

## **EFFECT OF THE NORMS ON ISLAMIC ARCHITECTURAL DECISION MAKING**

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### **Abstract**

The norm is what the people knew and walked on it from a common act among them or saying a lot of its use or leaving and is called habit. The architectural decision is a programmed decision that has its controls and goals. It also embodies the doctrinal, functional, cultural, and historical values of a society that change over time. Norms have been addressed in many of the proposals but did not address the mechanism of simulation and application of this concept in the decision-making architecture. Therefore, the research problem was identified as (the existence of a knowledge gap about the role of norms in architectural decision-making, especially Islamic architecture, which combines the established essence of the values and beliefs of a particular society while keeping pace with the spirit of the times). The objective of the current research is to uncover the effect of norms in Islamic architectural decision-making. In order to address the research problem, achieve its objectives, and verify its hypothesis, the intellectual paradigm was built through the collection of information and the study was based on an analytical and descriptive method. And the most important research findings are the efficiency of the variables of norms in building capacity, providing equal opportunities in decision-making, and taking it in line with the spirit of the age of technology, flexibility of the relations between the community environment and the civilizational systems to conclude the research recommendations and sources.

Keywords: Aesthetic need, Architectural decision, Ethics, Islamic thought, Norms.

## 1. Introduction

This paper explores the influence of norms on the Islamic architectural decision-making, where the norms are defined as a set of opinions, ideas and beliefs prevailing in a given society, which are reflected in physical or non-physical actions. When examining a group of previous studies, it was found that there are no norms in Islamic architectural decision-making, and therefore architecture is not appropriate for society. Except Alavi and Azizi study [1] that pointed to the impact of norms on the decision-making at the level of the urban design of Islamic cities, but it was not at the level of architecture in particular. Al-Mamouri study [2] stated that the decision-making is within Islamic thought, but it does not address the norm in architecture.

Therefore, the research problem is (the existence of a knowledge gap about the role of norms in architectural decision-making, especially Islamic architecture, which combines the established essence of the values and beliefs of a particular society while keeping pace with the spirit of the times). In order to achieve the research objective of build an architectural intellectual base and make it a destination for a generation of architects on the role of norms in Islamic architectural decision-making by adopting a qualitative approach based on three main axes. The first explained the concept of norms, in Islamic jurisprudence, its characteristics, stages, symbolism and aesthetic concepts, norms in architecture, and relationship with ethics, the concept of architectural decision-making. And the second included building the theoretical framework through a group of studies to reach the hypothetical paradigm. Finally, an applied framework was built by applying the vocabulary of the theoretical framework to three architectural samples, so that the research presented the final results and conclusions.

### 1.1. Conceptual framework for research (The concept of norms)

**Linguistic definition:** It came to mean a barrier between Heaven and Hell, according to the Almighty saying that the owners of the norms called out to men who knew them by their names [3, 4].

**Idiomatic Definition:** It is a set of ideas, opinions, and beliefs that arise in the community and are reflected in what individuals practice in the work [5]. So, the norm is what people are familiar within their dealings. Therefore, the norm arises from unintentional circulation in most cases and is formed in the form of a stand-alone structure that is included in the areas of social life, including architecture.

**Philosophically Definition:** It is what souls settled upon with the testimony of minds, and the natures accepted it (definitions of Al-Jarjani) [6]. It is two parts: The general norm is the sum of the norms and traditions spread in society, and the special norm is the sum of the patterns of behaviour and norm that is common among a group of people who are united by a profession or an art, etc. And it is not proven except by repetition [6]. From the above, then norms are the normative concepts that represent the basis for any communication and represent the immediate state of the identity of society. It has three levels: The semantic, deliberative, and compositional level, where the pace of changes in norms depends on the state of the society of anxiety or stability, and the culture represents the stable state of norms.

## 1.2. Norms in Islamic jurisprudence

Muslim jurists in their approach to the rulings of architecture on a verse in the Holy Quran, the saying of God Almighty: Take forgiveness and enjoin norm and turn away from the ignorant [3]. They interpret the norm of what the people have done and accept and do not object to it. Where, the origin of the Islamic social norm did not come out of anywhere, but rather is a cumulative group of values and beliefs that are based on Islamic thought [7]. Figure 1 shows the role of Islamic thought represented by its source (the Holy Qur'an) in creating social norms (privacy, for example) and its role in generating architectural norms as (the broken entrance).



