THESIS

GRADUATE EDUCATION, RESEARCH, AND THE INTERIOR DESIGN

PROFESSION

Submitted by

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In partial fulfillment of the requirements

for the Degree of Master of Arts

Colorado State University

Fort Collins, Colorado

Spring, 1998

U18401 8430219

COLORADO STATE UNIVERSITY

March 30, 1998

WE HEREBY RECOMMEND THAT THE THESIS PREPARED UNDER OUR SUPERVISION BY PATTI J. LAWLOR ENTITLED GRADUATE EDUCATION, RESEARCH, AND THE INTERIOR DESIGN PROFESSION BE ACCEPTED AS FULFILLING IN PART REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF ARTS.

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ABSTRACT

GRADUATE EDUCATION, RESEARCH, AND THE INTERIOR DESIGN PROFESSION

Irrespective of the field, all professions are made up of different components that set a standard for the discipline. These components include, but are not limited to, accreditation, examination, licensing, and research. The foundation of these components lies in the standardized esoteric body of knowledge the profession holds. The knowledge base of a profession is created, maintained, and expanded through scholarly research. When individuals have received proper training, the creation and documentation of new information can be conducted in all areas of a profession: education, business, and industry. Training to be a conductor of research is typically acquired through graduate education.

The objective of this study was to ascertain perceptions of interior design practitioners concerning the components of a profession as previously listed, their importance to the interior design practitioner and advantage to the profession as a whole. In addition, graduate education and research were the focus to gauge the commitment of interior design to the components of the profession. Questionnaires were mailed to companies meeting study criteria from the "100 Giants 1996" as listed in *Interior Design* magazine. A 54 percent return rate was acquired. The data were

analyzed using frequencies, percentages, means, standard deviations, Spearman Rho correlations, and chi-squares.

Analysis of the data revealed practitioners perceived an importance and advantage for each of the components of a profession, with the exception of graduate education. Practitioners had stronger perceptions of the importance and advantage of research to the profession and practitioner than they did of the importance and advantage of graduate education.

Based on the findings and the review of literature, recommendations such as design firms should encourage and support the components of the profession were made. Additionally, recommendations were made for practitioners, academic programs and educators, graduate students in interior design, and professional organizations.

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

seeing a large portion of the West, and all the things I enjoy: hiking, camping, biking, skiing, and the like. You helped me enjoy my time in Colorado, even if I did happen to be pursuing a graduate degree. Greg, your support from a thousand miles away continually gave me the motivation to put in long hours. I appreciated all your hard work while I was doing mine.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The three oldest professions--clergy, law, and medicine--began a precedent for professionalism hundreds of years ago. To enter any of these professions, one was required to obtain a specific level of knowledge, abide by personal and professional standards, and extend professional knowledge to the public through noble services. Today, innumerable professions exist based in a wide range of disciplines with a plethora of backgrounds, knowledge bases, personalities, and service orientations. Common to all professions are components that set standards for the respective discipline. The six general components are full-time occupation, commitment to a calling, a formalized organization, specialized training or education, a service orientation, and autonomy. These components also maintain a precedent for the practitioners of that profession. To have a commitment to one's calling requires acceptance of the norms and standards within the profession, ensuring identification with and loyalty to one's peers and the profession as a whole (Moore, 1970).

Among the components of a profession, the backbone of any profession is the standardized esoteric knowledge base upon which it is built. The pool of knowledge practitioners utilize to investigate situations, make decisions, solve problems, and provide services to clients is key to the survival and perpetuation of the profession. It is

the tool with which practitioners are able to prove competence in their field and gain the trust of clients and the general public in their skills. This standardized knowledge is acquired systematically through formal education ideally of exceptional quality (Moore, 1970).

The knowledge base of a profession is created, maintained, and expanded through scholarly research. Research discovers new information and relationships, establishes facts, expands and verifies existing knowledge, and creates a foundation for theory (Guralnik, 1978; Rummel, 1964). When individuals have been properly trained, the creation and documentation of new information can be conducted in all areas of a profession: education, business (practitioners), and industry. Training to be a conductor of research is typically acquired through graduate education. A commonly recognized definition of graduate education is that it develops depth of knowledge and provides opportunity to focus on an area of subject matter through the generation or reinterpretation of knowledge (Dickson & White, Winter 1993).

When research is utilized by practitioners of a profession, information has come full circle. New information is channeled through various means (e.g., workshops, conferences, publications, courses, etc.) to practitioners for use within the profession. Practitioners in turn remedy the situations of clientele and the public, while at the same time realizing new questions and problems in need of answers. Passing these new questions and problems to researchers, they can, in turn, investigate information for practitioner use.

Within interior design, the components of a profession are in place, and the knowledge base upon which the discipline rests is strong. Research is created and disseminated and practitioners can utilize this information when needed. However, a necessary gauge of a profession is its commitment to the components of a profession. It is not enough simply to have the components in place if the profession as a whole is not committed to development and maintenance of the components and active participation in the profession. If esoteric research information does not come full circle within a profession, it cannot be a useful contribution to the knowledge base of a field. Investigating two components of interior design, graduate education and research, gives an indication of the commitment of interior design to maintenance of the components of the profession.

Various authors (Dohr, 1992; Duvall, 1994; Fowles, 1992; Guerin, 1992b) have noted the importance of graduate education and research to interior design. They called for increased emphasis on graduate education and greater collaboration between research producing groups and practicing interior designers to increase dissemination of research information. The literature shows, however, that little is being done to increase practitioners' and the public's awareness of the role of graduate education and research in interior design (Dickson & White, 1995).

The Polsky Forum, sponsored by the Foundation for Interior Design Education Research (FIDER) and conducted in May of 1994, was the first gathering of interior design practitioners, educators, and industry members to specifically discuss research and graduate education. The forum, facilitated by Dickson and White, concluded that

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research and graduate education are "means by which the profession can document its value to society, empower its members, and ensure long-term sustainability" (1995, p. 3). Evaluating practitioners' current views of graduate education and research in interior design will enable the profession to gauge its long term sustainability as discussed by Dickson and White. This information can also be used to assess practitioners' commitment to the interior design profession.

Purpose of the Research

The purpose of the research was to investigate the commitment of interior designer practitioners to the profession through evaluation of their perceptions concerning graduate education and research.

The objectives of this study were to:

1. Explore to what extent interior design practitioners are committed to two components of professionalism: graduate education and research.

2. Examine practitioners' perceptions of the importance and advantages of graduate education in interior design to the interior design profession and to the individual interior design practitioner.

3. Determine practitioners' perceptions of the importance and advantages of research in interior design to the interior design profession and to the individual interior design practitioner.

Significance of Study

Graduate education and research are two important components to any profession. In assessing practitioners' perceptions of graduate education and research the interior design profession can become aware of its efforts in the further development of and commitment to professionalism. Graduate education contributes to interior design by strengthening professional recognition, contributing to the knowledge base of the field, and increasing specialization (White & Dickson, 1994). Research in interior design discovers new information and/or relationships, establishes facts pertinent to the field, and expands and verifies existing knowledge. Not realizing the importance of graduate education and research in any field can mean severe consequences for the livelihood of members of the profession, as well as its ability to sustain change and maintain status and recognition as a profession.

The intent of this study is to measure the degree to which a sample of interior design practitioners believe research and graduate education are important and advantageous to the profession and the practitioners. Their perceptions are used as an indicator of commitment to the growth and development of interior design as a profession.

Delimitations

This research focused on the perceptions of practitioners in interior design concerning graduate education and research. It did not attempt to examine the perceptions of industry or educators in the field. Also, this study did not address

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continuing education or the professional level graduate degree which combines undergraduate curriculum with a graduate degree. The professional level graduate degree is discussed later in this paper. In addition, efforts were made to survey interior designers as opposed to architects who also practice interior design. Interior designers were favored because many times architects have graduate degrees in architecture, consequently their views on graduate education in interior design could skew results. In addition, architects most likely will identify with the architecture profession, not interior design. Furthermore, the educational content of architecture is different from that of interior design (Harwood, 1991). Lastly, though there are many components involved in the composition of a profession, this study will focus on graduate education and research in relation to the status of the interior design profession; it will not address in depth each of the remaining criteria.

Assumptions

For the purposes of this study, the following assumptions were the basis upon which this research was conducted.

1. Practitioners should use research based information.

2. Practitioners need up-to-date/current research based information to effectively solve design problems.

3. Research is one outcome of graduate study which consequently adds to/increases the knowledge base of interior design.

4. Interior design should strive to strengthen its professional status.

Definitions of Terms

The following terms and their definitions were used in the thesis.

Continuing Education: study of topics by those practicing a profession with the intent of updating their existing knowledge with new information. Continuing education is usually offered in short-term courses, workshops, or seminars for non-academic credit. Continuing education does not expand the existing knowledge base of a profession, nor does it allow for in-depth specialization or investigation to become an expert. In general, it offers the opportunity for gaining proficiency in various work related skills.

Creative Scholarship: "an original activity in design and the arts that defines and expands the body of knowledge of the discipline in order to advance the quality of life and human performance in the designed environment" (Guerin & Birdsong, 1995, p. 44).

Graduate Education: formalized study beyond the undergraduate degree through specialization and scholarly research which builds on the existing foundation of the field. "Graduate education allows for the exploration of design theory and philosophy, the foundation upon which expertise is built" (White & Dickson, 1994, p. 29).

Information: facts or material derived from study, experience, or instruction; could be learning of a specific event or situation.

Interior Designer: "the professional interior designer is qualified by education, experience and examination to enhance the function and quality of interior spaces for the purpose of improving the quality of life, increasing productivity, and protecting the health, safety and welfare of the public" (NCIDQ, 1992, p. 39).

Post-Professional Degree: "degree granted beyond the professional level; usually this refers to at least a master's degree; however, some master's degrees are professional level degrees and care should be taken to determine if a given degree represents the professional level or post-professional level" (FIDER, 1997, p. 102).

Practitioner: an individual who earns his/her living as a professional interior designer.

Profession: an occupation whose members create and explicitly utilize systematically accumulated general principles and standardized knowledge in the solution of problems posed by a clientele (Moore, 1970).

