

Intermediate Environments and Restorativeness: the role of view and daylight

BACKGROUND

The restorativeness potential of Intermediate Environments (IE) is the focus of this research. IE range from courtyards, arcades, balconies to window-seats, offering retreat to the interior and contact with the exterior. IE promote prospect and refuge, with shelter, safety, diverse controllable environmental conditions, adaptable sociability, and relaxation opportunities. Literature indicates that the restorative benefits of nature dominate Restorative Environments (RE) research, with fewer studies on built settings. With people spending a significant proportion of time indoors, and predominantly in cities, RE within buildings give opportunity to relieve stress, attention fatigue, and therefore warrants investigation.

METHODS

An initial pilot study was conducted at a cultural building –freely accessible to the public –in São Paulo, which includes IE of different spatial characteristics and environmental qualities. Mixed research methods were used, including qualitative participant interviews, and building environmental surveys. This methodology was expanded in two recent studies in São Paulo including: Perceived Stress Scale, participants heart-rate variability, galvanic skin response, eye-tracking, Restoration Outcome Scale, Prospect and Refuge questions, semi-structured qualitative questions, daylight, and thermal measurements.

DATA ANALYSIS AND INITIAL FINDINGS

Pilot study findings indicate that views, daylight, and sociability were the main IE characteristics contributing towards restorativeness. These were investigated in more detail in these recent studies. Pilot study findings are compared with recent studies' results, that include participant physiological data collection and eye tracking.

CONTRIBUTION AND NEXT STEPS

Although similar methodology has been employed in RE research, these are novel methods in the context of intermediate environments; results can demonstrate the value of such methods to inform subsequent IE research. For the next steps of the research, studies during different times of the day as well as within different seasons of the year are proposed, where the effects of daylight variation on restorativeness can be further explored.

Keyword 1

Intermediate Environments

Keyword 2

Restorative Environments

Keyword 3

Daylight

Keyword 4

View

Keyword 5

Eye Tracking

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