# THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN INTERIOR DESIGN AND ARCHITECTURE

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**Abstract***: Architecture and interior design have struggled with how and where they intersect as professions and as academic disciplines. Architects believe that the design of interior space falls under their jurisdiction; that the architect is qualified by education and experience to design the interior and that they have always had this responsibility. At this time, the information stipulated on the knowledge areas and a set of skills published in the Interior Design Body of Knowledge is insufficient in providing clear guidance on the territories between interior design and architecture. There is a discrepancy in the information understood by the perspectives of education and industry in the definition of the profession. The need for clarity on what differentiates these two professions is a critical issue to avoid confusion and misrepresentation in professional roles and academic curricula structures. Henceforth, this study attempts to discuss the determinants shared similarly between architecture and interior design profession. The qualitative method is employed through a comparative and content analysis. Published and unpublished documents was retrieved from main databases which were Scopus, Science Direct, Google Scholars, Google engine search and the key professional associations, to facilitate the comparison. Reviewing the documents reveals that each profession acquires different knowledge. The findings showed that interior designers are not architects and not taught, qualified, or checked as architects. Conversely, architects are not educated, trained, or tested to be interior designers. The professions, on the other side, are complementary.*

**Keywords***: Interior Design, Architecture, Professional Definition, Professional Standard, Professional Guideline*

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## Introduction

For numerous decades now, architecture and interior design have battled with how and where they intersect as professions and academic disciplines. A crucial need in both architecture and interior design is to understand that their roles, methodologies, and service expectations are continually evolving within a shifting social, economic, and political culture (John, 2013). Conventionally, the disciplines of architecture and interior design view themselves as distinctive and singular; being both boundaries tied by professional legislation as well as seeing themselves as offering specialized service roles. This is reinforced by a protective "turf mentality" advanced and guarded by their respective professional and licensure organizations (Henry, 2004).

It has been reported form 1980, interior design profession has suffered from allegations in various publications, conflict in licensing meetings and restrictions in work environments, which argue that interior design standards do not compare constructively with architectural standards and not appropriately measure quality, responsibility, and service. Professional and educators in both professions are ignorant of the similarities and differences in practice, experience and education that occur between the two (Bue, 1991). Leading to the use of various technical acronyms and specific vocabularies by both professionals, a concise explanation of the process is challenging and poorly understand. However, the relationship between these two professions have not thoroughly studied by the scholars previously. Despite this uncertainty, it is essential for professionals to have a holistic understanding of their profession's knowledge skills, legal registration requirements and professional definition.

As a recognized profession, as its scope of work has expanded, and the knowledge required to practice become more complex, interior design has increasingly crossed paths with other design profession, especially architecture that claims to do the same work. It is essential for the profession to defend its area by defining it which raises the need to explain how unique that area is in comparison with others. From the perspective of architectural education, it is observed that the programmes under architecture discipline dominate interior design programmes. This scenario leads to the disappearance of its genuine qualities and values. In establishing its jurisdictional boundaries, the profession must not only define what it knows but also determine how that knowledge is distinct from other professional groups (D.Guerin, C.Martin, 2010). Hence, it must define what the architects and interior designers do uniquely in addition to what the do precisely correct.

### Aim and Objectives

The need for clarity on what is the similarities and differentiates interior design roles from architecture is a critical question to avoid confusion and misrepresentation in professional roles and academic curricula structures.

This study aims to serve as preliminary study to discuss on the determinants shared similarly between architecture and interior design profession. The guidance is based on three main aspects as follows: (1) professions professional definition (2) similarities and differences between the two professions (3) clarification on how the two disciplines intersect.

It is based on the review related to the perspectives encompassed factors surrounding the research issues by previous scholars and provides diversity of viewpoints on the understanding of the profession. Moreover, the current study was expected to advance the existing understanding of the similarities and differences of these two professions by

providing insights from multifaceted perspectives and document review obtained from various sources.