**Fig. 1. The role of Islamic thought in the birth of social norms, which in turn create architectural norms.**

## 1.3. Norms characteristics

- Change: Unintentional and unconscious exit, which is the property of norm in continuous transmission.
- Constancy: The tendency of a norm to resist change.
- Alteration: Intentional and conscious exit, which is changed by external effect.
- Non-obligation: It is an essential property of the norm that enables creativity through the norm itself [6].

## 1.4. Norms stages

- The pre-norm stage: The stage of the possibility of the formation of the norm like the probability of an element being related to appear in a combination.
- The stage of formation of the norm: The stability of the composition in a specific form that represents the optimum state in collective perception.
- The stage of forgetting and re-modelling: The deviation of the norm from the optimum and the possibility of the emergence of a new norm appear [8].

## 1.5. Norms need between symbolism and aesthetics

- Symbolic need: It is the link between how an individual determines his identity, norms, and faith, and how it is translated into a physical form, Chadirji [8].
- Aesthetic need: It is an intentional departure from everything that is described as natural or normal based on the human need to confirm its existence towards the nature, Chadirji [8].

## 1.6. Norms in architecture

They are in a state of tension between the forces of change and stabilization, and one cannot be preferred over the other. When the stabilizing factors constitute the

foundations of permanence and stability and the elements of human existence and identity, one cannot live in a state of repetition that generates boredom without change that can be translated into the concepts of effectiveness, creativity and development [9]. Figure 2 shows procedural analysis of the influence of norms on the architectural product subject to the designer on the one hand and the recipient/society norms on the other hand.

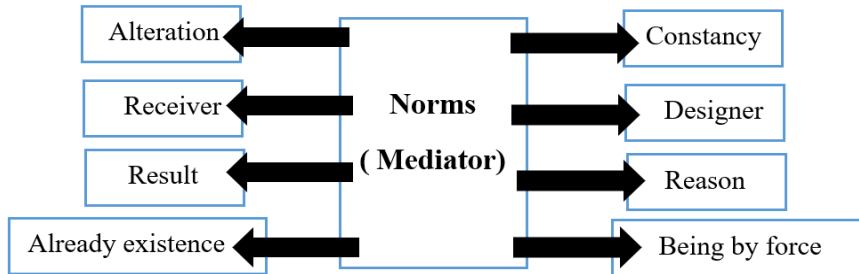


Fig. 2. Procedural analysis of the concept of architectural norms.

1.7. The correlation between concepts of norms and ethics

Ethics is a well-established concept in the soul, from which actions are issued easily without thought [10]. In European languages, there are two expressions: "morals" tend to behave in the human individual, and "ethic" represents the values that pertain to society and its products, including architecture [2]. As Al-Mamouri [2] pointed out that the characteristics of ethical action in architecture are the ability to make decisions, that is, the architects will be represented in the ability and control over desire and proof of the necessity imposed by the requirements. From the foregoing, norms are consistent with ethics in that they represent material and ethical societal values, and therefore norms combine between a fixed doctrinal core and another variable developed across different places and times, as shown in Fig. 3 where the author explain the site of ethics and norms among the knowledge system. Architectural product based on norm takes on fixed content (the habits of a particular society) with change (keeping pace with technology), all of which are derived from Islamic thought.

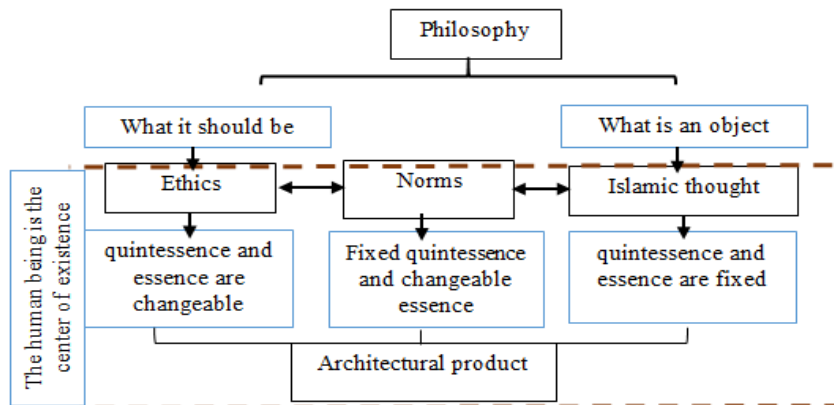
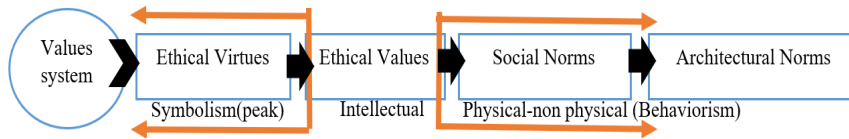


