Utilizing Design Elements and Principles to Decorate Interiors Effectively

[1]Judith Tibu,
E.P Senior High School,
P. O Box 138-Hohoe

[2] Peace A. Tsekpo,
St Monica's college of Education,
P O Box MA 250-Ashanti Mampong

Abstract:- This study aims to investigate how well the fundamental components and rules of design have been applied in Hohoe Municipality to produce an impression and satisfaction at their residences, places of business, educational institutions, weddings, and funerals. Primary and secondary sources were used to gather the study's data. In Hohoe Municipality in Ghana's Volta Region, copies of questionnaires were sent to both educators and uneducated people in order to collect basic data. The secondary data came from publications, including books, journals, and websites. Descriptive research played a significant role in the qualitative approach that was used. The comments and perspectives of users and designers who utilize a variety of stimuli available to them were solicited using 400 copies of a questionnaire. Search terms that indicate the efficiency with which the elements and principles of design were applied were looked up in educational level experience and regulatory jurisdiction documents. The results of this study demonstrated that interior decorators have not been properly applying design principles and features. According to the study, ignorance of design's fundamental parts and principles came in first place, and a statistical diagram was utilized to illustrate this. In order to provide on-the-job training for individuals currently working in the business, Principals, Directors, and Heads of Schools should also conduct recurring seminars and workshops on the subject of interior decoration.

Keywords:- Elements, Principles, Interior Decoration, Vocational and Technical Education, Creativity and Innovation

I. INTRODUCTION

Our world has been the source of all we need for nourishment and shelter because of its abundance of natural resources. Long before recorded history, man first began to manipulate stone, wood, and metal ores. Man discovered how to employ fibers and cloths for comfort and ornamentation with the beginning of farming and herding. We developed the ability to transform organic materials into stunning displays of architectural and aesthetic beauty throughout the Renaissance. Coleman (2002) asserts that artists, designers, and craftspeople strive to produce works of art in every genre to comfort us by pleasing the eye, the soul, and the senses (Shamaileh, 2022). When creating interiors for clients around the world, furniture makers, upholsterers, and artisans today work to get and control a plethora of natural and man-made resources (Winchip, 2012).

Today's interior designers are able to create some of the most stunning and imaginative interiors and best decorations in the world because of the wide variety of materials, textiles, colors, products, and tools at their disposal. Guerin and Lee (2010) note that despite the seemingly limitless variety of factors, things, and opportunities, we have a general understanding of the tools at our disposal. It is a necessary component of being a qualified interior designer. It is our responsibility to know which element is the best option for a certain application and to explain this to our clients.

According to Tiiu (2009), effective interior design must take into account and satisfy the needs of the user (Ndovela et at., 2022). This fosters a sense of pride in one's possession and encourages productivity in the workplace by making homes and workplaces appealing, ecologically safe, functionally effective, and maintained. This depends on how well design ideas and features have been used in both the business and the home. It is essential to have a sound working strategy and a thorough understanding of how to employ certain objects to elicit, maintain, and advance comfort and satisfaction (Winchip, 2012).

The interiors of rooms have been altered to better fit men thanks to technology and urban modernization. Buildings that have been converted from one use to another appear to benefit their users more now than they ever did before. According to Routio (2002), when natural light fills a building's interior through large windows in the façade, the full effects of the decoration are reflected. It describes how the environment is seen and brings about internal alteration. Atmosphere and personality are affected by the elements that can be used to express the character and quality of the interior. These elements can be utilized separately or in combination to express the character and quality of the interior.

According to Coles (2007), good use of rhythm, time, line, forms, function, pattern, color, harmony, scale, and other concepts and aspects has the benefit of making spaces appealing, at ease, and most importantly pleasurable for everyone. A place's aesthetic layout reveals a lot about the architect and owner. It complies with ecological principles, creates functional and comfortable environments, and appeals to both the eyes and emotions of a person. Unfortunately, very few interior designers employ the

principles and components of design effectively in their décor, and if the trend is not reversed, interior decoration will lose its worth (Nguyen et al., 2021).