Professional: one who has a high degree of generalized and systematic knowledge and competence in a particular field, an orientation to the community rather than self-interest, and a high degree of self-control through codes of ethics (Barber, 1963).

Professional Degree: "the professional degree refers to a professional-level degree in interior design indicating the individual has formally studied the common body of knowledge of the discipline" (FIDER, 1997, p. 102) . This is the baccalaureate degree.

Research: careful and systematic study, investigation, and examination in some field of knowledge to discover new information or relationships, to establish facts, and to expand and verify existing knowledge (Guralnik, 1978; Rummel, 1964).

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

This review covers the methodology used to conduct the investigation of literature, then goes on to topics related to graduate education and research and its role within a profession and in relation to interior design. Professions, research, and graduate education in general are discussed, as well as the specifics of interior design related to these three topics.

Methodology

A literature investigation was conducted using multiple databases to compile information on the topics of professionalism, research, and graduate education individually, as well as related to interior design. The search was conducted at Morgan Libraries, Colorado State University. Databases accessed were CARL, ERIC, SAGE, and Uncover. Key words or search terms included the following or any combination of the following: research, graduate school, graduate education, design, interior design, interior design education, interior decoration, information, research, information dissemination, research dissemination, interior designer, interior decorator, professional standards, professional practice, design practitioners, education standards, graduate education standards, design education standards, interior architecture, American Society

of Interior Designers (ASID), International Interior Design Association (IIDA), Interior Design Educators Council (IDEC), Foundation for Interior Design Education Research (FIDER), interior design association, graduate study, architecture, professions, professional, practitioner, and perceptions. In general, books and articles reviewed were from 1990-1997 with the exceptions of the *Journal of Interior Design* and books addressing professions and professionalism. A comprehensive search was conducted of the *Journal of Interior Design Education and Research (JIDER,* after mid-1993 became the *Journal of Interior Design, JID).* Publications of both the ASID (*ASID Notes* and *Grassroots)* and IIDA (*Perspective* and *Forum Focus)* were reviewed, as well as conference proceedings of IDEC from 1990-1997 and the newsletter of FIDER, as well as FIDER accreditation information. *Interiors & Sources* magazine was reviewed from 1990-1997 in an effort to find editorials and/or specific articles making reference to graduate education, research, and/or professionalism in interior design. A non-comprehensive search was also conducted on the Internet using Netscape Navigator Gold 3.1. Key words entered were the same as previously noted for the library search. Little information was discovered through this avenue. No information was found through the Internet that was not also found in hard copy at the library (such as magazines). Two prominent individuals in interior design education, Virginia Weinhold and Mary Joyce Hassell, were contacted via email for suggestions of articles in the professional organizations' publications that discussed graduate education and/or research in interior design. A combination of books, magazine articles, and journal

articles were used. Many sources contained information applicable to more than one area of the topic investigated.

Professions

The history of professions is a long one dating back to the middle ages when a "professional" was someone who professed to devote themselves to God. Soon after, physicians and lawyers combined with the clergy to form the professional class. Hughes stated that these professions professed, "to know better than others the nature of certain matters and to know better than their clients what ails them or their affairs" (1963, p. 656). Today, professions are described very differently and encompass many more fields than the three previously mentioned. Larson explained professions as, "occupations with special power and prestige" (1977, p. x). She went on to state that, "professions have special competence in esoteric bodies of knowledge linked to central needs and values of the social system, and…professions are devoted to the service of the public, above and beyond material incentives" (p. x). Professional status is sought by many occupations and "the extension of professionalization reflects, among other things, the particular openness of the American university to new fields of learning and the widespread access to higher education in the American society" (p. xviii).

Standards of a Profession

According to Moore (1970), six characteristics create a standard for professionalism. The criteria are full-time occupation, commitment to a calling, a

formalized organization, specialized training or education, a service orientation, and autonomy. Full-time occupation distinguishes professionals from amateurs. Within this, the profession as a whole is a full-time profession. In addition, "It is a necessary but not sufficient condition for admission to higher ranks on the scale of professionalism" (Moore, 1970, p. 5). Commitment to a calling "involves acceptance of the appropriate norms and standards, and identification with professional peers and the profession as a collectiveity" (p. 8). Included in that commitment is loyalty to one's peers and a dedication to one's field. The development of a formalized professional organization helps members identify with occupational interests including conditions of employment in the profession, criteria for admittance into the profession, and maintenance of performance standards. "An important next step in professionalism is the possession of esoteric but useful knowledge and skills, based on specialized training or education of exceptional duration and perhaps of exceptional difficulty" (Moore, 1970, p. 6). Education is generally formal with variable length of training, however the college baccalaureate degree is suggested as the minimum by Moore. "Even postgraduate education may not be sufficient to establish a claim to professional standing, if its type and quality do not provide a clear distinction between the person with formal training and the person who is merely experienced" (1970, p. 13). Having a service orientation includes competency, conscientious performance, and loyalty to the profession. Lastly, autonomy is based in the technical knowledge of the professional. This technical knowledge is what would prevent a person from attempting the work of a professional.

In addition, autonomy is achieved through programs such as departments and majors in academic institutions and through regulations such as licensing.

Barber described four attributes of professionals which included, "a high degree of generalized and systematic knowledge; primary orientation to the community interest rather than to individual self-interest; a high degree of self-control of behavior through codes of ethics...and a system of rewards that is primarily a set of symbols of work achievement" (1963, p. 672). Symbols of work achievement are found in items such as entry into a professional organization and/or earning the highest level within that organization.

Moore defines a profession as

an occupation whose incumbents create and explicitly utilize systematically accumulated general knowledge in the solution of problems posed by a clientele (either individuals or collectivities). Professional activities are the most closely contingent on new knowledge of any of the occupational spheres (1970, p. 54).

He then goes on to explain that professionals rely on the general principles and standardized knowledge of their field to solve problems and it is this standardized knowledge, which finds its roots in the knowledge base of the profession, that has well-defined boundaries despite the additions of new information. "The antithesis to a profession is an avocation based upon customary activities and modified by the trial and error of individual practice" (Moore, 1970, p. 55).

Interior Design as a Profession

Since the beginning of the twentieth century, interior design education has been recognized as a separate educational program. In 1904, the New York School of Fine and Applied Arts (in 1940 changing its name to the Parsons School of Design) began offering interior decorating courses. In the mid-1920s, the University of Washington in Seattle was the first university to offer an interior design major. During the 1960s and 1970s, a time of rapid expansion in higher education, both undergraduate and graduate degree interior design programs became more common in colleges and universities throughout the United States (White & Dickson, 1994).

In 1931, the first professional organization of interior designers, the American Institute of Interior Decorators (AIID), was created. In 1957, a struggle within the AIID created a second professional organization, the National Society of Interior Designers (NSID). In 1975, these two organizations joined to form the American Society of Interior Designers (ASID). During the same time period, in 1962, the Interior Design Educators Council was formed by design educators to ally themselves with the practitioners (Gueft, 1992). As early as 1950, interior design was attempting to pass legislation for the state licensing of interior designers; however, with no organized national effort, the attempts were unsuccessful. Renewed efforts in the early 1980s achieved the goal of state licensing in various states and with two possible forms; title registration and practice registration (Castleman, 1992).

Interior design has been working to meet the qualifications of a profession. As described by Harmon-Vaughan, professions are based in and grow from the

"development of a unique body of knowledge, a rigorous course of education based on standards, codes of ethics, requirements for continuing education, and testing for competency prior to professional accreditation" (1997, p. 106). Interior design has developed a unique body of knowledge for the undergraduate curriculum (Harwood, 1991). This body of knowledge includes the rigorous education mentioned by Harmon-Vaughan. The Foundation for Interior Design Education Research (FIDER) is the accrediting body that evaluates interior design programs. Presently, the assistant and professional level programs are accredited by FIDER. In May of 1974, The National Council for Interior Design Qualification (NCIDQ), responsible for the objective testing of interior designers, was incorporated. The first official qualifying exam was given in October of that year (Tregre, 1992). The NCIDQ gives the following definition for an interior designer, "the professional interior designer is qualified by education, experience, and examination to enhance the function and quality of interior spaces for the purpose of improving the quality of life, increasing productivity, and protecting the health, safety, and welfare of the public" (1992, p. 39). In addition, the development and dissemination of the body of knowledge of interior design contributes to its professional status. Veitch, Jackman, and Dixon add

> Interior designers are educated to become creative professionals who analyze problems from many different perspectives; apply philosophies, theories, and results of empirical investigations; and synthesize and reshape information in the development of their design solutions (1990, p. 7).

Using Moore's (1970) and Barber's (1963) attributes of a profession, the status of interior design as a profession can be evaluated. In conjunction with Moore's definition

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of profession, interior design must continue to develop its knowledge base through research and creative scholarship, as well as maintain the other attributes of a profession, in order to develop and grow as a profession.

The nearing of the twenty-first century presents interior design with new challenges and directions that will influence its continued growth and development as a profession. Current and predicted changes in population, economics, politics, and technology are emphasizing new and existing strategies that can have direct effects on interior design demanding development of new knowledge (Dohr, 1992; Fowles, 1992; Guerin, 1992b; Silverstein, 1993).

Research

Research is defined as the careful and systematic study, investigation, and examination in some field of knowledge to discover new information or relationships, to establish facts, and to expand and verify existing knowledge (Guralnik, 1978; Rummel, 1964). Research is multidimensional. To describe research in and of itself, Arnold compiled many observations about research including:

> Research seeks answers to questions or problems; questions or problems which guide research come from a wide variety of sources; the nature of answers sought ranges from fundamental knowledge to practical information; sometimes a research project doesn't provide an answer or result; research is of no value to society if no one knows about it; it follows that replication is necessary; a single observation does not establish a fact (not dated, mimeograph).

These observations create a general, yet descriptive definition of research and review the basics of what professionals and non-professionals alike should know about research.

Research is also a vital component of any profession in that it is the basis for information, as well as the foundation for theory. Wilson described the importance of research in this way:

> Universities conduct more than half of the nation's fundamental research and about one-quarter of its total research. They are an integral part of the search for solutions to problems in national security, health care, energy, productivity, education and the environment. They are the principal providers of the training of future generations of scientists, engineers, teachers, and professionals (1985, p. 121).