## Methodology

The author divided the methodology process based on the three objectives to retrieve relevant articles. The appropriate keywords were selected based on each objective in the process of searching a relevant documents, article, and journals. This study used two main searching techniques, namely advanced searching (on the selected databases) and manual searching on four main databases which were Scopus, Science Direct, Google Scholars, and Google engine search. The author also used the phrase searching function and the Boolean operator OR or/and AND to combine keywords in the advance searching process. The three main techniques were used for the manual searching in this study namely handpicking, backward tracking, and forward tracking. Then, the author determined the inclusion criteria as follows; (1) content of the articles and (2) timeline publication and language.

As the study are mainly to identify the determinants shared similarly between architecture between architecture and interior design profession, the content of the selected articles must be heavily focus on the professional definition and scope of service for each profession. Apart from that, published and unpublished documents were obtained from various sources and the key professional associations to facilitate the comparison between the two professions.

Documents for interior design was sourced from the Council for Interior Design Accreditation (CIDA), the National Council for Interior Design Qualification (NCIDQ) and other various licensing bills. For architecture, documents were obtained from the National Architectural Accrediting Board (NAAB), the National Council Registration Boards (NCARB) and various licensing bills. Each profession's professional definitions, scope of services, responsibility and set of standards was studied and compared. Interior design criteria were first defined, then compared to architecture criteria to see if there were any intersections. When intersections identified, the similarities were analysed to see if there were any related subject areas. When there were no intersections, differences in scope were analysed to ascertain content individually.

This study only extracted data from selected studies that fit the objectives. The process was performed independently by the author. Whereby, the co-authors provided advice to lead the author finalizing the suitability of the extracted data.

## Result and Discussion

### Professional Definition

Professional definition establishes professional identities. Quality, responsibility, and service are defined by definitions that distinguish processes and define professional roles. Different and often subtle conceptual standards constructs have emerged as conditional parameters to differentiate architecture from interior design. This involves architecture as being concerned with more than a mere building of practical and economical needs, and more than a mere structure on enclosure systems.

Architects continue to argue that the design of interior space falls their jurisdiction; that architect is qualified by education and experience to design the interior; and they have

always had this responsibility (John, 2013). Increased complexity in the design of interior environments has demanded a more focused expertise and skill set related to sustainable interior materials, ergonomics, design for multiple populations, ADA compliance, workplace design, facilities management, interior lighting, and other aspects of the built environment which is emphasis more on the interior scale. The rise of a distinct, parallel career track in interior design exemplifies this.

### Interior Design

According to the National Council for Interior Design Qualification (NCIDQ, n.d.), interior design encompasses the analysis, planning, design, documentation, and management of interior non-structural/non-seismic construction and alteration project management in compliance with applicable building design and construction, fire and life safety, and energy codes, standards, regulations, and guidelines for the purpose of obtaining a building permit, as allowed by law. Qualified by means of education, experience, and examination, interior designers have a moral and ethical responsibility to protect consumers and occupants through the design of code-compliant, accessible, and inclusive interior environments that address well-being, while considering the complex physical, mental, and emotional needs of people.  In the words of Society of British and International Interior Design (SBID), interior designer is multi-faceted, but fundamentally commences with providing accurate design advice for the optimal safe occupation of those work, live or use an interior space. Operating across a variety of sectors with different laws for product use and specification between residential and contract use, an interior designer must be aware of and comply with all building, health & safety, and product regulations.

For several factors, interior design industry has evolved significantly since the middle of last century.  Historically, architects have held responsibility for completing the architectural interior of buildings, although artisans, craftsmen, furniture makers. Beginning in the mid-1900s, the idea of the speculative building and a shift from corporate ownership to leasing began to separate the design of the building from the design of its interior. The need for interior renovation of still-viable building shells has arisen as an urban core have aged. More significantly, an increasing complexity associated with the building interior in workplace, healthcare, institutional and other types of environments demanded an increased expertise and an increased level of specialization in professional services.

Currently interior design is seen as a profession which contribute to the interior environment with knowledge and skills about space planning; interior building materials and finishes; casework, furniture, furnishings, and equipment; lighting; acoustics; wayfinding; ergonomics and anthropometrics; and human environmental behavior. Interior designers analyze, plan, design, document, and manage interior non-structural/non-seismic construction and alteration projects in compliance with applicable building design and construction, fire, life-safety, and energy codes, standards, regulations, and guidelines for the purpose of obtaining a building permit, as allowed by law. This asserted by The National Council for Interior Design Qualification (NCIDQ, n.d.).

