Preferences for biophilic features in tourism destinations: A Comparative Study of Germany Waterways and Oman Coastal Areas

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Structured abstract (1500-2000 words)

- **Purpose:** Over the last few years, the reconnection of human beings and nature has been emphasized widely. From ecotourism to biophilic architecture scholars in various fields have attempted to find solutions to connect people with nature and natural elements. The current study attempts to examine the role of biophilic architecture and urban design on tourism attractions. Building on the important interaction between built environments and natural landscapes, this study aims to further examine a nexus of how waterways can enhance tourists' interactions.
- **Originality:** The current study sheds light on the importance of waterways and coastal areas in two different contexts of Germany and Oman.
- **Brief Literature Review:** Biophilic architecture is grounded on biophilia notion. It highlights the basic link between humankind and nature. This architectural method has developed meaningfully which shows an increasing acceptance of the psychological and physiological advantages of combining natural elements into built environments. The basis of biophilic architecture can be found in the biophilia hypothesis presented by E. O. Wilson, which postulates that humans have an intrinsic attraction to nature, increased by an evolutionary processed (Toner, 2023).
- This hypothesis acts as a solid foundation for realizing how natural environments can develop human health and has influenced different designing rules to reconcile people to nature. The development of biophilic design rules has been made up by interdisciplinary studies that cover psychology, ecology, and architecture. For example, researchers have shown the attainability of natural natural spaces instead of only representing nature is vital for

enhancing health. (Samangooei et al., 2023). These characteristics has caused architects and urban planners to consider the incorporation of real natural elements into their designs, ignoring superficial aesthetics to make environments that enhance health and happiness (Kabinesh, 2024).

Biophilic architecture is noticeable by its intended integration of natural components into the built area which intends to make a link between people and nature. This design philosophy covers a few key characteristics that improve the well-being of human being. One of the essential properties of biophilic architecture is the integration of natural elements such as plants, water features, and normal light.

One of the central characteristics of biophilic architecture is the joining of natural light and ventilation, which not only improves the aesthetic attraction but also boosts the inhabitant well-being. Natural light has been proved to enhance mood and efficiency, whereas appropriate ventilation can decrease indoor air pollutants, developing the general heath. Moreover, biophilic design mostly contains the utilization of natural materials and colors that copy the tints found in nature, enhancing a sense of peacefulness and association to the environment (Kabinesh, 2024). Another important angle of biophilic architecture is the use of green spaces, such as gardens, green roofs, and living walls, which function as direct links to nature. These elements not only make ready aesthetic profits but also provide biodiversity easily and can help to decrease urban heat effects.

Study shows that accessibility to green spaces is connected with less push levels and boosted mental wellbeing results, supporting the significance of incorporating such properties into urban planning and architectural design (Khozaei et al., 2022). Moreover, biophilic architecture uses different design patterns that speeds up a more profound engagement with nature. For example, the "Nature in Space" pattern stresses the physical presence of nature inside the built areas, whereas "Natural Analogues" uses design elements that recalls natural shapes and structures.

- **Design/Methodology/Approach:** Bamberg (Germany), a historical city with UNESCO world heritage status and an intricate canal network, and Salalah in Oman which has a unique costal area and beaches have taken as a case study. The two locations are good examples of how large water features can help transform a city's aesthetic and provide space for various recreational activities. This research examines peoples' preferences for these biophilic features. People's preferences were examined through their interaction with waterways and coastal area images in Instagram. 500 images posted with hashtags of Bamberg and Salalah were analyzed, for the existence of any biophilic features, the number of likes and received comments.
- **Results:** The result of the study confirmed the correlation between the number of aspects of biophilic architecture and urban design, more specifically waterways and coastal areas with significant higher user interactions. The coastal area and waterways received more attention than merely built environment images.

- **Implications and limitations:** Understanding human beings' degree preferences for nature base environments provide a great source of information for policy makers and designers.

Keywords: Basophilic architecture, Tourism, Coastal area

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