

INTERIOR DESIGN AND INDIGENOUS HERITAGE: A CASE OF MASVINGO PERI URBAN IN ZIMBABWE

Isabel Makwara Mupfumira

Faculty of Education Great Zimbabwe University, Zimbabwe
Great Zimbabwe University, PO Box 1235 Masvingo, ZIMBABWE

ABSTRACT

The study investigated the use of the indigenous heritage in interior design of households in Masvingo peri urban in Zimbabwe. The focus was on the extent to which indigenous heritage was incorporated in the application of elements of design in households. The qualitative research paradigm was used to study the phenomena in its natural setting. A descriptive survey was conducted to come up with a detailed account of the phenomenon under investigation. The population comprised households in Masvingo peri urban in Zimbabwe. Households were sampled using convenience and purposive sampling. Homemakers of sampled households automatically became part of the sample. Data was collected through semi structured interviews and non participant observation method. The data collected was presented, according to the themes which emerged. The data was analysed and discussed basing on the research questions. The findings indicated poor application of elements of design especially colour, space, and line. From traditional practice rural kitchen floors are black and the walls are painted black in colour making them dark and unwelcoming. It was established by the study that some architectural designs created problems in interior design e.g. using small window openings like triangles which introduced very little natural lighting. Colour, texture and lighting were not in most cases used to counteract this effect. In some cases colour was not effectively used in small rooms to create an illusion of space. Advancing colours were used on walls drawing the walls even nearer. The element of form was applied utilizing both indigenous and western forms like, clay pots, reed baskets, wooden stools, chinaware, lounge suits, dining room tables and chairs. The research findings indicated that western furnishings and decorations predominated in the living areas of the households. Artefacts from the cultural heritage featured in households with the indigenous Zimbabwean kitchen where the mud shelf was used. The shelf provided a focal point where both traditional and modern forms were displayed like clay pots, wooden dishing spoons, cooking sticks, kango pots, plates and cups. The research findings showed that architectural indigenous design incorporating granaries for storage purposes reduced the need for wooden and metal forms for storage. It was established through the study that homemakers were not aware of interior design concepts as a result, selection and placement of furnishings and decorations in designing their homes was based on personal tastes rather than knowledge on interior design. The study recommends that householders improve the construction of the basic housing structures to minimize problems in interior design. For effective designing of interiors, homemakers should be conscientised on the elements of interior design, so that they may combine them in a pleasing way in order to create comfortable living environments. The study also recommends the development of an awareness of the cultural heritage through incorporation of indigenous knowledge on home decoration at grade six and seven levels in the primary school Home Economics curriculum. Similar studies be conducted in rural and urban areas to find out if there are any similarities and differences in the settings.

Keywords: Design, interior design, Indigenous heritage, architectural design, elements of design.

INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

Interior design is the art of combining elements and principles of design in a pleasant manner (Alexander et al 1977). The purpose is to create a pleasant living environment. Well designed interiors provide comfort to the inhabitants psychologically, visually and bodily.

Elements of design like colour, line, texture, form, space affect humans emotionally. For example overcrowded interiors cause an overcrowded feeling as if one is fighting for space with objects in a room. A serene restful atmosphere can be created through use of cool colours like green. The idea in interior design is to use elements of design to create the right visual effects for a particular room.

An effective interior designer makes use of elements of design to create the right illusions. In interior design problem situations are handled through application of elements to create a pleasant atmosphere for example a cold sunless room can have light and warmth introduced to it using colours closely related to the sun like yellow or fire like red. A small room can be made to look big and spacious through use of horizontal lines and receding colours like blue (Alexander 1972).

The need to study the use of indigenous heritage in interior design was prompted by the fact that the Zimbabwean culture is rich in material culture especially form. The researcher wondered whether the interiors of households in Masvingo peri urban made use of this heritage in the application of elements in households. Interest in the study was also prompted by the fact that a peri urban environment incorporates an urban and rural flavour. Interest was also created through the need to see how common interior design problems associated with the location like small rooms, narrow rooms, and dark sunless rooms were addressed in interior designing by households

Purpose of study

The purpose of study was to investigate use of indigenous heritage in interior design of the households. This was in order to study the extent to which our cultural heritage is incorporated in the application of elements of design.

Research questions

The following questions guided the research.

- Are elements of design being affectively applied in households in Masvingo peri urban?
- To what extent does the application of interior design elements incorporate Zimbabwean cultural heritage?
- Which factors hinder effective use of elements of design in the designing of interiors of households in Masvingo Peri urban?
- How are the interior design problems addressed by interior designers in the various households in Masvingo Peri urban?

LITERATURE REVIEW

The literature review covers some key definitions, elements of design and interior design problems. Alexander (1997) Johnstone et al (1974) defines design as the art of combining principles and elements of design in a pleasing manner. There are three basic designs in housing; architectural design, interior design and landscape design (Moughtin 1999). Architectural design deals with the basic structures i.e. the house plans and how structures are

built. Landscape design deals with the exteriors which include decorative gardening and flowers. Interior design as the successful organisation and visual effects of the environments (Baldwin 1990). Van Wyk (1997) and <http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/interior+design> refer to interior design as the design and coordination of the decorative elements of the interior of a house, apartment, office, or other structural space, including color schemes, fittings, furnishings, and sometimes architectural features. Designs are created in response to and coordinated with the building shell and acknowledge the physical location and social context of the project (<http://qarch.com/services/interior-design--4/definition-of-interior-design>).

Interior design applies principles and elements of design to achieve comfortable living environments. Clarkson et al (2002) say successful designs incorporate the use of principles and elements of design to serve the designers purpose and visual goal.