With the information provided above, the researcher hopes to pinpoint the reasons interior designers fail to effectively apply design principles and elements to their work. They also hope to explore how they might change this trend by making the necessary suggestions for the future of the interior decoration sector.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

A. Meaning of Interior Design/Decoration

Interior design is the art or process of planning the decoration and furnishings in a room or building. Encarta Dictionary (1999): Interior decoration is basically putting something pretty on anything in order to make it more attractive. It is a visual plan used to create something so beautiful that any viewer can appreciate the inside of a building. It could be the works of art such as furniture, fabrics, metalwork, upholsteries, or even pictures that make a place worth living and comforting (Tiiu, 2009). Bloch (2004), cited by Martin and Guerin (2010), stated that interior decoration is judging how to combine form and function in creating a built environment that goes beyond solely aesthetic impact. Interior design should be intended to meet the changing needs of the user's comfort and emotions, which are crucial.

When Busch defined interior design as the planning and selection of colors, materials, furniture fibers, and fabrics in order to make the interior of a building, especially people's homes, Mitchell Williams (1995), referenced by Coleman (2002), shared a similar perspective. From the foregoing, one can describe interior decoration as a piece of art that enhances the aesthetic appeal and calming atmosphere of a building's interior for both residents and guests.

B. Historical Perspectives and Development of Interior Decoration

Until recently, interior decoration had been a self-motivated work that dates back to the early days. The early men used paint to decorate their places of abode. With time, wool and the skins of animals were used. Then came the use of metals and other materials (Coleman, 2002). Minerals such as diamonds and gold were also used to decorate palaces in a gorgeous manner. The Renaissance period marked the use of fabrics in adornment. This period was characterized by an interior décor that showcased the richness and greatness of the home owners. Furniture was selected that could reflect how wealthy the owners were. The rooms in the house were large with high ceilings. Building houses made of wood, stone, or wrought iron with lots of carvings is also preferred (Winchip, 2012).

C. Elements and Principles of Design

The aesthetic guidelines for utilizing the many design components inside an enclosure are called design principles. Balance, proportion, focus, rhythm, and harmony are some of these guidelines (Slotkis, 2013). Although they are not frequently taught, discussed, or actively used, decorating principles do exist. They are a crucial component of the aesthetic toolbox and provide designers with a way to gently alter the focus and impact of their work by knowing where to look for them and how to alter them to enable unbiased design evaluation. They are frequently the answer to why a design succeeds or fails. Intentionally breaking these rules is equivalent to carefully following them if it increases message exposure (Jones, 2005).

You see, in order to describe something, you would utilize words that discuss the lines, shapes, colors, textures, and spaces of the object. These are the essential components. They contribute to the creation of attractive things. Everyone who works in the textile, home interior, woodworking, landscaping, and other arts should value them. Understanding the design principles will increase your chances of finishing home projects successfully. The elements and principles of design must be thoughtfully applied in order for any interior decoration to be successful (Ankerson, 2003). Every beautiful interior is built on a unique design. Poetry, music, nature, or even sketching may serve as sources of inspiration for the design.

➢ *Elements of Design*

Elements can be defined as the basic visual components of all natural and human-made objects. The elements of design include dot, line, space, shape, color, texture, form, and volume. Basically, the elements of design are essential, and they play important roles in decoration.

- *Line*

A visible mark generated by an artistic tool, like a crayon dragged over a surface like paper, can be thought of as a path made by a moving dot. There are many diverse applications for lines. Each of their dimensions—size, direction, length, width, height, and weight—is unique. Line plays a significant function in interior décor thanks to its variations.

- *Colour*

According to Davis (1996), the term "color" has several explanations, some of which are: It is the perception of light that results from activating the retina's cornea. Light movement is the foundation of color. The hue varies as the light source does. There would be no color without light. Colors are substances or materials that change the wavelengths of light by absorbing some and reflecting others.

