

The Role of Belief and Religion in Creation of Persian Garden

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Abstract

The most important and profound spirit of traditional Iranian culture is the idea of "boostan" that means the nature and the human are in harmony. The Persian garden is the famous paradise in ancient Iran, and the Persian garden is the typical place to show the harmonious idea. If we understand the nature and ideal as (heaven) and understand the urban life as (human), then the ideal environment including natural tangibles in the city is the Paradise, which is the harmony between the nature and the human. In Iranian idea, the garden has a universal picture as it has changed into an inner view for centuries and is considered a portion of its culture. Aspects of this internal garden which takes its form from historical characteristics, religion and especially rooted customs of poems and spiritual schools can be seen in all aspects and stages of life. In other words, gardens are considered as spirit and symbol of nature and all over the world they are a way to refer to internal beliefs. Sometimes these flowers are portrayed in words but not in dry and senseless words like western literature. Persian gardens show the natural environment of tangibles, but look forward to the ideal of the sublimation of the real world. A significant notion, in the garden, is "simplicity. The findings indicated that functions and structure of gardens obscure the psychological feelings of acts of people. The positive relationship between Persian garden and religion was also in line with the behavior theory. The Persian cultural environment with structured religious relationships may have a tendency to spiritual and paradise simulation, for instance, on entering the Persian gardens, in the whole space alongside the major axis, landscapes of altitudes are visible.

Keywords: Persian garden; Religion; Environment

Introduction

Since the penetration of religion effect on the Iranian life is considerable, their architectural design is inevitably influenced by the religious issue, and thus culture has significant effect on the architectural style. Regarding the significant relationship between architectural style and the creation garden in Iran, it could be concluded that by an increase in religion perception, it is said the belief in other worlds stems from Zoroastrian, which fosters to a certain extent super natural beliefs. It points to the ideology of paradise. For example plants in Persian gardens are not much of a biodiversity or rarity; rather they represent symbolically the beliefs of Iran. Platanus plants which symbolizes respectability and sanctity in Zoroastrianism, which a scholar strives to attain is seen commonly in Persian gardens.

Garden notion was soon adopted by other Mediterranean cultures that were in contact with the Achaemenid. In Islamic as well as Judeo-Christian belief, the Pasargadae Garden is considered as a symbol of paradise gardens. Not only Pasargadae Garden but also many other similar gardens of Achaemenid dynasty was seen so. 'Pairadaeza' means enclosure and this word is the basis for the word 'paradise'. As such these gardens were seen as patterns for celestial gardens as mentioned in Holy Quran as well as the model in the Holy Bible's Eden gardens [1]. The Hanging Gardens of Babylon is one of the 7 ancient world wonders, which still lacks archaeological evidence. Assyrian palace of Sennacherib at Nineveh built in 700 BC has a lush green garden depicted on its walls [2].

Methodology

The methodology, which was used to carry out the study. It details the approaches that were used to obtain data and information in the research project. This includes the study design, study population; sampling techniques, data collection instruments, data collection procedures, data collection methods and data analysis. It further describes the type and sources of data, the target population and sampling methods and the techniques that were used to select the sample

size. It also describes how data was collected and analyzed. Besides a detailed delivery of the research plan that will be used in this study, this chapter tackles different methodology aspects that were important in the achievement of the main research objectives [3]. Additionally, there was various tallying of figures that the researcher felt were key to the overall understanding of the entire research project. It is important to note that the various aspects of research that have been tackled here have subtly been integrated and linked to suit the research topic and objectives. Also, it is worth noting that the methodological approach that has been employed in this study is scientific oriented [4,5].

