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The Formulation of the Cultural Identity of Interior Architecture Students through the Educational Globalization

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Cultural Identity;
Educational globalization;
Interior Architecture.

Abstract

Educational Globalization debilitates the identities, the origins and cultural, religious, etymological, racial, and ethnic foundations— challenge a country's feeling of solidarity and cohesion. The incorporation of cultural beliefs and the ensuing generations' patterns into the society is an essential test of globalization. Neglecting to do so; however, will have long haul social ramifications. The capacity to define a character that permits agreeable development between universes will be at the very heart of accomplishing a really "worldwide soul". This research provides insights into a critical question: How are identity and agency implicated in educational processes and outcomes? Thus, the paper discusses the role of educational institutions, led by the Fine Arts and Applied Arts, with its leading role in facing the educational globalization and the dominance of foreign countries on Arab societies in the way of clothing, food and even individual behaviors. Certainly, the young designers -in the university student age- are influenced by the wave of westernization they face day and night.

1. Introduction:

Educational Globalization is the dominance of the strongest cultures on the weaker ones. The manifestation of that would echo with changing the curricula and other educational systems to remove differences and particularities that control behavior and lead to weakness of the value system. Educational globalization has many definitions in the context of higher education. Although the main target of many educational associations and institutions –now- is to prepare "globally competent graduates". Globalization is still viewed as selling or exporting an institution's educational product in which it can serve the institution rather than it can be beneficial for the students. In formulating cultural identity, youth try to create a self-identity the way they think it will have a consistent pattern with how others view them. They also consider the identity model, which enables them to achieve their goals. The ongoing confrontation between the youth and the various social surroundings, like home, school or the neighborhood, makes the identity formulation is less challenging.

Since the interior designer is the main axis of the design process, the magnitude of the variables of his accumulative mental perception keeps morals, traditions and values inherited, as well as the accumulation of knowledge in his areas of specialization. It all leads to the formulation of the final output of the internal environment to those

variables, but it does not mean ignoring or evading the identity of the user, the laws of social determinants, controls and other historical and cultural beliefs associated with that community. Who is an interior designer? It is the one possessing intellectual abilities and multiple stylistic skills in the field of competence and experience, as well as the standards which is often associated with the idea of ideological heritage of civilization. Such expertise leads to a result that affects the design act. The interior designer could create spaces that reflect the identity of the general concept within the framework of the society, which belongs to a larger social entity/identity that is called the Nation or the home.

On the other hand, the espoused goals by the designers are the functionally suitable forms; the Aesthetic values. It could be achieved as a response to many complicated and multi-rational factors that are associated with the cultural and social content. It also requires the designer to deduce objectivity in the design process through the real environment and surroundings.

According to the abovementioned information, we find that there is a relationship between cultural identity, as a system of thoughts, and the mechanisms and forms of design that are adopted by the interior designer.

First point: Literature Review

- At the most basic level, the ethnic label an individual chooses signifies his chosen identity (Maestes 2000). Sociological research has used the self-selected label as a way of examining identity. The sense of belonging to and alienation from various groups do also have important implications (DeVos and Suárez-Orozco 1990).
- Achieved identity is the extent to which an individual achieves a sense of belonging—"I am a member of this group." An ascribed identity is imposed either by co-ethnics—"You are a member of our group" or by members of the dominant culture—"You are a member of that group." (Suárez-Orozco and Suárez-Orozco 2001)
- The values of the global culture are not dogmatic: they are not exclusionary, they do not condone suppression of people or groups who have a point of view or a way of life that is different from the majority." (Arnett 2002, p. 279).
- A critical difference between boys and girls occurs in the realm of social relationships. Research with non-immigrant youth has consistently found that teacher/student support, as well as student/student support, is critical for the academic achievement of both boys and girls (Roeser, Eccles et al. 1998). Relationships within schools provide several forms of support critical to academic outcomes including access to knowledge concerning academic subjects, college, the labor market, and how bureaucracies operate; as well as advocacy; role modeling; and advice (Stanton-Salazar 2001).

