

Interior Architecture and Interior Design: Two Concepts, One Profession

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Abstract: The idea of interior architecture/design emerged, developed and was institutionalized as a profession in the early 20th century in the United States of America. However; two different approaches were adopted mainly in the field during this development process in terms of education and practice due to the presence of two different conceptions regarding the principles and practices, which have influenced and shaped the educational and practical dimensions of interior architecture/design since almost a century. They have been the prevailing conceptions not only in anglo-saxon cultures but also in all over Europe. The current study deals with these two conceptions, namely “interior design” and “interior architecture”, in terms of the following issues: historical development, definition, their effects on educational policies and the problems they create with regard to profession and the suggestions for possible solution to this problem.

Key words: Interior Decoration • Interior Design • Interior Architecture • Professional Qualification
• Classification of Education

INTRODUCTION

Interior architecture/design is considered a relatively recent profession. It involves processes that are quite different from those of main disciplines that are structured according to the principles of traditional education approach. Therefore, it can be said that interior architecture/design is about “shaping people’s lives” with its differences in its content and practical applications. It even has the potential to determine “how” people should live. In other words, interior architecture/design means coming up with certain design alternatives for individuals by taking into consideration their requirements, demands and likes.

When the emergence and development process of “interior design” is examined, it is seen that the idea of “use of space” dates back to ancient times. Throughout history of civilization, the practices of “using interior space” have progressed sometimes in collaboration with architecture and sometimes free from its influence. Therefore, interior architecture/design is considered the extension of an influential tradition of “using space”. However, the development of interior architecture/design as a profession reveals that it was initiated and

institutionalized in the United States, the country which is characterized with first practical applications, first professionals and first educational programs of the field. Later, this process has spread to other countries all over the world. In today’s world, it is more influential especially in the countries and continents where anglo-saxon culture is the dominant one.

Nowadays, the emergence of new concepts and study fields as well as the invention of new tools or materials have paved the way to new social values and the accumulation of much more information. In order to benefit from this available knowledge in time and, more importantly, as efficiently as possible, there is an urgent need to educate individuals who are equipped with this knowledge and are able to directly access and handle this knowledge as effectively as possible by considering even the necessary details [1]. The specialists working in the field of designing interior spaces according to the requirements, demands and likes of the users are called “interior architects/designers”.

Above mentioned definition implies that interior architecture/design is likely to provide solutions to satisfy the need for a well-designed environment in today’s hectic and fast-paced life. Such an environment promises

its user a comfortable space and appeals to his/her tastes with its aesthetical values. In other words, such an environment shapes the lives “inside”.

From Interior Decoration to Interior Architecture/design

Profession: In the early 20th century, when the concept interior architecture/design emerged, interior spaces used to be designed or decorated by people from different professions. Since such interior space design practices in the United States mostly focused on coming up with original outcomes, the profession became popular in the country even during these earlier phases, when the profession was called “interior decoration”. However, in 18th and 19th century, this concept was used to refer to the profession that deals with textile or furniture sales and interior spaces decorations. Elise de Wolfe (1865-1950) [2], who was the first person to work professionally in the field in the United States, developed a new approach by combining interior decoration practices with building, drawing and design methods of architecture. The first step of this approach was to determine the requirements, demands and likes of the customers. Later, she chose the furniture, fabric, color and ornaments according to these criteria and finally drew a suitable project on a piece of paper and put the design into practice accordingly. In addition, Wolfe never ignored certain factors such as budget, economy and efficiency and always formed a balance between the service and the product. In professional terms, Wolfe’s approach set ground for the study methods in the field of interior architecture/design during the early 1900s. Moreover, she radically changed the design conception of the period. She became the pioneer in the development of a new interior design mentality as her famous quotation below implies: “I opened the doors of American House and the windows and let in the air and the sunshine” [3].