Concerning interior design, however, Dickson and White (1993) have shown that interior design practitioners view research as the gathering of existing information as opposed to the creation and documentation of new information.

Research in Interior Design

In the past, research in interior design has been described as "haphazard investigation of specialized problems, the attempt to solve a general problem with one specific answer, or atheoretical" (Guerin, 1992a, p. 262). Veitch cited the importance of the knowledge base to continue the evolution of the profession of interior design: "the profession today demands continual updating and refreshing of knowledge, plus a search for new knowledge in specialized areas" (1992, p. 29). However, Loustau argued "there is presently no body of literature comprising the theory of interior design"

(1988, p. 3). Clearly the contradiction between the need for a continually updated body of knowledge cited by Veitch and the lack of a body of literature comprising theory cited by Loustau presents a problem for interior design.

A knowledge base and the research that feeds it are generally seen as the foundation of any profession. Thompson stated in the *ASID Professional Practice Manual* that "design research provides the fundamental theoretical underpinning of interior design as a profession" (1992, p. 47). Research is what professional decisions are based upon. As an incentive for protecting interior design's status as a profession, as well as to justify compensation for competent design services, Farrow (1995), past-president of the International Interior Design Association (IIDA), encouraged practitioners to advocate research within the profession. The research base is what distinguishes interior design from other fields such as architecture and decoration. Research information should be the basis for educational courses and entire curricula.

Disciplines have two areas available to them with which to draw research information: their own discipline and the disciplines of others. Most fields have areas of information applicable to other disciplines and vice versa. Disciplines must, however, maintain their own unique body of knowledge to maintain independence as a discipline and avoid being absorbed by other professions. Loustau noted there is no lack of theory from other disciplines that interior design may be able to apply to its field, however, without theories specific to interior design, the field is "vulnerable to criticism for lacking organizing principles" (1988, p. 7). White and Dickson (1993) argued that if interior design is seen by other professions, the public, or interior

designers as lacking its own scholarship, then anyone with a good eye for decoration or training in aesthetics could practice interior design and arrive at aesthetically pleasing spaces. Expanding the knowledge base of interior design from within the profession, instead of relying primarily on information produced in other disciplines, strengthens the knowledge base upon which interior design rests making it a unique discipline with its own body of knowledge to be utilized by interior design practitioners and shared with other disciplines. Dickson and White argued that research based information must come from within interior design because, "it is the continual development of a body of knowledge from within that legitimizes a profession" (1993, p. 5), thereby asserting that continuing research from within the field of interior design is the basis from which the profession can build. In addition, interior design can simultaneously draw upon information and knowledge from other disciplines and apply that information to interior design's theories to make it part of interior design's knowledge base.

Edison suggested thinking critically about interior design would raise the skill of designing above accident or intuition to a conscious act of doing design. "Design theory provides the language and the connections necessary to link knowledge and ideas about design concepts with the practice of designing" (1986, p. 19). Thus, using research based information as a foundation for making design decisions and thinking critically about the decisions made when designing will raise design above being simply an intuitive skill.

Interior design is making strides to incorporate research based information into the mainstream of the profession, making practitioners aware not only of its existence,

but also of its availability and applicability to design problems. IIDA has created a forum for discussing education and research related issues as well as disseminating research based information to the organization's members. While describing the reasoning behind IIDA's Education Forum, Weinhold (1995) explained that the interior design profession is young and, consequently, practitioners may not understand the importance of research and a knowledge base to the profession nor the role graduate education plays in expanding the knowledge base. This platform is therefore used to convey the importance of the two and to disseminate research information to the practitioners.

Research and the Interior Design Practitioner

Dickson and White (1993) conducted a study to investigate practitioners perceptions of the importance of research in interior design. The most frequent reason cited for why respondents felt research was important to the interior design profession was to advance the current body of knowledge. When asked what was the main role of research in interior design, the majority agreed that the main role of research was to facilitate problem solving. They also believed that research improves the profession and contributes to the design of better built environments. Furthermore, when asked if research served no purpose for the design practitioner, the vast majority strongly disagreed. These results showed that practitioners realized a purpose for research based information and reinforced the importance of strengthening and increasing the

knowledge base for the purposes of facilitating problem solving and improving the quality of built environments among others.

To the interior design practitioner, research information can have many uses and applications. Research can be a method used to measure design effectiveness. Duvall (1994) suggested practitioners use research techniques to investigate the impact of design. She encouraged "client involvement, easily implemented surveys, specifically designed studies and the desire on the part of the designer to pursue research" (p. 17) for the interior design profession to prove its worth through documenting the impact of interior design. The author noted that although most interior designers may not understand scientific research methods, the profession should be able to read and understand the research that does exist and implement the results to better both individual firms and the profession as a whole. "All noble professions rely on research to improve their understanding and their performance" (Duvall, 1994, p. 17). Consequently, the quality and function of the designed space may improve, occupant satisfaction may increase, and the long term cost of the design may be reduced when designs are based on research information. Graduate education is not only a source for learning the processes of research, but is also one possible source of research based information.

Graduate Education

In American education there are what we call "basic skills." There also are advanced skills. There is general education, but also there is specific education that involves knowing one subject very well. There are applied fields of teaching and learning; also there are theoretical studies.

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There are ideas. There is action. There is reason to be concerned about the better use of existing knowledge and available information. But there is also need for new knowledge, for work on what the academics call "the growing edge of knowledge." This latter task is the established responsibility of research and scholarship. And the graduate school is its home (Boyer, 1983, p. xi).

Graduate education, as described by the National Board on Graduate Education (1972), serves three fundamental purposes. It provides, "individuals with advanced education in a variety of forms and disciplines that is essential to the pursuit of specific careers" (p. 4) (the Board goes on to explain a vital function of graduate education is to allow individuals to pursue knowledge and inquiry because they are curious and have a desire to learn). The second broad purpose of graduate education is the production of new knowledge through research, and the third, the preservation and transmission of knowledge to successive generations. Interior design has incorporated these three purposes of graduate education as well as others.

Graduate Education and Interior Design

Graduate education in interior design has a short history. In the 1960s and 1970s both undergraduate and graduate degree interior design programs became more common in colleges and universities throughout the United States.

The university climate forced interior design subject matter to evolve from that of a craft to an academic subject. This transformation has required the creation of a distinct and separate body of knowledge as well as a theoretical base. But because competing issues have received greater precedence...the profession of interior design has not placed a high priority on the development of either. Thus there has been a lack of emphasis on graduate education and research, two of the primary means

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by which a separate body of knowledge and a theoretical base are cultivated (White & Dickson, 1994, p. 28).

Interior design has three levels of education as described in the FIDER Accreditation Manual (1997). First, the pre-professional assistant level degree prepares students for positions in the field as design assistants, merchandisers, and the like. The second level, the professional degree, is typically an undergraduate degree and indicates the completion of the formal study of the body of knowledge of the discipline. The third level, post-professional degree, refers to a master's degree. "However, some master's degrees are professional level degrees and care should be taken to determine if a given degree represents the professional level or post-professional level" (p. 102). This explains that there may be recipients of a master's degree in interior design who have completed, in reality, only the professional level of education usually equivalent to the baccalaureate degree. These recipients also may not have completed courses commonly viewed as graduate level curricula or any sort of creative scholarship or research project.

In December of 1996, the Interior Design Educators Council (IDEC) published its yearly listing of Interior Design and Related Graduate Programs. This list showed 47 programs that included interior design as well as related fields of study such as facilities planning, environmental design, housing, individualized programs of study, preservation, and the like. Of the 47 programs listed, 11 listed interior design as a program emphasis and of these 11 only four were post-professional level programs with both students enrolled as well as actually having earned degrees. Though this may not

be a complete list for the United States, it gives an idea of the relatively few programs which may be adding to the body of knowledge in interior design through retrievable information in the form of theses (research or creative scholarship). The lack of post professional graduate programs fueling the knowledge base was discussed by White and Dickson who stated, "there has been a lack of emphasis on graduate education and research, two of the primary means by which a separate body of knowledge and a theoretical base are cultivated" (1994, p. 28).

In a roundtable discussion sponsored by FIDER, "visionaries who had made a place for themselves in the field of interior design" (Weinhold, 1996, p. 124) were asked to identify future trends that would affect interior design. One of the major trends predicted that graduate education would gain importance in response to the rate at which new knowledge is currently generated, though the new knowledge generated may not necessarily be specific to interior design. In addition, several years prior to the previous predicted trend, Dohr, then president of the Interior Design Educators Council (IDEC), advocated the enhancement of graduate education to help designers meet the greater challenges of the future (1992).

Purposes of Graduate Education in Interior Design

Graduate education provides the interior designer an opportunity to specialize, to earn the degree necessary to teach in most university settings, to develop skills to read, understand, and evaluate research material and studies, is a source for research based information, and lends credibility to a profession. When the Foundation for Interior

Design Education Research (FIDER) was accrediting post-professional graduate education programs, the definition or guidelines offered for the purpose of a master's program were advanced education through scholarly research that can be disseminated; the development of professional expertise through creative projects in advanced and specialized areas; and exploration of issues to solve current problems in design (FIDER, 1985). However, in 1992, FIDER put a moratorium on the accreditation of post-professional degree programs. The reasoning behind this moratorium was that "this level of education leads primarily to the teaching of interior design rather than entry into the profession" (FIDER, 1992, p. 3). With this reasoning, the moratorium may suggest that a graduate degree in interior design is only necessary for those interested in becoming educators since the graduate degree primarily prepares for teaching interior design. In addition, it may indicate that persons with graduate degrees will not be entering into the profession if they teach and do not practice interior design. Does becoming an educator preclude entering into the profession? In fact, though a graduate degree is one of the requirements to teach interior design in most college and university settings, White and Dickson noted, "practitioners do not believe that graduate education necessarily produces the most qualified instructors and they value professional experience above advanced learning" (1994, p. 34). Since the time of the moratorium, FIDER has not reinstated accreditation of post-professional graduate education programs. FIDER does, however, accredit the undergraduate or professional level of interior design programs. "We have an exhausting knowledge base upon which undergraduate education is founded" (Creating a Vision..., 1995, p. 89). Students

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systematically accumulate the general principles and standardized knowledge of interior design at this level. Thus, the accredited professional level interior design degree contributes to the components of a profession for interior design.