Interior design includes a scope of services performed by a professional design practitioner, qualified by means of education, experience, and examination, to protect and enhance the life, health, safety and welfare of the public. These services may include any or all the following tasks:

- Research and analysis of the client's goals and requirements; and development of documents, drawings and diagrams that outline those needs.
- Formulation of preliminary space plans and two and three dimensional design concept studies and sketches that integrate the client's program needs and are based on knowledge of the principles of interior design and theories of human behaviour
- Confirmation that preliminary space plans and design concepts are safe, functional, aesthetically appropriate, and meet all public health, safety, and welfare requirements, including code, accessibility, environmental, and sustainability guidelines
- Selection of colours, materials and finishes to appropriately convey the design concept, and to meet sociopsychological, functional, maintenance, life-cycle performance, environmental, and safety requirements
- Selection and specification of furniture, fixtures, equipment and millwork, including layout drawings and detailed product description; and provision of contract documentation to facilitate pricing, procurement and installation of furniture
- Provision of project management services, including preparation of project budgets and schedules
- Preparation of construction documents, consisting of plans, elevations, details, and specifications, to illustrate non-structural and/or non-seismic partition layouts; power and communications locations; reflected ceiling plans and lighting designs; materials and finishes; and furniture layouts
- Preparation of construction documents to adhere to regional building and fire codes, municipal codes, and any other jurisdictional statutes, regulations, and guidelines applicable to the interior space
- Coordination and collaboration with other allied design professionals who may be retained to provide consulting services, including but not limited to architects; structural, mechanical, and electrical engineers, and various specialty consultants
- Confirmation that construction documents for non-structural and/or non-seismic construction are signed and sealed by the responsible interior designer, as applicable to jurisdictional requirements for filing with code enforcement officials
- Administration of contract documents, bids, and negotiations as the client's agent
- Observation and reporting on the implementation of projects while in progress and upon completion, as a representative of and on behalf of the client; and conducting post-occupancy evaluation reports

The interior design professional is extremely important in the "whole building" design process and should be contracted at the onset of the project, referred to as the pre-design phase or programming phase, with the other major disciplines, key stakeholders, client and end-users' contract (Frances, 2016).

### Architecture

To comprehend the distinctions between interior design and architecture, it is necessary to examine an architect's responsibilities in depth. The American Institute of Architects describes that Architects are the only professionals who have the education, training, experience, and vision to maximize your construction dollar and ease the entire design and construction process. They can perform site studies, help secure planning and zoning approvals, and execute a variety of other pre-design tasks. On the other hands, Royal Architectural Institute of Canada (RAIC, 2014) stated architects serve as trusted advisors. Their role is holistic, blending diverse requirements and disciplines in a creative process, while serving the public

interest and addressing heath and safety matters. Incorporate both sets of disciplinary definitions.

The discipline of architecture has both legal and cultural definitions. In the United States, all states have regulations that govern conditions of licensure, registration, use of the title "architect" and the provision of professional services, succinctly summarized by The American Institute of Architects. Each state or jurisdiction creates its own requirements for each of these aspects of the discipline. While legal definitions mandate the ways in which the profession is responsible for safeguarding the health, safety, and welfare of the public, cultural definitions characterize the ways in the discipline responds to social, aesthetic, and ethical aspects of making cities, buildings, and landscapes. A "whole building" approach must necessarily incorporate both sets of disciplinary definitions (Julie, 2016).

Architects are specially educated to help you define what you want to build, present options you might never have considered, and help you get the most for your valuable investment. They do not just design four walls and a roof, they create total environments, both interiors and exteriors, that are functional and exciting places in which to work and live. (AIA, n.d.). According to some industry analyst, the architect's role has been further limited by the idea that buildings are commodities, consisting of assemblies of standard materials and systems. New norm of project delivery including design and build, bridging and construction management, come out a belief that architects are no longer able to stay abreast of complex information in order to lead the design process on the owner's behalf. (Carls, n.d). Characteristically, the professional definitions identify the following criteria: (1) the professional title; (2) a statement requiring education, experience, and examination; (3) a statement on professional practice which highlights the scope of professional service.

