

# Psychology in Architecture: Client and Architect Relationship

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## Abstract

*Good communication and the psychological engagement between client and professional leads towards great outcomes/projects. By focusing on collaboration and mutual understanding, the study sheds light on how architects can foster a healthy and transparent relationship with their clients, marked by effective communication and responsiveness at every stage of the project. This approach enables architects to interpret and translate client needs into practical and aesthetic solutions while maintaining the integrity of their design principles. It highlights how such a partnership not only ensures project success but also creates an environment where both parties can learn and grow. The importance of this research is going to focus on architect-client continuous communication and understanding the psychological perspective of a client through the vision of an architect. Demonstrating and elaborating on the problem. The inclusion of different ways of cognitive responsive psychological techniques and understanding them as architects helps in a project and understanding the client's perspective. For clients, the process becomes an opportunity to gain a deeper understanding of architectural practices, enabling them to engage more meaningfully with the design process. For architects, it serves as a platform to expand their creative horizons, as they integrate client inputs and explore new possibilities within their work. This symbiotic interaction not only enhances the quality and relevance of the project but also lays a foundation for innovation and long-term professional growth for both the architect and the client. Ultimately, the study underscores the value of this collaborative approach in fostering a positive working relationship, achieving project goals, and contributing to the broader field of architectural practice and learning.*

**Keywords:** Client management, design sense, client-architect psychology, architectural perspective, relationship

## INTRODUCTION

Clients dealing as an architect with the integration of psychology into architecture have gained prominence in recent years, emphasizing the importance of human-centered design. By examining the psychological needs, behaviors, and emotional responses of clients, architects can tailor designs that enhance well-being, productivity, and satisfaction. The study highlights key psychological principles such as perception, cognitive responses, and emotional engagement, demonstrating how these elements shape the client experience. This approach fosters deeper client-architect collaboration, ultimately leading to more meaningful and personalized architectural solutions [1].

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Narrowing down a few points on which study will be applicable and understood are a few factors that do affect this relationship between a client and an architect, these pointers help both architect and the client to find a common ground where they can understand each other and work together as a team. Money is a key

factor that affects the idea and the deliverability of the whole project, different types of requirements the client has and how the architect can fulfill those requirements, then comes the ideas and giving those ideas a suitable physical form is the work of an architect [2]. Then presenting those ideas and how it makes the client feel and understanding the feeling behind that response also makes the architect get more conversant with the client's psychology. This pattern helps the architect maintain feasibility, the deliverables get more flexible, issues such as temper, time constraints, schedule matching can be overthrown by following a proper procedure of psychoanalyzing the client and building a work relationship. Psychology plays an important role in the architect-client relationship, providing insights into human behavior, emotions, and thought processes that underpin the design process. Knowledge of psychology helps architects better understand what their clients want, build teamwork, and solve problems effectively. With the application of these techniques, architects can design spaces that not only serve their purpose but also create an emotional connection with the clients to ensure their satisfaction and success with the project [3]. This chapter examines psychological techniques and methods applicable to research in the architect-client relationship.

## **THE IMPORTANCE OF PSYCHOLOGY IN ARCHITECTURAL PRACTICE**

Architecture is very human-centric, purpose-designed to create environments that cater to the physical, emotional, and psychological needs of people [4]. A person who wants to build his/her house comes to architects with dreams, experiences and hopes. To empathize with this psychology, an architect must go beyond being a technician and develop sensitivity. In most cases, miscommunication or failure to understand each other leads to client dissatisfaction, compromise in the design solution, or even failure of the project itself. For this reason, psychological insights are necessary in building trust expectations as well as in harmonizing outcomes [5].

### **Psychological Techniques for Architect-Client Collaboration**

Active Listening, Trust and clarity in communication rely on the cornerstone skill of active listening. An architect needs to listen carefully to the spoken and unspoken worries of his clients so that those clients feel valued and heard. Paraphrasing, clarifying questions, and summarizing important points help avoid misinterpretation. Besides building rapport, active listening also helps ensure that a client's vision and needs are properly understood. This provides deeper insight into client preferences and feelings. For example, hesitation in the tone or movement of the body might indicate discomfort with a design element proposed. Recognition of such subtle cues allows architects to modify their approach and confront issues proactively [6].

### **Cognitive Mapping**

Cognitive mapping is a valuable method that architects use to gain insights into how clients perceive and interact with spaces. By encouraging clients to verbalize or sketch their movements and experiences within a structure, architects can identify key priorities that influence design decisions. For example, a client may express a preference for an open layout to encourage social interactions, prioritize natural lighting for energy efficiency and well-being, or emphasize privacy for personal or functional reasons. This process helps bridge the gap between abstract ideas and physical design, ensuring that the final space aligns closely with the client's expectations and functional needs. By translating these perceptions into actionable design elements, architects can create spaces that resonate with clients' practical and emotional.

### **Conflict Resolution Techniques in Architectural Practice**

Conflict is an inherent aspect of architectural projects, often arising from mismatched expectations, budget constraints, or timelines that challenge creativity. Effective conflict resolution strategies are essential to maintaining a collaborative relationship between architects and clients while ensuring that projects move forward smoothly [7]. One key strategy is reframing the conversation to focus on shared objectives. By identifying common goals, such as delivering a successful project that aligns with the client's vision, architects and clients can redirect their energy toward collaboration rather than contention. This reframing helps align both parties on a unified path forward [8].

Facilitating open dialogue is another critical approach. Clear and transparent communication ensures that misunderstandings are addressed early and that both parties feel heard. Regular check-ins, design presentations, and feedback sessions create a platform for constructive discussions, helping resolve issues before they escalate [9]. These mediators can be project managers, consultants, or neutral professionals who help facilitate discussions, provide impartial perspectives, and mediate negotiations to find equitable solutions [10]. Overall, conflict resolution in architecture emphasizes collaboration over confrontation. By fostering mutual respect and focusing on shared goals, architects can build trust and maintain productive working relationships, ensuring smoother project progression and better outcomes.

