

Effect of cultural cognition and symbolic imagery of landscape elements on the impression of naturalness

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Landscape that is visually recognized is an efficient measure for evaluating the environment. The quantity of landscape elements in the field of view is used to evaluate landscapes. For example, the urban landscape has a high percentage of artificial elements. Therefore, natural elements such as water surface, vegetation, and mountains add to the evaluation.

Greenery represents the natural elements in an urban setting, and in the field of vision, it is associated with the psychological process of evaluation. This index has been long available for evaluating landscapes and the environment. However, a landscape consists of multiple elements, and in landscape evaluation, impressions weigh more for comprehensive evaluation. Therefore, each locality or culture perceives landscapes differently.

This study aims to clarify the impression of natural landscapes and to investigate the influence of elements and symbolic figures on the impression of naturalness.

Man-made involvement: There are various criteria for evaluating naturalness using the vegetation index. For example, the natural grade of vegetation, or potential natural vegetation, is such an index. The richness of species and differences in composition are also potential criteria. Furthermore, differences in the conditions cause visual changes if the vegetation is the same species and object. Conditions have an influence on the impression of naturalness. Specifically, the trimming of greenery produces visual changes and creates man-made artificial forms. People's impression of greenery is based on the constituents of the impression structure, which are the artificial form, quantity, and variety. It is shown that the artificial conditions are correlated with trimming and have a strong influence on the impression of naturalness.

Cultural beliefs: If mountains are located outside a city, the view of mountains from the city is small. However, cultures consider mountains as part of the natural landscape, which has important implications. Accordingly, mountains have positive recognition. This section measured the viewing of mountains and investigated the report of mountains in the literature. It was shown that mountains are symbols of nature and religious sites since early times. Even though the view of mountains from a city has low ratings, it makes a strong impression on people.

Symbolic imagery: The impression a landscape leaves on humans is affected not only by direct perceptual information but also analogical imagery. The artificial karesansui garden symbolizes the great wilderness. However the great wilder nature doesn't exist in the garden. The landscape technique used does not include vegetation or water. Nevertheless, mountains and water are suggested. This section analyzed the impression of naturalness that people perceive from images of the karesansui garden. The karesansui garden has a simple architecture; however, the results show that people see variety in the garden. Even though the garden does not have a water area, people image water, either sea or river. Clearly, the symbolic image affects impression.

Even if landscapes consist of the same types of elements, differences in the conditions will create different impressions. Furthermore, despite the small viewing amount of elements, the cultural symbolism of the elements strongly affects impression. The indirect impression of the landscape on people's imagination has a powerful effect on the final impression. Therefore, it is important to measure people's impression of landscapes with multiple compositions and to discover the common ground of cultural awareness and symbolism.

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