Elements of design

The focus of this study is on the application of elements of design. Van Wyk et. al. (1997) define elements of design as the basic ingredients in good design. Design elements are the fundamental ideas about the practice of good design which form the basis of all visual design (Hayward 2004). According to Van Wyk et. al (1997), colour, texture, line, space and form are the elements which form tasteful designs.

<https://insidespacedesign.wordpress.com/2013/05/29/the-7-elements-of-interior-design-2/> includes light as one of the elements of design. Design elements create different emotional and psychological effects on individuals who come into contact with the designed living environments. According to Molony (1978) each element is unique and when combined with other elements the outcome produced provides a comfortable living environment.

Colour

Colour is classified in two categories, warm and cool colours (Birren 1987). Colour has different effects on human emotions. According to Van Der Wagen (1977) colour is fundamental to design because it can create different moods in rooms. Heron (1987) is of the view that colour is like a keyboard and has the power to influence the soul. <http://www.hgtv.com/design/decorating/color/choosing-interior-color-schemes> says when the colour's right, it can enhance feelings of health and wellbeing, modify perceived temperature — make your space feel warmer or cooler, transform perceived space — make your space feel larger, or more cosy and intimate, illuminate dark areas, create mystery and romance in dull areas and energize static areas.

Cool colours like blue, green, violet give a tranquil feeling. These colours give a restful feeling such a feeling is required in resting areas like the bedrooms. However an unpleasant sensation of depression can be produced by a tranquil relaxing colour like blue because it is an absorber of light. Blue can create a dull comfortless atmosphere (feeling blue) (<http://www.infoplease.com/spot/colors1.html>). Blue is associated with the coolness of water and green is considered a motionless colour for summer, when nature is resting from storms of winter (Burren 1987, Clark et al 1976). Louw, 1982, <http://www.interiordesignipedia.com/room-color-schemes.html>) says green is associated with vegetation hence create a feeling of coolness and restfulness. This is why indoor plants are used. These colours have a psychological feeling of calmness and relaxation. When in hot weather, or hot sunny rooms, one can use cool colours like green, blue to create the illusion of coolness (<http://www.infoplease.com/spot/colors1.html>)

The warm colours like red, yellow and orange create an impression of warmth (Clarkson and Lewinski 1976, <http://www.schoolsliasion.org.uk/aliens/access/signsSym/colour.htm>). Warm colours are stimulating and gay. Van Wyk et al (1984) regard warm colours as vibrant, cheerful, bright and alive. Light sunny colours like yellow seem cheerful especially in combination with white. Warm colours like orange and red are said to be active (<http://www.interiordesignipedia.com/color-meanings.html>, Madden 1981). Therefore these colours are suitable in working rooms like the kitchen and children's playrooms as people tend to be active in these rooms (Heron 1987). People are said to be more active in a room decorated with warm colours. Warm colours are associated with fire, they quicken the pulse and raise body temperature (<http://www.interiordesignipedia.com/color-meanings.html>). However too much red is said to be aggressive so it must be used with caution. In a lounge warm colours like red should be used sparingly to avoid making the room uncomfortable (Van Wyk et al 1984). When used in bedrooms, warm colours should be combined with neutrals or used in their tints (Forrester 1989).

Colour can create an illusion of closeness or distance from objects or surfaces, cool colours are sometimes called receding colours. They give distance making objects and surfaces seem far away. They create an illusion of distance, making objects appear smaller (Alexander et al 1972, Madden 1981). It is therefore ideal to use cool colours in small rooms on the walls to give distance and create an illusion of space.

Bread (1990) refers to warm colours as advancing colours. They make objects appear larger as they tend to advance towards the viewer. It is therefore ideal to use warm colours for large rooms, especially on large surfaces like walls so that the room appears small (Dixon 1997, Madden 1981).

Neutral colours like black, brown and white can be used in interior design. Neutral colours are said to have a quiet effect (Madden 1981). Black is said to have a dramatic effect (<http://www.interiordesignipedia.com/color-meanings.html>). Neutrals are important in interior design as they may be used on their own or in combination with other colours. Brown tints and shades give a feeling of stability (<http://www.interiordesignipedia.com/color-meanings.html>). However too much brown creates a sense of darkness or drabness. The use of one colour in its darker shades is overpowering. Use of too many colours in a room should be avoided. Too many colours create a sense of unrest, unease and movement.

Colour can be presented in rooms using colour schemes or colour harmonies. Briggs (2007) defines colour schemes as the logical combination of colours on the colour wheel. There are basically two groupings of colour schemes, related and unrelated (Thomas 2005). The related colour harmonies are made up of one or more colours which are adjacent or near each other on the colour wheel and harmonise well (Dixon 1988). The related are made up of monochromatic and analogous colour schemes. Monochromatic colour schemes are where shades and tints of one colour are used with neutrals (Heron 1987). The analogous colour schemes are made up of a dominant colour and a colour close to it on the colour wheel e.g. blue, blue green and green (Birren 1987, <http://1.bp.blogspot.com/-Nz5WKipz3ws/UPA7UtCL-FI/AAAAAAAAASQ/7FSko3gTjE/s1600/colourwheel.png>, <https://arquitecturaucinf.files.wordpress.com/2013/03/armonia-del-color.jpg>). A neutral colour or several neutrals are also used. Monochromatic colour schemes give a harmonious and restful effect (Forrester 1989). They are suitable for bedrooms. In the lounge they can be tiring and monotonous (Alexander et al. 1972). Analogous colour schemes give an elegant feeling because a wide range of colours are used (Forrester 1989). The colour scheme is

suitable in bedrooms and lounge. The unrelated colour harmonies are contrasting and are made up of colours that come from any part of the colour wheel (Gill 2000). They are most suitable for large rooms (Birren 1999). The authorities go on to say if unrelated colours are used in small rooms, the rooms become clumsy and a feeling of crowdedness is created. If a colour harmony is striking, it should be introduced on a large surface as a way of toning down the effect.

