Appraisal of Interior Designbetween the 19th, 20th, and 21st Centuries

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Abstract

Interior design as a profession applies design principles, colours, materials, space planning and lighting design, which the designer uses to orchestrate the design of interiors and derive an experience for its user(s).The research method utilized a case study approach where works of architects based on their era were studied, qualitative analysis was used for data analysis and data was collected from secondary means using observation schedule. Analyses of interior design characteristics are made, through the 19th and 20th centuries with an appraisal of interior design in the 21st century.It is the aim of this paper to see how trends in interior design have evolved through these years to its current state (21st century).Results show that architects initially adopted architectural styles in their works, principles and elements of design, colour, space planning and materials were commonly adopted throughout the three periods. Interior design now focuses on creating pleasing user's experience based on the appraisal.

Keywords: Domestic interior, interior design, 19th century, 20th century, 21st century,

1.0 Introduction

Interior design emerged in the 1970s, which describes a discipline that uses architectural history, theory and principles in interior design and creation of spaces (Coles & House, 2007).Tracing its history, the profession began from the art of decoration,taking into consideration form and function.Interior design started with the ancient Egyptians, where their mud huts were decorated with simple furniture that was enhanced by animal skin, sculptors and vases.Over the years, this has evolved and resulted into specialized areas of interior design. The first interior decorators who were Americans applied the basic principles of design; balance, proportion, rhythm, scale, variety and contrastto create interior spaces. It is estimated that man spends 90% of his day in interior spaces(Richarz& Schulz, 2013),which makes the work of interior designers very important. Interior design as a profession is based majorly on human interaction with a space, and as such, interior designers visualize the entirety of the project and take into account, client needs.This paper discusses this issue by carrying out an appraisal of interior design in different eras to address the current trends in interior design.

2.0 Literature Review

2.1 Principles and Elements of Design

The principle and elements of design are design philosophies which serve as a yardstick for creating and judging a good design. These principles include proportion, rhythm, emphasis, balance, scale and harmony (Brooker & Weinthal, 2013). Scale deals with size of objects in dimensions or mass as they relate to each other. The relationship or ratio of parts to each other, and to the whole of an interior refers to proportion. Rhythm is the design principle that suggests movement between different parts of a design using colour, line, form or texture.

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This is also referred to as continuity. The importance of a focal point in a space is called Emphasis.In any given interior, there may be more than one focal point, however one focal point serves as the primary, which serves as a reference to others. Balance deals with equilibrium of a space, which is achieved through symmetry (mirroring images from a central point), asymmetry (optically varying items from the central point to achieve balance) and radial. Harmony in any given interior space refers to the creation of feelings of unity among element or objects (Sehgal, 2017).

The elements of design on the other hand include space, shape, form and mass, line, texture and pattern, light, and colour. Space is the fundamental of any interior, and this deals with the required area. Shape is the two dimensional outline of a space while form is the three dimensional configuration. Mass refers to the actual or optical density of an object. Line is used to create width and height, or the appearance of activity, movement or flow. Texture is the actual physical feel or surface appearance of a finishing. Colour is the most personal and evocative element in design. They are considered warm (reds, yellows and oranges), cool (blues, greens and purples) or neutral (beiges, browns, black, greys and white). Light could be present either naturally or artificial lighting.Light has the ability to alter or make true the appearance of things (Sehgal, 2017).

2.2 Colour Theory

Color is a powerful tool in the design of any interior space, as it establishes an aesthetic connection between objects and sets the entire atmosphere of the space. It is strong and has the ability to evoke emotions or feelings. Color varies in its application and can be seen in floor coverings, ceiling tiles, wall finishes, and other elements in the space such as furniture, doors, and other accent pieces.According to Frampton(2010), Johannes Itten (1888-1967) was a Swiss painter, designer, and one of the several teachers of the Bauhaus school. Itten believed in the importance of creating harmony through the sense of space, composition and the sense of colors, for this reason he created a 12-hue color wheel (Figure 1) that explained how to mix hues and shades, where he encouraged individual creativity.