Although FIDER is not accrediting post-professional programs, graduate education is still a widely discussed topic by interior design educators. Advantages of graduate education for the interior design profession are cited by many authors. Guerin (1992b) as well as White and Dickson (1993) noted that master's degree programs are to offer interior designers an opportunity to specialize and become experts in a specific area of interior design. In times of growing and changing economic markets, there is a demand for specialized experts as well as specialized knowledge. The advanced, experienced interior designer would be one who may demand "more specialized and technical knowledge" (Montgomery, 1997, p. 112). Design firms today are looking for new knowledge from their employees to help meet the changing needs of their clients. They are also looking for individual designers who can help them create a unique market niche to remain competitive in the design industry (Farrow, 1995). However, the path between encouraging specialization through graduate education and designers who acquire advanced degrees may be a long one. Fowles states "the concept of life-long learning is not an integral part of most design professionals value system" (1984, p. 14). Considering that life-long learning usually refers to pursuing continuing education credits and staying abreast of current knowledge, the task of increasing the number of interior designers with graduate degrees may prove challenging. The purpose of continuing education and life-long learning is to update professionals

existing knowledge to new technologies, processes, or design requirements. Continuing education is usually offered in short-term courses, workshops, or seminars for non-academic credit. In general, it offers the opportunity for gaining proficiency in various work related skills. Conversely, graduate education provides in-depth study and the exploration of design theory and philosophy necessary to achieve expertise. The resulting research based information of this in-depth study can expand the existing knowledge base of the profession and develop technologies or answers to problems which are critical to the future of the profession.

One product of graduate education is professionals who are producers as well as consumers of research and research based information. "What it will take to move the profession beyond the current marketplace is more designers who are educated to generate, test, refine, and consume research information" (Building a Knowledge Base..., 1995, p. 76). When designers are able to produce, read, understand, and evaluate research studies and information, they can incorporate this information into their designs and use the research based information as justification for design decisions. Farrow (1995) stated there is an increasing need for graduate programs in interior design to help develop practitioners who would be able to stay abreast of the new knowledge that is being developed in the design field.

Graduate education is one source of research based information. It is an avenue through which additions to the knowledge base are made. Completion of a graduate degree enables the recipient to teach in many college and university settings (White & Dickson, 1994). The Interior Design Educators Council (IDEC) white paper on

Appointment, tenure, and promotion: A position paper on criteria for evaluation of interior design faculty in postsecondary institutions stated, "IDEC recognizes that a master's degree is a terminal degree for interior design faculty. Attainment of a doctoral degree is encouraged for some areas of specialization. Qualifications should be evaluated on the particular requirements of the position" (1993, p. 1).

Graduate education can lend credibility to a profession which may be considered an advantage to both the profession of interior design as well as the individual practitioners of interior design. Dohr, when asked to comment on the credibility of interior designers, stated that after stretching oneself, striving for and achieving high standards and strong competencies, and "demonstrating, assessing and ultimately knowing a higher standard of design thinking and performance" (1992, Fall, p. 3) will yield a credible designer, not simply the possession of a graduate degree in design. Graduate education, said Dohr, encourages "depth of understanding and skill in becoming independent, competent design scholars" (1992, Fall, p. 3). These are goals of graduate education which, when coupled with professional education and behaviors, can lend credibility to the interior design profession.

White and Dickson (1993) cited building on the existing knowledge base of interior design with the development of new knowledge from within the profession as an advantage of graduate education. Consequently, this would strengthen professional recognition and create a distinction from other professions.

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Disadvantages of Graduate Education in Interior Design

Many authors have described the advantages of graduate education in interior design and encouraged the pursuit of an advanced degree; however, few have addressed downsides to acquiring a graduate degree in interior design. Perceived disadvantages to the practitioner of pursuing a graduate degree in interior design might include (a) standard wages despite an advanced degree, (b) time and costs incurred, (c) low demand by the profession for interior designers with graduate degrees, and (d) the thought that scientific research is dry, unexciting, and regimented which would limit the creativity and expressiveness of interior design (Dickson & White, 1993).

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

This study was a descriptive survey of interior design practitioners within the Top 100 Giants as listed by *Interior Design* magazine. The study evaluated opinions of interior designers regarding components of a profession including graduate education and research in interior design. Methodology examined in this chapter includes the design of the study, process of sample selection, a description of the instrument, and collection and analysis of the data.

Description of the Instrument

A descriptive study was developed to examine practitioners' opinions of the (a) importance and advantages of graduate education to the profession of interior design as well as to the individual interior designer; and (b) the advantages and importance of research in interior design to the profession as well as the individual interior designer. The questionnaire used in this study was constructed according to Dillman's Total Design Method guidelines (Dillman, 1978). Its administration and distribution followed a study conducted by Davis (1994).

The questionnaire (Appendix A) was printed on 8½ x 14 inch (legal) size paper folded in half to form a booklet measuring 8½ x 7 inches and stapled twice for binding.

It had 12 pages and was printed on light yellow paper. The front page was used as the questionnaire cover. The cover included the title of the project (Graduate Education and Research in Interior Design), an eye-appealing graphic to promote interest, an explanation of the purpose of the questionnaire, and the name of the conducting institution (the Interior Design program at Colorado State University).

Items were grouped into nine sections with a total of 21 items, plus space on the last two pages for comments. The nine sections are described as follows.

Section One, "Research," addressed research in interior design. Divided into two parts, the first dealt specifically with the importance of research to the profession. This portion had eight statements with five possible responses on a Likert-type scale anchored by strongly disagree and strongly agree. The second portion dealt with the advantages of research to the individual design practitioner with eight statements and five possible responses on a Likert-type scale anchored by strongly disagree and strongly agree. This section was to gain an understanding of whether practitioners recognize the importance or advantage of research, and specifically what those benefits are.

Section Two, "Graduate Education," addressed graduate education in interior design. Also divided into two parts, the first dealt with the importance of graduate education to the design profession. Nine statements were given with five possible responses on a Likert-type scale anchored by strongly disagree and strongly agree. The second part dealt with advantages to the practitioner of graduate education. Twelve statements were given with possible responses on a Likert-type scale anchored by

strongly disagree and strongly agree. This section, as Section One on research, attempted to discover what practitioners feel are the advantages or the importance of graduate education to both the profession as well as to the individual design practitioner.

Section Three, "What Are You Looking At?", was an open-ended question that asked practitioners to identify three interior design publications, whether journals or magazines, they reference most often. This information suggested the best avenues for dissemination of research based information to reach a large number of practicing interior designers.

Section Four, "What Are You Looking For?", asked what types of information practitioners looked for, such as product information, design ideas, and research information, when they reference certain sources (for example, trade magazines and manufacturers' representatives). This was to show avenues for dissemination of information based on the type of information practitioners seek.

Section Five, "Information Sources," asked practitioners to identify how often they referenced each of eight specific sources of information within the previous two years. Information sources included conferences, courses, and manufacturers' representatives as well as magazines, journals, and the Internet. This information gave the frequencies, within response categories ranging from zero to 26 or more, with which they consult those sources.

Section Six, "The Biggest Advantage," asked practitioners to rank order options concerning graduate education. Divided into two parts, the first was a rank ordering of five items concerning the importance of graduate education benefits to the profession;

the second was a top five rank ordering, of ten total items, pertaining to the advantages of graduate education to the profession. This information was to discover what the practitioners felt was the advantage or importance of graduate education and the priorities placed on different aspects of the topic.

Section Seven, "Opinions," asked respondents their opinions concerning five topics: examination of interior designers (NCIDQ); graduate education; research; the accreditation of undergraduate programs; and state licensing of interior designers. Respondents were given a Likert-type rating scale with five possible responses anchored by not important and very important. These issues addressed the components of a profession discussed in the review of literature. Items were asked as to the importance for the profession and advantages for the practitioner as in previous sections.

Section Eight, "All About You," collected demographic information of the respondents in 11 questions. Items asked were gender, age, experience, education level, professional identity, professional activity, certification and examination, and information about their firm.

The final section, "You Tell Us," asked the respondents to add comments they had concerning graduate education and research in interior design. This open-ended question gave practitioners an opportunity to address any part of the questionnaire or other things they felt needed to be addressed concerning the two topics. Lastly, respondents were given space to write their names and addresses, or attach business cards, if they wished to receive an abstract of the results of the study.

Sample Selection and Description

In order to obtain a diverse sample from a wide geographic area, interior designers employed by the top 100 firms as identified in *Interior Design* magazine's article "100 Giants 1996" (1996, January) were asked to participate in this study. The most current "1997 Top 100 Giants" (1997, January) could not be used because the same demographic information provided in previous annual listings was not included in the issue. *Interior Design* was chosen because it is the only known magazine that ranks interior design firms, and it is highly recognized by the interior design community.

The 100 firms were narrowed by selecting those firms with 75 percent or more of their staffs identified as interior designers and 50 percent or more of their fees acquired from interior design services. This strategy was used to ensure most respondents were interior designers rather than architects.

The "100 Giants 1996" list was chosen as a sample for many reasons. Although a majority of interior design firms are small businesses, the "100 Giants 1996" provided a sample of the trend setters in interior design. Most likely, small businesses follow the larger firms' lead when it comes to trends in interior design and demand for information. In addition, because of size and income, large design firms may employ specialists. It is the large firms that dictate what type of specialists they need to complete design jobs, and they seek individuals possessing those areas of expertise. One possible advantage of graduate education is specialization; therefore, specialists in large firms may have different perceptions concerning graduate education and research than those practitioners who perform many different types of activities within smaller firms.

Specialists may not represent the views of practitioners as a whole, however, and sampling large firms may increase the likelihood of receiving input from specialists. Large firms are also more likely to be able to afford to support research and graduate education. It is also likely that because large interior design firms employ more interior design practitioners a wider range of education and experience levels are represented than in smaller firms with few employees.