A direct complementary colour scheme of two colours directly opposite each other on the colour wheel e.g. red and green (Dixon 1988, <http://desktoppub.about.com/cs/color/a/symbolism.htm>). The colour scheme is vibrant and stimulating. Wiles (1993) recommends this colour scheme in the kitchen and children's rooms because there is activity in these rooms. Thomas (1995) says a direct complementary colour scheme can be used in any room. This depends on whether the colours are used in their shades or tints. If softened through tinting, they may be used in bedrooms and if vibrant, they may be used in living areas.

A split complement is made up of three colours, the main colour and two other colours at either side of its direct complement e.g. red with blue green and yellow green (Wiles 1993). According to Thomas (2005) colours in a split complimentary colour scheme, intensify each other giving high aesthetic value and a good effect on the room.

A triadic colour scheme is a three colour harmony, made up of three colours equidistant from each other on the colour wheel e.g. green, violet and orange (Clark 1976). Birren (1999) considers a triadic colour scheme as dramatic and overpowering so that neutrals like white, black and grey are a must. This colour scheme is mostly suitable in the lounge.

The double complement works with four colours equidistant from each other on the colour wheel (two double compliments) e.g. red, yellow, green and violet (Wiles 1993). This scheme is said to be very dramatic and overpowering such that neutrals are a must (Gill 2000). In children's rooms the colours, may not be tinted to make the room lively and stimulating. Colours may be subdued by tinting to produce a calm effect for the lounge and bedroom (Birren 1999). One needs to be careful when using colour because it is the easiest element one notices on entering a room (Birren 1987).

Space

Van Wyk and Erlangsen (1997) define space as the emptiness, void or interval between objects. Space is important as it is in, space that other elements like line and form are seen or viewed. For this reason some authorities consider space as the most important element since all objects are located and all events occur in space. The first element of space refers to the actual building or room that the interior designer can work with. This is the basic structure of the room or building including the walls, floors, ceiling, doors and windows as well as the beams and columns that support the structure. This is the "blank canvas" so to speak that the designer works with to enhance style and functionality

(<https://insidespacedesign.wordpress.com/2013/05/29/the-7-elements-of-interior-design-2/>). Space is categorised as positive and negative space (Van Wyk and Erlangsen 1997). Positive space would be a specific object or an occupied space. A bed positive space and negative space would be the background to the bed or unoccupied space (Mealock 1972 Nelson 1992). Other elements of design are used to effectively manage and utilise space. Line, for example can be used to create a broadening effect e.g. pieces of furniture of the same height. A narrow effect in a too wide room can be created by use of vertical lines. Texture can be used to create

an illusion of spaciousness in a small room by means of fine textures e.g. glass. Glass has important influence on space, windows bring in the outdoors, mirrors broaden space. Wall pictures with a deep perspective create an illusion of distance (Van Wyk and Erlangsen 1997).

Colour and space are said to form a natural alliance. Warm colours draw things nearer reducing space and cool colours push objects further creating more space.

Space has an effect on human emotions, an uncluttered space is peaceful and can look clean and cool. A cluttered room leads to frustration and irritability. This can result in irritability and quarrels. One needs enough space in a room for easy movement psychologically (through visual movement) and physically (through bodily movement). There is need to provide enough space for movement in a room by providing traffic lanes to eliminate feelings of confusion and frustration. Storage space should be provided in form of cupboards, shelves, boxes. Enough storage space in a room reduces clutter (Stenfield 1976). If a room is organised and uncluttered it looks peaceful and clean.

Line

Line is the direction of an art or creation used in most contemporary designs. Line can be vertical, horizontal, curved, diagonal or zig-zag. Different lines have different psychological effects. Vertical lines give height and strength to a design. Van Wyk and Erlangsen (1997) <http://hatchdesign.ca/elements-of-design-part-1-line/>, <http://www.rcwilley.com/blogs/Room-To-Talk/34/2013/5/4327/Interior-Design-Basics-Psychological-Effects-of-a-Line.jsp> say vertical lines force the eyes to move up and down creating an illusion of height, strength and dignity e.g. use of tall furniture. Horizontal lines are said to be relaxing, solid and masculine. Horizontal lines cause the eye to move sideways giving an illusion of width (Van Wyk and Erlangsen 1997 <http://www.rcwilley.com/blogs/Room-To-Talk/34/2013/5/4327/Interior-Design-Basics-Psychological-Effects-of-a-Line.jsp> <http://hatchdesign.ca/elements-of-design-part-1-line/>). Diagonal and zig-zag lines depict action due to the slanting feeling. Too many diagonal lines give a feeling of unrest. Curved lines give a graceful feminine effect e.g. curved furniture. Too many curved lines create boredom and make the room too soft.

Creese (1970) says too many different lines in a room should be avoided as they cause stress and headaches. Careful use of line is important to create the right atmosphere in a room.

Form

Campbell (2007) defines form as any three dimensional object which has volume this can be a bed, pot or stool. Form is three dimensional. The forms in a room may be regular or irregular. Form can be furniture.