Fig. 3. The site of ethics and norms among the knowledge system.

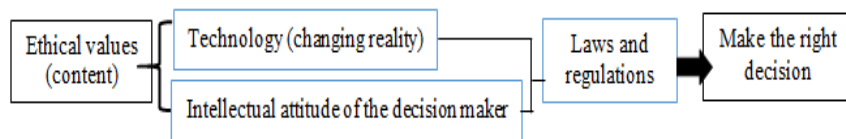
On the other hand, the ethics theory has combined the condition of "ethical" and the condition of "humanity" [2]. Consequently, it is in accordance with the norms Fig. 4 shows relationship between norms and ethics. Norms combines fixed and variable behavior/physical and non-physical.



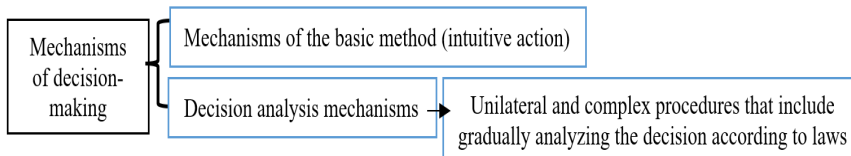
**Fig. 4. Relationship between norms and ethics.**

**1.8. The concept of decision making**

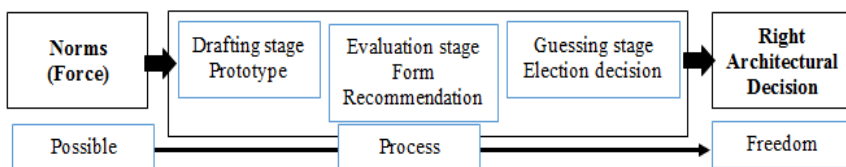
The decision was known as the specific will of the decision maker regarding what should and should not be done in order to reach the final result. Decision-making is the process of achieving a basic goal by choosing the most appropriate alternative to face a particular situation [11]. Then, the decision-making is the series of individual or group responses that end in choosing the most appropriate for any situation, which is a very complex process in which multiple factors overlap: psychological, political, economic, and social. Thus, the decision-maker exercises the freedom and responsibility of his choice, as seen in Figs. 5-7, which show the stages of architectural decision-making according to norms (selecting a prototype then reformulating it using new techniques, provided that it does not deviate from the familiar general framework (in form and content)), refer to Table 1.



**Fig. 5. The process of translating ethical values into the decision-making process.**



**Fig. 6. The influence of structural laws and design principles on the architectural decision-making mechanism.**



**Fig. 7. Stages of architectural decision-making according to norms.**

**Table 1. Summary of the conceptual framework of the search.**

Sources	Islamic World (The Holy Quran) - Western World (Contexts of Society)
<b>Borders</b>	Judgments and doctrinal controls related to architecture
<b>The mechanisms</b>	Taking into account the effect of norms in making architectural decisions
<b>Norm axis</b>	The human being is the focus of existence architecture
<b>The aim</b>	Finding an ideal architecture that serves human values
<b>The result</b>	Humanized Islamic architecture reflects the contents of the norms of the society for which it is designed

## 2. Theoretical Framework for Research

It includes a group of architectural studies with the aim of identifying the knowledge gap, goal, and extracting the vocabulary of the theoretical framework. Chadirji [8] pointed that if the "value" is a subjective attitude towards things and the individual determines the importance of the thing for him, and that the interaction of the general sum of individual values constitutes the general norm of that society, this means that the norm consists of different subjective situations, which are interacting and interrelated states. And, for this reason, the norm becomes from this perspective is variable, qualitative and arbitrary and reflects the instantaneous subjectivity of these individuals, and this is what happens in an unstable society in the role of rapid development or decay. It is clear that the norm is one of the basic pillars of community identity and is changed for the sake of distinction.