Research methodology is regarded as a way to systematically solve a particular research problem. It is systematic as there are laid down rules to be followed by a researcher in the process of conducting the research. It is a science of studying how research is done scientifically. In research methodology various steps that are generally adopted by a researcher in studying his research problem along with the logic behind them are studied. Therefore, it is necessary for any researcher to know not only the research methods but also the methodology towards the research [6,7]. This is because there are different assumptions underlying various research methods and some techniques or methods are applicable differently to various research problems, that is, certain techniques and procedures will be applicable to certain problems and others will not. All this means that it is necessary for the researcher to design his methodology for his problem as the same may differ from

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problem to problem. The research design, sample, and data collection procedures. It also describes the development of the questionnaires, the selection of the research measures, and the results of the pilot study. It briefly explains the data analysis techniques and provides an overview of Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) and Structural Equation Modeling (SEM). This research, followed by a description of the process used to develop the survey questionnaire. Section six describes the questionnaire and explains the translation process. The purposes of having a pilot study and the discussion on the results of such study is explained in section seven. Further, the next two sections provide explanation regarding the sampling frame, sample size and the justification of the selected sample. Section ten describes the data collection procedure and the final section provides a summary of the chapter [8].

Descriptive analysis

In this analysis, covariance matrix method was used to calculate the descriptive function so that all of the variables could be included in the analysis. The composite scores of the variables were computed by parcelling the original measurement item scores. Parcels are sum or averages of several individual indicators or items based on their factor loadings on the construct [9,10]. The mean was applied as a measure of central tendency, which indicated that means of all variables were above their midpoint level (3) as indicated in Table 1. The highest mean rating belonged to Religion (M = 4.308).

The standard deviation was applied as a dispersion index to indicate the degree to which individuals within each variable differ from the variable mean. Among the studied variables, the individual values of Privacy deviated the most from its mean (SD = 0.486). This standard deviation suggested reasonably high variability in respondents' willingness to declare their perception toward Privacy [11]. In other word, the survey participants were most varying in these variables from each other. At the other side, the lowest deviation from mean belonged to Culture with the standard deviation of 0.412.

Figure 1 gives a good illustration for the mean of all constructs together with their standard deviations.

Structural models - stage 2

The structural equation model is the second main process of SEM analysis. Once the measurement model is validated, representation of the structural model can be made by specifying the relationships among the constructs [12]. The structural model provides details on the links between the variables. It shows the specific details of the relationship between the independent or exogenous variables and dependent or endogenous variables [13,14]. Evaluation of the structural model focuses firstly on the overall model fit, followed by the size, direction and significance of the hypothesized parameter estimates, as shown by the one-headed arrows in the path diagrams [15]. The final part involved the confirmation of the structural model of the study which

Variable	Mean (M)	Std. Deviation
Culture (CULT)	4.160	0.412
Architectural style (ARCH)	4.196	0.430
Religion (RELG)	4.308	0.422
Privacy (PRVC)	4.156	0.486
History, Literature and Symbolism (HIST)	4.086	0.429
Sustainability (SUST)	4.166	0.434
Shazdeh garden (SHGA)	4.171	0.442

Table 1: Results of descriptive Statistics for First-Order Constructs.

was based on the proposed relationship between the variables identified and assessed. In this study the structural model was estimated, using the maximum likelihood estimate (MLE) and regression technique, to examine the research hypotheses depicted.

An examination of goodness-of-fit indices indicates that the modified structural model (Figure 2) best fit the data with the value of 1 for both GFI and CFI. Although the chi-square statistic is statistically significant, this is not deemed unusual given the large sample size [16].

Overall findings showed that the scores of R² value satisfy the requirement for the 0.10 cut off value [17], ranging from 0.15 to 0.57. This indicates, for example, the error variance of "willingness to Persian garden" is approximately 57 percent of the variance of willingness to Persian garden itself. In other word, 57 percent of variations in willingness to Persian garden are explained by its six predictors (i.e., Culture, Religion, History, Literature and Symbolism, Architectural style, Privacy and Sustainability) [18,19].

