



Woman in Development and Politics

Identifying the Dimensions and Components Affecting the Formation of Desirable Urban Spaces for Women by Using the Meta-Analysis Method

Mana Vahid Bafandeh¹ | Melika Vahid Bafandeh² | Javad Imani Shamloo³

1. Department of Urban Planning, Faculty of Architecture and Urbanism, Tabriz Islamic Art University, Tabriz, Iran. E-mail: ma.vahidbafandeh@tabriziau.ac.ir
2. Department of Architecture, Faculty of Architecture and Urbanism, Ferdowsi University of Mashhad, Mashhad, Iran. E-mail: melika.vahidbafandeh@mail.um.ac.ir
3. Corresponding Author, Department of Urban Planning, Faculty of Architecture and Urbanism, Tabriz Islamic Art University, Tabriz, Iran. E-mail: j.imani@tabriziau.ac.ir

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ABSTRACT

Introduction

Many urban environments and spaces are designed with a male dominance focus. The effects of this imbalance are evident in all cities: from dark and dimly lit passages, high walls that create a feeling of confinement and insecurity, to neighborhoods with public transportation planning that does not align with women's programs. Women often appear in urban spaces as caregivers of children and families, balancing multiple duties and responsibilities simultaneously. Therefore, creating desirable urban spaces for them is considered a fundamental issue and priority. The design of urban spaces currently does not align with women's desires, and cities remain "gender blind" when it comes to urban territories. According to what has been stated, the main problem addressed in this research is the lack of alignment between urban spaces and the needs of women in various societies. This issue should be addressed by recognizing the roles and responsibilities of this segment of society, leading to the design of various urban spaces and environments that cater to their needs. Churchman emphasizes in her research that the daily lives of men and women differ, and the key question is how to harmonize the environment with these differences. This ensures that each person can achieve a positive quality of life. Obviously, the enjoyment of urban spaces is the right of all citizens, and women should be able to fully enjoy these spaces.

Methods

Meta-analysis involves using statistical methods to summarize the results of independent studies. In the field of women and urban spaces, extensive and important studies have been conducted in Iran and around the world. However, very few efforts have been made to evaluate and summarize the results of these studies. First, based on the process of conducting a logical and correct meta-analysis, the main keywords related to the topic should be identified. In this research, these keywords include "urban spaces" and "women." For sub-keywords, the words "park," "public space," and "unisex spaces" should be replaced with the first keyword. This step has been taken to enhance the effectiveness of the subject and provide a more accurate output. The statistical community studied in the research comprises valid scientific-research conducted in Iran and globally. The period for this study is from 1395 to 1401 in Persian sources and from 2016 to 2022 in English sources, covering seven years of research. To properly utilize the sources and access the primary information of the articles in Latin sources, databases such as Scopus, Elsevier, and Web of Science were used. For Persian sources, relevant keywords were employed in databases like Iran Doc, Magiran, Elmnet, Civilica, and Google Scholar (totaling 163 articles).

Results

Based on the summary of studies conducted in the studied area, 41 articles have been published in English, and 53 articles in Persian. After collecting the main data in the fields of study, it was concluded that the highest frequency regarding time periods in Persian studies and sources was in 2015, while among English articles, it was in 2022. The graph representing the field of Persian studies has shown a rise and fall between these years,

whereas it has consistently risen in Latin sources. One of the main topics in all research is the hypothesis and research question (27% of the articles had a hypothesis). Based on data collection, the most frequent research method is in the applied field. Among the tools used in research, the field method has been the most frequent, which is natural considering the nature of the research. The next issue concerns the nature of research, which has a higher level of theorizing. Examining the scientific status of the authors is another important point; most of the research was conducted by students and professors. According to the output of the software, the most words related to the main research keywords for the production of articles in recent years were about security and gender. Additionally, the next graph shows the degree of connection between articles based on authors' names in the Elsevier database. This software has special tools developed specifically for visualization. Based on deep qualitative studies and categorization of various topics, finally, the field under study has been categorized into five approaches that represent the greatest tendencies and trends of theories in the field of women and urban spaces in recent years. According to the final conclusion, in total, feminist theory and the women-friendly city have had the highest number of references among the sources in the past years.

Conclusion

Considering the importance and necessity of redesigning urban spaces suitable for women, who play a significant role in the civic and social life of urban areas, urban designers and planners should strive to create suitable places for the presence of all classes, including women. If women are absent from urban spaces due to restrictive reasons and their role is diminished, it will have a negative effect on the education of future generations and the dynamics of the city. Solving problems and implementing rational and correct policies will only be achieved by identifying and understanding the needs and roles of women in urban spaces. This research also aimed to take an effective step toward identifying these factors by examining the various aspects of this phenomenon. Urban spaces, as well as gender relations, are influenced by various cultural, social, individual, and environmental factors.

Based on this, the most important topics in the formation of desirable urban spaces for women include:

Physical and functional dimensions of urban spaces (easy accessibility to urban spaces and environments, proper lighting for users to see and be seen, access to clean, safe, and accessible spaces). Effective structural and spatial dimensions in the design of urban spaces (improving the quality of lighting in blind spots to enhance security, paying attention to the different ergonomics of women in the design of urban environments). Cultural and social dimensions in the design of urban spaces (performing gender analysis in projects, policies, campaigns, and relevant organizations in urban design projects, encouraging women's participation and empowerment in urban spaces). The lowest number of references include the indicators of gender mainstreaming in national and local policies, maintaining balance and justice in the distribution of benefits and services in urban spaces, and regulating power relations in interactions between women, and paying attention to the structural context.

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