- *Shape*

A shape is a two-dimensional area. Shapes are created by color areas, contrasting textures, or some combination of these. According to Harder (2007), form is a design element that develops when a line crosses itself or another line to enclose an area. If the artist draws a circle and colors it red

inside the line, the result is a round red shape. Even if there is no line, just a roundish daub of red paint, we still perceive a circular red shape set off from the surrounding space by its red edges. Shapes project the moods of the lines enclosing them and of the space within them. Rectangles and squares, with their horizontal and vertical sides and firm right angles, seem stable and confident. Shapes with diagonal edges seem more dynamic but less stable. Curved lines smoothly change direction, so the diagonal effects are softer.

- *Space*

According to Katz (1995), "space" is the region in or around an object that defines its shape or form. According to Amenuke et al., (1991), "space" is an unbounded space. Positive and negative space are the two forms of space related to composition. The unused space between, inside of, and surrounding shapes and forms in a composition is commonly referred to as negative space. The shapes, symbols, and forms themselves are referred to as positive space.

- *Texture*

Texture is the term used to describe how something looks on the outside. Texture refers to how something feels or seems to feel. It is the proper term to use when discussing and evaluating three-dimensional artworks such as building, assemblage, and collage. Texture, like any other visual component, can influence how we see and interpret a piece of art. According to Katz (1995), three different forms of texture are employed by artists in the production of works of art. These textures are created as visual simulations or real textures.

- *Forms*

Gilbert (1992) defined forms as three-dimensional shapes. Shapes and forms both have heights and widths. The third dimension of forms is depth, or thickness. Shape and form can reflect psychological moods and create optical illusions since they are so adaptable as visual design elements.

- *Mass*

Getlein (2002) defined "Mass" as a three-dimensional structure that takes up a volume of space. A few instances of mass include a mass of clay, a mountain, and an architectural structure. Mass is frequently used to denote bulk, density, and weight in three-dimensional structures (Essel, & Acquah, 2016).

- *Light*

Mcloud (2007) asserts that light is the electromagnetic energy that causes objects to be visible—the radiant energy arising from electron vibration. An elusive design component is light. It is impossible to immediately grasp and control it. It needs to be controlled indirectly by altering the surface it hits. In most cultures, lightness is uplifting and energizing and symbolizes clarity and openness. We can see what we are doing and learn more about our surroundings thanks to light.

- *Dot*

According to Dodsworth (2009), dot is a small round spot made on a surface or found on an object. Dots are found in nature and may also be created by man. Examples of dots found in nature are pebbles, human heads in crowd, oranges, seeds, and gravels. Artificial dots created by man can be used to create a nice interior decoration.

- ➤ *The Principles of Design*

The rules or principles of unity, balance, rhythm, variety, contrast, proportion, dominance, repetition, and movement are frequently applied by artists in the arrangement of the visual elements. These are the guiding ideas that artists strive to use when creating their pieces. But from where do the laws or morals come? Who decided that successful works of art adhere to certain rules? The explanation is that these guidelines weren't established as laws; rather, artists simply became aware of them as they sought to understand how people responded to what they saw.

- *Unity*

Katz (1995) describes unity as a notion that enables us to view the parts of an artistic creation as a whole. Unity is evident all around us. A variety of fish with different colors, textures, forms, and sizes may be kept in an aquarium. The fact that all the organisms are fish, however, unites these variances. Unity is an issue for artists. When all the components of a design function as a whole, they are able to provide a sense of wholeness or harmony in their work.

- *Balance*

One of a man's most basic demands from the moment of birth is to maintain balance. The gravity forces are at odds with a person. When a person first learns to stand and walk, they face their first balancing challenges. Later, in addition to seeking mental and emotional balance, the person aspires to various types of bodily balance. The relationship between the various elements of a composition is known as visual balance.

- *Emphasis*

Crilly et al., (2004) defined "emphasis" as the significance or importance one accords to something. Again, Harder (2007) said that the emphasis in the composition is the center of attention. It is the characteristic that pulls the viewer's focus to a certain element of the design and must be handled properly to provide the desired effect.

- *Movement*

According to Katz (1995), "Movement" is "the visual suggestion of action created by the placement of the elements in a work of art." Movement is defined by Apomah (2003) as "the act of changing position or place away from something that exists." He continues by saying that movement is used in art to give it life and vitality.