Form has an emotional effect. Heavy and bulky forms can be claustrophobic, that is they give an enclosed crowded feeling. Very small furniture in a large room gives an empty and small furniture in a large room creates an empty feeling (Van Wyk and Erlangsen 1997). Form creates a feeling of balance and serenity when the space which individual forms occupy harmonise with the space around. One form can form the main anchor in a room (Anchor means stability) e.g. bed in the bedroom, a free standing or fitted cupboard. Other forms are chosen and harmonise with the main anchor. Anchor forms can be free standing or placed against a wall. Anchor forms act as a communicators to visitors and establish a point of contact between people e.g. a lounge suite communicates that the room is sitting room. Using

too many forms can result in a cluttered atmosphere (<http://hatchdesign.ca/elements-of-design-part-3-texture-pattern/>)

Texture

Texture is the quality of a surface which can be seen as well as felt (Ragans 1988). It can give an effect of heaviness or lightness, warmth or coldness, hardness or softness, regularity or irregularity (Black and Walls 1990). Every surface has a texture whether it be smooth or rough, bumpy or flat. Our perception of texture is also influenced by the textures of adjacent surfaces, our viewing distance, as well as the lighting applied. For example, rough surfaces seem more textured next to smooth surfaces, when viewed up close. (<http://hatchdesign.ca/elements-of-design-part-3-texture-pattern/>)

Texture can be described as either tactile or visual. Tactile texture relates to the actual feeling of a surface – smooth, rough, soft, hard, etc. Visual texture is our perception of what a texture might feel like (<http://hatchdesign.ca/elements-of-design-part-3-texture-pattern/>).

According to Maloney (1978) there are three textures fine, medium and course. Fine textures are smooth, delicate in appearance , formal, cold and hygienic , easy to clean, space saving, soft or stiff, feminine, compatible with medium textures (Van Wyk and Erlangsen 1997 <http://insidespacedesign.wordpress.com/2013/05/29/the-7-elements-of-interior-design-2/>).

Medium textures are light or fairly heavy in mass, warm to the touch, cosy, informal, more hard wearing than some fine textured textiles. Medium textures are compatible with fine or coarse textures. Coarse textures are warm, cosy, hot in appearance, soft or stiff, heavy in mass, dominant, warm to touch, masculine and more hard wearing if closely woven (Maloney 1978). They are collectors of dust or dirt.

Textures have various functions in interior design. They control light entering a room and when closely woven they provide privacy. They can provide for comfort. Medium and coarse textiles give an impression of warmth in cold weather. Fine textures give an illusion of coolness in hot weather (Van Wyk and Erlangsen 1997). Fine textures are hygienic and are almost always used in the kitchens and bathrooms. Fine textures are easily kept clean so they are labour saving (Ragans 1988). Coarse textures hold dirt and require more effort in cleaning (Madden 1981). Fine textures create a feminine and coarse a masculine mood.

Effective application of elements of design will create attractive, comfortable environments for the inhabitants and visitors (<http://hatchdesign.ca/elements-of-design-part-3-texture-pattern/>). Appropriate use of elements of design overcomes problems like small rooms, hot rooms, dark sunless rooms.

Pattern

Pattern is used in interior design to add interest to surfaces and its created by repetitive designs in fabrics, rugs, furniture (<http://insidespacedesign.wordpress.com/2013/05/29/the-7-elements-of-interior-design-2/>, Madden 1981). Pattern is brought about through repetition of colour, line, form, and this brings about harmony (<http://hatchdesign.ca/elements-of-design-part-3-texture-pattern/>)

A print should put against a plain background. Two different prints should not be put together this kind of scenario would create confusion as the two prints would fight for attention(Madden 1981). A print shows better against a plain surface or next to geometric design e.g. lines against a print. Prints should suit the sizes of surfaces on which they are applied. Large prints on large surfaces e.g. curtains for large windows. Large prints look better on large surfaces and small prints on small surfaces Pattern is brought about through

repetition of colour, line, form, and this brings about harmony (<http://hatchdesign.ca/elements-of-design-part-3-texture-pattern/>)

Light

Daylight and artificial lighting is used in the home. Light is essential to any interior space as it is the means by which we can see our surrounding environment. Madden (1981) says provides visual comfort and safety in the home The feeling of a space can be completely transformed by altering the intensity, placement and colour of light which makes it a very powerful tool (<http://hatchdesign.ca/elements-of-design-part-4-light/>).

There are many considerations that must be taken into account to ensure interior spaces are properly lit for functionality, mood and atmosphere, and sustainability. Since light has both psychological and physiological effects on people it is important to get it right (<http://hatchdesign.ca/elements-of-design-part-4-light/>). .

Different types of spaces have different lighting requirements. In work spaces in the home it is important that workers can complete their tasks, often involving cooking, cleaning, reading printed documents or working at a computer (<http://hatchdesign.ca/elements-of-design-part-4-light/>). Lighting should just be adequate. Too little light limits visibility and it becomes difficult to perform necessary tasks. Too much light and it causes glare.

The three main types of lighting that designers are concerned with are ambient, task and accent (<http://hatchdesign.ca/elements-of-design-part-4-light/> and McMillan and McMillan).

- *Ambient* light is the general illumination surrounding the environment or subject. It is indirect and soft, reducing contrast and shadows and is achieved through natural and artificial light sources, as well as reflection from surfaces.
- *Task* light is that which illuminates a small, specific area. A good example of this is a desk lamp which allows one to add more light to complete a working task. Task light should be three times as bright as general lighting.
- *Accent* light is used to add highlight, drama and focus to interior spaces. This includes lighting placed on a focal point. Accent lighting adds brilliant shimmer to make your precious objects, paintings, sculptures, and outstanding architectural features stand out (McMillan and McMillan).

Methodology

The descriptive qualitative survey was used in this research. Best and Khan (1993) refers to a qualitative study as an inquiry of phenomenon in a natural setting. The qualitative research describes and qualifies human experiences through the written and/or spoken language (Leedy & Amorod, 2010; McMillan & Schumacher, 2010; Polkinghorne, 2005). This was in order to understand application of elements of design through direct interactions with the research participants (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2011).

The descriptive survey research design is an investigation technique which concentrates on describing and interpreting the existing phenomenon. Sidhu (2003) refers to a descriptive survey as a systematic description of salient aspects of phenomenon, object or situation with a focus on the patterns that emerge. The researcher used the descriptive survey because it allowed the researcher to collect data on the interior design of households in Masvingo peri urban and find out whether they made use of indigenous forms, patterns etc from the Zimbabwean heritage.