A sample of individuals that may or may not be part of a professional practitioner organization (e.g., ASID, IIDA, IDC, etc.) was also an objective. "Only 10 percent of the people who call themselves interior designers are members of these organizations" (Castleman, 1992, p. 44). Consequently, sampling from a professional organization may have limited representation of the profession. Also, a study by Dickson and White (1993) sampled professionals in the top two positions, president and vice-president, of interior design professional organizations. Using both national and regional chapters gave a total of six organizations and 96 participants. To reach practitioners irrespective of membership in interior design's professional organizations, firms employing interior designers were chosen for this study.

Procedure for Data Collection

Pilot Study Administration

After approval to collect data was given, the study was piloted using two firms from the "Second 100 Giants" as listed in *Interior Design* magazine (1996, January). A contact person was ascertained at each firm. Based on information from the contact

person, four questionnaires were sent to one firm, and three questionnaires were sent to the other. A cover letter specifically written for the contact person plus questionnaires and cover letters for the design participants, as well as stamped, self-addressed, return envelopes were sent to each contact person. The cover letter to the contact person explained that the questionnaires should be distributed to designers with varying amounts of interior design experience. Approximately 10 days after the original mailing, a follow-up was conducted by calling the contact persons. Mailed pilot surveys were given three weeks to be returned. In addition to the two firms from the "Second 100 Giants" two interior design practitioners, acquaintances of the researcher from firms not listed in the "Second 100 Giants", were given the survey. Another survey was given to an interior design graduate student with extensive design experience. A total of ten pilot questionnaires were distributed. The pilot questionnaire tested the validity of the instrument; the questions and comments obtained from the eight returned questionnaires were used in the refinement and finalization of the instrument. Findings and changes included consistency in Likert scales, refining questions for applicability to any respondent, graphics that reproduced more clearly, and clearer formatting.

Questionnaire Administration

The 51 firms, in the United States and Canada, qualifying for this study by employing 75 percent or more interior designers and receiving 50 percent or more of their fees from interior design services, were individually called to ascertain a contact

person, preferably the head of the interior design department, to whom the package of surveys could be mailed. All addresses and telephone numbers of the firms were acquired via Internet directories. Only one firm was not listed in the Internet directories. This firm's phone number was acquired through telephone directory assistance. Only headquarters of the firms as listed by *Interior Design* were used. Five firms were found to be unreachable for various reasons: phone no longer in service and firm no longer at number. Phone numbers were then cross-checked with telephone directory assistance in a further attempt to reach the firm. Three firms declined participation stating the firm was too busy to take time for the study.

Upon reaching the receptionist of the remaining 43 firms, four questions were asked: (a) the name of the head of the interior design department; (b) if the head of the interior design department had an Email address; (c) street address of the firm and; (d) if the head of the interior design department was available to discuss the study. If the receptionist inquired further, the study was concisely explained and the name of a design person who would be most receptive to participating in the study was requested. This did not always yield the head of the design department. Resource librarians were suggested twice, marketing representatives were suggested twice, and once a personal secretary to the head of the design department offered to distribute the surveys.

If the head of the design department was available, he/she was asked if he/she would be willing to have the firm participate in the study. Participation, it was explained, would involve filling out a questionnaire as well as distributing four surveys to interior designers who had varying levels of design experience within the firm

(Appendix B). If the contact person was unavailable at that time, contact was attempted a total of four times at differing times during the day and on various days of the week. After four unsuccessful attempts at contact, a voice mail message (Appendix B) was left with the contact person explaining the study, what participation would entail, and that the package was being mailed. If the contact person did not have voice mail, a fax (Appendix C) was sent explaining the study and that the package of surveys would be mailed that day.

Contact persons for whom Email addresses could be ascertained were Emailed directly. If the firm had an Email address not specific to any one person, the name of the contact person was written in the subject line. The same Email script (Appendix C) was used for all firms individualized with the firm's name and contact person's name. Upon Email reply, questionnaires were mailed the same day. If an Email was undeliverable, telephone contact was used in place of Email.

When agreement was established, a package containing a total of five questionnaires, five cover letters, and five self-addressed, stamped, return envelopes was sent to the contact person. The questionnaire (Appendix A), cover letter (Appendix D), and return envelope for the contact person were left unfolded and paper clipped together. Each of the remaining four questionnaires were folded with their cover letters (Appendix D) and stuffed into return envelopes for easy distribution by the contact person. The cover letter for the contact person was slightly different than the cover letter to the participants chosen by the contact person. All cover letters contained an explanation of how the firm was chosen for participation in the study, specifics of the

survey, and a requested date for return of the survey. Return envelopes were encoded with a number on the front of the envelope to monitor how many questionnaires were returned from each firm. These envelopes were discarded upon receipt of the questionnaires.

Approximately ten days after the mailing of the package, a follow-up postcard was sent to the contact person (Appendix E). It was requested this reminder card be routed to those to whom the survey was distributed to remind them to return the surveys. Mailed follow-up postcards used were either an "Elvis Presley" postcard or a "Cows" postcard to catch the eye of the recipient. If agreement was ascertained via Email, an Email reminder (Appendix E) was sent to the contact person requesting the Email be forwarded to those participating in the study as a reminder. Survey participants were given three weeks to return the survey. However, the researcher allowed one extra week for the receipt of questionnaires.

Research Questions

The questionnaire was designed to address research questions that would describe practitioners' opinions concerning components of a profession, especially graduate education and research, encompassing the objectives stated in Chapter I. The research questions were:

1. What are interior designers' perceptions of the importance of specific
   components of a profession (accreditation of undergraduate interior design

programs, state licensing, examination, graduate education, and research) for the profession as a whole?

2. What are interior designers' perceptions of the importance of specific components of a profession (accreditation of undergraduate interior design programs, state licensing, examination, graduate education and research) for the individual interior design practitioner?

3. What do practitioners perceive as the importance of graduate education in interior design to the interior design profession?

4. What do practitioners perceive as the advantages of graduate education in interior design for the individual interior design practitioner?

5. What do practitioners perceive as the importance of research in interior design to the interior design profession?

6. What do interior design practitioners perceive as the advantages of research in interior design to the individual interior design practitioner?

Research questions cross-referenced to the questionnaire items providing the data and the descriptive and inferential statistics used are found in Table 3.1.

Data Analysis

Data collected from returned questionnaires were computed and analyzed by the Statistical Laboratory at Colorado State University. The data to answer the research questions were generated with descriptive statistics including frequencies, percentages, mean scores, and standard deviations. Inferential statistics, such as Spearman

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correlation coefficients and chi-squares, were used to measure the direction and strength of associations between selected variables. Closed-ended questions were coded by the Statistical Laboratory and open-ended questions were coded and categorized by the investigator. Missing data were not included in the calculation of percentages. Percentages are based on the number of responses to each individual question.

Table 3.1
Research Questions, Questionnaire Items, and Statistics Used

Research Questions	Questionnaire Items	Statistics Used
1. What are interior designers perceptions of the importance of specific components of a profession for the profession?	Q9	Frequencies, Percentages, Spearman Rho Correlations, Means, Standard Deviations, Chi-Squares
2. What are interior designers perceptions of the importance of specific components of a profession for the individual interior design practitioner?	Q10	Frequencies, Percentages, Spearman Rho Correlations, Means, Standard Deviations Chi-Squares
3. What do practitioners perceive as the importance of graduate education in interior design to the interior design profession?	Q3, Q5, Q8a, Q9d	Frequencies, Percentages, Means, Standard Deviations, Spearman Rho Correlations
4. What do practitioners perceive as the advantage of graduate education in interior design for the individual interior design practitioner?	Q4, Q8b, Q10d	Frequencies, Percentages, Means, Standard Deviations, Spearman Rho Correlations
5. What do practitioners perceive as the importance of research in interior design to the interior design profession?	Q1, Q9e	Frequencies, Percentages, Means, Standard Deviations, Spearman Rho Correlations
6. What do interior design practitioners perceive as the advantages of research in interior design to the individual interior design practitioner?	Q2, Q10e	Frequencies, Percentages, Means, Standard Deviations, Spearman Rho Correlations

CHAPTER IV

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The data collected for this study are presented and discussed in this chapter. The demographic characteristics of the respondents are depicted as well as the resources interior designers read and referenced most often. Finally, practitioners' opinions concerning the components of a profession and their perceptions of the advantages and importance of graduate education and research in interior design address the research questions presented in Chapter III.

Questionnaire Disposition

This study was designed to ascertain the perceptions of practitioners concerning the interior design profession, specifically the advantages and importance of graduate education and research. As explained in Chapter III, five questionnaires were mailed to a contact person at each of the qualifying 43 firms obtained from the "1996 100 Giants" in *Interior Design* magazine (1996). The five questionnaires mailed to each firm were distributed by the contact persons to interior designers within their firms. Due to personal contact with each firm before the questionnaires were mailed, there were no undeliverable questionnaires. A total of 213 questionnaires were mailed (two firms requested four questionnaires be mailed instead of five); 115 completed questionnaires

were returned from 34 different firms representing a 54.0 percent response rate. Return rates based on the various contact methods used are depicted in Table 4.1. Two questionnaires arrived after the data analysis had been completed and were not included in the analysis. In order to achieve a sample of practitioners identifying with the interior design profession, questionnaires of those who most identified with architecture or were missing an answer in question seven of the demographics section of the questionnaire were removed from further analyses. A total of 94 questionnaires remained.

Table 4.1
Return Rates Based on Contact Method Used, Frequencies and Percentages

Contact Strategy	Firms Reached		Questionnaires Distributed		Return Rate of Strategy		Return Rate Total	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
Telephone	24	55.8	119	55.9	69	58.0	69	60.0
Voice Mail	9	20.9	44	20.7	19	43.2	19	16.5
Email	6	14.0	30	14.1	21	70.0	21	18.3
Fax	4	9.3	20	9.4	6	30.0	6	5.2
Total	43		213		115	54.0	115	100

Description of the Respondents

The data indicated that 69.1 percent of the respondents were women and 30.9 percent were men. As professionals, 78.7 percent (74 respondents) identify with interior design, 12.8 percent (12 respondents) with both interior design and architecture, and four with interior architecture (3.5%).