### **Psychometric Tools and Surveys**

The use of psychometric tools and structured questionnaires provides architects with a systematic approach to understanding the preferences, personality traits, and decision-making styles of clients. These tools offer quantitative and qualitative insights that help architects align their communication and design strategies with individual client needs. For example, psychometric assessments can reveal whether a client values practicality over aesthetics or prefers collaborative decision-making versus relying on professional expertise. With such tailored insights, architects can enhance collaboration, build trust, and improve client satisfaction [11].

### **Psychology in the Architect-Client Relationship**

Psychological principles play a vital role in strengthening the architect-client relationship by fostering better communication, smoother teamwork, and more successful project outcomes. Techniques such as active listening, where architects focus on understanding and addressing client concerns, help establish rapport and clarity [12]. Similarly, tools like empathy mapping allow architects to delve deeper into a client's emotional drivers, uncovering hidden motivations that influence design decisions [13]. Cognitive mapping, which involves clients verbalizing or sketching their spatial preferences, bridges the gap between abstract ideas and practical design, ensuring that architectural solutions align with functional and emotional needs [14].

### **Visualization Tools and Psychological Frameworks**

Visualization tools such as 3D renderings, virtual tours, and mood boards are indispensable in minimizing misunderstandings and enabling clients to actively participate in the design process. These tools provide a tangible representation of concepts, allowing for immediate feedback on materials, layouts, and aesthetics, thus reducing potential conflicts [15]. Moreover, frameworks like Maslow's hierarchy of needs add depth to architectural practice by connecting spatial designs to human psychological needs. For instance, ensuring safety and security in structures aligns with foundational human requirements, while creating spaces for self-expression addresses higher-order needs, such as self-actualization [16].

Incorporating psychological insights into architectural practice relies heavily on research methods such as interviews, observations, and surveys. Interviews allow architects to gain a detailed understanding of clients' personal and cultural preferences, while observational studies can reveal how individuals interact with existing spaces [17]. Surveys and structured questionnaires, as noted earlier, systematically capture client attitudes and expectations, creating a robust foundation for design. These methods collectively ensure that the architect-client relationship evolves into a harmonious partnership where both visions and expectations are successfully met [18].

## **AIM AND OBJECTIVES OF RESEARCH**

### **Aim**

To understand a client's psychology while designing a space.

The objective of this research focuses on different types of approaches to measure the client architect psychology and how they complement each other when put together to form a project. The three main objectives are narrowed down below:

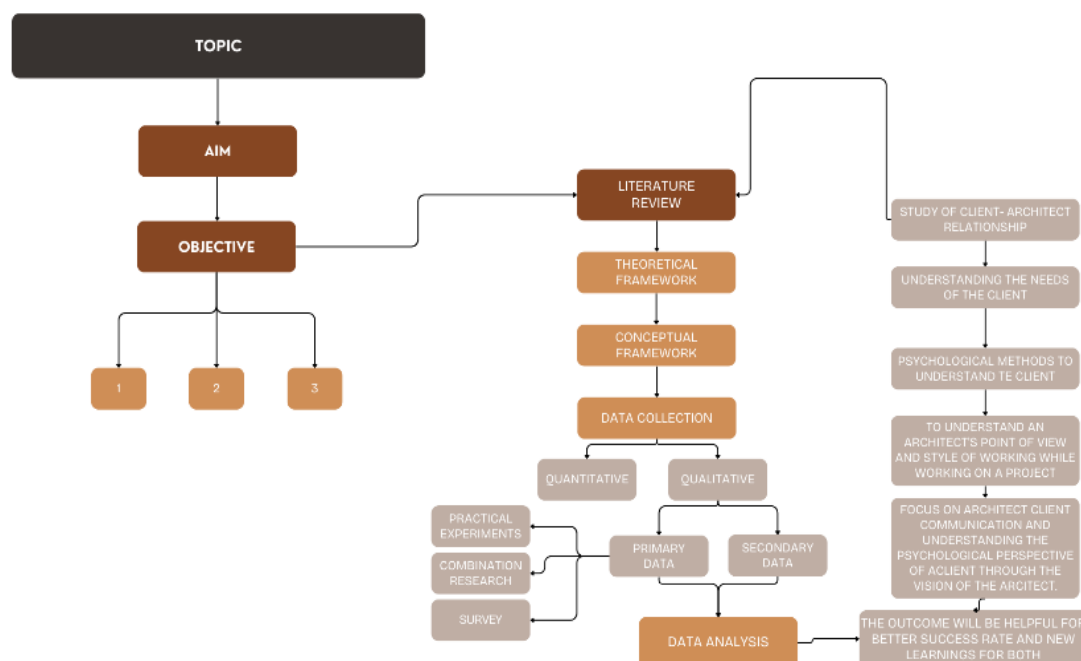
- To understand an architect's point of view while dealing with a project and style of working.
- To understand a client's requirements according to their needs and type of project.
- Understanding collaborative relationships and exchanging ideas while working on a project.

### Scope of Research

The scope of this research is to understand the collaborative relationship (Figure 1) between a client and an architect and understanding a client's psychology from the perspective of an architect while working on a project.

### METHODOLOGY

Methodology of this research is divided in steps to understand psychology and relationship in a better way. It's not just the architect who needs to understand the new materials or technologies but he (architect) helps client to motivate and learning new things. The perspective of client matters the most who is building his structure for next a few decades but architect contributes to shape their views as per the latest technology and environment. Here are the steps taken for the research.



**Figure 1.** Methodology chart.

### DATA COLLECTION

#### Case Studies

##### *Case Study: Fallingwater (Frank Lloyd Wright and Edgar Kaufmann)*

- **Project Overview:** Frank Lloyd Wright's Fallingwater is a renowned architectural masterpiece designed for Edgar J. Kaufmann, a wealthy department store owner, in the 1930s.
- **Client-Architect Relationship:** Wright had a strong vision for integrating the house with nature, positioning it over a waterfall. Kaufmann was initially skeptical but trusted Wright's expertise.
- **Psychological Dynamics:** Kaufmann's hesitance was overcome through Wright's confident presentation of the design, highlighting the importance of trust in the client-architect relationship. Wright's deep understanding of Kaufmann's desire for harmony with nature was crucial in the project's success. This relationship exemplified how balancing the architect's vision with the client's emotional connection to the site can create iconic works (Figure 2).
- **Key Psychological Factors:** Trust-building, emotional attachment to natural surroundings, client hesitance and persuasion.