Population and Sampling

Cohen, Manion, and Morrison (2011) define a population as a well defined group of human beings or entities. In this research, the population of study comprised of 100 households and people responsible for interior design in the households.

The study made use of a sample of 20 households and householders. Convenience and purposive sampling were used. Firstly the houses to be studied were purposively sampled to include houses which presented a completely traditional rural Zimbabwean look, a modern look and a combination. Convenience sampling was then used to sample houses which could be easily reached.

Data Collection Methods

Burton & Bartlet (2003), Lincoln & Guba (1985), Mutch (2005) & Punch (2009) say typical methods of data generation in the qualitative studies include interviews, observation and document analysis. Data were collected through interviews, and observation. Qualitative research uses a variety of data generation tools to achieve trustworthiness (Maree, 2008; McMillan & Schumacher, 2010; Sidhu, 2003).

Interview

The researcher interviewed the householders to establish their understanding of interior design elements. The interview involved direct, personal contact with the participants (Best & Khan, 1993; Punch, 2009). Through direct contact, the researchers gathered data on what the respondent's value, think, like and feel about the way their homes were designed. Semi structured interviews were used to give room for probing and provide respondents with the opportunity to express themselves.

Observations

Best & Khan, (2006), Marshall & Rossman (2006) consider observation as a foundational tool for all qualitative research. Observation entails a systematic description of events, behaviour and activities in the social setting selected for study as seen by the researcher (Marshall and Rossman 1989). The observation method assisted the researcher to acquire first hand information on how the peri urban householders decorated their homes Spindler & Spindler, 1992).

Data Collection Procedures

The researcher first of all visited the households in order to familiarise with the types of housing set ups. This was to facilitate sample selection. The second visit and the subsequent visits were to interview and to observe the interior design of households.

Data Presentation and Analysis

Data were presented and analysed in narrative form basing on the themes which emerged.

Discussion of findings

The discussion and findings focused on the themes which emerged from the research. The recurring themes were on:

- colour usage
- Texture application
- Management of space
- interior design problems
- Lighting

From the findings it was established that colour as an element of design was not effectively and appropriately used. In most cases one colour was used for all rooms i.e. the lounge and the bedroom would have blue used on walls. In bedrooms the blue colour was appropriate as it provided a restful atmosphere but in the lounge it made the environment cold and

uninviting since the lounge is a living area where occupants are more active than the bedroom (Birren 1987, Clark et. Al 1976 and Louw 1982, <http://www.schoolsliaison.org.uk/aliens/access/signsSym/colour.htm>, <http://www.interiordesignipedia.com/room-color-schemes.html>, <http://www.infoplease.com/spot/colors1.html>). When respondents were asked on the justification of using one colour in all rooms some indicated that they were given paint in one colour by a relative or bought themselves. The respondents were not aware that colours have different psychological effects and need to be selected according to the function of a room. There are colours which are feminine and masculine, active and restful (Van Wyk 1984). The colours used in rooms were not based on colour schemes for most households. The main reason was that respondents had no knowledge of colour schemes and their application in different rooms. Some of the colours used would clash because they did not complement each other. In the formation of a harmonious colour scheme e.g. blue and red, the direct complement of blue is yellow (Dixon 1988, <http://1.bp.blogspot.com/-Nz5WKipz3ws/UPA7UtCL-FI/AAAAAAAAASQ/7FSko3gTjE/s1600/colourwheel.png>). Some monochromatic colour schemes were rather too monotonous because accents for relief were not used.

Most of the rooms were negatively affected by the use of the wrong colour for the room. Most of the rooms were on the small size requiring receding colours to increase the size of the room. But you would find the advancing colours like yellow used making the rooms appear even smaller (<http://www.hgtv.com/design/decorating/color/choosing-interior-color-schemes>). When warm colours like yellow are used surfaces advance closing in. Colour can be effectively used in a small room to create an illusion of spaciousness e.g. colours like cream, light green, light blue (Alexander et. al 1972). In some rooms where lighting was poor the situation was made worse by using dark colours like black which absorb light. Black was mostly used in the rural kitchen. The result was that the rooms appeared even darker. The situation was compounded by the fact that rooms had very small windows allowing very little light. Maybe the challenge faced by the interior designer of a rural kitchen is that fire is used for cooking smoke and soot would spoil light colours. Some respondents supported use of dark colours in rooms because they do not show dirt easily.

The researcher came across many colours used in some rooms. This created a confused cluttered atmosphere. Colour use in rooms was not based on colour schemes. Colour schemes provide a systematic way of combining best suited colours e.g. complementary colours (<http://desktoppub.about.com/cs/color/a/symbolism.htm>) People are not able to relax and rest when surrounded by too many colours. Too many colours which do not harmonise create a confused atmosphere giving feelings of unrest and unease (Van Wyk 1984).

The element of space was not effectively used. The major problem in terms of space was that the rooms were generally small except in a few cases. There was generally limited negative space in most lounges and bedrooms observed. It was rather difficult to move psychologically because most space was taken by large objects in small rooms giving an overcrowded feeling. In bedrooms it was difficult to move bodily e.g. a double bed would occupy most of the space or a lounge suit would be occupying most of the space in a lounge. There is need for a balance between negative space and positive (<http://hatchdesign.ca/elements-of-design-part-3-texture-pattern/>). Objects in a room should leave space for the eye to move easily from one object to another. For comfort there is need for enough space to move bodily within a room. The case of limited space was compounded by the use of wrong colours in the small spaces. The use of black lounge suits

in small rooms made the sofas appear larger and the rooms smaller. Colour was not effectively used in the provided space. Light, neutrals and cool colours are more appropriate as they create spaciousness (Van Wyk and Elarngsen 1997).

