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ISLAMIC ARCHITECTURE DISCOURSE AND DEVELOPMENT OF A SYLLABUS FOR FACILITATING CRITICAL DIALOGUE IN HISTORY OF ARCHITECTURE

LIYANA BINTI HASNAN

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By

LIYANA BINTI HASNAN

Thesis Submitted to the School of Graduate Studies, Universiti Putra Malaysia, in Fulfilment of the Requirements for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

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Chairman : Assc. Prof. Nangkula Utaberta, PhD
Faculty : Design and Architecture

Traditional lecture-based pedagogy has remained fundamentally unchanged. This is particularly true with the teaching of History of Architecture where trends of contents and education have not changed. The research finds that Islamic architecture's discourse is a complex subject with multiple narratives that are often swept under a metanarrative, positioned as the 'other' towards Western history. Passive learning of knowledge could lead learners to experience cultural alienation, detaching students from contemporary issues. The research argues for an in-depth inquiry into the syllabus design as a pedagogical tool towards critical learning of History of Architecture with a focus on Islamic architecture. The purpose of the research is to design a course syllabus that could facilitate dialogue in class. The research posits that developing the syllabus focusing on the contents of history and theory can facilitate critical learning among students, to identify multiple histories and narratives within Islamic architecture. The research uses an integrated case study and grounded theory methodology to analyse hybrid data collection from interviews, document and case studies in the course syllabus. The outcome of this research is a theoretical framework of contents that would aid critical dialogue in the subject of Islamic architecture. Materials of diverse context and problems facilitate learning, enabling students to construct an encompassing understanding of Islamic architecture.

Keywords: Critical Learning; History Theory; Islamic Architecture; Pedagogy; and Syllabus.

Abstrak tesis yang dikemukakan kepada Senat Universiti Putra Malaysia sebagai memenuhi keperluan untuk ijazah Doktor Falsafah

WACANA SENIBINA ISLAM DAN PEMBENTUKAN SILABUS KEARAH DIALOG KRITIKAL DALAM SEJARAH SENIBINA

Oleh

LIYANA BINTI HASNAN

Oktober 2019

Pengerusi : Prof. Madya Nangkula Utaberta, PhD
Fakulti   : Rekabentuk dan Senibina

Persekitaran pengajaran/ pembelajaran sentiasa berubah, namun pedagogi berasaskan kuliah tradisional kekal dan tidak berubah. Ini adalah benar dengan pengajaran Sejarah Senibina di mana trend kandungan dan pendidikan tidak berubah. Penyelidikan ini mendapati wacana seni bina Islam adalah subjek yang kompleks dengan pelbagai naratif yang sering disapu di bawah metanarratif dan diposisikan sebagai 'yang lain' terhadap sejarah Barat. Pembelajaran yang pasif boleh membawa pelajar menghadapi pengasingan dari budaya dan isu kontemporari. Kajian itu memperdebatkan penyiasatan mendalam ke dalam reka bentuk sukatan pelajaran sebagai alat pedagogi ke arah pembelajaran kritis Sejarah Seni Bina dengan tumpuan kepada seni bina Islam. Penyelidikan memaparkan bahawa membangunkan silabus dengan fokus pada kandungan sejarah dan teori dapat memudahkan pembelajaran kritis di kalangan pelajar, untuk mengenal pasti pelbagai sejarah dan naratif dalam seni bina Islam. Penyelidikan ini menggunakan Kajian Kes bersepadu dan metodologi Teori Asas untuk menganalisis pengumpulan data hibrid dari temubual, dokumen dan kajian kes dalam bentuk sukatan pelajaran kursus. Hasil kajian ini adalah kerangka teoritis kandungan yang akan membantu dialog kritikal dalam subjek seni bina Islam. Bahan konteks dan masalah memudahkan pembelajaran, membolehkan pelajar membina pemahaman yang merangkumi seni bina Islam.

Kata kunci: Pembelajaran Kritikal; Teori Sejarah; Senibina Islam; Pedagogi; dan Sukatan pelajaran.