**Figure 2.** Falling water (Frank Lloyd Wright and Edgar Kaufman).

***Case Study: The Glass House (Philip Johnson and Dr. John Burgee)***

- ***Project Overview:*** Philip Johnson's Glass House, completed in 1949, was designed as a personal residence and a space for artistic expression, in collaboration with architect John Burgee.
- ***Client-Architect Relationship:*** Johnson, acting as both the client and architect, engaged Burgee to balance his artistic vision with technical execution. The close personal relationship between the two resulted in a deep understanding of each other's design sensibilities.
- ***Psychological Dynamics:*** Johnson's psychological duality, serving as both client and architect, created an internal dialogue between his emotional desires and the practical constraints of the project. This balance led to an iconic minimalist design, demonstrating how personal psychology can drive both aesthetic and functional aspects of architecture (Figure 3).
- ***Key Psychological Factors:*** Architect's dual role as client, creative collaboration, balancing artistic desires with practicality.



**Figure 3.** The glass house (Phillip Johnson and Dr. John Burgee).

***Case Study: Vanna Venturi House (Robert Venturi and Vanna Venturi)***

- ***Project Overview:*** The Vanna Venturi House, designed by Robert Venturi for his mother in the 1960s, is a postmodern architectural icon.

- *Client-Architect Relationship:* Designing for a close family member added a layer of emotional complexity to the project. Vanna Venturi wanted a traditional, cozy home, while Robert Venturi was experimenting with postmodernism and breaking away from modernist trends.
- *Psychological Dynamics:* The psychological relationship between mother and son was key. Robert's personal connection with his client meant he had to balance his architectural innovation with his mother's emotional and psychological needs for comfort and familiarity. This resulted in a compromise where modern aesthetics met traditional design elements (Figure 4).
- *Key Psychological Factors:* Family dynamics, emotional attachment, balancing professional vision with personal expectations.



**Figure 4.** Vanna venturi house.

**Case Study: The Schroder House (Gerrit Rietveld and Truus Schröder)**

- *Project Overview:* The Schroder House, built in 1924, was a pioneering modernist design by Gerrit Rietveld, designed in close collaboration with the client, Truus Schröder.
- *Client-Architect Relationship:* Schröder was a progressive client with specific ideas about flexibility, open space, and minimalism. Rietveld's design was influenced significantly by her desire for simplicity and a new way of living, unencumbered by traditional walls and rooms.
- *Psychological Dynamics:* Schröder's psychological drive for autonomy and freedom in space influenced Rietveld's design decisions. Their collaborative relationship highlighted the importance of client input in shaping the final design, with Rietveld acknowledging Schröder's influence on his modernist ideals (Figure 5).
- *Key Psychological Factors:* Client autonomy, collaboration, influence of lifestyle psychology on design.



**Figure 5.** The schroder house (Gerrit Rietveld and Truss schroder).

**Case Study: The Farnsworth House (Mies van der Rohe and Dr. Edith Farnsworth)**

- *Project Overview:* Mies van der Rohe's Farnsworth House, designed for Dr. Edith Farnsworth in the late 1940s, is an iconic example of modernist architecture.
- *Client-Architect Relationship:* The relationship between Farnsworth and van der Rohe was initially harmonious but deteriorated over time due to disagreements about the design's functionality. Farnsworth felt the house, while beautiful, was impractical for living, leading to frustration with van der Rohe's rigid artistic vision.
- *Psychological Dynamics:* The breakdown of communication and misalignment of expectations between Farnsworth and van der Rohe exemplifies how client satisfaction can suffer when the architect's vision overpowers practical considerations. Farnsworth's psychological needs for privacy and comfort were not fully met, leading to disillusionment with the project (Figure 6).
- *Key Psychological Factors:* Miscommunication, architect's dominance over client needs, emotional dissatisfaction with functionality.



**Figure 6.** The Farnsworth house (Mies van der rohe and Dr. Edith Farnsworth).

**SUMMARY OF CASE STUDIES**

These five case studies collectively demonstrate that the psychological dimension of architect-client relationships is as crucial as technical skill and artistic vision. Trust, communication, and understanding of the client's psychology form the foundation of successful collaborations. While harmonious relationships, as seen with Wright and Kaufmann or Rietveld and Schröder, can lead to groundbreaking designs, cases like the Farnsworth House remind us of the pitfalls of neglecting client needs. By examining these relationships, we gain deeper insight into the nuanced interplay of professional expertise, personal dynamics, and architectural innovation.

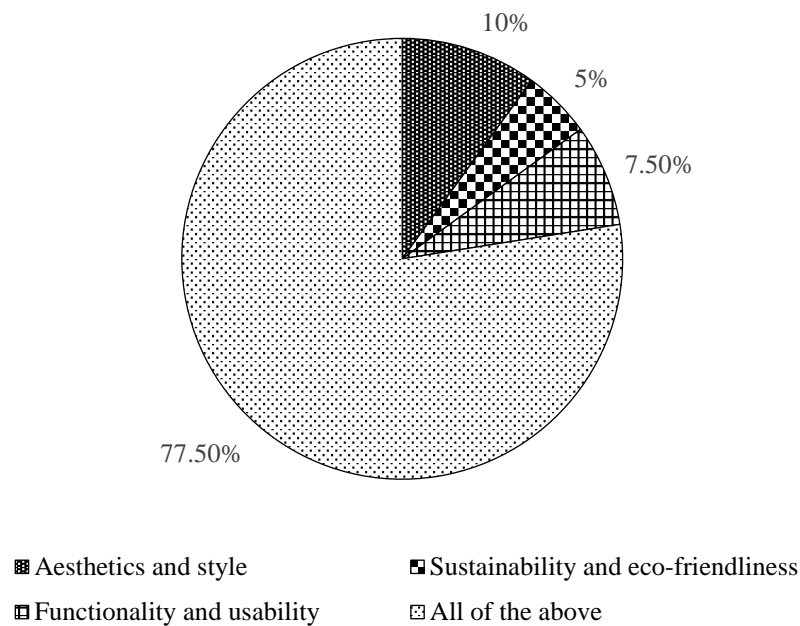
**Expert Survey**

In this study, we incorporated an expert survey to further assist in analyzing the psychological perspective of the architect-client relationship and the effect it has on the outcome of a project. The participants of the survey were professionals who had some degree of involvement in some architectural work, client relations, as well as project processing, and were inquired regarding efficient communication styles, psychological approaches, and determinants of client fulfillment (Figures 7-13).

