

Impact of Elements of Rock and Water Combination on Landscape Perception: A Visual Landscape Quality Assessment on Kaludiya Pokuna in Sri Lanka

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Abstract : Landscape architecture needs to encompass a placemaking process carefully composing and manipulating landscape elements to address perceptual needs of humans, especially aesthetic, psychological and spiritual. The objective of this qualitative investigation is to inquire the impact of elements of rock and water combination on landscape perception and related feelings, emotions, and behavior. The past empirical studies have assessed the impact of landscape elements in isolation on user preference, yet the combined effect of elements have been less considered. This research was conducted with reference to the verity of qualities of water and rock through a visual landscape quality assessment focusing on landscape qualities derived from five visual concepts (coherence, historicity imageability, naturalness, and ephemera). 'Kaludiya Pokuna' archeological site in Anuradhapura was investigated with a sample of University students (n=19, male 14, female 5, age 20-25) using a five-point Likert scale via a perception based questionnaire and a visitor employed photographic survey (VEP). Two hypothetical questions were taken into investigation concerning biophilic (naturalness) and topophilic (historicity) aspects of humans to prefer a landscape with rock and water. The findings revealed that this combination encourages both biophilic and topophilic aspects, but in varying degrees. The identified hierarchy of visual concepts based on visitor's preference signify coherence (93%), historicity (89%), imageability (79%), naturalness (75%) and ephemera (70%) respectively. It was further revealed that this combination creates a scenery more coherent dominating information processing aspect of humans to perceive a landscape over the biophilic and topophilic aspects. Different characteristics and secondary landscape effects generated by rock and water combination were found to affect in transforming a space into a place, full filling the aesthetic and spiritual aspects of the visitors. These findings enhance a means of making places for people, resource management and historical landscape conservation. Equalization of gender based participation, taking diverse cases and increasing the sample size with more analytical photographic analysis are recommended to enhance the quality of further research.

Keywords : landscape perception, visitor's preference, rock and water combination, visual concepts

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