- *Rhythm*

Rhythm is the repetition of the visual movement of the elements: color, shapes, lines, values, forms, spaces, and texture. Variety is essential to keeping rhythms exciting and active and to avoiding monotony. Movement and rhythm work together to create the visual equivalent of a musical beat. Rhythm helps direct eye movement (Coles, 2007).

- *Pattern*

Various human actions fall under the umbrella of this term "pattern." Clothing is cut out and put together using patterns. The movements of aircraft are controlled by flight patterns. Behavior patterns show how people behave in specific circumstances. 'Pattern' is a word frequently used in the language of art, both as an element and a guiding concept (Nguyen et al., 2021).

- *Proportion*

The relationship between one component of a design and another component, or to the total design, is referred to as proportion, according to Coles (2007). It is a measurement of ratios, areas, and sizes. For example, a wall hanging's vertical and horizontal measurements might be appropriate because the contrast created by their different lengths is visually pleasing.

- *Harmony*

Visual images that relate to and enhance one another are said to be in harmony. Through repetition and rhythm, harmony can be established, which unites the various elements of a visual image. Harmony can be achieved by repeating visual units, connecting the dots, and focusing attention on particular patterns and shapes.

- *Variety*

According to Harder (2007), variety serves as a counterpoint to harmony and unity; it consists of object differences that enhance a visual image. It is done by utilizing stark contrasts or opposites. A visual image can become more interesting and varied by altering the size, perspective, and angle of a single object. A pattern can be broken and repeated to give a visual image more life.

III. METHODS

To do this, a descriptive survey design was used. The population for this study consists of residents of Hohoe Municipality, both educated and illiterate. The samples needed came from the Hohoe Municipality, which was divided into two clusters (urban and peri-urban). A questionnaire was utilized to collect information so that the researcher could ask respondents about pertinent information. Most interviewees provided comments through the research's use of interviews.

IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

- *To what extent are the elements and principles of design effective in interior decoration?*

The concept of elements and principles of design are crucial if any decorator intends to bring about a change in design. An outstanding decoration needs to employ the elements and principles of decoration. Decorations, whether exterior or interior, speak a lot about the expertise of that individual, her background, and her interests. Martin et al. (2002) state that, with overwhelming arrays of elements, items, and possibilities, an understanding of the resources, which is worked with principles, makes a professional interior designer a designer. All it takes is to understand which element is the correct choice for a particular application and why it should be so.

Respondents were asked which area of interior decoration they were into and whether they used elements of design only in their interior decoration or if they used principles of design only in their work. Whether they can differentiate between elements and principles of design and whether they face challenges in their decorations.

Table 1 Areas of Interior Decoration

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Wedding	54	13.5	13.5	13.5
	Home	53	13.3	13.3	26.8
	Funerals	26	6.5	6.5	33.3
	Wedding and Funerals	81	20.3	20.3	53.5
	Home and Offices	108	27.0	27.0	80.5
	All the above	78	19.5	19.5	100.0
	Total	400	100.0	100.0	

It can be seen that 13.5% (n = 54) of the respondents were into weddings, parties, and places where merrymaking goes on. 13.3% (n=53) of the respondents took interest in decorating homes and a low figure of 6.5% (n=26) were into funeral ground decoration. 20.3% (n = 81) were into weddings and funerals. 108 respondents, representing 27.0%, decorated homes and offices, and 19.5% (n = 78) were into general decorations. Ongoing, it is evident that the majority of interior decorators in the Municipality are into home and office decoration. Tiiu (2009) affirms that when homes and offices form a greater part of interior decoration, man lives in harmony with nature.