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This thesis was submitted to the Senate of Universiti Putra Malaysia and has been accepted as fulfilment of the requirement for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy. The members of the Supervisory Committee were as follows:

Nangkula Utaberta, PhD
Associate Professor, Ir.
Faculty of Design and Architecture
Universiti Putra Malaysia
(Chairman)

Sumarni Ismail, PhD
Associate Professor
Faculty of Design and Architecture
Universiti Putra Malaysia
(Member)

Nor Atiah Ismail, PhD
Associate Professor, Lar.
Faculty of Design and Architecture
Universiti Putra Malaysia
(Member)

_____
ZALILAH MOHD SHARIFF, PhD
Professor and Dean
School of Graduate Studies
Universiti Putra Malaysia

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Name and Matric No.: Liyana Hasnan, GS46299

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Name of Chairman
of Supervisory
Committee:

Signature:
Name of Member of
Supervisory
Committee:

Signature:
Name of Member of
Supervisory
Committee:

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1   Background of the Study

Learning is a life-long process pervading time and context. On the other hand, architecture is a process of production, entwined in its practice and relationship to society. Within these productions and learning spaces, there is a demand for a reflection of one's position (Coles and Klimowski 1998). This thesis becomes the space of reflection for the researcher, who will embark on a teaching journey, while at the same time, questions that space where the transfer of knowledge and sharing of experiences happen. The researcher begins by questioning the fundamentals of learning and architecture to inform the grounds of the research. From there, the research will focus on the subject of history theory, specifically the subject of Islamic architecture.

Learning is a basic necessity that is of value towards something better. A typical idea of learning is the delivery of knowledge within institutions or schools. In higher education institution, a certain level to thinking is desired from students, be it prior to entering or after exiting these higher education institutions. It is a universal understanding that students need to be equipped with the awareness and ability to ask difficult questions. The higher education is a space where knowledge is no longer assembled for passive recipients but reassembled through multiple lenses and perspectives, paving a path for social awareness and change (Giroux 2010; Griffin, Brown and Warren 2012).

The thesis looks to challenge the ideas that ground the subject matters and the institutions that contain them, along with the ability to deal with the fast-changing world. The changing world should also reflect on the curriculum of the discipline, that is architecture as previously stated earlier, it is not autonomous from the world. The rapid pace of cultural change requires a class environment that stimulates critical learning and dialogue between architecture, culture and religion to be more inclusive of marginal voices and challenge any systems of oppression or forms of a power structure (Al-Qawasmi and de Velasco 2006; Kingsley 1988).

Architecture as a discourse can generate spaces and narratives that are inclusive and critical. This space of criticality must manifest within the education sphere, if not where else? Critical spaces have increased in number, almost all-in academia, through symposiums, conferences and biennales. Research in architectural education declare that education is the fundamental facet of

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architecture, functioning as a powerful medium for the dissemination of ideas and methods.

Intricacies of 21st-century global politics further require the need to reflect on issues concerning history and theory education critically. There are many contemporary issues currently affecting the discourse of history and theory that demands curricular and pedagogical changes. Issues then come with its own set of challenges, especially of knowledge transfer in the digital information age. Thinkers and educators have proposed progressive pedagogies to prepare students for a changing world, and many symposiums and conferences have stated the need to examine current architectural education. For example, the graduate student symposium, 'Teaching Architecture, Practicing Pedagogy' in February 2011, in Princeton University School of Architecture aimed to upheaval the facets of architectural education while critically examining the discipline's continuing transformation. The 2019 Architecture Symposium in Sydney, held recently in Australia "probe the means, methods, successes and failures of architecture's role in shaping our cities, and uncover how we can sharpen our collective contribution."

To continue on the boundaries of architecture and pedagogy, the thesis begins looking into the educational spaces with respect to Islamic architecture. Islamic architecture as a term is a new construct, which among the first to use them were the European travellers and scholars. It was an attempt at categorising and colonising an otherwise unknown and diverse architecture to the European spectators. Yet, the term's architectural manifestation started simultaneously with the beginning of Islam itself, and perhaps a closer split to the Antiquities, then some Western architecture. Nonetheless, in the present times, Western history of architecture continues to be accepted as the standard for which Islamic architecture is an offshoot topic supporting the core as an elective or a two-week short course. It is argued that Islamic architecture might lack a developed methodological perspective to accommodate its being. However, due to its histories, diverse regions, ethnic cultures, and nationalities, it cannot be studied similarly along Western history's conceptual lines, let alone an extension from it (Rabbat 2012).

The dissemination of information parallels that of a rapidly changing world. There is no space for passive learning, as this could lead students to experience cultural alienation and be disassociated from contemporary issues. Taking into account the issues affecting education, the thesis examines the boundaries of pedagogy and architecture, with an overarching desire to create an environment that encourages dialogue and stimulates inquiring minds. The researcher aims to use the research in future teaching endeavor.