Second point: Research Problem

- The lack of awareness of the concept of identity among the vast majority of the age group of students at universities who are easily influenced by western cultures that reflect their effects on self-intellectual young designers, as a result.

Third Point: Significance of The Research

- It Sheds the light on the potential challenges that could happen due to the outbreak of the educational globalization without control. Plus, it supports the process of blending different cultures and civilizations in the designer's memory.

Fourth Point: Objectives

Building a theoretical framework to formulate the cultural identity of the new generation of interior designers through the following points:

- Clarifying the definition of cultural identity among interior designers and enhancing their sense of belongingness.
- Balancing between cultural identity and objectivity in the design process.
- Paying attention to the content of the theoretical and applied curricula of interior design.

Fifth Point: Methodology

-This preliminary study took place in Cairo, Egypt, and a variety of methods were used to collect data in the field including, open-ended interviews, observation of participants of professors, former lecturers, and students. However, the methodology of the research was developed within the sequence of the following stages:

- The theoretical study includes:

- A database theory that is based on the fundamental axes to analyse previous studies in the areas of setting the crucillas of interior design to match the cultural identity of learners and to control the process of importing programs of study in the private universities. Addressing the research problem will achieve the aims of the research and proves the hypotheses of the research.

- An Empirical Study includes:

- Identifying realistic responses that have been applied as live models of research in the heritage and history of the taught curricula- as ways to consolidate the cultural identity of the students and reaching conclusions accordingly.

- Observational Studies:

- Faculty of Fine Arts (Décor Department-Interior Architecture section/Helwan University)

- Faculty of Arts and Design (Interior Design Department -October University for Arts and Science –MSA University).

- Formulating Cultural Identity Through Globalization:

- Discussion: The Paper discusses building a theoretical framework to formulate the cultural identity of the new generation of interior designers through, firstly, clarifying the definition of cultural identity among interior designers and enhancing their sense of belongingness. Secondly, balancing between cultural identity and objectivity in the design process. Thirdly, blending different cultures and civilizations in the designer's memory.

- Culture provides people with shared understandings and it explains the process of making the one's experiences. Cultural beliefs and social behaviors offer a soothing sense of social safety and values stability. A constant productive contact is required when it comes to maintaining a sense of compatibility with the one's culture of origin. As parents are responsible for the most of the cultural lessons to teach their children, educational associations are a critical source of information in the quest to form a sense of identity as well.

- Globalization creates the world that is increasingly multicultural; however, diversification presents real challenges to individuals. It unifies people from different cultures regardless of any existing differences. Moreover, it supports human experiences in order to cultivate the sense of unity. On the other hand, it could be a reason to increase dramatized violence that people may experience due to cultural values and belief-clashes.

- Global culture penetrates many cultural and national boundaries; it unifies people and develops the sense of belonging. Global culture emphasizes and allows tolerating and even celebrating differences.

- The improvement of multicultural mindfulness from an early age may coordinate belief systems sourced from different social orders.

- Cross-cultural educational collaboration between global institutions may rise above the academic frames to professional organizations in which the globally educated ones would retain advantageous-skill-sets produced through intercultural correspondence encounters. This gets to be distinctly important inside multinational companies that require worldwide exchanges to maintain overall exchanging partnership.

- Methods of building a framework that formulates the cultural identity of young designers through faculties of Fine arts and faculties of Arts and designs require engaging in activities such as:

- Create and support a forum to connect researchers, data technologists, decision makers, and specialists with the end goal of re-examining training in the period of globalization.
- Support components for trading thoughts and encountering the utilization of educational development.
- Support investigations and experimentation to push the wildernesses of the capability of data advancements and interchanges for a more effective education.
- Engage in educational communities that expand the time and space dimensions of education.
- Energize, and participate in, shared plans for the improvement of the related educational modules that could be utilized internationally to accomplish economies of scale and skill.