The survey data showed that trust along with communication are the core elements that balance the architect-client relationship. The experts stressed that expectation, conflict, and collaboration are aligned in clear dialogue, preventing the possible hitches that come in between. Many people noted that clients have a hard time expressing what exactly they want or need, meaning that architects have to rely heavily on active listening, empathy mapping, and cognitive mapping to figure out a set of unexpressed desires (Figures 14-20).

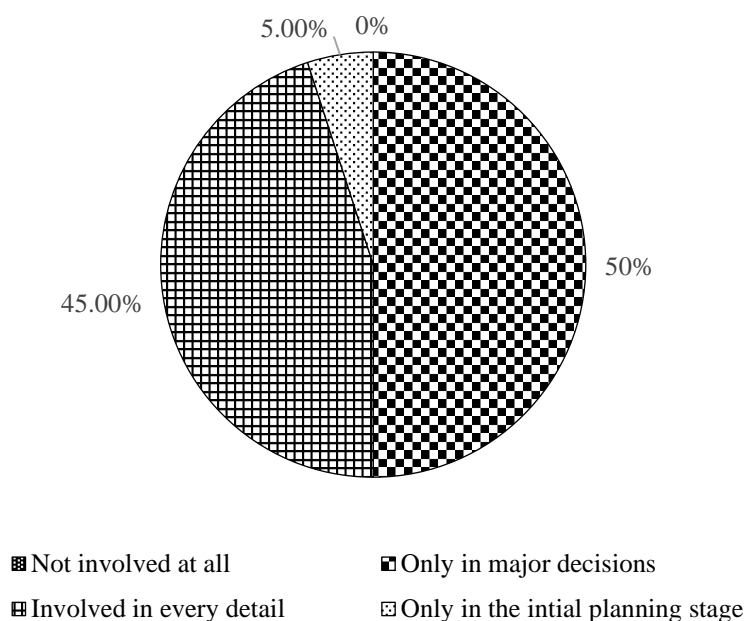
Another important finding was the influence of psychological factors in the design choices. The experts suggest that clients have a unique set of personal background experiences, cultural context, and emotional ties that they wish to impute into the process. Those spaces that are created with these considerations in mind tend to have more meaning and satisfaction for the clients (Figure 21).

1. What are the key goals you want to achieve through a project?  
40 responses



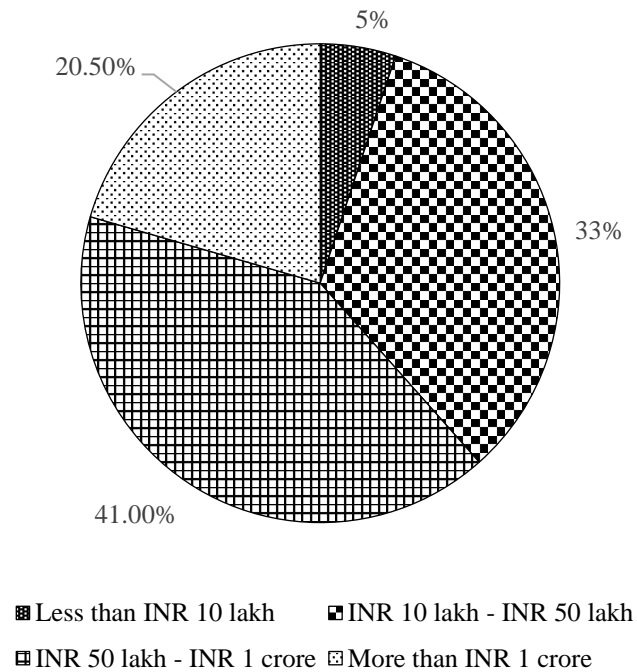
**Figure 7.** Result of Question 1.

2. How involved do you want to be in the design process?  
40 responses



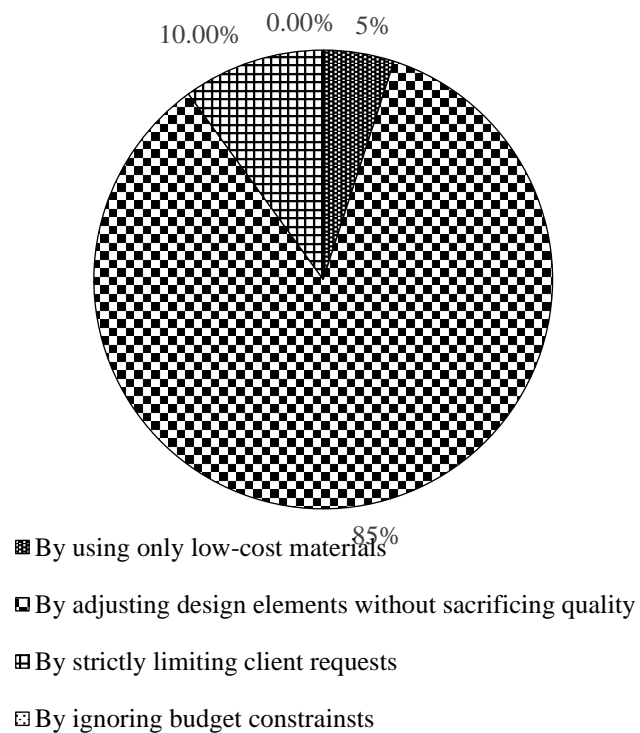
**Figure 8.** Result of Question 2.

