

Exploring the Impact of Non-Formal Education in Architecture: A Comparative Study of Finland and Japan

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Abstract:

Over the past decade, the architecture education curriculum in higher education institutions (HEIs) has been the focus of extensive debate among scholars, driving significant advancements in global educational practices. A key comparison arises from the contrasting emphasis on formal and non-formal educational methods between Eastern and Western frameworks. For instance, European architecture departments, particularly in Finland, have increasingly incorporated non-formal education into their curricula, supported by European Union policies that encourage flexible learning approaches. Conversely, Japan's architecture programs have traditionally prioritized formal education, emphasizing structured knowledge acquisition through standardized academic channels. This paper presents case studies from Finland and Japan, illustrating the divergent educational models and their respective impacts on student learning. Through these examples, we aim to highlight the advantages of non-formal education in fostering creativity, critical thinking, and practical application within architecture studies. The analysis offers a strong case for broader adoption of non-formal education across HEIs globally, providing valuable insights for educators seeking to align their teaching strategies with evolving global standards in architecture education.