Table 2 Use of Elements of Design in Interior Decoration

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	320	80.0	80.0	80.0
	No	80	20.0	20.0	100.0
	Total	400	100.0	100.0	

Table 3 Use of Principles of Design in Interior Decoration

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	214	53.5	53.5	53.5
	No	186	46.5	46.5	100.0
	Total	400	100.0	100.0	

Table 4 Differentiating Elements and Principles of Design

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	320	80.0	80.0	80.0
	No	80	20.0	20.0	100.0
	Total	400	100.0	100.0	

It can be seen that 80% (n = 320) of the respondents use elements in decoration. It is therefore expected that 80% of the respondents will be using line, form, color, pattern, and texture in their work. A view shared by Fullmer (2012) is that elements convey meaning and make decoration very attractive to users. Contrary to the above, 20% of the 80 respondents do not employ all the elements in their decoration.

It is evident from the study that about 20% of interior decorators do not use all the elements in their work. Their work may not be near perfection for a trained decorator. The respondents made the decision to do the research to find out if the principles of design are used by all decorators. From Table 4.8, 53.6% (n = 214) of designers use the principles of design: unity, harmony, rhythm, emphasis, scale, balance, and function in their work to make interiors look appealing to the viewer. 46.5% (n = 186) do not employ them. Some might not have a clear idea of them or might be using them unknowingly.

The above shows that 80% (n = 320) of respondents can differentiate between the elements and principles of design in decoration, and 20% representing 80 respondents cannot differentiate between elements such as line, form, color, pattern, and texture and principles such as unity, harmony, rhythm, emphasis, scale, balance, and function. In

such a situation, the work of many decorators may not be appealing. In many peri-urban areas, interior decorators are semi-skilled and might not have the needed expertise to identify all principles and elements and effectively apply them.

Some of the elements and principles of design are applicable to the arrangement of furniture, walls, window treatments, ceilings, floors, and textiles as they serve as the theory of design and, by law, are acceptable as a philosophy that governs decoration. Understanding how these tools apply leads to attractive and pleasant interiors; line and harmony, for instance, as stated by Coles (2007), create a good background when furniture is placed in an environment where it silhouettes. If elements are arranged well, the result may be harmonious and interesting.

It can therefore be concluded that many unattractive decorations are the result of the inability of some decorators in the municipality to differentiate elements and principles of design and therefore cannot use them effectively.

To be sure that the elements and principles of design are used, the researcher tried to predict challenges that some decorators might face in their work. Table 4.5 below explains this.

Table 5 Challenges Faced by Interior Decorators

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	320	80.0	80.0	80.0
	No	54	13.5	13.5	93.5
	No Response	26	6.5	6.5	100.0
	Total	400	100.0	100.0	

From Table 4.5, 80% of the 320 respondents face one form or another of challenge with their work. It could be funds, user preference, physical location, materials available, quality of products, or the ethnic background of clients. 13.5% (n = 54) of the respondents stated that they do

not face difficulties with their work, and 6.5% (n = 26) gave no response. It is therefore apparent that a lot of interior decorators have challenges with their work. The majority of the respondents in the Hohoe Municipal Assembly really face challenges with their decorations.

V. SUMMARY AND KEY FINDINGS

The essential findings of this study can be summarised as follows:

According to the study, the majority of interior designers in Hohoe Municipality did not properly apply the elements and principles of design to their interior décor. This implies that people working in the décor sector don't employ terms like line, harmony, color, or space, among others. It was also shown that most interior decorators lack sufficient knowledge of the fundamentals and components of design. Surprisingly, it was also discovered that many interior decorators had acquired their skills through informal means rather than through official education and training.

It has also been brought to light that formal education and experience can be used to predict the effective use of the elements and principles of design. This implies that only those who are highly educated, trained, and experienced in the vocational industry and who live in urban areas are more likely to use the elements and principles of design effectively than their colleagues who are semi-uneducated.

VI. CONCLUSIONS

The purpose of the study was to find out the effective use of the elements and principles of design in interior decoration in Hohoe Municipality. It was concluded that:

- The majority of interior decorators in Hohoe Municipality do not successfully apply the elements and principles of design to interior decoration, which causes them to offer finishes that are not aesthetically pleasing and harmonious.
- Majority of the interior decorators do not know the differences between the elements and principles of design and therefore could not combine the two well to produce decors that attract and appeal to users and clients.