Other ways of overcoming limited space were not noted in rooms observed e.g. use of mirrors, pictures, with deep perspectives. These would create an illusion of spaciousness. Mirrors would throw back the room creating more space (Van Wyk and Erlangsen 1997). The pictures with a deep perspective would create a far away distant look creating space. Some of the furniture used was too large in proportion to the space available. Furniture and form should be scaled to the space available. Small scale lounge furniture for small rooms to avoid over crowding and large scale furniture for large rooms to avoid an empty look.

Storage space was provided in most cases reducing clutter (Stenfield 1976). In some household portraying a modern look pantries were provided for storage space. In rural kitchens wall shelves were provided for storage of kitchen equipment like plate pans etc. Large clay pots were used for storage of water, mealie meal and milk. However farm produce was stored in granaries. The findings show fair utilisation of form as an element of design. Anchor form was found in most rooms indicating the purpose of the room. One could deduce that a room was a bedroom by the presence of a bed. In the lounge you would come across a lounge suit. Dual purpose rooms e.g. lounge and dining would have a dining table and chairs and a lounge suit. In some rooms it would be difficult to establish the purpose of the room since there was no anchor form. On interviewing householders on purpose of room it was indicated that some of the rooms were bedrooms or lounges. The occupants could not afford the relevant furniture. In such households you would mostly find that the bed is only found in the parents' bedroom and children would sleep on the floor on reed mats. In some households you would come across form for the lounge and kitchen in the same room e.g. lounge suit and a kitchen table and kitchen unit. This would cause confusion as the forms communicate different things. In some households lounges did not exist relaxation and receiving of guests was done in the kitchen where you would find a bench which will be part of the structural design and a few wooden stools to sit on. Animal skin mats were also used on sitting space. In these cases the bench stools and skin mats would communicate that the room was for relaxation and entertainment.

In some of the rooms, you would find bulky forms which were not proportional to the space available like large sofas in small rooms causing overcrowding. Double beds squashed in small bedrooms leaving very little space for movement and effective cleaning of the rooms. Form needs to be scaled and be proportional to the space provided for a comfortable living environment. Form should be in relation to space, small furniture should be placed in small rooms large furniture in large rooms to avoid over crowding (<http://hatchdesign.ca/elements-of-design-part-3-texture-pattern/>). Form was used especially in the rural kitchen to create an area of focus or emphasis in form of a display of staggered clay pots or objects displayed on the shelves. The element of texture was not given much consideration. The combination of the right textures was mostly by chance since the householders were not aware of the different forms of texture and how they may be utilised. Medium textures were widely used creating a warm and relaxed feeling. Fine textures could have been applied in small and dark rooms. A feeling of lightness and spaciousness can be created by fine textures like glass and mirrors. Fine textures could have created more light in dark rooms as they reflect light introduced into a room. The rooms were generally not very interesting due to lack of utilisation of a variety of textures. Fine textures could have been used on sofas in the small lounge to help give an illusion of space by making the sofas appear less bulky.

Textures were appropriately selected in some cases. Fine textures were found in the kitchen on the floors and the other surfaces. Fine textures are said to be suitable for the kitchen as they are easy to clean and hygienic. The floors were finely finished in cement. The storage shelves had a fine finish on them. The clay pots used for storage purposes in the kitchen had a fine finish and could be easily wiped with a cloth to remove dust. Coarse textures which give warmth and comfort were introduced in the rural kitchen and lounge in form of animal skin mats. One respondent said they use animal skins because they keep away the cold and are comfortable to sit on.

Line as an element of design featured in rooms on surfaces, decorations and furnishings. In some cases line was effectively used although it was by chance and not by design. Application of line was mostly seen in the rural kitchen where different lines were used to create interesting shelves. Horizontal lines along the shelves created width whereas the vertical lines gave height to design. The design was made active by the introduction of a zig zag pattern where the cups and small kitchen equipment were displayed. On the walls of some kitchens coloured soils were used to form interesting designs with lines e.g. the chevron pattern. Triangular window openings were also found on the walls as part of the architectural design. In some cases these were accentuated by linear designs using clay. Horizontal lines were also introduced in form of suspended drying rods from the roof for drying meat when an animal has been slaughtered this would be found above the fire place so that the meat would be dried by the heat from the fire and smoke would also act as a preservative for the meat.

In some of the rooms line was used haphazardly you would find in a narrow room curtains with vertical lines used on the narrow side creating an even narrower appearance to the narrow end. In some cases you would find a low room having a dividing horizontal line through the painting of the walls with two different colours. This would create an illusion of reduced height of the room because the eye will be moving horizontally. Such a situation lowered the roof ceiling giving an uncomfortable feeling.

Pattern as an element of design was not effectively used. In some sitting rooms and bedrooms different patterned material were put against each other. You would come across a situation where a lounge suit with one type of print was put against a curtain of a different print as its background. This kind of scenario would create confusion as the two prints would fight for attention. A print shows better against a plain surface or next to a geometric design e.g. lines against another print (Madden 1981). A. Some of the prints were used on wrong sizes of surfaces (Madden 1981). A. One would come across large prints on curtains for very small windows. This looked awkward, large prints look better on large surfaces and small prints on small surfaces.

Some designers did effectively make use of pattern. You would come across a colour only used once without being repeated in any form in a room. Pattern is brought about also through repetition of colour line form, and this brings about harmony (<http://hatchdesign.ca/elements-of-design-part-3-texture-pattern/>) In some cases a pattern was formed through repetition of colour and form especially in the rural kitchen on the shelves displaying kitchen wear. Pattern was also illustrated on the arrangement of clay pots where a pattern of a gradual change of size was shown on balancing pots with the smallest at the top and the biggest at the bottom as was seen in the rural kitchen.