- Cases Studies (Observational Studies):

- Faculty of Fine Arts (Décor Department-Interior Architecture section/Helwan University):

- Heritage theoretical curricula:

It has been applied on each academic level as a unit/ subject through the five academic years of interior architecture, Undergraduate Studies.

- Heritage Projects:

A thorough explanation of the ethnic and heritage forms and styles, which focuses on the decorative patterns and symbols of Nubian styles and the Egyptian Folklore. Such methodology leads the student to dig deeper into different styles, historical stories, and legends behind those forms and patterns under the supervision of **Prof. Ahmed Hosni** (Professor of Interior Architecture, Décor Department, Faculty of Fine Arts/ Helwan University).



Figure (1): Example of Prof. Ahmed Hosni Folklore Artwork. Source: Prof. Ahmed Hosni Photos Album Library.



Figure (2): Example of Décor department Prep. year students Artwork at the faculty of Fine Arts. Source: photographed by the authors from the kept projects of décor department library.



Figure (3): Examples Given to students that reflect Heritage factors on interior architecture. Source: <https://www.google.com.eg/webhp=HOTELINTERIOR%20DESIGN>



Figure (4): Example of Décor department Level 2 students Cities Gate Design that is inspired by city heritage and historical background at the faculty of Fine Arts. Source: photographed by the authors from the kept projects of décor department library.



Figure (5): Example of Décor department Level 2 students TV Channel program Design that is inspired by Islamic patterns at the faculty of Fine Arts. Source: photographed by the authors from the kept projects of décor department library.



Figure (6): Live samples of student's studio work with Prof. Ahmed Hosni on Folklore Projects.

Source: Prof. Ahmed Hosni photos album.

- Statistics on studies numbers' increase on historical palaces and heritage themes in Egypt:

The Egyptian monuments and heritage have always been in risk. They have never been properly valued, preserved, or marketed. The situation has gotten worse in the aftermath of January revolution. They have continued to fall a victim to the political chaos and lack of security in the country. The threats are ongoing because the security remains insufficient, and the attention of the public is generally directed to political news and recent events. The Egyptian center for Economic and Social Rights (ECESR) along with Egypt's Heritage Task Force, organized a press conference on Thursday 19 September 2013 titled *Save Egypt's Heritage for its Future*. The main target of this event was developing a plan to preserve Egyptian monuments, historical places, and heritage themes correctly as a possible important source of the national revenue. This also encouraged young designers to search deeply in the field of renovation-methods of historical palaces, and it utilizes these materials in their educational studies. It could be a reason to explain the increase in masters' thesis numbers that reflect the students' interest to focus on historical palaces and heritage themes in the past few years.

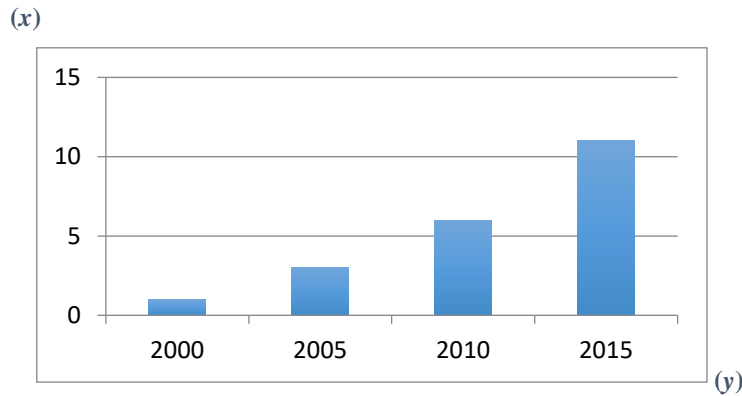


Figure (7): Statistics on master's thesis numbers increase issued by The Faculty of Fine arts-Cairo through the last twenty years that focuses on historical palaces and heritage themes in Egypt. (x): Scale of Masters' Thesis Numbers - (y): Scale of Years)

Source: Done by the authors. Data has been collected through the documented statistics of masters' thesis library of The Faculty of Fine Arts.