During the same period, the architects who worked professionally in the United States such as Frank Lloyd Wright (1867-1959) were quite interested in interiors as well. The works of Wright contributed a lot to the development of architecture and the formation of a modern interior architecture/design mentality in the United States. For Wright, “space is a single and flowing entity and it serves its primary purpose with its ornaments, technology and the materials used” [2]. Just like Wolfe, Wright also did his best to be involved in every phase of his design and application process to be able to achieve successful outcomes at the end. In addition, he reflected his unique design mentality on his works ranging from furniture, fireplaces, stained-glass

windows, illuminants and even statues. He tried to redirect the attention from architecture to the life in interiors, which is an outcome of modern life, by uttering the following sentence: “Space within becomes the reality of the building” [4].

In the first quarter of 20th century, two different professional conceptions emerged as a result of two different approaches adopted towards interior architecture/design; namely Interior Decoration and Interior Architecture. These two concepts have affected both professional and educational practices.

Education: The increase in the number of interior design practices in 1920s grabbed the attention of both print and visual media and demands for education in this field soared accordingly. Taking these new developments into consideration, National Association of Decorative Arts and Industries worked on the principles of a new education program suitable for the existing conditions of this new era.

“From interior decorating, which mainly involved the furnishing and decorating of existing spaces, programs of interior design evolved to encompass the study of complex design processes, various behavioral theories and the creation of new spaces. Curricula for interior design education developed from three primary academic areas: (1) as an outgrowth of the fine and decorative arts, (2) as a component of home economics and (3) as a specialized focus in architecture... Each provides a slightly different focus, yet contains the necessary elements required for a Professional interior design program” [5].

Since fine arts component of interior architecture/design is mainly based on human culture and taste, the concepts “taste”, “beauty” and “search for aesthetics” are considered the main issues that should be focused on in this field. Home economics played a role that is as important as that of fine arts in the earlier applications of interior design. Some universities established “Departments of Home Economics” in Canada, the United States of America and England in the 19th century. The aim of these departments was to educate individuals, families and even the society in certain issues such as consumer education, institutional management, interior design, home furnishing, textile products, handicrafts, clothing, catering, food conservation, health, child development,

Table 1: Classification of Instructional Programs (CIP 2000) [9].

Program Area	Title and Code
Visual and Performing Arts	<p>Instructional programs that focus on the creation and interpretation of works and performances that use auditory, kinesthetic and visual phenomena to express ideas and emotions in various forms, subject to aesthetic criteria.</p> <p>Interior Design (50.0408): A program in the applied visual arts that prepares individuals to apply artistic principles and techniques to the professional planning, designing, equipping and furnishing residential and commercial interior spaces. Includes instruction in computer applications drafting and graphic techniques; principles of interior lighting, acoustics, systems integration and color coordination; furniture and furnishings; textiles and their finishing; the history of interior design and period styles; basic structural design; building codes and inspection regulations; and applications to office, hotel, factory, restaurant and housing design.</p>
Architecture and Related Services	<p>Instructional programs that prepare individuals for professional practice in the various architecture-related fields and focus on the study of related aesthetic and socioeconomic aspects of the built environment.</p> <p>Interior Architecture (04.0501): A program that prepares individuals to apply architectural principles in the design of structural interiors for living, recreational and business purposes and to function as professional interior architects. Includes instruction in architecture, structural systems design, heating and cooling systems, occupational and safety standards, interior design, specific end-use applications and professional responsibilities and standards.</p>

money management and family relationships [6]. The content of interior design profession was determined by combining the subfields of fine arts and home economics that might be to the interest of users in a building. However, this content was extended by integrating certain building-related knowledge available in the field of architecture due to some inadequacies of the previous content. Moreover, “most interior designers have been trained in either home economic departments or design schools” [7]. This structure evolved into a discipline in a very short time.