The highest education levels attained by the respondents ranged from a two year interior design certificate (3.2%) to master's degrees in various fields (9.6%) shown in Table 4.2. Of those respondents holding bachelor's degrees as their highest degree attained (81 respondents), over three quarters (86.2%) were in interior design. The remaining 14 percent held bachelor's degrees in related fields such as architecture (5 respondents) and industrial design (4 respondents). A few held degrees in other fields such as education (2 respondents). Of those listing a master's degree as their highest degree attained (9 respondents, 9.6%), one was in interior design and one in interior and environmental design. The other seven respondents held master's degrees in architecture (1 respondent), art history (3 respondents), and one each in philosophy, business administration, and library science.

Table 4.2
Education Characteristics of Interior Design Practitioners, Frequencies and Percentages

Highest Education Level	Frequency (n=94)	Percent
2 year interior design program	3	3.2
Bachelor's Degree	81	86.2
Interior Design	60	63.8
Environmental Design	1	1.1
Interiors and Furniture	1	1.1
Interior Architecture	1	1.1
Architecture	5	5.3
Architectural Technology	1	1.1
Interior Design and Architecture	2	2.1
Interior Design and Other	1	1.1
Industrial Design	4	4.3
Fine Art	2	2.1
Art History	1	1.1
Other	2	2.1

Table 4.2 (continued)

Pursuing Master's Degree		
Interior Architecture	1	1.1
Master's Degree	9	9.6
Interior Design	1	1.1
Interior and Environmental Design	1	1.1
Architecture	1	1.1
Art History	3	3.2
Business Administration	1	1.1
Library Science	1	1.1
Philosophy	1	1.1

The largest percentage of respondents were ages 26-35 (53%) (Figure 4.1), and

the largest percentage of years of experience was less than 6 years (44%) (Figure 4.2).
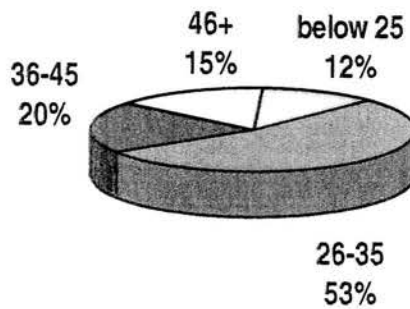
Figure 4. 1 Percentages of Respondents' Ages (n=94)
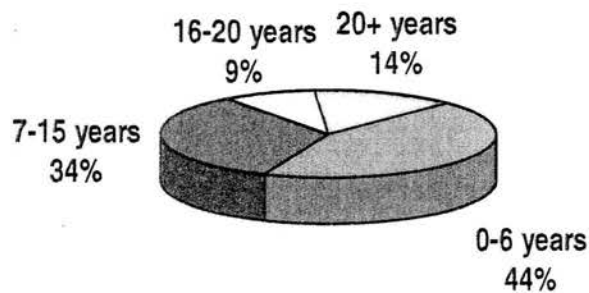
Figure 4.2 Percentages of Practitioners' Interior Design Experience (n=94)

A profile of the 94 respondents is shown in Table 4.3. In regards to professional activity, eight of ten respondents were neither state licensed/certified/registered interior designers (81.9%) nor were they NCIDQ certified (84%). In addition, 61.7 percent of the respondents were not currently members of professional interior design or architecture organizations. Fifty one percent had never been members of any interior design or architecture professional organization.

Table 4.3
Demographic Characteristics of Interior Design Practitioners, Frequencies and Percentages

Characteristic	Frequency (n=94)	Percent
State Licensed/Certified/Registered		
Missing	1	.9
No	77	81.9
Yes	16	17.0
State		
CA	3	3.2
DC	1	1.1
FL	1	1.1
IL	2	2.1
MA	1	1.1
TX	3	3.2
MD	1	1.1
VA	1	1.1
No State	3	3.2
NCIDQ Certified		
No	79	84.0
Yes	15	16.0
Most Identify with		
Interior Design	74	78.7
Interior Design and Architecture	12	12.8
Interior Architecture	4	4.3
Interior Design and Other	3	3.2
Retail Interior Design	1	1.1

<div align="center">**Table 4.3 (Continued)**</div>

Characteristic	Frequency (n=94)	Percent
Currently Belong to Professional Organization		
No	58	61.7
Yes	36	38.3
Organization		
American Institute of Architects (AIA)	4	4.3
American Society of Interior Designers (ASID)	7	7.4
International Interior Design Association (IIDA)	14	14.9
Institute of Store Planners (ISP)	3	3.2
Other	8	8.6
Hold an Office in Professional Organization		
No	92	97.9
Yes	2	2.1
Previously Belonged to Professional Organization, No Longer a Member		
No	48	51.1
Yes	42	44.7
Missing	4	4.3
Organization		
American Society of Interior Designers (ASID)	20	21.3
International Interior Design Association (IIDA)	1	1.1
Institute of Store Planners (ISP)	2	2.1
Other	19	20.2
Held an Office in Professional Organization in the Past		
No	81	86.2
Yes	13	13.8

Encouragement and financial support of interior design credentials by interior design firms might reflect practitioners' perceptions of the importance or advantage of these items to interior design. Respondents were asked if their firm encouraged and/or financially supported graduate education, licensing, the NCIDQ exam, and research. These results are displayed in Table 4.4. Items are displayed in the order they appeared on the questionnaire. The largest percentage of firms do not contract out research

(68.1%) and do encourage passing the NCIDQ exam (60.6%). Nearly one quarter of practitioners do not know if their firms encourage graduate education (22.3%).

Table 4.4
Perceived Encouragement and Financial Support by Design Firms (n=94)

Does your firm...	Yes		No		Don't Know	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
Encourage graduate education	25	26.6	47	50.0	21	22.3
Support/pay for higher education credits	37	39.4	47	50.0	10	10.6
Encourage passing the NCIDQ exam	57	60.6	27	28.7	9	9.6
Support/pay for the NCIDQ exam	36	38.3	44	46.8	13	13.8
Conduct research in house	46	48.9	39	41.5	7	7.4
Contract out research	17	18.1	64	68.1	9	9.6

Information Sources Interior Designers Reference

Though not directly related to the research questions of this study, resources which could be utilized when disseminating research information to practitioners were addressed. Information was collected concerning which interior design publications, whether magazines or journals, practitioners read or referenced most often. In addition, the types of information practitioners were looking for when they referenced specific sources, as well as how often they referenced those sources, were also collected.

The five magazines read or referenced most often by practitioners (Q5) were, in order: *Interior Design* (81.9%), *Interiors* (47.9%), *Contract Design* (32.9%), *Architectural Digest* (27.8%), and *Visual Merchandising and Store Design* (12.8%). Thirty-one other publications were mentioned. A complete listing of the 33 magazines noted by practitioners is located in Appendix F.

What general types of information practitioners seek when they read or reference sources of information were investigated. Respondents were asked to note what information or purpose (research information, product information, continuing education credits, and design ideas) they were looking for when they go to different sources (manufacturers' representatives, continuing education courses, graduate education courses, conferences, trade magazines, popular design magazines, and the Internet) (Q6). The results are displayed in Table 4.5 and are shown in the order they appeared on the questionnaire.

In regard to information sources, manufacturers' representatives were most often referenced for product information (93.6%). When attending a continuing education course, practitioners were most often interested in attaining continuing education units (50.0%). However, over one quarter of the respondents (28.7%) noted attending continuing education courses did not apply to them.

Research information is most sought when practitioners attend conferences sponsored by professional organizations (51.1%). When asked about graduate education courses, 41.5 percent of the respondents said it did not apply to them. Equally, 38.3 percent noted they would be looking for continuing education units when

attending a graduate education course. Usually, continuing education credits are not attained through a graduate education course. This high number could be a result of a lack of general knowledge about graduate education courses and/or the master's degree. In addition, graduate education courses could be perceived as any educational experience after the bachelor's degree.

In summary, when practitioners are looking for product information they are most likely to consult manufacturers' representatives and trade magazines. When looking for design ideas, popular design magazines and trade magazines are most referenced. Continuing education courses are generally taken for course units. Research information is most sought from conferences and the Internet. Graduate education courses either do not apply or practitioners are looking for something they may not be able to obtain from the courses (continuing education units).

Table 4.5
Types of Information Practitioners (n=94) Referenced from Specific Sources,
Frequencies and Percentages

Statements	Research Information		Product Information		Continuing Education		Design Ideas		Not Applicable	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
Manufacturers' representatives	16	17.0	88	93.6			10	10.6	1	1.1
Continuing education courses	31	33.0	7	7.4	47	50.0	13	13.8	27	28.7
Conferences sponsored by professional organizations	48	51.1	34	36.2	23	24.5	29	30.9	12	12.8
Trade magazines	36	38.3	72	76.6			63	67.0	1	1.1

Table 4.5 (continued)

Statements	Research Information		Product Information		Continuing Education		Design Ideas		Not Applicable	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
Popular design magazines	24	25.5	48	51.1			81	86.2	1	1.1
Graduate education courses	24	25.5			36	38.3	10	10.6	39	41.5
Internet/World Wide Web	45	47.9	53	56.4			13	13.8	25	26.6

Respondents were also asked to report the frequency with which they referenced various sources of information within a previous two year period given seven ranges (Q7). Responses are shown in Table 4.6, displayed in order of mean categorical scores. The highest possible mean score is 7.0 (21 or more times). The largest number of practitioners most often referenced manufacturers' representatives as an information source. Seventy-one respondents (75.5%) noted they met with manufacturers representatives 21 or more times within the last two years. Other information sources referenced by practitioners 21 or more times within the last two years were individual issues of popular design magazines (65 respondents, 69.1%) and trade magazines (60 respondents, 63.8%).