Figure (8): Said Halim Pasha Palace (also known as Champollion House), Cairo, Egypt. Source: <https://www.google.com.eg/webh/> Said Halim Pasha Palace.

- Faculty of Arts and Design (Interior Design Department -October University for Arts and Science –MSA University):

- **Heritage theoretical curricula:** it is divided into two units that are taught to students through Level 2 and Level 3 of academic years, undergraduate studies.

- **Heritage of Interior Design:** This unit provides students with a deep historical study of interior architecture and furnishings in the period from ancient times until the nineteenth century. The study enables students to identify the main period styles and design movements; to recognize the development in interior design, furniture themes, and architecture, as a reflection of changing influences and cultural contextual factors.
- **Contemporary Design in Housing and Interiors:** This unit provides students with a deep historical study of interior architecture and furnishings in the period from the mid-nineteenth century until the end of the twentieth century. The topics are focused on the Industrial Revolution in the nineteenth century in Europe through the Aesthetic Movements until the Post Modern. The study enables the student to identify movements, and styles that were explored in Europe, and America, then the interior design and architecture in contemporary Egypt and Arab world (XIX and XX) Centuries.
- **Historical Places Field Trips:** Those trips provide students with information about their culture and history and it gives them a live model of what they study theoretically to support their understanding of the units they learn.



Figure (9): Live Model of Bait el Suhimey Field Trip supervised by Prof. Aleya Abdel Hadi (Head of Interior design department- Faculty of Arts and Design- MSA University) Source: Photos Library of MSA University.

- **Graduation Projects Theme and Purpose:** the recent direction was Guiding Grad. Students to design projects that provide their society with real services through their living reality inspired by Egyptian heritage patterns and themes, and this was actually achieved with Grad. Students of the academic year 2006 at the faculty of Arts and Design- MSA University under the supervision of:
- **Prof. Aleya Abdel Hadi** (Head of Department and Prof. of Interior architecture/ Faculty of Arts and Design/ MSA University).
- **Prof. Hassan Metwalli** (Head of Décor Department, Faculty of Fine Arts/ Helwan University).
- **Associate Prof. Diaa Tantawy** (Professor of Interior and furniture Design, Faculty of Applied Arts).
- **AL. Noha Essam** (Assistant Lecturer of Interior Architecture/ Faculty of Arts and Design/ MSA University).



Figure (10): Nazlet El Semman Equestrian Club Grad. Project: the student has studied the area of Nazlet El semman and its problems and decided to design a project inspired by Pyramids and triangle shapes patterns of Arabian horse movement analysis.

Source: Interior design Department digital archive library of Grad. Projects.

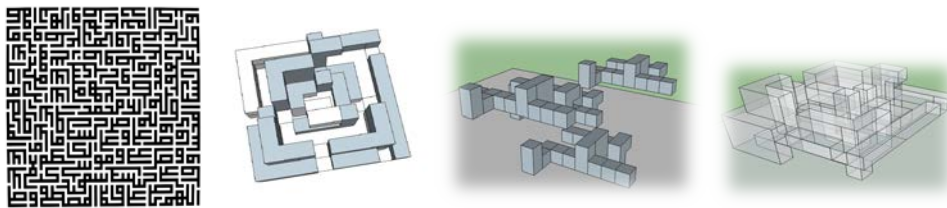
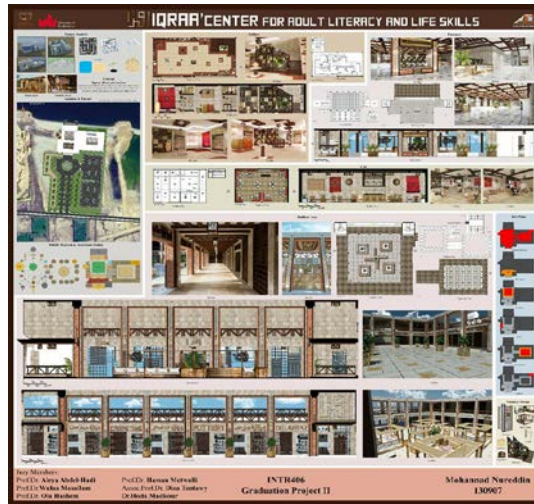