1.2   Problem Statement

Most courses for learning Islamic Architecture, as an introduction to the topic would cover the civilisation from the beginning of the religion to the twentieth century. The current method of teaching Islamic architecture is a history course that commences with a chronological survey of key periods of the golden civilisation before branching into a detailed typological approach or an architectural detail analysis of forms and elements (Hasnan 2015). This method introduces students to the architecture with a general scope of the field and establishes points of reference. The format of classes, on the other hand, usually emphasises on the use of visual aids. These visual aids utilise dramatic maps and images to describe traditional forms and limited "actor" or architecture. Aides are dated and follow the same chronological survey.

However, this dry exercise severely limits the exposure and understanding to students on what Islamic architecture entails. Passively teaching history gives no room for analytical or critical reflection, evaluation or long-term synthesis: without any queries on the information, there are possibilities of accepting texts that propagate false, Eurocentric or mythologised views of history (Loewen 1995; Foster & Padgett 1999; Savich 2009). Plastic boundaries, mass diaspora, volatile world economy, environmental ruins, cultural conflicts and religious disputes occurring around the world inform and influence the discourse of Islamic architecture, without which produces a detached subject.

Various approaches and disciplines have been employed to discuss the canon further. One approach of centring it on the notion of the sacred and secular further divides the consensus on whether including non-religious buildings to the inventory of religious buildings is considered blasphemy. The subject continues to be debated among academia and practitioners on Islamic architecture due to the lack of consensus on the term's fundamental meanings (Rasdi 2015).

The challenge is in trying to navigate through various discourses and sometimes, the polarities in the expression of history and Islamic architecture. When exposed to these discourses, a student might have a difficult time making decisions about what to accept or discard. However, with guidance, students can become critical thinkers and allow them the position to control their reading and understanding of historical narratives. A critical perspective on historical context examines the factors that contributed to current situations, especially those marked by disparity, discrimination or stigma (Given 2008).

Women and gender are also aspects rarely examined in the description of Islamic architecture. It is usually reduced to women's physicality instead of a complex discussion on gender as a flexible and vital construct within society. In

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Malaysia, for instance, there is a claim towards Islamic architecture that suggests the Malay vernacular architecture is inherently Islamic. This concept, though valid, runs the risk of becoming a political tool for power and conflict.

Islamic architecture narrative often takes the position of a universal aspect to maintain the status quo and the trend of a globalised connection. However, this practice pushes the discourse into a distant concept with little comprehension of cultural interactions between regions and crossing time. This reduction erases the fact that Islamic architecture develops from interactions of the surrounding geo-socio-political environment, complete with the complexities of cultural identities that are always contesting. Islamic architecture continues to modify and express itself through the changing times and space, but this rarely reflected in the education scene.

The tendency of historians to read straightforward narratives of progress should be rejected. Historiography covers the writing of history itself, by which depending on its validity of the writings, validates the history. History is not necessarily chaotic, though it is far from linear, as each event in history emerges from other related events. Generating more critically engaged participants can be achieved by altering the traditional education landscape to include an understanding of diverse culture and indigenous ways of knowing, and to engage with socio-historical constructed power relationships while acknowledging personal biases (Griffin, Brown & Warren 2012; Kincheloe 2007; Lukinbeal & Allen 2007; Kupiainen, Suoranta & Vaden 2007).

This understanding insists on dialectic and discursive approach to its learning, and perhaps the space for criticality could be found within the syllabus. If a course syllabus can impact the way history and theory subject is understood and made relevant to contemporary issues. There is a need for an in-depth examination of the syllabus as a pedagogical tool towards critical learning of Islamic architecture.

1.3 Research Question

From the problem statement and the need for a critical learning approach, the main research questions on 'how to develop the syllabus as a pedagogical tool to facilitate critical dialogue of Islamic architecture?' The sub-research questions are divided into three (3) constructs of 'what' and 'how' to support this central research question. Below is a table to show the construct of the sub-research questions, along with the knowledge outcomes:

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Table 1.1 : Construct of Research Questions and Knowledge Outcomes

Construct	Research Question	Knowledge Outcomes
What	What are the available Islamic architecture discourses and the motivation for each view?	Conceptually map out the varied discourses of Islamic architecture.
How	How does pedagogical practices address contemporary issues through the history theory courses?	Understanding the pedagogical strategies of history theory courses.
How	How to develop the history theory syllabus as a pedagogical tool to facilitate critical dialogue in the discourse of Islamic architecture?	Recommendation of selected content the history theory syllabus to facilitate dialogue in the discourse of Islamic architecture.

To explain the table further, the first construct looks into the available discourses of Islamic architecture, focusing on each view's theories and motivations to have a comprehensive inventory of the subject. The second construct looks at the pedagogical practices of history and theory subjects and the strategies of addressing contemporary issues. The last construct aims to answer the main research question through the proposal of a theoretical framework in order to facilitate critical learning.