The result indicate that the religion and belife has significant positive influence on the persian garden garden this result is consistent with also found the religion and belife as the significant determinats of willing to have persian garden. Religion has played significant role in shaping up the identity and values of the people of Iran. People of Iran are highly religious in their beliefs and practices. Religion still continues to be a vital part of the Iranian public life [20]. Recent days' research on religious aspects has brought light to the association of religion and the nation's politics and public life. Being said so, research on various aspects of Iran's religious beliefs and customs are yet to be made. Especially, information on the minorities and the demographics of the new faiths in Iran's modern day is yet to be gained. The result also indicate that the efect of religion on the persian garden garden design is not only direct , but there is a significant positive indirect effect from religion to persian garden throught archiechure, privacy and sustainability [21,22]. On the other word the relationship between religion , the willingness to persian garden garden, is partially madiated by the architecture and sustainability. From the result can be said that ,One reli gion that has influenced the shaping up of Iranian culture over the years is Zoroastrianism, ofcourse prior to Islam. Principles of Zoroastrianism emphasizes on the need to purify human mind and body which is reflected in the quote in Avesta, the book of Zoroastrians- "O creator, I learned you well when my good nature came to me and taught me the best way to acquire knowledge, which is in fact, thinking in quiet" [23]. Though most written sources of faith isn't on the market currently, the on the market ones stresses on this facet of purification.

The impact of Zoroastrian beliefs on the formation of building

Before the Introduction of Islam, Zoroastrianism was the dominant religion in Iran. Zoroastrians lost their holy book when Alexander conquered Iran. They did not have one until the Sassanid era, when this book was rewritten, (Avesta) Zoroastrianism is one of those religions which have influenced Iranian culture considerably prior to Islam. Many researchers believe that other than Zoroastrianism, very few religions have put such an emphasis on purifying the soul and body, [24]. Although many parts of Avesta, the Zoroastrians' book, are not available, those left stress the need to think in quiet: "O creator, I learned you well when my good nature came to me and taught me the best way to acquire knowledge, which is in fact thinking in quiet, It is clear that this is possible if there can be the right conditions at home. It must be a house compatible with the climate and not subject to trespassing. It must be mentioned that the current Avesta is not exactly the same as the original one. It includes parts of Gatha's of the old Avesta and the new

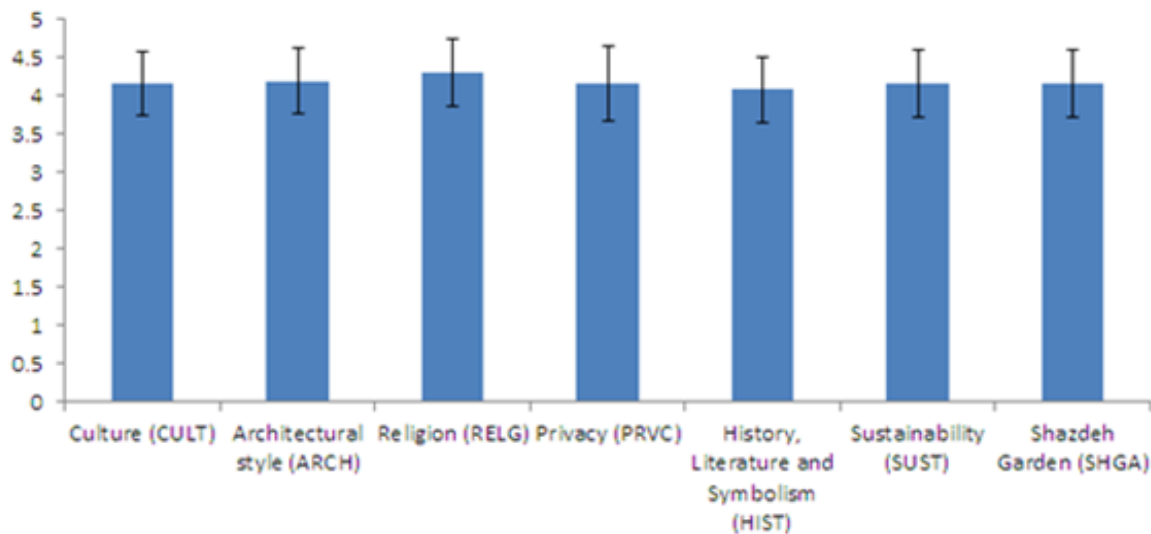


Figure 1: Means and Standard variations of all Constructs.