Interior design problem / challenges

From the findings several problems were noted in interior design. These problems were due to architectural design of the building. The problems were too small rooms low roof levels, dark room, long, narrow rooms and hot sunny rooms. Too small rooms were encountered in the study especially the sitting rooms and bedrooms. Little effort was made in most cases to give an illusion of spaciousness through the application of elements of design.

In some rooms advancing colours like yellow were used on the walls making them close in on the occupants. This was because yellow as an advancing colour would bring the walls closer (Baldwin 1990). In a few cases neutrals like white and receding colours like blue were used giving the illusion of spaciousness. The element of space was not effectively used as some of the rooms were crammed with large furniture and other objects creating an overcrowded feeling due to limited negative space. These rooms would have benefited from the introduction of mirrors and wall pictures with deep perspectives (Donald 1980, Baldwin 1990). The problem of small rooms was made worse by the use of large forms which took up all the space. Small form should be used in small rooms and form should be minimised to create space, this helps to avoid a crowded feeling (Donald 1980, Van Wyk and Elargnsen 1997). Some of the rooms were crammed with form causing an over crowded feeling (<http://hatchdesign.ca/elements-of-design-part-3-texture-pattern/>)

Low roofs was one of the problems encountered during the study. Most homes in the area investigated did not have ceilings so they exposed thatch grass, asbestos roofing or galvanised iron sheets. These materials did not help to create receding effect or distance on the roof. The roofs appeared to be hanging close to the occupants creating discomfort. An illusion of height could have been introduced through use of vertical lines on the walls. Vertical lines create an illusion of height (Collier 1985 and Van Wyk 1989). Sometimes the situation was made worse by use of horizontal lines on curtains or painting on walls. The vertical rafters supporting the thatch could have been painted a receding colour instead the of black to help the eye travel up. Where asbestos sheets were used, these could have been painted with a receding colour like green to create distance.

Some of the rooms were long and too narrow. These created a problem in trying to create the ideal rectangular shape. Most arrangements were in form of line arrangements along the long side to end of the narrow side e.g. sofa arranged along the long side. This emphasised the narrowness of the room. Use of horizontal arrangement on the narrow side would create width (Van Wyk 1997). Vertical lines could be used on the long side to reduce width this could be in form of arrangement of wall decoration designs an curtaining fabric. Mirrors could be placed along the long side to increase width of room through reflection. Forms in the room can be arranged not reaching walls on the narrow sides to visually reduce length. The researcher also came across hot sunny rooms. These rooms were made worse in most cases by the absence of ceilings. To make the situation worse some of these rooms were painted with warm colours like yellow. Van Wyk (1997), Clarkson and Lewinski (1976), <http://www.schoolsliaison.org.uk/aliens/access/signsSym/colour.htm>, recommends the use of cool colours like light green, blue as these create a feeling of coolness soothing, and are restful on the eye, they help one relax mentally as well as physically and help alleviate depression, nervousness and anxiety (<http://www.interiordesignipedia.com/color-meanings.html>).

These could be used on large surfaces like walls to provide a cooling effect. The situation in the hot rooms was worsened by use of coarse textured forms like lounge suits instead of fine

textured lounge suits which provide a cooling effect (Van Wyk 1997, <http://insidespacedesign.wordpress.com/2013/05/29/the-7-elements-of-interior-design-2/>). Some of the hot rooms were made worse by overcrowding. Hot rooms should have enough negative space to allow for free circulation of air (Buscher 1986). Tall furniture can also hinder free circulation of air (Van Wyk 1984).

The researcher also came across dark sunless rooms. This was mainly because of small openings or windows on the walls allowing very little light. Traditionally, the rural kitchen is used to house the dead person's body during the funeral process, and the small windows are meant to keep the dead person's soul inside. The colour black in the rural kitchen was considered appropriate as it is associated with death. However it was difficult for occupants to complete their tasks effectively in poor lighting. Good lighting is important for effective execution of tasks and well being of occupants since light has both psychological and physiological effects on people (<http://hatchdesign.ca/elements-of-design-part-4-light/>). Lighting should just be adequate. Too little light limits visibility too much light causes glare.

Some of such rooms were made worse by painting with cool colours like blue and green which made the rooms even cooler (<http://www.interiordesignpedia.com/color-meanings.html>). Colours which improve the situation belong to the warm colour clan i.e the yellow, red which <http://qarch.com/services/interior-design--4/definition-of-interior-design> are associated with the sun or fire. So colours like yellow, pink would create an illusion of light and warmth (Coles 1995, Van Wyk 1984, Clarkson and Lewinski 1976 <http://www.schoolsliaison.org.uk/aliens/access/signsSym/colour.htm>).

To effectively address interior design problems, designs created should be in response to the architectural design of the building and acknowledge the physical location and social context of the occupants (<http://qarch.com/services/interior-design--4/definition-of-interior-design>).

CONCLUSIONS

With reference to effective application of elements of design, the conclusion is that to a greater extent the elements of design are not effectively applied in the households. Colour was not applied to address size of rooms, purpose of room and level of lighting. In terms of space the general observation was that there was too much positive space resulting in an overcrowded feeling, frustration and confusion.

From the research findings it was concluded that interior design in the households incorporated aspects of the Zimbabwean heritage. This featured mainly in the rural kitchen where forms like clay pots, stools and goat skin mats were used. Clay pots and the built in shelf provided storage eliminating clutter.

From the findings it may be concluded that interior design in the households was mainly affected by lack of knowledge by householders on interior design. Application of elements was based on availability materials and personal taste. In some cases selection and application of elements was based on income. For example some households lacked basic anchor forms like beds for the bedrooms and lounge suits for the lounge.