1.4 Objectives of the Study

Corresponding to the research questions are the research objectives for the thesis. The investigation covers the subject of Islamic architecture, pedagogical practices and critical dialogues. The objectives of the study are:

1. To identify and analyse the available discourses of Islamic architecture, that are varied, conflicting and wide-ranging. The goal is to study each argument's motivation along with the issues and challenges as this gives an in-depth understanding of the canon.

2. To analyse the pedagogical practices of learning the history theory subject, with a focus on Islamic architecture. This analysis looks at strategies of pedagogy, dialogue and the syllabus as tools for facilitating understanding. The analysis also looks into the flexibility of each strategy to incorporate contemporary issues.

3. To propose a theoretical framework that includes a recommended content framework to assist Islamic architecture's critical learning. The selected content is incorporated into the syllabus as a pedagogical strategy to support the theoretical framework.

1.5   Methodology

The main research focuses on Islamic architecture and pedagogical strategies with the intention of developing tentative theories or theoretical framework. The research questions aim for conceptual meanings and descriptive answers, which are non-numerical data, underlining the use of a qualitative research method. The research also focuses on the social issues and discourse to explore the respondents' words and views (Creswell 1998; Miles & Huberman 1994), again, underlining the use towards a qualitative research method. Once a qualitative approach for the research has been established, it is necessary to decide on a specific research design that best addresses the research problem (Creswell & Plano-Clark 2007).

For this qualitative study, a combination of a case study and grounded theory methodology was chosen. Grounded theory and case study research partly overlap (Arshad et al. 2012). The research explores both the motivation and development of pedagogy in preference to the subject of Islamic architecture. This exploratory approach justifies the use of a grounded theory methodology. However, the researcher approached the research already bound to a specific case that is Islamic architecture syllabus, and this satisfies the design of a case study method.

In this design, the case study is employed as data and not just a research design as described by Yin (2003). The important implication for using this combined method is that case study is the 'object of study' while grounded theory method is used as both research design and data analysis (Eisenhardt 1989; Glaser & Strauss 1967). Another reason for the combined research design is the narrowing down of an otherwise broad exploratory research of the case study. The research design implies an interpretivist method, rejecting absolute facts while allowing space for perspectives and opinion justifies the use of interviews and case study document as data collection. Using the grounded theory methodology, the data analysis for both data collection utilises the open coding, selective coding and constant comparison process. The outcome of the research is a theoretical framework. There were four (4) respondents for the interviews, while the case study document collected were 30 syllabi from an open access inventory.

1.6   Significance of the Study

This research will be a significant endeavour in promoting Islamic architecture as an alternative concept that parallels the Western history of architecture, forged on its timeline and context and without having to lean on the European centric narrative. In a world where power structures are being dismantled to give voice to the common people and minorities, the research can also dismantle the power structures within the subject. A clear understanding of the canon can prevent perpetuating the trend where Islamic architecture is continuously used as a political, racial and religious identity.

This study is also beneficial to the students and instructors in architecture when effective learning is employed in the class. By addressing real-world issues and historical conflicts, the subject ceases to be a dry and detached topic. Instead, Islamic architecture as a subject can be interesting with a sense of urgency. Both students and instructors benefit from the selected contents, making learning the subject systematic without the rigidity it implies.

The contemporary issues justify the need for more effective, life-changing teaching strategies. Utilising the recommended theoretical framework from this study trains to better understand the subject, towards the development of critical graduates of architecture and history theory.

The study will help other researchers conduct a history theory course of their own, guided by the selected contents of the theoretical framework. This subsequent process could then help uncover critical areas in the educational process.

1.7   Scope and Limitations

This study focuses on the Islamic architecture course, with the intent to address the discipline of architectural history and theory. However, the research acknowledges that it can never determinedly describe the whole discipline of architectural history and theory. The purpose of the research is to design a course syllabus that could facilitate dialogue in class, and thus specific problems taken into account are those faced here in Malaysia.

Efforts have been made to ensure a broad reach in the collection of the syllabus, although the Archnet repository by the Aga Khan Trust for Culture (AKTC) is already an authority in the resource for teaching and learning tool, with a growing and updated database. Since the repository collects from around the world, the research is ensured a broad reach of the data. In addition

to this, data is sourced from the world wide web and Malaysian higher education institutions to address both a global and local audience.

The use of exploratory study means the findings can be generalised to the local and global population. The exploratory nature of the research inhibits an ability to make definitive conclusions about the findings. They provided insight but not definitive conclusions.