Table 4.6

Practitioner (n=94) Participation in Information Sources Within the Previous Two Years, Frequencies and Percentages

Sources	0		1-10		11-20		21 or more			
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	Mean	S.D.
Met with manufacturers' representatives	1	1.1	10	10.6	12	12.8	71	75.5	6.09	1.60
Read or referenced popular design magazines (different issues)	1	1.1	14	14.9	14	14.9	65	69.1	5.84	1.71
Read or referenced trade magazines (different issues)	0	0.0	17	18.1	17	18.1	60	63.8	5.71	1.73
Read or referenced scholarly journals (different issues)	17	18.1	50	53.2	8	8.5	19	20.2	3.20	2.10
Browsed the Internet for design related information	36	38.3	38	40.4	10	10.6	10	10.6	2.55	1.79

The activity most participated in by practitioners within the last two years was attendance at conferences sponsored by design organizations. Results are displayed in Table 4.7 in order of mean scores. The highest possible mean score is a 7.0. Sixty-six respondents (70.2%) noted attending one to four conferences within the last two years. The activity least participated in was completing a graduate education course. Eighty-six (91.5%) practitioners had not completed a graduate education course within the previous two years. An item of interest in this section was that just over half of the respondents (53.2%) noted they had read or referenced between one and ten scholarly journal issues within the previous two years. In addition, over half (52.1%) of the

practitioners had not attended a continuing education course in the previous two years. Less than half of the practitioners (41 respondents, 43.6%) have attended one to four continuing education courses within the previous two years.

Table 4.7
Practitioner (n=94) Participation in Activities Within the Previous Two Years, Frequencies and Percentages

Activities	0		1-4		5-10		11 or more		Mean	S.D.
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%		
Attended conferences sponsored by design organizations	13	13.8	66	70.2	14	15.0	1	1.1	2.48	1.15
Completed a continuing education course	49	52.1	41	43.6	4	4.3	0	0.0	1.72	.91
Completed a graduate education course	86	91.5	8	8.5	0	0.0	0	0.0	1.11	.37

In summary, manufacturers' representatives, popular design magazines, trade magazines, and conferences are the major sources and/or providers of information for interior designers.

Interior Designers' Perceptions about the Components of a Profession

The purpose of this section is to answer the research questions related to the importance and advantages of the components of a profession to the interior design profession and practitioners. In addition, although not specifically addressing the

research questions, comparisons between responses to similar items regarding importance to the profession and advantage to the practitioner will be discussed.

Research Question 1: What are interior designers' perceptions of the importance of specific components of a profession for the interior design profession?

Practitioners rated five components of a profession to consider their importance to interior design (Q9). The five components were accreditation of undergraduate interior design programs, state licensing, examination (NCIDQ), graduate education, and research. Practitioners were given a five point Likert-type scale anchored by not important (one) and very important (five).

In general, most practitioners viewed each of the components as a four or a five rating (very important), with the exception of graduate education (Figure 4.3). The accreditation of undergraduate programs in interior design rated the highest with 86.2 percent of the respondents giving this a four or five importance rating. Accreditation was followed by state licensing (70.2%), research (64.9%), the NCIDQ exam (63.9%), and lastly, graduate education (34.1 %).
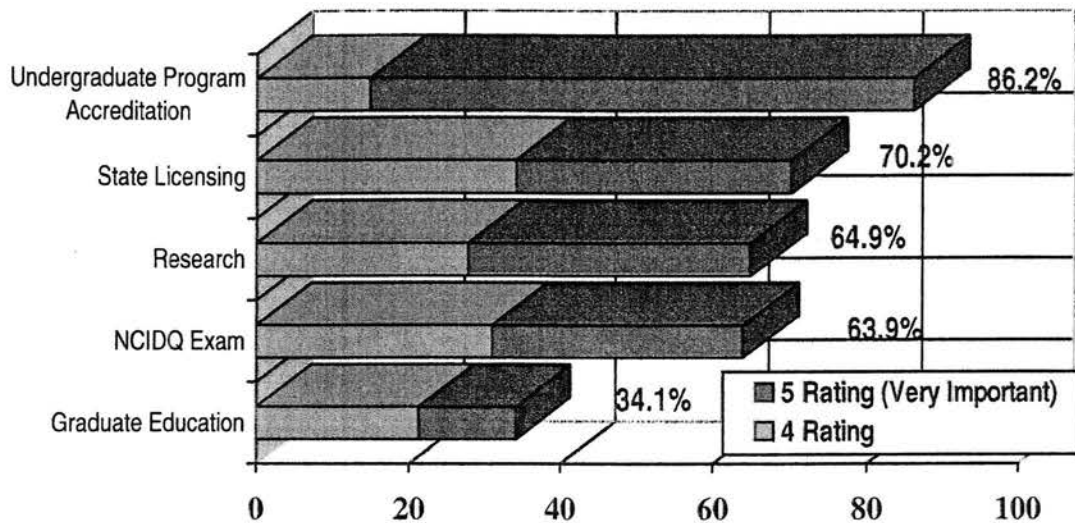
Figure 4.3 Percentages of Respondents' Rating Importance of Components of the Interior Design Profession to the Profession, 4 and 5 Ratings

Frequencies, percentages, and mean scores regarding practitioners perceptions' about the five components of a profession regarding interior design are presented in order of mean scores in Table 4.8. None of the practitioners stated that research in interior design is not important (1 rating). The mean score for research was 3.95. Graduate education was given a one rating (not important) or a two rating by 27.7 percent of the respondents, nearly as many as deemed it four or five ratings. Most often respondents were in the middle concerning graduate education, 37.2 percent gave it a "three" rating, with a mean score of 3.13. Accreditation of undergraduate programs held the highest mean score, 4.52.

Table 4.8

Practitioners' (n=94) Perceptions Concerning the Importance of Components of the Interior Design Profession to the Profession, Frequencies and Percentages

Statements	(Not Important) 1		2		3		4		(Very Important) 5		Mean	S.D.
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%		
Accreditation of undergraduate interior design programs	2	2.1	3	3.2	7	7.4	14	14.9	67	71.3	4.52	.93
Research	0	0.0	8	8.5	24	25.5	26	27.7	35	37.2	3.95	.99
State licensing	4	4.3	11	11.7	12	12.8	32	34.0	34	36.2	3.87	1.16
Examination (NCIDQ)	6	6.4	10	10.6	17	18.1	29	30.9	31	33.0	3.74	1.21
Graduate education	6	6.4	20	21.3	35	37.2	20	21.3	12	12.8	3.13	1.10

Spearman correlation coefficients were calculated to determine relationships within items of the question (Table 4.9). Horowitz's (1979) categorizations and descriptions of coefficient values were used for summarizing the Spearman correlation coefficients. The Horowitz categorizations are as follows:

.00 - .20 negligible correlation/relationship

.20 - .40 low correlation/relationship

.40 - .60 moderate correlation/relationship

.60 - .80 considerable correlation/relationship

.80 - 1.0 high correlation/relationship

Due to the number of correlations throughout this research, only moderate, considerable, and high correlations based on Horowitz's categorizations are discussed. In addition, all correlation tables throughout this chapter are displayed in the order that the items appeared on the questionnaire. Ranges of coefficients, when discussed, are based on the actual highs and lows of the coefficient number, irrespective of sign (+ or -).

Four of the ten correlations concerning the importance of components of a profession to the profession were significant, all were positive relationships. The most significant correlation was between examination (NCIDQ) and state licensing. This considerable correlation revealed practitioners agreed the NCIDQ exam is important to the profession and were also in agreement that state licensing is important.

Table 4.9
Correlation Matrix of Importance of Components of the Interior Design
Profession to the Profession

Components		X_1	X_2	X_3	X_4	X_5
				Spearman Rho[1]		
Accreditation of Undergraduate Interior Design Programs	X_1	1.00				
State Licensing	X_2	.438 (.000)	1.00			
Examination (NCIDQ)	X_3	.435 (.000)	.789 (.000)	1.00		
Graduate Education	X_4	.106 (.313)	.100 (.342)	.222 (.032)	1.00	
Research	X_5	.144 (.169)	.137 (.192)	.161 (.124)	.149 (.154)	1.00

[1]Number in parenthesis is p value.

Research Question 2: What are interior designers' perceptions of the advantage

of specific components of a profession for the individual interior design practitioner?

The same components (undergraduate accreditation, state licensing, the NCIDQ

exam, graduate education, and research) were posed to the practitioner in regard to the

advantage of each to the individual interior design practitioner (Q10). Respondents

were given the same five point Likert-type scale anchored by not important (one) and

very important (five).

Practitioners again viewed accreditation of undergraduate interior design

programs as most advantageous to the practitioner. Eighty percent rated it with a four

or five (very advantageous) (Figure 4.4). State licensing ranked second in advantage

with 61.7 percent viewing it as a four to a five, followed by over half rating research

(58.5%) and the NCIDQ exam (55.3%) as a four or very advantageous (five). Graduate

education had the smallest percentage of four and five ratings (30.8%).
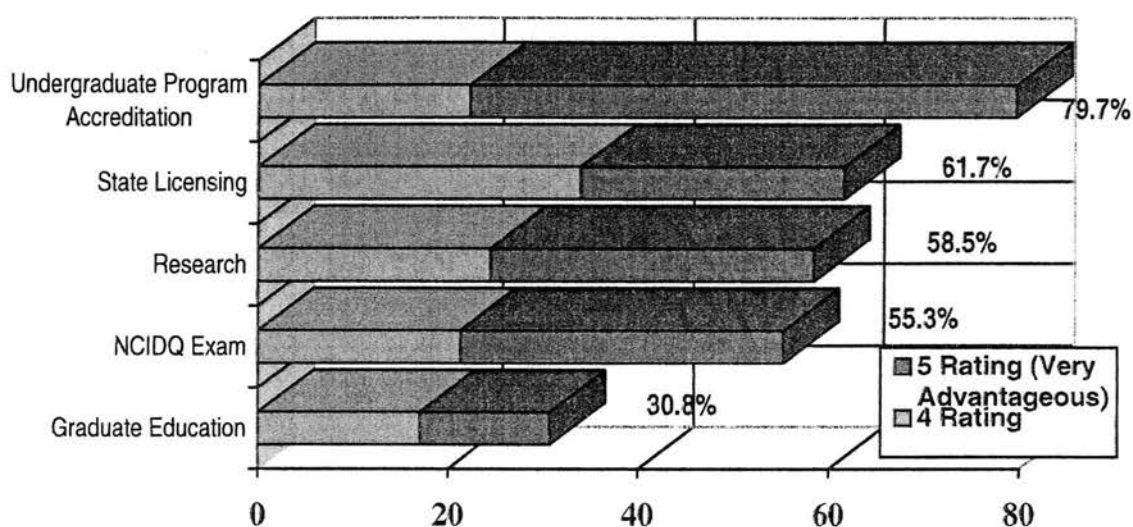
Figure 4.4 Percentages of Respondents' Rating Advantages of Components of the Interior Design Profession to the Practitioner, 4 and 5 Ratings

Frequencies, percentages, and mean scores regarding practitioners' perceptions

about the components in relation to the individual practitioner are presented in Table

4.10 and ordered by mean scores. Thirty-two percent rated graduate education as a one

(not advantageous) or a two rating, nearly the same number that gave it a four or five

rating (32.9%). Within graduate education, "three" was chosen most often (35.1%). In

addition, nearly one-third (29.8%) of practitioners were neutral on the importance of

research, giving it a "three" rating.