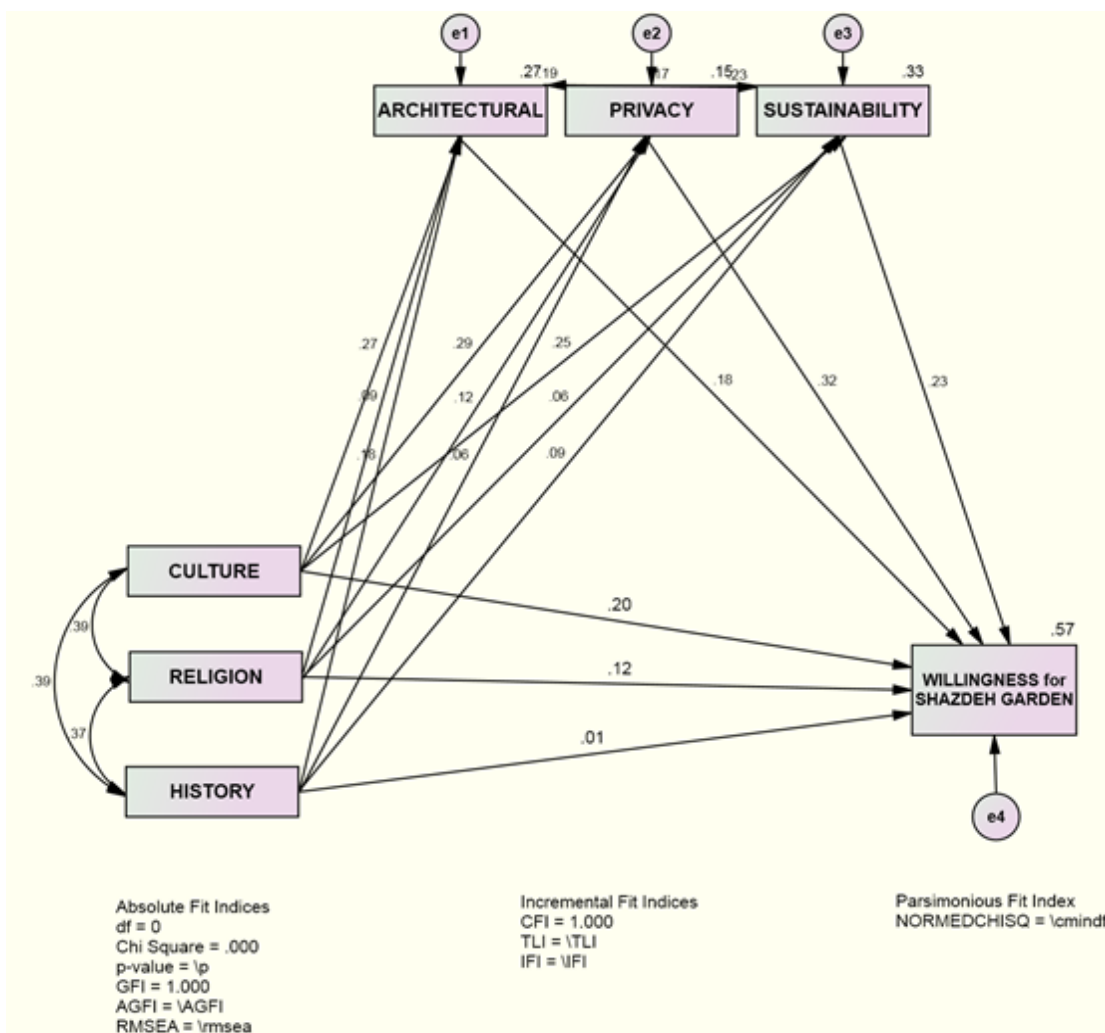


Figure 2: Structural Model.

