

Socialisation in architectural education: a view from East Africa

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Abstract

Purpose

Concern for the state of architectural education in East Africa was a catalyst for this exploration of socialisation, which sought to understand socialisation and its influence on educational outcomes in the region. Socialisation within architectural education has long been known to influence how students acquire important aspects of the profession, building both values and a cultural ethos in the process. An appreciation of these processes in the context of East Africa adds to the wider understanding of the implicit curriculum in architectural education. The paper aims to discuss these issues.

Design/methodology/approach

An ethnographic study was undertaken in five architecture schools across Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda, making use of a mixed method approach incorporating document analysis, a questionnaire study, participant observations and focus group discussions as the data gathering instruments. Focus group discussions, as the primary data gathering method, acknowledged the social context of the study, with data gathered from multiple sites across the region.

Findings

As an integral component of architectural education, socialisation was evident at all stages of the educational process. Within the educational realm, contrasting expectations of students and instructors were evident, leading to conflicts that influenced the values acquired by students. This was seen in attitudes towards contemporary architectural issues within architectural education, and suggests that socialisation can at times have pronounced negative consequences.

Originality/value

The wider study represents the first comprehensive review of architectural education in the context of East Africa, and contributes to the global appreciation of the influence of socialisation on educational outcomes.

Key words: Focus groups, East Africa, Socialization, Expectations, Architectural education