On the aspect of challenges / problems faced in interior design. It was concluded that most of the problems were related to architectural design. The most prominent problem was that of small rooms. Some of the rooms had poor lighting, low roofs and narrowness.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Local authorities and church organisations should organise workshops where householders are conscientised on the application of elements of design to create pleasant living environments.
- Householders to be encouraged to use low cost materials and forms in designing their homes e.g. basketry, clay pots, mats, stools.
- Basics in interior design be taught at primary school level and be developed at secondary school as life skills. The study should include relevant content and materials from the Zimbabwean cultural heritage.
- Further studies to be carried out in other locations to verify findings of this study.

REFERENCES

- Alexander, T. and Jean, M. (1972) *Designing Interior Environments*. London: Harcourt Brace.
- Baldwin, E. R. (1979) *Home and Family*. London : Oxford University Press.
- Best, J.W. & Kahn J.V. (2006). *Research in education (10th Ed)*. Boston M.A. : Pearson Education.
- Birren, F. (1969) *Principles of Colour*. USA: Schiiffer Publishing Company.
- Burton, D & Bartlet, S. (2007). *Introduction to Education Studies*. (2ndEd.). London: Sage Publications Ltd.
- Clarkson C. March, J. and Palmer J. (2002) *Textile Technology for ORC*. Oxford: Reed Educational and Professional Ltd.
- Cohen,L, Manion, L. and Morrison, K. 2011. *Research methods in education*. 7th edition. New York: Routledge the Zimbabwe bulletin of teacher education 12(1)16-39.
- Hayward, P. (2004) *Tourism*. Great Britain: Batch Press.
- Heron, P. (1987) *Abstract Art*. Great Britain: Academy Group Ltd.
- <http://www.schoolsliaison.org.uk/aliens/access/signsSym/colour.htm>(Accessed 28/09/2014)
- <http://hatchdesign.ca/elements-of-design-part-3-texture-pattern/> (Accessed 02/01/2015)
- <http://www.interiordesignipedia.com/room-color-schemes.html> (Accessed 02/01/2015)
- <http://www.infoplease.com/spot/colors1.html> (Accessed 28/11/2014)
- <http://hatchdesign.ca/elements-of-design-part-4-light/> (Accessed 11/01/2015)
- <http://desktoppub.about.com/cs/color/a/symbolism.htm> (Accessed 11/01/2015)
- <http://hatchdesign.ca/elements-of-design-part-1-line/> (24/12/2014)
- <http://insidespacedesign.wordpress.com/2013/05/29/the-7-elements-of-interior-design-2/> (Accessed 11/01/2015)
- <http://www.interiordesignipedia.com/color-meanings.html> (Accessed 06/01/2015)
- <http://www.hgtv.com/design/decorating/color/choosing-interior-color-schemes> (Accessed 06/01/2015)
- <http://qarch.com/services/interior-design--4/definition-of-interior-design> (Accessed 11/01/2015)
- <http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/interior+design> (Accessed 11/01/2015)
- <http://1.bp.blogspot.com/-Nz5WKipz3ws/UPA7UtCL-FI/AAAAAAAAASQ/7FSko3gTjE/s1600/colourwheel.png> (Accessed 06/01/2015)
- <https://insidespacedesign.wordpress.com/2013/05/29/the-7-elements-of-interior-design-2/>(Accessed 06/01/2015)
- <https://arquitecturaucinf.files.wordpress.com/2013/03/armonia-del-color.jpg> (Accessed 06/01/2015)

- Johnstone, R. O. Akingbehin, A. and Mcfie, J. (1974) *Art And Design*. London : Longman group ltd.
- Leedy, P D. and Ormrod, J E. (2010). *Practical research planning and design*. New Jersey: Pearson Education Inc.
- Lincoln, Y.S. & Guba, E. (1985). *Naturalistic Inquiry*. Beverly Hill CA: SAGE.
- Louw W. A. (1976) *Needlework Clothing Manual*. Cape Town: National Book Prentices
- Madden, D. (1981) *Home and Community*.
- McMillan, J.H. & Schumacher, S. (2010). *Research in Education*. New York: Harper.
- McMillan, K. K. and P H. *McMillan Home Decorating for Dummies* (2nd Edition)
<http://www.dummies.com/how-to/content/how-to-use-lighting-as-an-interior-design-element.html> (Accessed 06/01/2015)
- Moughtin, C. (1999) *Urban design*. London: Butterworth Heinemann.
- Moughton, C. (1999) *Urban Design*. London : Butterworth Heinemann.
- Mutch, C. (2005). *Doing Educational Research : A Practitioners Guide to Getting Started*. Wellington, New Zealand: NZCER.
- Van Der Wagon, W (1977) *Communication In Tourism and Hospitality*. Australia : Hospitality Press.
- Polkinghorne, D.E. (2005). Language and meaning : Data collection in qualitative *Journal of counseling Psychology*. 52(2): 137-145.
- Punch, K.F. (2005). *Introduction to Social Research Quantitative and Qualitative Approach*. Los Angeles: Sage Publication Limited.
- Punch, K. F. (2009). *Introduction to Research Methods in Education*. London: Sage.
- Spindler, G. and Spindler, L. (1992). *Cultural processes and Ethnography : An Anthropological Perspective in M.D. LeCompte, W.L. and J. Preissle (ed)*. The hand book of Qualitative research in Education San Diego, CA: Academic, pp53-92.
- Van Wyk and Erlangsen E. M. (1997) *Modern Home Economics*. Cape Town: Maskew Miller.
- Van Wyk and Erlangsen, E. M. Kruger, R Gelderbone, S. Dostal E Verganani, T. and Lilers, S. (1984) *Modern Home Economics*. Cape Town: Maskew Miller.