Al-Wardi [12] referred to the slow social change in norms, traditions, and values, as well as defined the change as a natural transformation that affects the patterns of relationships, elements or both. The change is reflected in the form of behaviour prevailing among the individuals, such that it ultimately affects the structure of society and its functions. In architecture, whenever the growth of society stops, the development of architecture in it stops, and it remains preserving its vocabulary and connotations. Also, the author explained the types of restrictions affecting the architecture. They may be psychological restrictions represented by the controlling subconscious mind, or social restrictions represented by social norms and thus fixed architectural norms and styles, or fanaticism towards some ideas, or cultural restrictions represented by cultural values.

Al-Khayat [9] explained that the architecture is considered one of the basic factors for the formation and consolidation of social symbols that contribute to the formation of the identity of the individual and society, indicating that the symbols have common meanings and values and how they are transformed into norms. The architectural norms that reach the optimal characteristic of their composition consisting of technical, aesthetic, symbolic, and functional components remain constant, and if this characteristic is lost, it will change. Then, the norm is an independent structure. Baker [13] classified the architectural product into: Primitive architecture in which the prevailing norms are transmitted without change, local architecture in which the norms are transmitted through circulating collective thought, and archaeological architecture whose goal is to depart from the general norms. It is clear that the architectural product changes according to societal norms that reflect the way of life, religion, and way of thinking. There is a product that settles on a certain formula and becomes familiar with perception, and another

tends to be reshaped, and thus a new architectural norms/formula/style emerges that is different from what preceded it.

Al-Bokhari et al. [14] agreed on the influence of socially norms and Islamic heritage on the form, characteristics and the relationships between the elements of housing depending on environmental conditions. The study's findings revealed that the architectural practices in Islamic societies are related in two ways: "Rooting" which refers to a return to local architectural norms and styles in terms of vocabulary and styles. The second aspect is "the influence of current/surrounding context," which encompasses social, cultural, political, climatic, and economic factors. And the technological progress has an impact on the social changes, such as Western architecture schools' reliance on basic shapes, new building materials, and implementation speed. The researcher concluded that the religious norms influence the home design, such as giving privacy (visual and audio), limits on the height of buildings, and neighbour rights, avoiding the extravagance, and that the absence of these concepts will lead to the designs losing their identity.

Khaki [15] aimed to investigate the pattern of Islamic housing based on the Holy Qur'an in terms of the importance of the concepts of place (meaning/norm) and its perceptual indicators in forming spaces related to norms, identity, and religion, which are considered the sources of change in place. The spaces were characterized by reassurance and revive feelings of belonging and spatial presence. The results indicated that applying Islamic methods and semantic patterns creates environmental calm and psychological health, such as the use of light and respect for neighbours as stipulated in the Islamic foundations for creating a harmonious living environment. Mohamadi [16] agreed with Khaki the influence of religious conventions on the construction of spaces in Islamic architecture, and focused on architectural elements (minarets, domes, entrances), such as mosque entrances embellished with Holy Qur'an verses. Light is also a vital feature since it represents God's presence, therefore the glossy walls and floors have been used to reflect the light, which enhances the building's aesthetics as well as its historical and local characteristics. Mansour and Ahmed [17] agreed with the above regarding the importance of human norms, especially respect the neighbor in the Islamic faith and how they contribute to the cohesion of the Islamic city by providing psychological comfort and reassurance.

While Salman and Aljbouri [18] emphasized that the religion is (law, logic, norms, ethics, science), as these principles contribute to a deductive rational methodology to create a model for Islamic architecture that governs the principles and methodology of the limits of Islamic law. Alavi and Azizi [1] pointed that the individual/group norms in terms of constraints and freedom influence decision-making, and tried to build an Islamic base based on the Qur'an and the Noble Prophet's Sunnah. An architect, who uses rational thinking based on architectural design principles and Islamic thought and takes advice, will be more likely to make the right decisions.

