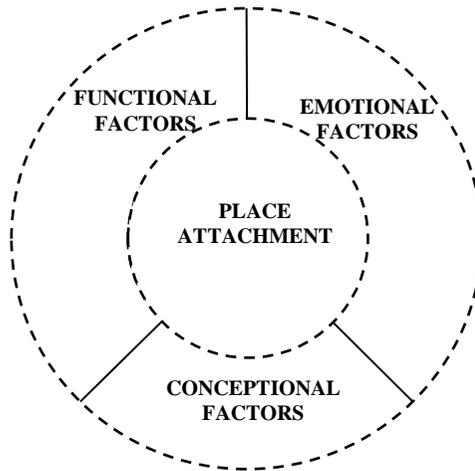


Figure 1: Conceptual frame of place attachment (Sajjadzadeh, 2013)

2.3.1. Conceptual Factors

Place attachment can be found in its own meaning if there is a relation between environment and place. In this context, meaning is connected to the perceptual and psychological aspects of environmental experience, and place attachment in such a context means the point of contact between the individual and the environment (Hernandez, 2001: 121). According to Stedman,

the symbolic concepts of the space is connected to the space and it has an important role (Stedman, 2003: 682). Establishment of social interaction causes people to perceive a place.

2.3.2. Functional Factors

This factor is to provide the needs of the users based on the nature of the space, and it depends on the past experiences of the person in space, how to manipulate the space, and behavioral characteristics (Willams & Vaske, 2003: 18).

2.3.3. Emotional Factors

The establishment of an emotional relationship with the interior of the place is the basic and essential characteristics of the place attachment. This will enable a permanent and impressive connection to the living space, and in such a situation the user will find himself in a relaxed and calm environment (Hernandez, 2001: 121).

3. METHODOLOGY

It has been investigated with various approaches as a psychological phenomenon related to environment and people. Researchers work in this field have examined the human living environment and human daily behavior, and have brought to bear the basic theories of space and environment. The article is based on documentary studies, observations, surveys and explanatory methods. In the documentary section, the concept of the place for the methodology of the research was considered to establish a suitable theoretical framework about identity and place attachment. In this way, environmental psychology studies will be explained with reference to the factors of institutional commitment, followed by the evaluation of the study area by taking observation survey and inferential statistics.

Age, occupation, social, sexual, etc., to increase the reality and validity coefficient of the study. The proper selection of groups was taken into consideration. Therefore, 50 questionnaires with 8 questions suitable for the purpose of the research were designed and circulated among the users calm in Konya. The average age of the users is between 25 and 60 and half of the number is selected as female half male. This survey was conducted among people in Konya whose average life span is between 10 and 30 years and most of them have defined this square.

4. DESCRIPTION OF STUDY AREA

Alaaddin Hill is located in between historical city center, Mevlana museum and new city center. And also this hill is an intersection for public transportation, turistic tours and shopping bazaars. The location of the hill is shown in Fig.1.

Alaaddin Hill is an artificial man-made hill that was built by the Seljuk Sultan Alaaddin Keykubat. The hill was 450 x 350 meters long and 20 meters high and was one of the protohistoric settlements called the mound. Fig.2.



Figure 1: The location of Alaaddin Hill.



Figure 2: The ancient Alaaddin Hill. (<http://www.superaktif.net/gezi/konya-alaaddin-tepesi>)

Today it stands right in the middle of the city, and serves mostly as a park. Hill has variable functions as museum, mosque, coffee and recreation. And also there are several ongoing historic archaeological excavations and an old structure is protected from the elements with a concrete umbrella. Fig.3. Fig.4.



Figure 3: The Alaaddin Palace, mosque and the old castle structure

(<http://konyalife.com.tr/haber/alaaddin-tepesi-efsanesi.html>)



Figure 4: The Alaaddin Hill,
(<http://gezdimdegeldim.com/konya-center-trip-2/>)

5. THE EVALUATION PLACE ATTACHMENT OF STUDY AREA

Three groups of questions were prepared in a formal, functional, and semantic way to evaluate the effect of attachment to an establishment in an identifiable place and tested among users. Positive feelings about emotional characteristics, sentimentality, love, pride, interest and sensitivity were measured. Concepts such as dependency, satisfaction, convenience, various activities, meeting daily necessities were evaluated. Concepts such as identity and cultural communication, physical and cultural ratios, places to meet and interact with people, and places where memories are formed were evaluated in the field of meaningfulness. Table 2.

Table 2: Evaluation of emotional, functional – physical and semantic indicators.