3. What is your estimated budget for a project?  
 40 responses



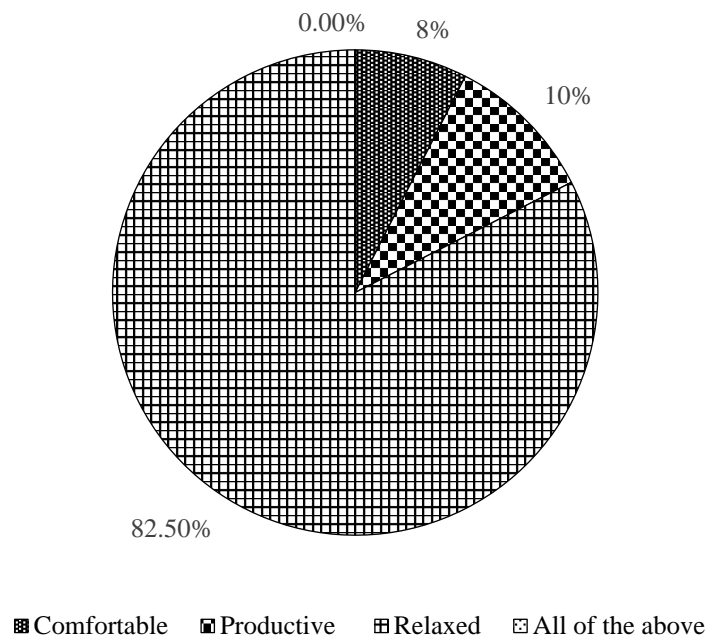
**Figure 9.** Result of Question 3.

4. How does the architect ensure the project stays within the budget?  
 40 responses



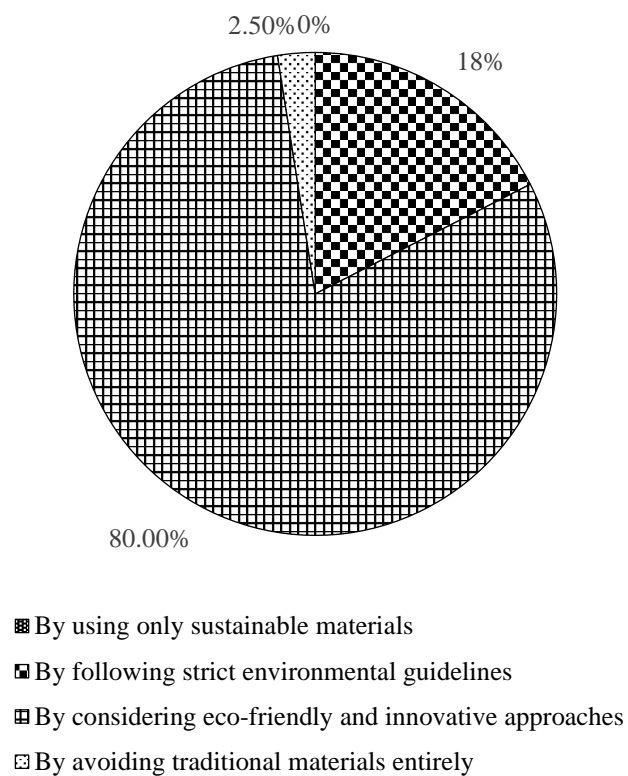
**Figure 10.** Result of Question 4.

5. How do you envision feeling in the completed space?  
40 responses



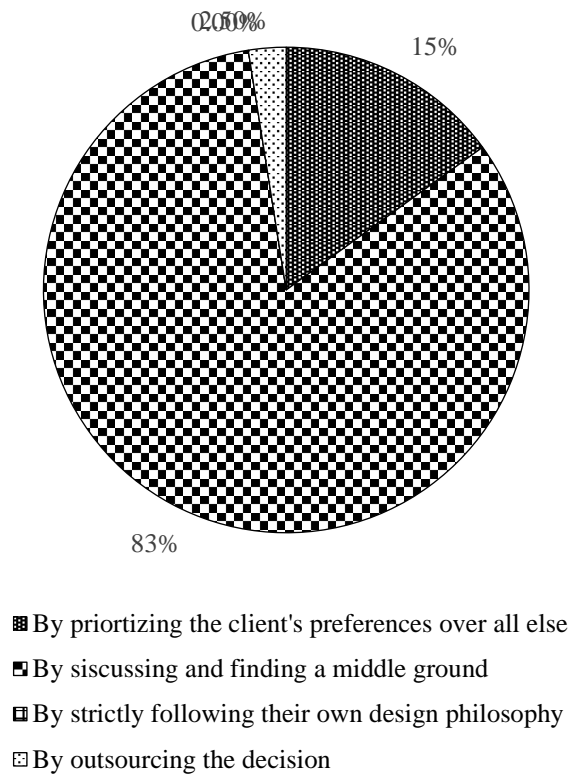
**Figure 11.** Result of Question 5.

6. How does the architect incorporate sustainability and innovation into designs?  
40 responses



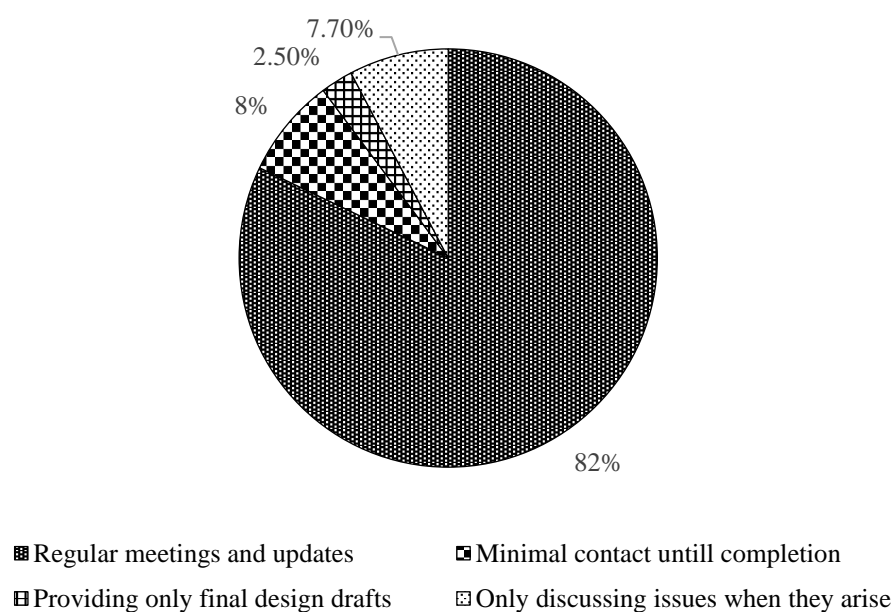
**Figure 12.** Result of Question 6.