However, the real transformation occurred when Bauhaus school influenced the world of art during the 2nd World War and the concept “design” was acknowledged worldwide. Established by integrating fine arts and handicraft schools in 1919, Bauhaus School of Art and Design developed a new education model. The school tried to form a relationship between art, design, handicraft and modernism-the concept which started to be influential during that period [8]. However, Bauhaus education system dealt with the idea of “designing interior space” by mainly and merely focusing on its handicraft dimension. As a result, only the following courses were offered as part of the curriculum: “wood-metal atelier” and “color-painting-decorating atelier”. During the 2nd World War, the immigration of European academicists to different parts of the world due to the war led to quick worldwide spread of Bauhaus approach. The theoretical and ideological background of the concept “design” was formed in Europe and later it

spread globally and was adopted by various educational and professional disciplines. This transformation required the field of “interior design/architecture” to restructure itself in terms of both educational and professional practices. Called “interior decoration” at the earlier stages, the term used for the process has later been renamed as “interior design”.

It is believed that the ideological development leading to the transformation from “decoration” to “design” has played a significant role in the dilemma between interior design and interior architecture, which has been a topic of discussion since the first half of the 20th century. However, the main problem is the subtlety of its borderline with architecture, which sparked considerable reactions in the field. Therefore, United States Department of Education Institute of Education Sciences felt the need to define the terms related to interior design and interior architecture [9] (Table 1).

Being influential for nearly 100 years and causing the emergence of different professional institutions, this distinction was formally cleared after the establishment of American Society of Interior Designers (ASID). However, the definitions offered did not bring solutions to the problems regarding education and profession. This situation was discussed during a roundtable session in 2009 Fellows Forum at the IDEC International Conference held in St. Louis, the United States. At the end of this conversation, the four futures posited for the discussion were as follows:

- Interior design becomes licensed in all states and is identified as the sole profession dealing specifically with the interior environment. A collaborative design community flourishes between architects and interior designers.
- Interior design is one of the several terms used to identify professionals working within the interior environment. Others include interior architects, inter-space designers, etc. Routes to the practice are diverse and include, but are not limited to, passage of the National Council for Interior Design Qualification or National Council of Architectural Registration Boards exams.
- Interior architecture becomes the accepted term globally for those working with interiors. Interior architects are required to graduate from a Council for Interior Design Accreditation-accredited program and take the National Council for Interior Design Qualification exams.
- There is a split in the profession, with those focusing on residential design retaining the right to call themselves 'interior designers' and those with a commercially based practice addressing health, safety and welfare issues adopting the term 'interior architect' [10].

These approaches, unfortunately, reflect the vision of only one country with regard to the future of the profession. The problem here seems to be the misconceptions regarding the terms and certain precautions are taken to solve this problem. However, it is clear that this discussion is becoming global and the reason behind the discussion seems to be the subtlety of its borderline with architecture.

Europe: Professional Qualification and Bologna

Process: The situation is a bit different in Europe, where interior architecture/design have not completed its institutionalization process yet, since diversity among European countries in cultural and educational aspects resulted in the emergence of various educational models. Therefore, it is inevitable that art and design education considerably varies across the continent in today's Europe.

Such differences in the field of education are considered a serious problem for a common European context. The aspiration for a "common Europe" has necessitated the formation of common grounds based on certain agreeable criteria in many fields, at least at minimum level, to be valid in the member and candidate

countries of European Union. This development resulted in radical changes affecting both educational and professional issues in Europe. The authorities try to agree on "mutual recognition in profession" to enable employees to work in any European countries. The first step applied to establish this common context was to enable free movement of people and capital across Europe [11]. There are two main phases of mutual recognition; the first being academic recognition and the second professional recognition. When a university graduate receives professional qualification, he is supposed to have already acquired educational and professional skills and knowledge. Moreover, he/she is entitled the right to be employed in all member countries.