EMOTIONAL (pride, interest, emotional attention)	FUNCTIONAL (commitment, satisfaction, comfort)	CONCEPTUAL (culture, belief, quantity, interaction)
Proud of square	Ability to characterize a square	Cultural events in the square
Positive senses with square	Mental image belonging to square	Introducing people with each other
To feel a part of square	Qualification of physical changes	People's daily communications
Get used to square	Functional images of the square	People's beliefs and customs
Be sensitive to the change of places	A place suitable for relaxation	Cultural and physical symbols
Interaction with space	A convenient place to meet daily necessities	Having memorable effects in the square

Findings: The amount of obtained bar graph, relativity and absolute frequency were examined and the effect of triplicity was classified and evaluated in the attachment of place. The variables of spatial dependence and the effect of these variables on challenge identity were examined in a triple group such as 'Emotional', 'Functional', and 'Semantic' (table 3). Places show significant coefficients of ternary variables on attachment. Square reflects the continuous cultural identities of Konya. Both the physical organization and the structure and the activities influence the opinions of the users on the place. Emotional and social concepts provide the continuity and identity of the space. Cultural and social relations, people's historical memory and individual experiences strengthen the sense of belonging to the place and the commitment to the place. Table 3.

Table 3: Level of emotional, functional, semantic dependence.

EMOTIONAL DEPENDENCE	FUNCTIONAL DEPENDENCE	SEMANTIC DEPENDENCE
I love the square very much	It is beautiful to travel and have fun	It's the perfect place to relax
The square is filled with memories for me	The environment of the square is very comfortable and reliable	Suitable for Turkish identity
I am proud of the square	Access is easy	I can make cultural connections
I am constantly walking around the square	The challenge is very important to me	I can meet new friends
I enjoy staying in the square	I can enter the following streets from 4 sides	Appropriate space for conversation and interaction
I am safe in the square	Drink tea and coffee and make purchases	People who are missing in the center immediately address it

5.1. The Impact of Emotional Characteristics of Users on Place Attachment

The findings of the study show that there is a close relationship between the spaces and the emotional dependence. Green spaces, old trees, the organization of the square and its formation on the hill and its geometry have separated this area from other parts of the city and have made its adherence to the places of the users. The pride, boast about the emotional dependency was answered by the users. The duration of stay and the use of the place are directly related to the degree of place attachment. Employees in the square or the urban people who have been using it for a long time have a better sense of emotional dependence because of their better detailed description. There is a meaningful relationship between sense of pride and sense of comfort in the square and feeling of being in the square according to the table 4.

Table 4: The relation between place attachment and emotional factors such as; Sense of honor, tranquility and pleasure.

EMOTIONAL CHARACTERISTICS	SENSITIVE RATIO
Sense of pride	% 34
Sense of trust	% 67
Enjoying the stay process(Pleasure)	% 86

5.2. The Impact of Functional and Spatial Factors on Place Attachment

The square has a variety of spatial and functional qualities (cafes, mosques, tea garden, tulip garden) which enable the users to use this space continuously. The feeling of place attachment is directly connected with a strong and impressive feeling of satisfaction. Thus, the users and the citizens perceive the square as multi-layered and enjoyable. In this context, the sense of peace and trust is important in ensuring the satisfaction of the locals. Table 5.

Table 5: The relation between place attachment and functional factors such as; accessibility, diversity and possibility to sit and shopping.

FUNCTIONAL FACTORS	SENSITIVE RATIO
Accessibility	% 77
Functional diversity	% 69
Stay and communication	% 73
Shopping	%28

5.3. The Impact of Semantic Factors on Place Attachment

The venues of the square have a significant role in place attachment to engage and interact with the users. The factors increasing the effects and importance of place attachment and the criterias of increasing the interaction and daily activities of urban people are;

- The fact that the Alaaddin Mosque is one of the beautiful works of the Selcuk period,
- The factor of the mosque has an appropriate dimensions according to human scale
- The hill and square has relevant openness, width, hide, height and slope.
- The variable cultural and commercial buildings and arrangements.

The individual conceptualizm and continiously experience in place is important for the sence of place attachment. The people imagine the images of square in their minds in order to build dependence between space and human. The Alaadin Mosque has a special role in the identification in mind and identification of the city as a beautiful urban symbol, and the green

areas surrounding it increase the identity of the square as a form of inviting and appealing elements and increase the level of it in place attachment.

Thus, the myths, symbols, monuments, social, historical and cultural constructions are defined as important conceptual factors in the identity of the square and the city. This urban square has obtained its identity throughout history, social events, people's existence, memories, past experiences and physical organization. According to table 6, there is a meaningful ratio between the physical identity, the identification of the personal interaction and the possibility of meeting opportunity. There is a meaningful relationship between emotional, semantic (conceptual) and functional factors according to the relationship between inferential statistics and the factors of place attachment. These data evaluated according to Spearman's correlation coefficient (Spearman correlation test) and 0/01 alpha coefficient (Table 6), and the factors of commitment directly influence each other. Thus, results such as the Figure 2 have been obtained.