7. How does the architect handle differences in design opinion with the client?  
 40 responses



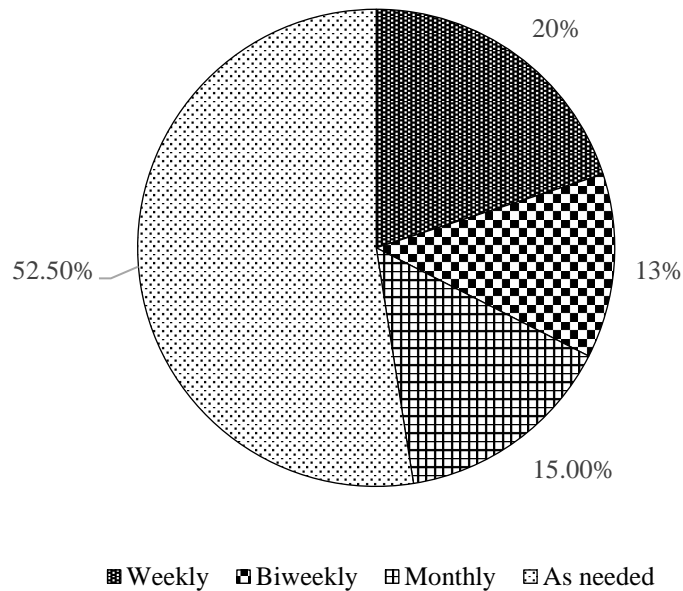
**Figure 13.** Result of Question 7.

8. What communication strategies does the architect use to keep the client informed?  
 39 responses



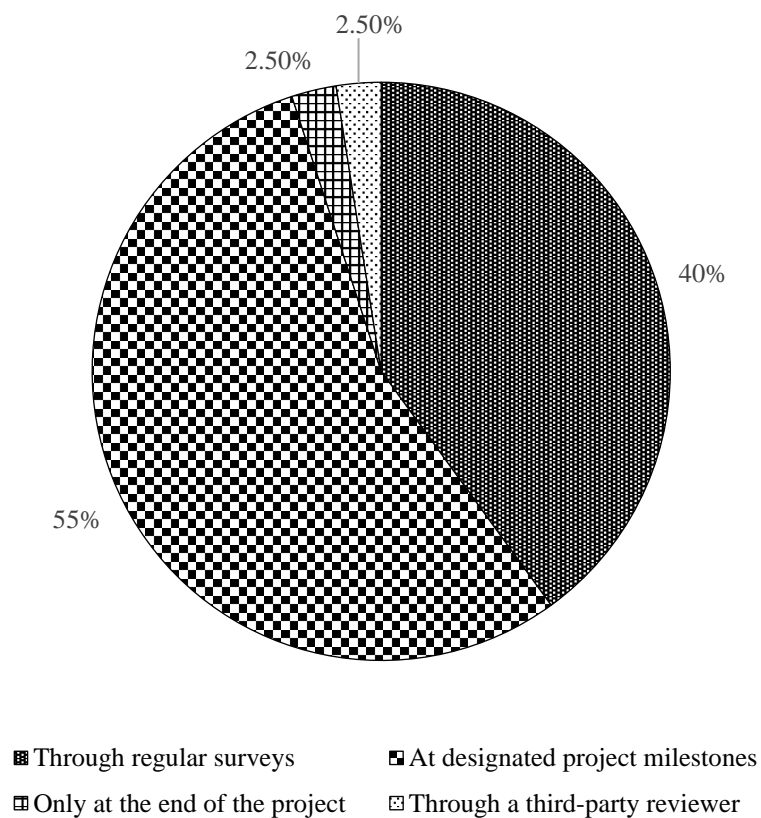
**Figure 14.** Result of Question 8.

9. How often does the architect meet with clients to review project progress?  
40 responses



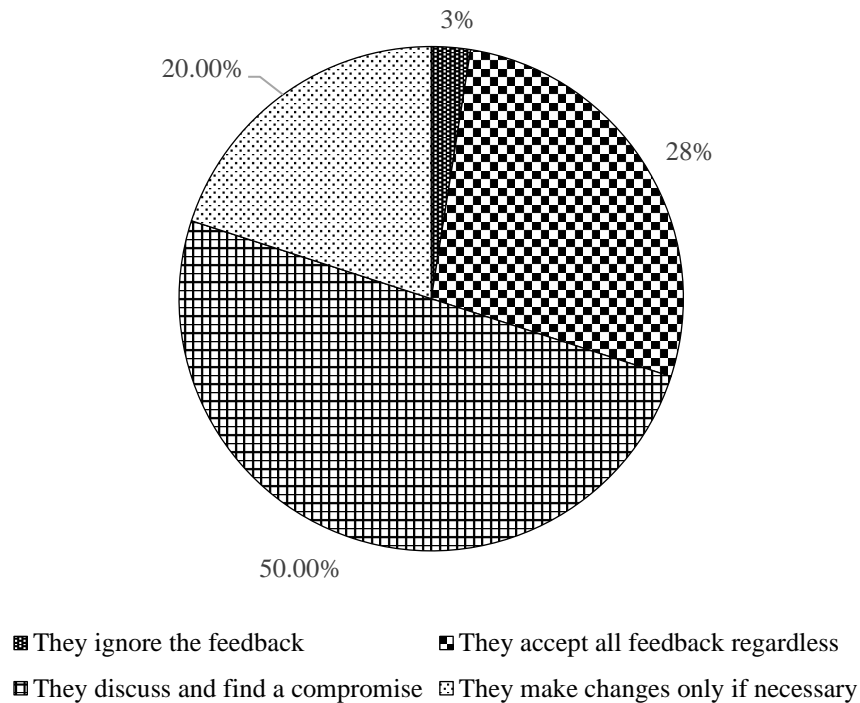
**Figure 15.** Result of Question 9.