The scope of services in interior design and architecture are quite different. The services listed in the newly updated interior design definition by The National Council for Interior Design Qualification (NCIDQ) include programming, conceptual design, design development, contract documentation contract administration and evaluation. These services are concerned with the function and quality of complex micro interior environment which focused on people. Looking at architecture profession, the services identified in the definition of architectural practice include consultation, verification of facility requirements, design development, coordination and integration of professional services, and contract administration.

Royal Architectural Institute of Canada (RAIC, 2014) claimed that the practice of architecture consists of the provision of professional services in connection with town planning as well as the design, construction, enlargement, conservation, restoration, or alteration of a building or groups of buildings. These professional services include, but are not limited to (1) planning and land-use planning; (2) urban design; (3) provision of preliminary studies, designs, models, drawings, specifications, and technical documentation; (4) coordination of technical documentation prepared by others (consulting engineers, urban planners, landscape architects, and other specialist consultants) as appropriate and without limitation; (5) construction economics; contract administration; (6) monitoring of construction (referred to as supervision on some countries) and (7) project management. These services are focused on the function and quality of a complex macro environment of buildings on a site. Architecture has a different emphasis than interior design, but it is complementary.
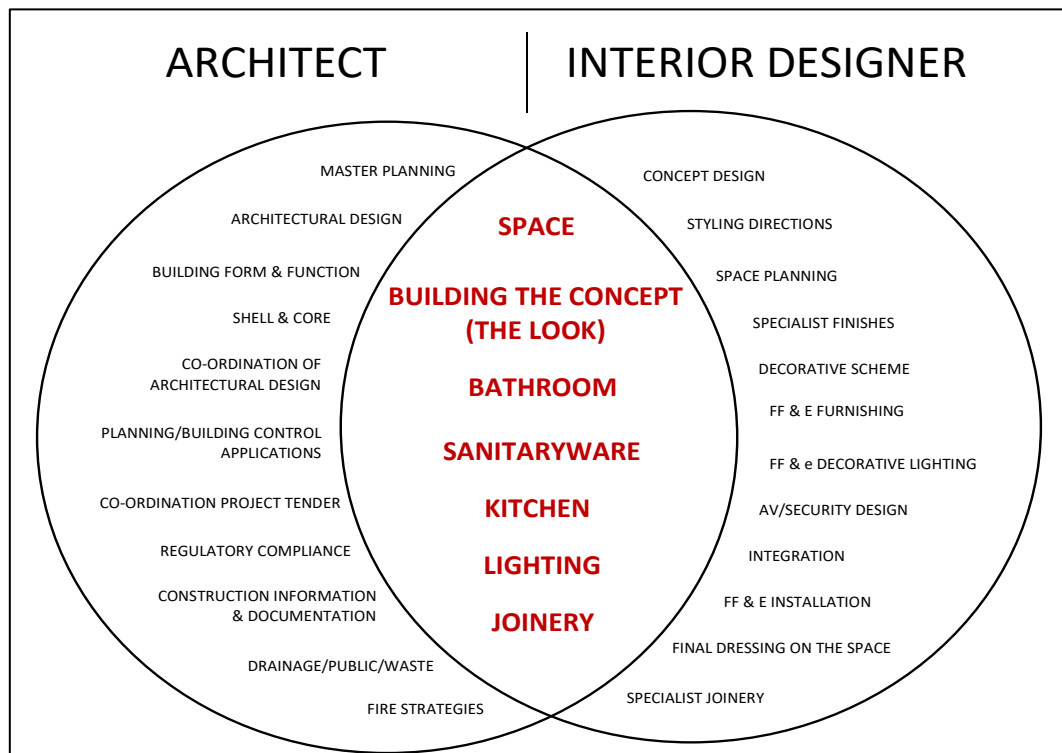
**The Organization**

It is hard to observe the defining line of the profession. Thus, the author believe that the information stipulated on the current standards and guidelines is crucial in providing clear guidance on the territories between interior Design and architecture profession. There is a mismatch in the information understood by the perspectives of education and industry in the definition of the interior Design profession. An understanding of the key players is critical when reviewing standards. Who engages in the development and implementation of professional interior design and architecture standards? Table 1 below shows the organizations that plays an important role in developing professional standards for architecture and interior design. Membership, education, experience, examination, and legal registration are all governed by organisations in both disciplines. Each profession is significantly influenced by these key players. Their interactions, whether by policy or action, often influence the profession's future.