Table 6: The relation between square attachment and semantic characteristics such as; physical identity, familiar persons and the opportunity to meet.

SEMANTIC FACTORS	SENSITIVE RATIO
Physical Identity	% 61
Personal interaction	% 83
Meeting opportunity	% 54

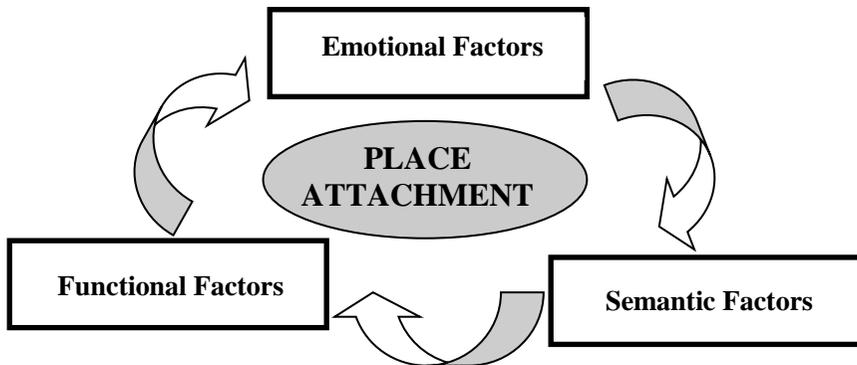


Figure 2: Spearman correlation test for examining the relation between emotional, semantic and functional attachments

6. CONCLUSION

Place attachment concept taken into account in environmental research and psychology. Place attachment and sense of commitment to place is emotional effectness of place. This concept is a kind of attraction individually in terms of emotional, social and cultural. In fact it is a symbolic relation between human and space by its emotional and internal activities. In other words, it contains cultural common and emotional meanings.

This research has shown that "Emotional", "Functional" and "Conceptual" factors play an important role in place attachment, sense of belonging, and identity of urban squares. On the other hand, there is a direct relationship between these factors. These are about the emotional

factors and their effectiveness in attachment to the urban squares: "prosperity", "comfort" and "social and individual memory" have an impressive significance in the identity of the place. The square has actually a human-oriented meaning. Hence, the meeting and interaction of people in this place increases the mental images and communal identity of the urban people. With existing activities in the urban squares, meeting the expectations of the users and meeting their physiological, social and economic needs can be discussed as an important aspect of the place attachment. On the other hand, the functional and operational factors influence the ratio of the place attachment.

Individual and social experiences constitute mental concepts of square and urban spaces. For example, being a permanent place, using the place, social interaction, being proud of the place (the identity of the place), location and spatial characteristics of the place affect the mental processes so the urban memory is formed by these factors. In this way, the components of the place attachment related to urban squares can be explained in the 3rd Figure format.

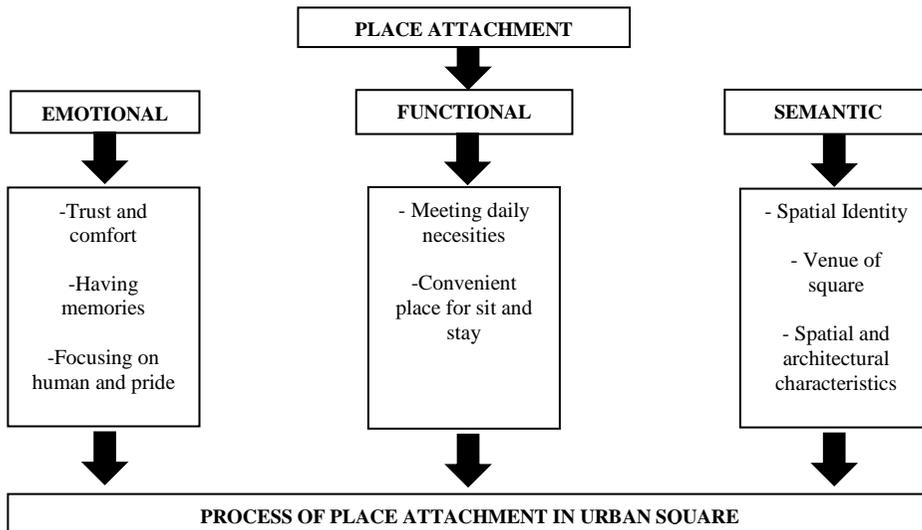


Figure 3: The process of place attachmnet in urban square

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