Al-Mamouri [2] referred that the Islamic principles affecting the ethical architectural decision-making are (unity and harmony - privacy - simplicity and reduction - refraining from extravagance - sincerity - efficiency of performance - equality). There is a purposeful judgment that is linked to religion and sacred texts and is achieved by presenting multiple alternatives and choosing the optimal alternative, so that the architectural decision is ethical and preserves the cultural identity of the community. As the Al-Khayat [9] mentioned God Almighty has

granted man freedom, competence, and ownership in his life, as well as the process of human decision-making is subject to planning, organization, and motives that may face obstacles, but controlling these obstacles achieves the motive, which is the required needs, and thus the optimal decision, refer to Table 2.

**Table 2. Summary of what was reported in previous studies.**

Concept	Restrictions/norms											Islamic architecture				Decision-making
	change/distinction	(social)/Rooting	cultural	aesthetic	symbolic	privacy	neighbor rights	spatial presence	psychological	light						
Researchers																
Alavi[1]	•	•		•	•											•
Mamouri[2]				•												•
Chadirji[8]	•	•														
Khayat[9]	•	•		•	•											
Wardi[12]	•	•	•													
Baker[13]	•	•														
Bokhari[14]	•	•	•				•	•								
Khaki[15]	•					•		•		•		•		•		
Mohamadi[16]		•	•	•	•											•
Mansour[17]		•						•				•				
Salman[18]		•	•		•	•										

From the foregoing, it can be noted that the previous studies dealt with several aspects but did not address the effect of norms on the Islamic architectural decision-making. Therefore:

- Research Problem: The existence of a knowledge gap about the role of norms in architectural decision-making, especially Islamic architecture, which combines the established essence of the values and beliefs of a particular society while keeping pace with the spirit of the times.
- Research objectives: To build an architectural intellectual base and make it a destination for a generation of architects on the role of norms in Islamic architectural decision-making by building a theoretical framework that includes design thinking while verifying the application of the vocabulary of this framework to international and local architectural products.
- Research methodology: The qualitative method was adopted and included the following steps:
  - The research introduction comprised building a conceptual framework for the concept of norms in general, characteristics, stages, norms need between symbolism and aesthetics, norms in architecture, and the relationship between norms and ethics. The concept of the decision was also clarified as to how it was taken.



- Building a theoretical framework based on a group of studies to define the problem, objectives of the research and its hypotheses, and then extracting from them the hypothetical paradigm for the research.
- Building an applied framework by the clarification of architectural samples and how the norms and Islamic architectural thought that reflect in it.
- Analysing the results and final conclusions.
- Research hypotheses: An ethical Islamic architectural decision is influenced by societal norms.

### 3. Hypothetical Paradigm

It includes the most important vocabulary of the theoretical framework of the research which has been extracted from conceptual framework and previous studies, as shown in Table 3.

**Table 3. Vocabulary of the theoretical framework of the research.**

Main concepts	Sub-concepts	Possible indicators and values
<b>Determinants of norms</b>	Norms characteristics	Change Constancy Alteration Non-obligation
	Total properties and elements	Symbolic dimension Aesthetic dimension
<b>Foundations of norms</b>	Perceived properties and elements	Perceived Image/ Content elements Content form/ Supplementary image
<b>Mechanics of norms</b>	Decision-making within the framework of Islamic thought	Unity and uniformity Privacy Simplicity and reduction Asceticism
<b>Norms rules in construction</b>	The role of the sacred text in building techniques	Building materials Building techniques
<b>Characteristics of an architectural decision with an ethical dimension</b>	Intellectual orientation	Ethical standards and intellectual positions for the decision-maker
	Dealing with absolute values	Fixed content through awareness of absolute truths
<b>Presence of ethical values in the decision</b>	Spatial presence	Understanding the relationships existing in the societal environment and civilized systems
	Temporal presence	Evolution, adaptation to time, and efficient decision-making with an ethical dimension

### 4. Applied Framework for Research

Architectural samples varied between global and local samples, differing in their geographical location, how they deal with the norms that reflect the society in which they are located, how to apply the principles of Islamic architectural thought, and it will be explained as follows, as shown in Fig. 8.