2.3 Space Planning

Space is a fundamental variable which serves as the very starting point on which the entirety of the design interior comes along.

Figure 1: Johannes Itten's Color Wheel,
(https://dab1nmslvvntp.cloudfront.net/wpcontent/uploads/2014/03/1394776276Itten-300x300.png)

Designing involvesplacing hierarchy, personality, details and individual components to the space, creating an organized environment; controlling visual and physical limits therein (Brooker & Stone, 2007).Functionalityplays an imperative role in space planning, wherein, without a room meeting its functional purpose, its aesthetic isof less significance, and the space would have lost its purpose.

2.4 Design Theory and Process

Design theoryinvolves the fundamentals and principles of creating visual communication which deals with the manner people perceive and visualize information. It creates a separationbetween ideas of style, taste and trend from the universal principles of aesthetics common to every person(Pile, 2000).This is the very foundation of design as it connects designers and image makers from history to current day.

Design theory involves understanding the elements of design and the interplay between these elements to achieve the principles of design. Form and function were first formalized at the Bauhaus School and has been the basis for every good design (Rowe, 2011).

3.0 Methodology

The Study was carried on interior designs in three different eras; the 19th, 20th, and 21st centuries respectively. The overall design practices of these eras was the focus of this study, to establish the progression of interior design. Qualitative analysis was carried out and data collection was done by means of an observation schedule. Comparisons were made in respect of design considerations between interiors of these three centuries. The research indicated a pattern and direction for which an appraisal was carried out.

4.0 Data Analysis And Discussion Of Results

In order to highlight the evolution of interior design trends, three different eras were the focus of the study, namely the 19th, 20th, and 21st centuries.Each of these eras is characterized with some features which would be observed and evaluated.

4.1 19th Century Interior Design

During this era, Italian Renaissance gave shape to interior design around the world.Major characteristics of interiors were classical elements such as the use of symmetry, arches, pilasters (flattened columns on walls) and caryatids of a geometric framework. Main details were of Italian influence. Spaces were usually dark in colour with ceilings and fabrics brightening them up (Sorabella, 2003). Classical styles were based on mathematically expressed laws of proportion, which were applied to much of the interior decoration(Friedman and Savage, 2017). Interiors in this period used materials such as textiles, and carpets, furniture was upholstered, stuffed with horsehair and often with internal springs. On the walls were pictures, and decorative plaques, with cabinets adorned with ornaments.The domestic interior can be characterized as a shelter, and protection from the threats of modernity (Brooker &Weinthal, 2013).19th century interior spaces can be considered to be rich spaces exuding grandeur.In terms of interior design, consideration was given to principles and elements of design, material application and architectural styles. Figures 2 and 3, both illustratethe richness in terms of pre-colonial interior design characteristics.

Figure 2: Room designed by Robert Adam (Heilbrunn, 2000).byJohn Sanderson(Heilbrunn, 2000).

Figure 3: Dining room from Kirtlington Park

4.2 20th Century Interior Design

In the 20th century, the approach to modern home interiors was increasingly associated with characteristics peculiar to modernism; such as, simple, abstract, geometric and undecorated spaces. According to Friedman and Savage, (2017) interior design was greatly influenced by the Bauhaus. Modern design was meant to be the opposite of design styles that preceded this era using heavy textures, carvings and wood tones throughout the home (Asaff, 2000)These features present in interior design denoted a high level of functionality, seen by many as modern interior aesthetic of the 20th century (Sparke, 2007). Therefore, functionality in the design of interiors is an important feature. Majority of spacesthat were designed in this century made use of neutral colors and different shades of black and white.

