

**THE INFLUENCE OF LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE ON THE EFFECTIVENESS  
OF THE UNIVERSITY CAMPUS - A case study of Zimbabwe**

**Mohammad Sharif Zami**  
B. Arch.

Lecturer, Department of Architecture, National University of Science and Technology  
Bulawayo, Zimbabwe

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## ABSTRACT

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The university campus is a place of life fulfilment for the future generation. This life fulfilment does not take place in isolation in the university academic building, classrooms, or in the library building alone; rather it involves the interactions of different ideologies, cultures, traditions, religions, ethnic background carried by people of international communities. Such interactions take place in various spaces of the university campus and these spaces include: interior space, courtyard open space, semi-covered open space, playfields, circulation spaces, etc. This study is focused only on open air spaces on the university campus.

Landscape design plays a major role in students' outdoor activities and the different attributes of university campus of Size, shape, patterns of growth, circulation systems, are all significant. Pedestrian walkways, courtyard open spaces and landscape forms are the major landscape design elements which are discussed in this research study and analysed in relation to student open air activities. Besides these three major landscape design elements of university campus open spaces, the achievement of environmental control through the effective landscape design is also discussed.

Students' open air activities in the university campus are not only influenced by the landscape design elements but also by the social, cultural and economic aspects and background of the users. Islamic culture and architecture for example, play a role to enhance and encourage open air activities in the learning institutions in Africa. The Europeans, Americans, Asians and Arabs brought their ideologies, cultures, and religions in Africa and influenced Africa as a whole because of the magnetic central location of Africa. Besides the Islamic culture, colonial cultures also play a major role in the establishment of tertiary institutions.

The development of university campus in Zimbabwe started during the colonial era. Open space design and landscape planning was not considered as a separate design task in the development of university campus during this period. There is still a lack of landscape professionals in the development of campuses in this country. Some recently developed university campuses show significant efforts as incorporation of landscape design principles on the development of their campuses. The high rate of student open air activities is observed in those university campus open spaces because of effective landscape design and environmental control.

This study attempts to understand and interpret the importance of student open air activities on the university campus, the contributions of landscape architecture on the effectiveness of university campus design, and the role of landscape design to enhance student open air activities in the development of the university campus in Zimbabwe. The research approach has been qualitative; it ranges from the general to the specific, from macro to micro issues. The methods used to collect information include: personal observations, set of questions to guide interviews with space users, administrators of institutions and other stakeholders, and desktop survey. This study summarises the results of investigations of the effectiveness of university campus, the influence of landscape design and makes recommendations towards the future of campus landscape architecture for the architects, planners, policy makers, students, researchers and the stakeholders.