Figure (11): IQRAA Centre for Adults Literacy in Fayoum: the student has studied the location, citizens needs and designed a project that provides them with an educational and training services inspired by Arabic calligraphy patterns. Source: Interior design Department digital archive library of Grad. Projects.

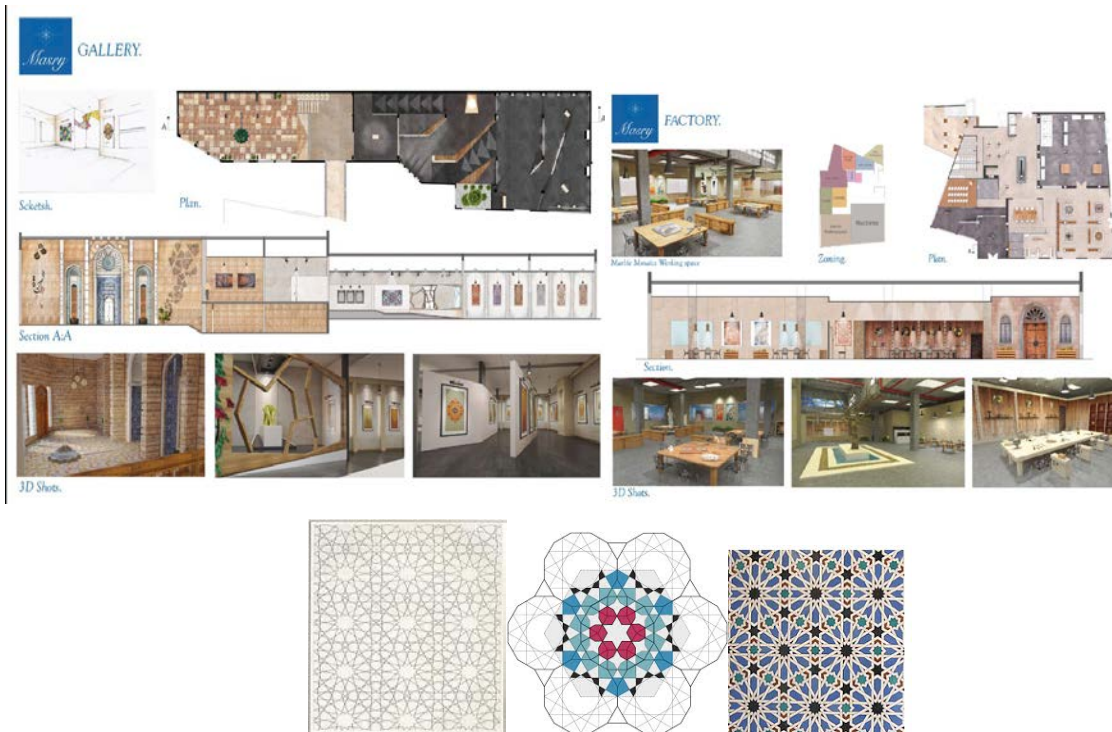


Figure (12): Different shots of Arts and Crafts Centre in El Fostat- Masr el Adima inspired by the Islamic geometrical shapes including workshops to get the best use of marble wasted pieces to reform and recycle them into decorative and functional furniture pieces.

Source: Interior design Department digital archive library of Grad. Projects.

- Questionnaire Format: It has been designed and submitted to students of interior design in MSA Students Level 2, 3 and 4 who answered the questions and has been analyzed by the authors.