10. How does the architect gather feedback during the project?  
40 responses



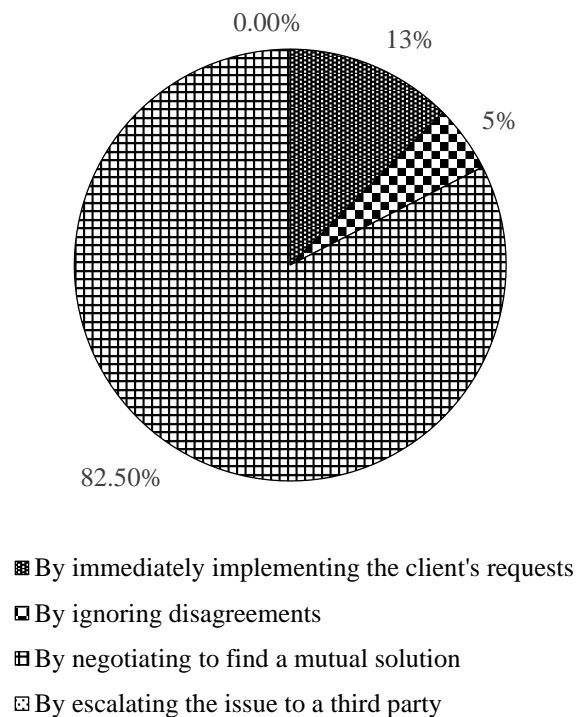
**Figure 16.** Result of Question 10.

11. How does the architect handle feedback that doesn't align with their vision?  
 40 responses



**Figure 17.** Result of Question 11.

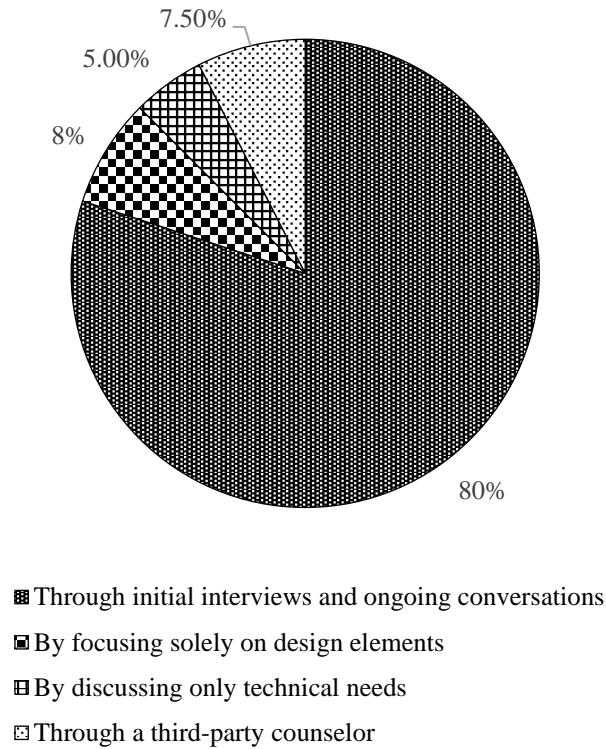
12. How does the architect resolve conflicts with clients?  
 40 responses



**Figure 18.** Result of Question 12.

13. How does the architect assess the emotional and psychological needs of the client?

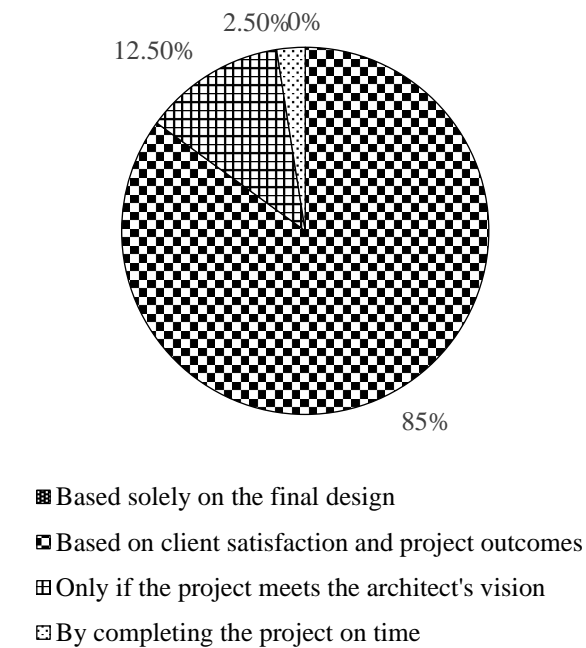
40 responses



**Figure 19.** Result of Question 13.

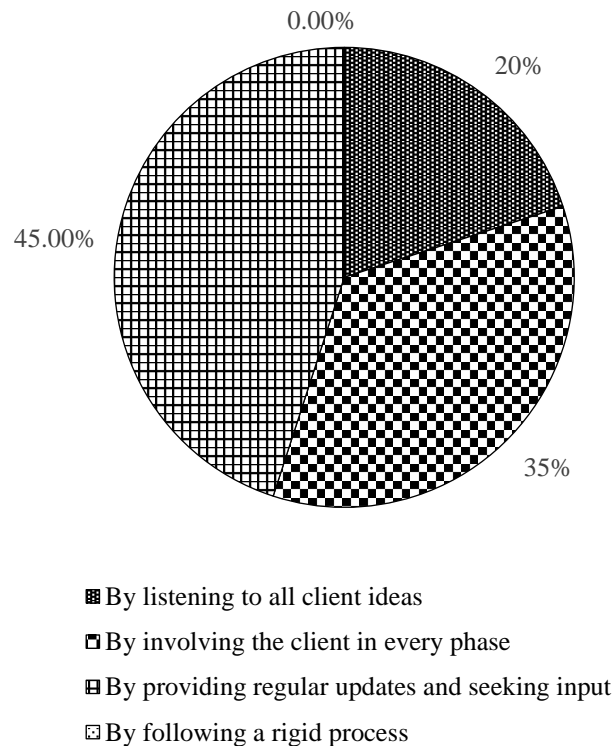
14. How does the architect define success in a client relationship?