To break up the neutral tones and provide a focal point, bold accents are often used (Asaff, 2000). Minimalism played an integral part, where the basics included a "less is more" approach in the design of the space. This means there are no unnecessary details such as openings, walls, or the use of excessive materials, colors, and textiles. Minimalist designs may be thought of as being conceived with much ease, however, a lot of planning is involved to ensure that only necessary details are included in the over design. One way simplicity is achieved is through the simplest manner of thoughtful reduction (Maeda, 2006).During the 20th century, interior design characteristics gave consideration to principles and elements of design, material, colour and space planning, with less consideration given to a particular architectural style as illustrated in Figures 4. The design of interior spaces in the 20th century was to meet basic social needs (Rowe, 2011).

Figure 4: 1954 Bachman House living space by Frank Lloyd Wright
(http://www.architecturaldigest.com/story/frank-lloyd-wright-bachman-wilson-house-arkansas)

4.3 21st Century Interior Design

The interior design scene of the 21st century is inspired from the 20th century, and reflects certain features from the modernist era, with some advancement to them. There has been an evolution of interior design with the progression of time (Tabasi, 2014). 21st century interior design is still being decided upon in terms of its style, with many definitions of its design traditions. However, certain basic trends can be highlighted.Minimalism, the incorporation of straight lines, and moderate asymmetry are all prominent in interior design of this century. The use of elegance and efficiency are used to evoke a simple complexity within a space(Morgan-Harlow, 2012).

With the newer technologies in our present day, interior spaces created are considered to be spontaneous, eclectic and unconventional, where designers are allowed total freedom of expression in design. Common features dominating these interiors are strong, irregular geometric forms, an emphasis on comfort, the use of sustainable, eco-friendly materials, extensive use of natural light, sophisticated colour and strong silhouettes (Pile, 2000). With the design of these interiors, each space is said to have its own individual personality. Also evident in the 21stcentury design of interiors include creating spaces that have an industrialaura, where materials are exposed to add character to the space. The need to economize space has been on the rise, which has led to smaller and intelligent spaces, with space saving furniture and techniques becoming prominent (Tabasi, 2014).

From the analysis of the interiors in the 21st century, deductions can be made that, when it came to design, consideration was given to principles and elements of design, materials, colour and space planning. In terms of architectural style, little to no consideration was given in the course of interior design and implementation.21st century interior design references features from its preceding era, to produce timeless spaces (Morgan-Harlow, 2012), as exemplified in Figure 5.

Figure 5: NW8 development apartmentinterior by KellyHoppen
(http://www.hamhigh.co.uk/polopoly_fs/1.4880339!/image/image.jpg_gen/derivatives/landscape_630/image.jpg)

From the 21st century interiors, it is observed that the principles and elements of design alongside material have been considered by all interior designers in all eras. Emphasis on colours and space planning was not considered by interior designers not until the colonial-era, the post-colonial era is majorly centred on creating pleasure and experience for the user of interior space and as thus little or no consideration for any architectural style.

Table 1: Differences and similarities in considerations in interior design between the different eras

S/N	Architect	Principles and element of design	Colour	Material	Space planning	Architectural style
1	19th Century	√	--	√	--	√
2	20th Century	√	√	√	√	√
3	21st century	√	√	√	√	--
	Total percentage%	3	2	3	2	2
		25	16.7	25	16.7	16.7

Conclusion

The study between the different eras(19th, 20th and 21st centuries), was carried out using five different variables obtained from the frame work of the study; principles and elements of design, materials, colour, space planning and architectural style. The result showedthat in the 19th century, principles and elements of design, material application and architectural styles were the major considerations between the famous designers of that era. In the 20th century, consideration was given to principles and elements of design, materials, colour and space planning.Less consideration was given to any particular architectural style when compared to the 20th century. The 21st century however witnessed the following considerations: principles and elements of design, materials, colour and space planning, with little or no consideration for any architectural style.The study has equally shown that interior design has gradually moved from a modernism concept to post-post modernism, which holds the client in high esteem and seeks to please him. Architecture has greatly influenced interior design, as interior design and architecture have been integrated together by interior designers in order to create pleasing interiors.

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