1.8   Duration of Study

The scholarship that binds the researcher limits the length of the study to 36 months. Integrating case study and grounded theory method covers a substantial amount of data both from the interviews and the selected course syllabi, with the intent for comprehensive research. The design of the methodology will use memo writing and comparative analysis to control bias, prevent skewed and impartial data analysis.

The number of interviewees is small; however, the aim is for in-depth data collection. Integrating case study and grounded theory covers many data both of experiences from the interview and case study of the syllabus with the intent for comprehensive research. Designing the methodology to achieve the research objective is risky, but memo writing, and comparative analysis are used to control bias and prevent a skewed data analysis.

1.9   Structure of Thesis

The structure of the thesis is as follows:

Chapter 1: An overview of the thesis informing the readers of problem statements, research questions and methodology. The study's scope and limitations, along with the duration of the study and the definition of the term concludes the chapter.

Chapter 2: The literature review chapter is divided into four sections: history and Islamic architecture, Islamic architecture discourse, pedagogical practices and transferring of knowledge. Each section is summarized through points of departure, and these points are summarised for further course of action.

Chapter 3: The methodology begins by presenting the study's branch and followed by descriptions of the chosen method. The chapter then is presented

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by the data collection method and analysis and concluded by the research validation.

Chapter 4: This chapter details the data collection and findings of the three research questions. The findings chapter is divided into two sections. The first is the data collection and analysis of both the interview and case study data. The second section is the constant comparison of selective coding from the analysis to which an outcome of the theoretical framework was achieved.

Chapter 5: This chapter further discusses the findings and analysis of Chapter 4 and begins by analysing pedagogical practices focusing on the transaction of knowledge. The chapter then discusses the framework of contents that was generated with justification for them. Lastly, the chapter discusses how the framework generated could facilitate critical dialogue in classes.

Chapter 6: The concluding chapter summarises the contributions of this research. The chapter begins with a summary of the research, along with the restatement of the research objectives. A recapitulation of the findings will be presented, and the implications discussed. Later, the chapter acknowledges the limitations of the study and the problems encountered during the course of the research. Recommendations for future research and final words ends the chapter.

1.10   Definition of Terms

A list of terms used in the research requires prior understanding. The following is the definitions to understand further and clarify the terms:

Table 1.2 : Glossary of Operational Terms

TERMS	DEFINITION
Grounded Theory	A systematic methodology in the social sciences involving the construction of theories through methodical gathering and analysis of data.
Historiography	The study of the writing of history and of written histories.
Pedagogy	The method and practice of teaching, especially as an academic subject or theoretical concept.

Syllabus	The subjects in a course of study or teaching.
Theory	A supposition or a system of ideas intended to explain something, especially one based on general principles independent of the thing to be explained.
Epistemology	The theory of knowledge, especially with regard to its methods, validity, and scope, and the distinction between justified belief and opinion.
Ontology	A set of concepts and categories in a subject area or domain that shows their properties and the relations between them.
Interpretivist	An approach to social science that opposes the positivism of natural science. Or qualitative research, a method of inquiry in social science and related disciplines.

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BIODATA OF STUDENT

Liyana Hasnan is a researcher and part-time educator, focusing in architectural history and theory. Her work investigates cultural, historical and political rhetoric within the discourses that have defined the architecture discipline. Her recent research looks at modes of architectural pedagogy, spatial politics and the tension between universalisation and traditional culture. Her background in architecture began at the Universiti Teknologi Mara, UiTM in Shah Alam, where she received both her Bachelor Science and Bachelor Honors in Architecture.

Liyana received her master's degree from Columbia University, GSAPP, in the program, Critical, Curatorial and Conceptual Practices in Architecture (MSc. CCCP) in 2015. During her time in New York, she joined the curatorial team for Exhibitions at the Arthur Ross Gallery of Architecture. She organised the 4th annual symposium, *Interpretations: Critical Shifts*, at the Studio-X, New York. She co-edited *Monograph: Tool for the Toolmakers* (UiTM, 2009) and has contributed articles in *Design Coursebook:20* (UiTM, 2005), *Revue III* (UiTM, 2007) and most recently, in *TheVenice Counter-Catalogue: A Guide to the 14th International Architecture Exhibition* (GSAPP Books, 2015). Liyana is currently a Graduate Fellow attached to the Universiti Sains Islam Malaysia in Nilai and is continuing her PhD studies.

Liyana's PhD topic aims to build her ground into Islamic architecture and history theory, which she has also previously researched into during her master's science degree. Her PhD thesis would aid her in designing her syllabus once she starts teaching. She recently presented her first paper at the Persidangan Seni Bina dan Alam Bina Serantau 2018 at UKM last year.

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