<p>- Questionnaire Model Questions:</p> <p>1- Courses procedures and assignments support Egyptian historical and cultural identity: (1) Strongly agree – (2) Agree – (3) Neutral – (4) Disagree – (5) Strongly Disagree</p> <p>2- Historical and Heritage units/ courses are clear (1) Strongly agree – (2) Agree – (3) Neutral – (4) Disagree – (5) Strongly Disagree</p> <p>3-Textbook, Materials, Field trips provide students with sufficient data on Egyptian themes and Folklore culture: (1) Strongly agree – (2) Agree – (3) Neutral – (4) Disagree – (5) Strongly Disagree</p> <p>4- Courses contents threaten or have conflicts with identities, the origins and cultural, religious, and ethnic backgrounds of students. (1) Strongly agree – (2) Agree – (3) Neutral – (4) Disagree – (5) Strongly Disagree</p> <p>5- Courses provide students with information of eastern and western culture as well. (1) Strongly agree – (2) Agree – (3) Neutral – (4) Disagree – (5) Strongly Disagree</p> <p>6- Courses support the process of formulating a culture identity of students. (1) Strongly agree – (2) Agree – (3) Neutral – (4) Disagree – (5) Strongly Disagree</p>

Figure (13): Questionnaire Model

Source: Done by the authors.

- Questionnaire analyzing Results:

Question No.	Format No.	Answers No.		1 st Choice		2 nd Choice		3 rd Choice		4 th Choice		5 th Choice		6 th Choice	
		No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
1	75	75	100	20	26	38	51	17	23	0	0	0	0	0	0
2	75	75	100	13	17	23	31	11	15	16	21	12	16	0	0
3	75	75	100	5	7	14	19	20	27	17	24	11	15	8	11
4	75	75	100	0	0	2	3	19	25	19	25	13	17	22	29
5	75	75	100	25	33	11	15	10	13	18	24	8	11	3	4
6	75	55	73	7	16	13	24	10	18	16	29	5	9	4	7

- Results show that 51 % of students who answered the questionnaire assume that the academic courses they study support Egyptian historical and cultural identity.

-1% of students claimed that historical and heritage courses are neutral clear to them while 21% of them disagreed.

- 27% of students claimed that textbook and materials are neutral in providing them with sufficient data on Egyptian themes while 24% disagreed.

- 29% thought that academic courses do not threaten or have conflicts with their cultural background while 25% assumed that they do threaten them.

- 33% of students assumed that the courses provide them with information of eastern and western culture as well.

- 29% of students claimed that the academic courses do not support the process of formulating a culture identity of them while 24% thought it supports the process, but what is observed that about 30% of students did not answer this question; maybe this refers to the lack of knowledge of the culture identity definition.

Table (1): Questionnaire Model answers Results

Source: Done by the authors.

Conclusion:

- The study has concluded that globalization has had an impact on education reform in Egypt in several ways.
 - Identity formulation is not a simple process that one passes through a variety of stages on the way to achieving a stable identity. Rather, it is a process that is fluid and contextually driven.
 - Young interior designers are challenged to navigate between achieved identities and imposed ones. Achieved identity explains a sense of belonging. However, Identities and methods of adaptation are highly context dependent. Also, The social paths of youth for the ones who are able to actively maintain positive expectations for the future are very promising; whether they look resistant to the reflections in the social mirror or not.
 - Utilizing advanced data and technology, another arrangement of information, instruction and learning ought to apply an extensive variety of synchronous and offbeat exercises, help students in breaking the limits of space and time.
 - Faculties of Arts and design in Egypt focuses on preparing "globally competent graduates" through following methods of teaching that support the sense of belonging to the Egyptian heritage and encourages new techniques throughout various disciplines that blend global and individual ways of thought.
- Acknowledgment:** This Research is supported by the Faculty of Fine Arts (Décor Department)/ Helwan University and Faculty of Arts and Design (Interior Design Department) /MSA University. The data presented, the statement made, and the views expressed are solely the responsible of the authors.

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