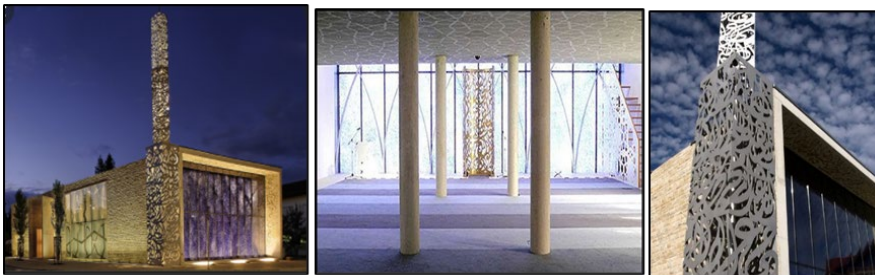
**Fig. 8. Sample (A): Al-Hussain cultural centre for Quran sciences.**

The idea was built on transferring the norms of a specific society with the features and vocabulary of Islamic architecture in terms of the structural elements (arches, domes, and central courtyard) and the basic design principles (repetition, symmetry, unity within diversity, and rhythm) that were reflected in the architectural elements and relationships in addition to adherence to specific building laws (building height, movement isolation for both genders, multiple entrances, new technologies, and materials), refer to Fig. 9.



**Fig. 9. Sample (B): Baghdad central railway station (architect Wilson-1951).**

The general style was a hybrid between the English elements (A spherical dome was placed low and covered by the main foyer), modernity (Glass - covering large areas without columns) with (bricks, blue turquoise element gave the building a local feature interfering with the sky in its symbolism), refer to Fig. 10.



**Fig. 10. Sample (C): Glass mosque – Germany.**

The idea is the integration of Western society with Islamic identity, in terms of adherence to Islamic building standards (mosque style, floral decorations and Quranic verses written in Arabic with their German meanings) as well as providing

the optimal environment for the effectiveness of religion without affecting the aesthetic form of the building.

#### 4. Results

Adopting the descriptive and analytical method based on data recording by the researcher through direct reference based on pictures and explanations for each sample.

The concept of determinants of norms (Table 4).

**Table 4. The results of concept of the determinants of norms.**

	<b>Sample (A)</b>	<b>Sample (B)</b>	<b>Sample (C)</b>
<b>Change</b>	Achieving direct contact with the local environment and beliefs represented by formal metaphors and circulating relationships that were repeated in a regular manner that reinforced the local aspects.	Two vertical towers closer to the shape of the minaret.	Walls of transparent glass - Quranic verses in German.
<b>Constancy</b>	Documenting the vocabulary of the visual inventory of Islamic architecture in terms of physical forms while adhering to structural laws such as the use of decorations, inscriptions and Qur'anic texts in the arts of Arabic calligraphy.	Colonnaded porch - Indoor domed courtyard influenced by religious shrines in Iraq.	Commitment to the architectural and societal norms of mosques.
<b>Alteration</b>	Merging the legacies of Islamic architecture with technology.	The influence of the Renaissance buildings such (as raising the building off the ground, and the classic details of the doors)	Glass facade along the building.
<b>Non-obligation</b>	Designing the external spaces to confirm the continuity of the architectural language by repeating double groups (double quadruple or more) for arches and domes.	A conflict between two contents (local Islamic + global).	The L-block.
<b>Symbolic dimension</b>	Domes - arches - decorations in Quranic texts - glazed Kashi (Karbala).	Colonnaded porch - central dome - horizontal rectangular block.	The minaret.
<b>Aesthetics dimension</b>	Indoor open and closed courtyards that open when needed.	Vertical towers - a huge indoor courtyard.	Not using the minaret to raise the call to prayer - glass indicates liberation.

The concept of the foundations of norms (Table 5).

**Table 5. The results of the concept of the foundations of norms.**

	<b>Sample (A)</b>	<b>Sample (B)</b>	<b>Sample (C)</b>
<b>Perceived Image/ Content elements</b>	Domes -arches - the functional and movement separation - glazed Kashi (Karbala).	Porch of religious shrines - minarets - orientation upwards - contact with the ground by levels- horizontal block.	Minaret - decorations - openness to the outside.
<b>Content form/ Supplementary image</b>	(Local Islamic + global) but the power of Islamic thought.	Combines (local Islamic + global).	The simplicity of configuration with technology (Islamic + global).

The concept of norms mechanics (Table 6).

