Biophilic Design: Creating a healthy guest experience

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Abstract

The purpose of this study is to gain a better understanding of how biophilia can enhance the interior environment and the most beneficial factors of biophilia which should be incorporated into design to alleviate everyday stressors.

Methodology

- Data for this study was collected through Qualtrics, using a quantitative research method including 13 questions taking about five minutes to complete focusing on biophilia in the indoor environment.
- The survey was available to complete starting November 16th through November 26th, 2018. Questions were broken up between hotel and inn related questions.
- Questions types of questions included images based on preference of spaces with biophilic elements and spaces without, multiple choice, and a Likert scale.
- The survey was broken up into two distinct parts. The first regarding the inn and inn participants opinions on inn and hotel stays. The second was focused around spas and how people may or may not utilize them.

Subjects

- Participants were contacted through North Dakota State University (NDSU) and social media.
- Participants were of at least the age of 18 or older.
- In total 302 participants completed the survey with 81% of the participants being between the age of 18 and 24. The remaining came in as follows: 11% at 25-34, 3% at 35-44, 3% at 45-54, and 2% at 55 or older.

Results

Inn/Hotel

- 59.08% of participants ages 18-24 visit hotels for group vacation.
- 46.67% of participants ages 25-34 take individual vacations.
- 54.55% of participants ranging from the ages 18-44 stay in hotels for business travel.
- Participants ages 45-54 stay in hotels for both business (36.36%) and individual vacations (36.36%).
- Participants 65-74 years of age display results that are equal between business, group and individual vacations.
- 32.09% of participants stay in hotels for group vacations.

Spa

- Participants were asked which interior image they prefer Image 1, which consisted of a wide variety of plants and greens in the lobby was preferred by 84% of participants. While 12% of participants preferred a lobby with some plants and greens (Image 2), and 4% preferred the lobby with no plants (Image 3).
- Participants were asked which of the top 5 features they prefer to have in the built environment.
  - Ability to control light 80.92%
  - Access to outdoors 85.37%
  - Access to natural light 85.74%
  - Variety of seating 61.67%
  - Access to private space 62.46%

Discussion

Greenewegen, De Verheij, Mees, Spruurwezenberg, & Vries (2006) found that the presence of greens in the environment has a positive impact on human’s health. Our findings indicate that the majority of participants preferred interior spaces that contained some sort of nature element, whether it be plants or water, compared to interior spaces that had no natural elements. This aligns with Aden & Martensson (2013) findings on humans gravitation toward the presence of plants and animals within an area.

According to Evans (2003) the placement of large windows, or a lot of windows in a space provides natural lighting, which has been proven to positively affect people’s moods, and lower stress levels. Results from our survey for elements that participants found most important in a space, results showed that light is very important, not only the ability to have access to natural light, but also the ability to control the lighting. This information relates back to an interview with Roseanne Mains (2018), who discussed on it is important to allow for ample natural lighting in a space, and the ability to have access to dimming lights in a space.

Participants also look for the ability to have private or separate spaces and would pick a private space over a shared space when given the option. The research also shows that participants find it important to have the option to select from a variety of seating options in a space. These results indicate that participants like to have control over their space and have options within a space.

The research also shows that participants think of spas as a relaxing environment that can be beneficial and enjoyable. Results from our survey indicate that the main reason participants visit spas is to relax. According to Fourni (2001), the presence of plants and nature elements within a space makes participants feel calmer and more relaxed. Therefore, these results show that as participants are looking for a relaxing experience while they visit spas.

References