What is interesting in the system is that academic recognition involves university education and the process that organizes this area is called Bologna Declaration. "The 'Bologna Declaration' introduced a Europe-wide harmonization of educational systems, including readable and comparable degrees, adopting a system of two main cycles (Bachelor/Master) and establishing a system of European credit transfer and accumulation system (ECTS)" [12]. Many structural changes have been made during this process in university education systems such as administrative structures, curriculum and duration of education, learning outcomes, ECTS, diploma supplement. Thanks to such practices, education has become more accountable and transparent and easier to be assessed. [13]. In addition, they aim at agreeing on common values with regard to professions by preserving the existing knowledge and practice variety.

As part of this process, certain classifications were made according to professions and those based on similar knowledge and techniques have been grouped together. The institution responsible for this process was The European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training and later the outcome was published as a manual titled "Fields of Education and Training Manual-ISCED'97". Interior design and interior architecture were also included in this list. "For the interior architecture and interior design education, European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training made a classification with a simple explanation, which can provide the genuine knowledge for the education fields" (Table 2) [14].

The most significant issue in this classification is that interior design and interior architecture have been grouped under the category "Humanities and Art" together. There is also a reminder under the table which writes: "Exclusions: Study of Building design is excluded

Table 2: ISCED '97, Fields of Humanities and Arts [14].

Fields of Humanities and Arts			
Broad Field	Narrow Field	Detailed Field	
2- Humanities and Arts	21-Arts	211-Fine Arts	
		212 Music and Performing Arts	
		213 Audio-visual techniques and media production	
		214 Design	Costume design, Design of industrial products, Fashion design, Interior architecture, Interior design, Stage designing and Window dressing
		215 Craft Skills	

Table 3: ISCED'11 Subject Codes [16]

Subject Erasmus Description	Subject codes	Isced Code	Subject ISCED Description
Interior Design	02.2	214	Design

from this field and included in field 581-Architecture and Town Planning. Study of Industrial design and included in the appropriate field under 52-Engineering and engineering trades. Publishing design and graphic design are excluded from this field and included in field 213-Audio-visual techniques and media production” [14]. This note determines the relationship between architecture and interior architecture/design.

However, when ISCED'97 document -which was about educational classification-was published, certain corrections and amendments were made and professional classifications were updated. Published by UNESCO, the most recent professional classification was titled International Standard Classification of Education-ISCED'11. In this document, interior design is classified under the following categories: 2-Humanities and Art (broad field), 21 (Arts (narrow field) and 214 Design (detailed field). The term, unfortunately, can be found only by looking through a list called “subject codes” [15] (Table 3). Interior architecture is not available in this list.

The second step of this radical change in the field of education in European Union is mutual recognition of professions. For this recognition, it is necessary to graduate from an educational program and to document this process with a diploma or diploma supplement.

After documenting his academic recognition at the end of an educational program provided according to the predetermined professional classifications, a person has to document his professional recognition as well in order to work in a job related to the education he received. When these two phases have been completed successfully, professional qualification is entitled and the person can work in a related job in his own country or even in other member countries. Therefore, professional classifications should cover the qualifications of the profession as well as the field of

practices. So the classification of a profession is very important for knowledge, scientific and academic studies and development of profession.

CONCLUSION

Since the early 20th century, the problems related to interior design have been more serious in today's world. The distinction between two different conceptions-Interior Design and Interior Architecture- became a global problem. This problem affects both educational and professional dimensions of the field, which in turn affects professions and institutions in the field of design.

The results of this distinction cannot be ignored. The first consequence is that this distinction between Interior Design and Interior Architecture was officially acknowledged by government institutions and organizations in the United States. These two concepts were defined and fields of practice and accreditation conditions were determined. The United States is the country where interior architecture/design emerged, developed and was institutionalized. Therefore, any kind of innovation, development and practices are followed and applied in a wide range of areas in this country. Therefore, the recognition of these two concepts as two different ones in this country might influence other countries at global level as well.

The second result is the development of the profession in Europe. Interior architecture/design started to be institutionalized in the continent especially in 19th and 20th century, when the intellectual background for the movements was formed and many inventions were made. The fact that the profession is practiced according to different approaches in different cultures and countries makes it difficult to agree on certain common principles.