Avesta. Some researchers refer to "Vandidad" as a concluding part of the new Avesta. This part, which is quite different from the other parts, and somehow incompatible with the first part, represents the creeds and customs of the western Mads and most of the religious rules and details [25,26].

Building and religion design

Persian gardens became a part of a religious body of Persia and are often found in tombs and religious places. As a means of decoration in palaces, or a public display of relaxation or beauty, Persian gardens have a solid background in Iran. Among Iranian, Persian gardens are a part of society and Iranian culture [27]. These internal Persian gardens are heavily influenced by the religion, Persian poems, and art, historical characteristics, and other schools of thought in ancient Iran. The design of gardens is also influenced as other parts of the world by the internal beliefs and is a symbol of spiritual nature [28]. Among ancient Iranians, plants had special meaning. Trees thought to have special powers, such as life-giving, young giving, productivity and Immortality made them sacred to Ancient Iranian people. Moreover, some plants were highly important and thought to be Herbaceous Gods and some were as usage in religious ceremonies. Some of the trees and plants were thought holly, life-saving, and symbolic such as Plateaus, Cedar, Grapevine and Pomegranate. Pomegranate in special was the symbol of Everlasting, multiplicity with unity, long productivity and thought to be from heaven [29,30]. Among Zoroastrian people, and in their religion books, a list of superpowers of plants was noted. In their fire temples, Zoroastrians used these plants, as well as in their lives, and ceremonies. It often aforementioned that Persian gardens and farming generally were sacred for Iranian [31].

Discussion

As is the wont of Philosophers of the Achaemenid-Parthian period and the Hellenic writers, ideologies and concepts of Persians become obfuscated soon with them and this has become a topic of bigger debates. Great philosopher Epicurus (341-270 BCE) considered his school as a garden too, both in figurative and metaphoric terms [32,33]. Certain objectives of his philosophy coincide with the ideologies of Zoroastrianism. The way in which they are framed make some ideas untenable and also worth debating, even derision. In order to evoke the criteria of culture and religion, the suggestive way of expression became a basic manner to garden design. particularly, the designer must connect to the concept of Behesht (Paradise). After Iranian believe that in illustrating the whole the concern of the viewer is lost. The designer should motivate the spectator to attain empathy with the garden and usage suggestive means to raise the viewer's imagination, making conceivable the expansion of the garden outby its physical boundary [34,35]. The positive relationship between persian garden and religion was also in line with the behaviour theory. The Persian cultural environment with structured religious relationships may have tendency to spiritual and paradise simulation, for instance, On entering the persian gardens in the whole space alongside the major axis, landscapes of altitudes are visible [36].

Conclusion

The influence of religion and belief was confirmed due to the common agreement that although Iran society is religious, Iranian architecture workers share certain common and religion values [37]. This research investigated the relationship between creation of Persian garden and belief and religion. The findings confirmed that religion did impact on the creation of the garden. On the other hand, the two

selected traits (religion and behavior) were found and associated with Persian garden design. This has paved the way for an investigation of behavior constructs, as they are understood in another religion and cultures. The findings also pave the way for further study of to another factor and impact on garden design [38]. In this study, the role played by historically important garden in Iran, as a social service provider and their significance for sustaining garden has been addressed. Certain survey results are presented targeting to explore the motives and perceptions if visitors of the most historically important gardens in Iran. Certain conclusive remarks are being made here. The existence of such garden in Iran is a significant factor in the culture and religion. It thus fulfils many social functions. Thus the gardens sustainability of considered as sustainability resource [39-41].

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