RECOMMENDATIONS

In line with the research findings and conclusions drawn, the following recommendations are made:

- An Association of Professional Interior Decorators and the Municipality should be formed in Ghana to regulate the activities of those in interior decoration, as it is done in advanced Nations like the United States of America.
- Periodic seminars and workshops should be organized by Principals, directors, and Heads of schools in the field of interior decoration to offer on-the-job training for those already in the industry.

➤ *Suggestions for Further Research*
The following proposed areas require additional research investigations to be done.

- A study on the reasons why most interior decorators use only few elements and principles in their work.

REFERENCES

[1]. Amenuke, S. K., Dogbe, B.K., Asare, F.D.K., Ayiku, R.K. & Baffoe, A. (1991). General Knowledge in Art for Senior Secondary School. Ministry of Education London, UK: Evans Brothers Publications.

[2]. Ankerson, K.S. (2003). Interior construction documents. New York: Fairchild books and Visuals.

[3]. Coleman, C. (2002). Interior design handbook of professional practice. New York:McGraw – hill and interior design magazine.

[4]. Coles, J. (2007). The Fundamentals of Interior Architecture. South Africa: Avenue Publishing.

[5]. Crilly, N., Moultrie., & Clarkson, P.J. (2004). Seeing Things; consumer response to the visual domain in product design. Design studies 25(6) 547-577.

[6]. Davis, M. L. (1996). Visual Design in Dress. (3rd ed) New Jersey: Prentice- Hall, Inc.

[7]. Essel, O. Q., & Acquah, E. K. (2016). Conceptual art: The untold story of African Art. *Journal of Literature and Art Studies*, *6*(10), 1203-1220.

[8]. Fullmer, D. L. (2012). 3D Design Basics. Studio Campanion Series.Kansas State University, USA: Fairchild Publication and Trades.

[9]. Getlein. D. (2002). Living with Art (6th ed). New York: Mc Graw Hill.

[10]. Guerin, D. A. & Lee, Y.S. (2010). Interior Design Students Handbook part 2. Basic Drafting Standards and Symbols. Department of Design, Housing and Apparel College of Human Ecology. 240 Mcneal Hall, Buford Avenue.

[11]. Harder, N. (2007). Elements & Principles of Design (Teacher Resource Grade 9 & 10). Switzer-land: Bata shoe museum.

[12]. Jones, S. J. (2005). Fashion Design, (2nd ed). Chicago, USA: Lawrence King Publishing.

[13]. Katz, A. (1995). Small Drawing- Small Paintings. Avenue of the Americas Rockefeller Center New York. Marlborough Gallery.

[14]. Ndovela, X., Olalere, F. E., & Reynolds, M. C. (2022). Design for Social Innovation: A Value Creation for Intensifying Interior Design's Social Compact. *International Journal of Design Management & Professional Practice*, *16*(2).

[15]. Nguyen, B. V. D., Simeone, A. L., & Vande Moere, A. (2021, March). Exploring an architectural framework for human-building interaction via a semi-immersive cross-reality methodology. In *Proceedings of the 2021 ACM/IEEE International Conference on Human-Robot Interaction* (pp. 252-261).

[16]. Routio, P. (2002). Beauty of Artifacts. Retrieved 25 October, 2013 from http://www.uiah/product/metodi/155.htm.

[17]. Shamaileh, A. A. (2022). Study and investigate perceptions of Jordanian college students on the golden ratio proportions. *Computers and Electrical Engineering*, *103*, 108317.

[18]. Slotkis, S. J. (2013). Foundations of Interior Design, (2nd ed). Fashion Institute of Technology. Chichester College, UK: Evans Brothers Publications.

[19]. Tiiu, P. (2009). Taking up Space. Exploring the Design process. University of Montreal. New York: Fairchild books and Bloomsbury Publishing.

[20]. Winchip, M. S. (2010). Professional practice for interior designers in the global marketplace: Illinois State University.

[21]. Winchip, M. S. (2012). Sustainable Design for Interior Environments (2nd ed). New York: Fairchild books.