40 responses



**Figure 20.** Result of Question 14.

15. How does the architect ensure the client feels respected throughout the project?  
40 responses



**Figure 21.** Result of Question 15.

## CONCLUSIONS

### Psychological Factors in Architect-Client Relations

This study concludes that psychological dynamics play a profound and decisive role in the success of architect-client relationships. Researchers have explored how mutual understanding, effective communication, and the application of psychological principles are essential components for delivering meaningful and efficient architectural designs.

Through extensive analysis involving case studies, surveys, and expert evaluations, several recurring themes have emerged. These themes serve as critical insights and can function as a roadmap for architects and clients aiming to establish harmonious and collaborative partnerships.

Firstly, mutual understanding between architects and clients is fundamental. This involves architects not only grasping the functional requirements of a project but also appreciating the client's personal values, lifestyle, and emotional connections to space. Techniques such as active listening, empathy mapping, and cognitive mapping have been identified as effective tools in achieving this deeper level of understanding. By genuinely engaging with the client's vision and concerns, architects can tailor their designs to reflect the client's identity and aspirations, resulting in spaces that are both functional and personally meaningful.

Secondly, effective communication is paramount in fostering a productive architect-client relationship. Clear, transparent, and consistent communication helps in aligning expectations, preventing misunderstandings, and facilitating collaborative decision-making. The use of visualization tools like mood boards, 3D renderings, and virtual tours has been highlighted to enhance communication. These tools allow clients to visualize proposed designs, provide immediate feedback, and engage more actively in

the design process. Thirdly, the application of psychological principles in the design process has been shown to enhance client satisfaction and project outcomes. Incorporating frameworks such as Maslow's hierarchy of needs enables architects to design spaces that address clients' basic physiological needs up to their desires for self-actualization. Understanding clients' psychological drivers, whether through psychometric tools, surveys, or informal interactions, allows architects to create environments that resonate on a deeper emotional level.

The study's findings emphasize that successful architect-client partnerships are built on a foundation of trust, respect, and mutual engagement. The recurring themes identified provide practical guidelines.

1. Regular meetings are important. Utilize various tools and technologies to support clear exchanges of ideas.
2. Employ Empathy: Strive to see the project from the client's perspective. Consider their emotional responses and how the design will impact their daily life.
3. Incorporate Client Feedback: Create iterative design processes that allow for client input at various stages.
4. Manage Expectations: Be transparent about feasibility, timelines, and potential challenges. Setting realistic expectations helps prevent disappointment and conflict.
5. Apply Psychological Frameworks: Use theories like Maslow's hierarchy of needs to guide design decisions, ensuring that the space meets both functional and psychological needs.
6. Address Conflicts Constructively: When disagreements arise, approach them as opportunities for dialogue and problem-solving rather than confrontations.

By following this roadmap, architects and clients can work together more effectively, leading to projects that not only meet practical requirements but also enrich the lives of those who inhabit the spaces. The study underscores the importance of viewing architecture not just as a technical or artistic endeavor but as a collaborative process deeply intertwined with human psychology.

In conclusion, acknowledging and integrating psychological dynamics into the architect-client relationship elevates the practice of architecture. It leads to designs that are more responsive to clients' needs and fosters partnerships that are both satisfying and productive. Future research and practice should continue to explore and develop strategies for enhancing these psychological connections, ultimately contributing to the creation of more meaningful and impactful architectural works.

## **KEY FINDINGS**

### **Relationship Between Trust and Communication**

The basis of any architect-client relationship is built on trust and good communication. As was the case with Frank Lloyd Wright with Edgar Kaufmann, there is evidence of the fact that trust determines satisfaction; therefore, it also determines how well the project comes together. Architects should first ensure that their work is transparent, and the language of their communication is flexible enough to help them align their visions and expectations.

### **Finding Vision with Reality**

It is in subtle balancing acts between the creative vision of an architect and the pragmatic needs of a client, as shown in works like the Vanna Venturi House, where complex family bonds were part of the story, or in the Glass House, where architect-client roles created an internal dialogue between aesthetics and functionality. Recognizing the emotional states of clients from which to build helps ensure that designs are innovative but personal.

### **Psychological Insights Driving Design**

Psychological understanding, including emotional associations with space, autonomy, and lifestyle, was another important factor that started to emerge. Works like the Schroder House brought out the issue of dealing with a client's psychological need for autonomy and simplicity in demonstrating how

collaboration can go beyond mere technical design to have an impact on life itself.

### **Challenges of Misalignment**

Case study examples such as the Farnsworth House have highlighted the impact of failure to provide for psychological needs and desires. The sources of dissatisfaction and tension were inadequate communication, imposing the architect's own vision, and a lack of functional effectiveness. These cases emphasize the need for empathy and negotiation.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS FOR BEST ARCHITECT-CLIENT INTERACTIONS**

### **Taking the Client-Centric Approach**

Architects must be attuned to the client's emotional and functional aspirations as equally valued considerations. In-depth initial interviews, continuous dialogue, and tools such as mood boards or virtual simulations can help them express and align shared visions.

### **Fostering Collaborative Engagement**

Encouraging active involvement in the design process increases ownership and satisfaction among clients. Design-supportive tools, collaborative workshops, and feedback mechanisms foster an inclusive culture.

### **Psychological Sensitivity as a Tool**

This will involve empathetic understanding and flexibility. The architect should be trained in understanding diverse psychological and cultural contexts so that designs are respectful to and resonate with the client's personal narratives.

### **Conflict Resolution Strategies**

Define formal conflict resolution methods, including mediated discussion or phased decision-making processes, to prevent arguments and improve trust.

### **Implications for Future Research**

The study signifies the importance of psychological engagement but also reveals gaps in existing frameworks. New research may further investigate the details of quantitative satisfaction measurements by clients, the role of digital tools on communication dynamics, and the influence of cultural differences on an architect-client relationship. Finally, broadening studies to incorporate diverse project types and demographics about clients can offer a much-needed general understanding of this intricate relationship.

### **Final Thoughts**

The research concludes that psychological understanding is not an auxiliary skill for architects but a foundational one for modern architectural practice. By embracing empathy, collaboration, and adaptability, architects can transform their interactions with clients into meaningful partnerships. This human-centered approach ensures that architectural projects are not only aesthetically and functionally remarkable but also deeply aligned with the aspirations and emotions of those who inhabit them.

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