**Table 6. The results of the concept of norms mechanics.**

	<b>Sample (A)</b>	<b>Sample (B)</b>	<b>Sample (C)</b>
<b>Unity and unification</b>	Diversity within the unity of domes and arches.	Regular symmetrical repetition of the porch-bearing columns in the front façade.	For decorations and elements.
<b>Privacy</b>	Separating males from females functionally and movement.	The inner courtyard.	Reflective glass.
<b>Simplicity, reduction, and asceticism</b>	Translating ideas in the fullest meanings and least vocabulary at the level of the plan and architectural elements.	Take one item and repeat it - reducing the shape of the minaret to a tower.	For elements and relationships with keeping its expressive power.

The concept of norms rules in construction (Table 7).

**Table 7. The results of the norms concept of rules in construction.**

	<b>Sample (A)</b>	<b>Sample (B)</b>	<b>Sample (C)</b>
<b>Building materials and techniques</b>	Local materials with pre-cast concrete mold	Local materials with pre-cast concrete molds.	Modern materials (glass-iron) with pre-cast concrete molds.

The concept of the characteristics of an architectural decision with an ethical dimension (Table 8).

**Table 8. The results of characteristics of an architectural decision with an ethical dimension.**

	<b>Sample (A)</b>	<b>Sample (B)</b>	<b>Sample (C)</b>
<b>Intellectual orientation</b>	Transferring the image of Islamic architectural thought.	Combine two contradictory contents.	A symbolic minaret, deliberate in its design.
<b>Dealing with absolute values</b>	Transferring the fixed content of Islamic thought in form and function.	Dread in the style of religious buildings.	The essence of Islamic thought.

The concept of presence values ethical in the decision (Table 9).

**Table 9. The results of the characteristics of an architectural decision with an ethical dimension.**

	<b>sample (A)</b>	<b>sample (B)</b>	<b>sample (C)</b>
<b>Spatial presence</b>	The opposite of Karbalai's privacy (Motion isolation/constructive materials).	Familiar building elements, including arches, domes, and a central courtyard.	Transferring the heritage of Islamic thought in terms of repetition of elements and high symmetry.
<b>Temporal presence</b>	An Islamic thought with new technologies (New materials and technologies for implementation).	Transforming the courtyard into a closed inner courtyard.	The simplicity of the composition/elements/new materials embodied one of the concepts of Islamic architecture.

## 6. Conclusions

This paper represents one of the few studies that clarified the influence of norms in architectural decision-making to form contemporary Islamic architecture. Therefore, it is an important step to know the diversity of architectural ideas while maintaining the stability of social and Islamic concepts. The main drawn are as follows:

- Norms as an important human need contribute to the formation of the identity of the individual and society. Social norms are fulfilled in the event of collective agreement religion or belief, event or law.
- Islamic architecture is very rich in details/vocabulary, treatments of environment, where the Islamic law influences the intellectual and formal structure of architectural production, which establishes the formulation of the aspects (social, environmental, symbolic, and expressive) and the value, ethical, and ideological systems, while employing the architectural jurisprudential heritage. An example of this is the features of the Arab-Islamic urban fabric, which relies on the orientation toward the interior, the reduction of openings, and the broken entrance as concepts for achieving local privacy.
- The ethical system gives physical shapes, their value and presence. This was reflected in the Islamic architecture, such as the interlacing of muqarnas with floral decorations and Quranic verses in a way that represents unity and harmony.

- It governs the architectural decision external influences (values, norms, etc.) and internal influences (Design principles). Therefore, it starts from a problem whose primary goal is to embody the prevailing norms of society in an original architectural product.
- The sample (A) corresponds with the spatial and social context through direct contact with the local environment and beliefs that reflected in formal metaphors circulating. While sample (B) combined old English styles with local features by imitating the concept of the Islamic dome but on a huge scale that covered the inner courtyard. As for sample (C), it embodied the pattern of building mosque architecture in a new formula by the displacement of vocabulary from the recognized context and it went out of the scope of circulation to communication.
- The results manifested that the most successful Islamic buildings are the same architectural decisions that are compatible with the local environment and represent a strong, cohesive and contemporary base without deviating from the prevailing norm in form and content, based on rights, duties and principles of Islamic thought.

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