The standards reviewed in education addressed the major knowledge categories identifying the basic content needed to practice in field. The educational standards and the supervising professional became the subject of those dealing with expertise. Whereby, the standards, format, development, jury, and certification processes were reviewed by those involved in the examination area. After the comparison, the legal registration requirements and professional definitions were reviewed and compared to the established standards. This review revealed the significant similarity between standards and the scope of services in both disciplines.

**Table 1: Organization of The Profession**

| Interior Design | |
|---|---|
| ASID | American Society of Interior Designers |
| CFID | Council of Federal Interior Designers |
| CIDA | Council for Interior Design Accreditation |
| IBD | Institute of Business Designers |
| IDC | Institute Designers of Canada |
| IDCEC | Interior Design Continuing Education Council |
| IDEC | Interior Design Educators Council |
| IDS | Interior Design Society |
| IFDA | International Furnishings and Design Association |
| IFMA | International Facilities Management Association |
| ISIS | International Society of Interior Design |
| ISP | Institute of Store Planners |
| NCIDQ | National Council for Interior Design Qualification |
| NLCID | National Legislative Coalition for Interior Design |
| **Architecture** | |
| AIA | American Institute of Architects |
| ARE | Architect Registration Examination |
| ACSA | Association of Collegiate Schools of Architecture |
| IDP | Intern-Architect Development Program |
| NAAB | National Architectural Accrediting Board |
| NCARB | National Council of Architectural Registration Boards |
| SAA | Society of Architectural Administration |

**Figure 1: The Profession's Scope of Work & Services**

### The Determinants

There are some very key and fundamental differences. But the truth is that there is also a lot of middle ground and cross over where both interior designers and architects do similar work during the life of a project. Figure 1 presents the middle ground and cross over where both Interior Designers and Architects do similar work during the life of a project. This includes selection of interior finishes, such as tile and woodwork, drafting of interior elevations and details, and space planning for furniture placement. As claimed by Society of British and International Interior Design (SBID, 2019), the architect would lead. But also having the interior designer involved briefly in the space planning exercise would allow the interior designer to develop interior furniture layouts, which then help influence the best possible positioning of walls, partitions, door openings and placement of radiators, switches, furnishings to maximise the optimal room layout from a furnishings and user experience perspective. This would involve the interior designer working with architect from day one, with a view to the architectural design being approached from and 'Inside Out' perspective.

Having both architect and interior designer working together will create a much better solutions as furniture placement, small power and special features can all be accommodated sympathetically within the initial architectural design. In this way, the architect and interior designer would be able to adopt a holistic approach incorporating spatial arrangements, special finishes, lighting effects, positioning of art in one complete concept. This eliminates the need for costly 'bolt-ons' and creates greater opportunities to realise the visions of both architect and interior designers.

## Acknowledgement

## Conclusion

As illustrated throughout this study, the professional definition and scope of services for interior designer directly reflect interior design professional practice, and they address microenvironments. Whereby, the professional definition and scope of services for architect directly reflect architectural professional practice, and they address macroenvironments. The similarities and differences are multifaceted, and they address distinctly different audiences. This overlap is highlighted in the scope of services indicated in each professional discipline. It characterizes the professional practice, it clarifies the required knowledge, and it defines the identity. Without this distinction, it would be difficult for the public to understand the nuances of each profession. Both disciplines have recognized organizations that monitor their respective standards. The architectural system is more fully developed than that in interior design, primarily because it is older and has had a longer time to develop. Interior design knowledge is different from that in architecture because it addresses a different set of criteria. Consequently, interior designers are not educated, trained, or tested to be architects. Conversely, architects are not educated, trained, or tested to be interior designers. In conclusion, the professions are however, complementary.

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