

Codification the qualitative criteria for interior design of special schools - improve adaptive skills in mentally retarded children

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Abstract

Mentally retarded children are distinguished from other children by differences in the components of intelligence and adaptive skills. Literature review has shown that adaptive skills that are actually capable of adapting to environmental requirements, communicating with others, and meeting personal needs and also different aspects of independent lifestyles can be enhanced by solutions and designing space can play an impressive role in this issue. The main question of this research is which qualitative characteristics of interior design in these schools have positive effect on promoting adaptive skills?

In this study, which seeks to find the qualitative principles of designing schools to promote adaptive skills, qualitative and quantitative approach has been used together. The research started with library studies and defining the most effective factors on improving adaptive skills. At the first step research community consists of psychologists, the second stage is the special children psychologists and also architects, and for the last stage the teachers of these children were selected to approve the results. The samples of this research were selected using Delphi technique and after identifying the effective factors on improving the adaptive skills, and questionnaire was codified to ask the specialist about the spatial characters. Afterwards, the correlation method is used to test the research hypotheses. Considering the effective spatial traits and the factors that influence the development of adaptive skills, the next questionnaire was distributed among the architects and the architectural solutions were extracted. In the last step, a survey was conducted to assess the impact of architectural solutions on the components of adaptive skills development of these children's instructors.

According to the results of this research, the principles are such as the design of simulated spaces with community that provide a place which is suitable for face with challenges may students face with in society in future and it can enhance skills such as social use and social connection. Existence of collective spaces should be increased so we can have good places for collaborative and group activities and as a result of that social connections will increase. By using the relaxing form, colors and textures in interior design of spaces, as well as connecting with natural elements of the environment such as plants, water, natural light and soil, we can provide peace and security for children. Flexibility in environment especially in public spaces such as library, corridors and ... which provide the manipulation of spaces for children, can also enhance individual independence. It will be achieved by the book shelf's that are reachable and the furniture which can change in order to be used individually or by groups. For stimulate the senses of students using different colors and non-harmful textures should be regarded. Playing music can also help students to be relax. Some other tips are designing a home-like school environment where the students repeat and practice different skills like cooking simple foods, arranging their cloths in the shelf's and other activities which help them to enhances self-help skills and accordingly improve their adaptive skills.

Keyword: Child, participation, emotional connection with space, child-friendly therapeutic environment, architectural design process.

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