The uncertainty between interior design and interior architecture affects the classification of educational institutions and professions. The best example of this situation is that interior architecture was not included in professional classifications but it was available at professional institutions level, which is quite confusing.

The third result is that both interior design and interior architecture have contents that follow and complete each other, which is clearly reflected in the definitions of the concepts and the regulations made in Europe. Briefly, these two concepts complement each other.

The last consequence, which may be considered as an implication, is the subtlety of the borderline between interior design and architecture, which causes a sort of dilemma between these two professions.

The profession involves information as well as technical, technological and idea-based products that have been produced or acquired in its recent history as well as the traditions and habits shaped throughout the centuries. In other words, interior design/architecture is based on an interior space tradition structured by human beings for centuries and reflects an up-to-date design tradition that is modern, constructive and futuristic. It has only one goal: applying the new, the different and the unprecedented by designing certain spaces and functions according to the requirements and demands of certain individuals.

It is of course inevitable to include the following values, which are also considered the main problems of the 21st century, in the educational practices of interior architecture/design: education for everybody; lifelong learning; living together, equality of opportunity and talent conflict; which information to access; spirituality-materiality conflict; preserving nature; and historical and cultural values [17]. When considered from this point of view, the following issues are the requirements to be fulfilled in the field: the intensity of practical applications in “interior”, more efficient use of time, the material variety, high number of application techniques and application of standards determined for human health. Forming a knowledge background and providing common knowledge pattern are also essential while educating individuals to be furnished with knowledge about interior architecture/design.

There are some required qualifications for individuals who receive education in this field. Acquired through education, these qualifications are also the ones

distinguishing design from other related professions. The institution that defines these qualifications is the International Federation of Interior Architects/Designers (IFI). IFI is the global voice and authority for professional Interior Architects/Designers. IFI is the sole international federating body for Interior Architecture/Design organizations and acts as a global forum for the exchange and development of knowledge and experience, in worldwide education, research and practice [18]. IFI definition of a professional interior architect/designer:

Qualified by education, experience and applied skills, the professional Interior Architect/Designer accepts the following responsibilities:

- Identify, research and creatively solve problems pertaining to the function and quality of the interior environment,
- Perform services relating to interior spaces including programming, design analysis, space planning, aesthetics and inspection of work on site, using specialized,
- Knowledge of interior construction, building systems and components, building regulations, equipment, materials and furnishings,
- Prepare schematics, drawings and documents relating to the design of interior space, in order to enhance the quality of life and protect the health, safety, welfare and environment of the public [19].

This definition is acknowledged by most of the professional organizations in many countries. When we add the definition of interior architecture/design to this broad definition, we define the basic characteristics of the profession and its fields of interest. “Interior architecture/design is a profession that deals with “spaces” in terms of practicality, aesthetics and symbolic functions in order to meet the needs of individuals by designing them according to these individuals’ physical and mental characteristics as well as their actions” [19]. In other words, interior architecture/design mainly involves a structure whose user-space-function relationship is determined by the interior architect/designer within the framework of a certain overall concept.

While the world tends to adopt a global culture, it is inevitable for the users -to whom interior architecture/design offers services- to have both local and

global needs, tastes and wishes. As a result, interior architect/design assumes a role to establish a direct relationship between global culture and the users. So, it is not logical for this profession to be based on two different approaches or to define two separate fields of application for it. In fact, the definitions suggested by United States Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences refer to one single profession that complements each other.

An interior architect/designer designs an interior both physically or visually for the same user and for the same function. Therefore, it is not logical to define another profession that provides the same services for the same user in the same space for the same function. If there should be such a distinction, it should be dealt with in an interdisciplinary framework. Moreover, authorization at different levels within the profession, as suggested in professional qualifications, would be an appropriate practice for such a structure.

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