Table 4.10

Practitioners' (n=94) Perceptions of the Advantages of Components of the Interior Design Profession to the Practitioner, Frequencies and Percentages

Statements	(Not Important) 1		2		3		4		(Very Important) 5		Mean	S.D.
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%		
Accreditation of undergraduate interior design programs	2	2.1	8	8.5	8	8.5	21	22.3	54	57.4	4.26	1.07
Research	1	1.1	9	9.6	28	29.8	23	24.5	32	34.0	3.82	1.05
State licensing	8	8.5	10	10.6	17	18.1	32	34.0	26	27.7	3.62	1.24
Examination (NCIDQ)	9	9.6	9	9.6	23	24.5	20	21.3	32	34.0	3.61	1.31
Graduate education	13	13.8	18	19.1	33	35.1	16	17.0	13	13.8	2.98	1.22

With the exception of graduate education, there was a range of approximately six to nine percentage points difference between practitioners' perceptions of the advantage to the practitioner of the components of a profession versus the importance to the profession (Figure 4.5).
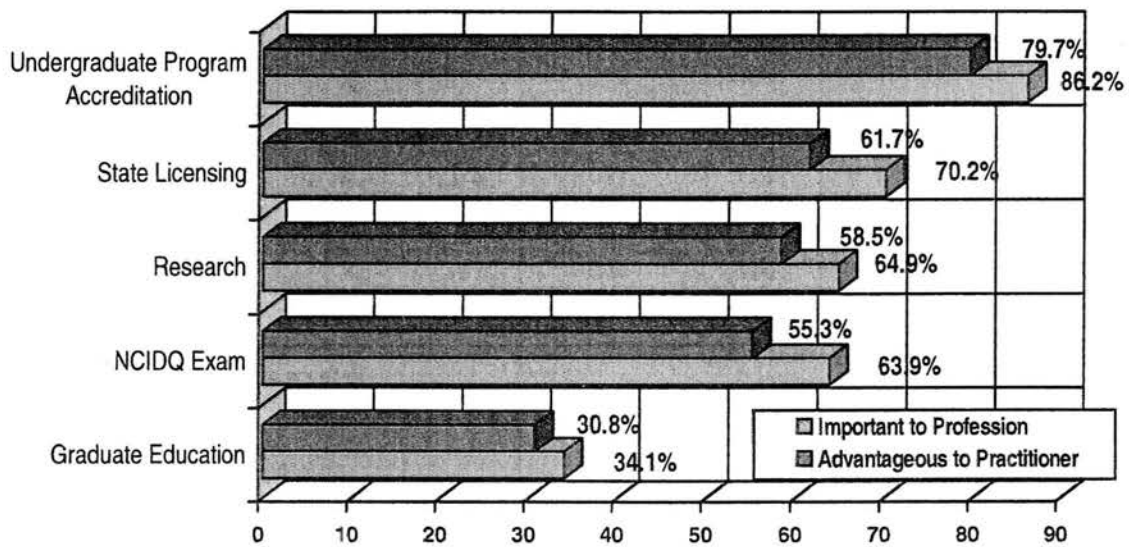
Figure 4.5 Percentages of Respondents' Rating Components of the Interior Design Profession, Comparing Importance to the Profession and Advantage to the Practitioner, Agree and Strongly Agree

Spearman correlation coefficients were calculated to determine relationships between items of the question (Table 4.11). Four of the ten correlations were significant, all were positive relationships. The strongest correlation revealed practitioners who agreed the NCIDQ exam is advantageous to the practitioner were also more likely to agree that state licensing is important.

63

Table 4.11

Correlation Matrix of Advantage of Components of the Interior Design Profession to the Practitioner

Components		X_1	X_2	X_3	X_4	X_5
				Spearman Rho[1]		
Accreditation of Undergraduate Interior Design Programs	X_1	1.00				
State Licensing	X_2	.321 (.002)	1.00			
Examination (NCIDQ)	X_3	.355 (.003)	.779 (.000)	1.00		
Graduate Education	X_4	.276 (.007)	.042 (.691)	.128 (.221)	1.00	
Research	X_5	.137 (.190)	-.044 (.675)	.010 (.927)	.096 (.362)	1.00

[1]Number in parenthesis is p value.

Interior Designers' Perceptions of Graduate Education

The purpose of this section is to answer the research questions related to practitioners' perceptions of the importance to the profession and the advantage to the practitioner of graduate education in interior design. In addition, although not specifically addressing the research questions, comparisons between responses to similar items regarding importance to the profession and advantage to the practitioner are discussed.

Research Question 3:   What do practitioners perceive as the importance of graduate education in interior design to the interior design profession?

Respondents were asked to indicate the extent to which they agreed with nine statements measuring perceptions of the importance of graduate education in interior design to the profession as a whole.   A five point Likert-item scale was used with possible responses anchored by strongly disagree (scored as one) to strongly agree (scored as five).

Figure 4.6 displays items ranked by agree and strongly agree responses. The item receiving the highest percentage of agree and strongly agree was "graduate education in interior design provides opportunities for specialization in design areas" (73.4%). More than half of the respondents agreed or strongly agreed with "raises the prestige level of the profession" (56.4%). Conversely, less than 50 percent agreed or strongly agreed with "provides the profession with new information that can be used in solving design problems" (49.0%), "is a primary component for competent educators" (45.8%), "trains individuals to become consumers of research findings" (29.8%), and "trains individuals in research skills" (29.8%).
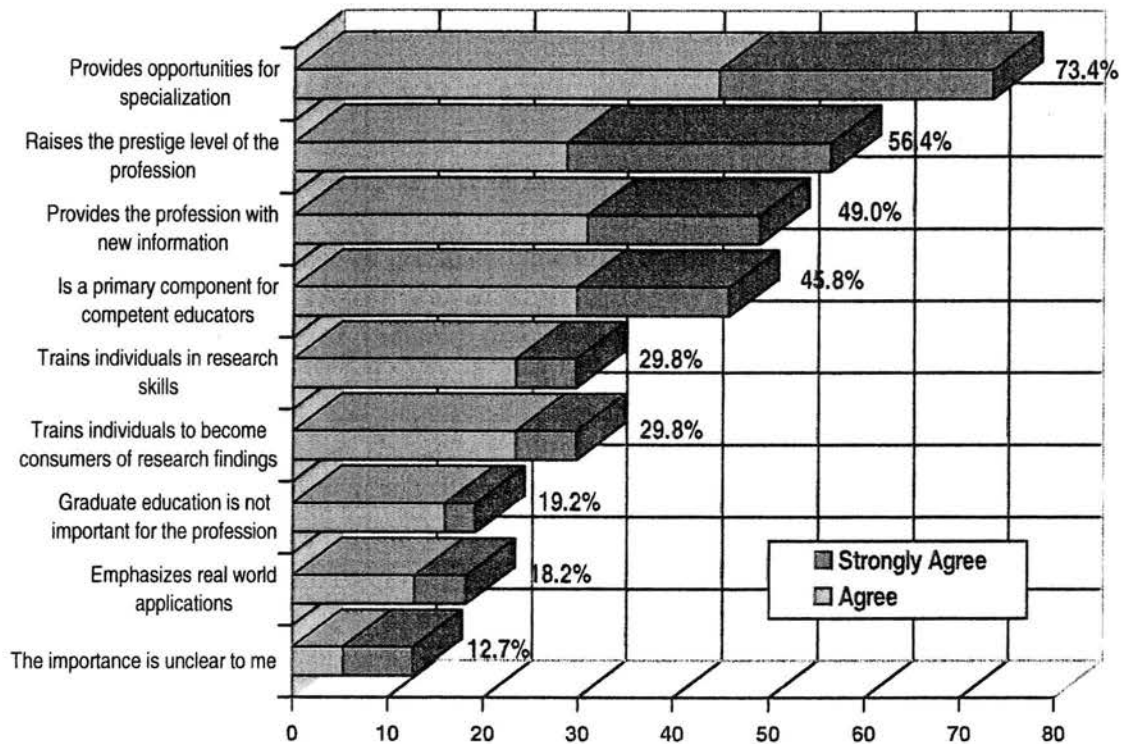
Figure 4.6 **Percentages of Respondents' Rating Importance of Graduate Education to the Interior Design Profession, Agree and Strongly Agree**

Frequencies, percentages, and mean scores regarding practitioners' perceptions of the importance of graduate education in interior design to the profession are shown in Table 4.12 and are displayed in order of mean scores. Items receiving highest percentages of disagree and strongly disagree were "the importance of graduate education for the profession is unclear to me" (60.6%); "graduate education is not important for the profession" (55.3%); and "graduate education emphasizes real world applications" (44.7%). These disagree and strongly disagree scores seem to indicate practitioners perceive an importance to graduate education in interior design. It is also

interesting to note that nearly one quarter to nearly one half of the respondents were neutral in eight of nine responses to the items.

Spearman correlation coefficients were calculated to determine if importance of graduate education to the profession items were interrelated (Table 4.13). Of the 36 correlations, 33 were significant. It is interesting to note the considerable correlation (.718) between importance of graduate education to the profession and the importance is unclear. This appears to indicate practitioners perceive an importance to graduate education. In addition, the negative relationships between graduate education is not important and the other seven items shows practitioners not only agree graduate education is important, but they also agree it is important for the purposes of the listed items.

In a separate question, practitioners were asked to rank five items in order from least important (ranked as 1) to most important (ranked as 5) concerning the importance of graduate education for the profession. Table 4.14 shows the results of this ranking in order of mean ranks. Three items had mean ranks of 3.00 and above. The option "increase the body of knowledge of the profession" ranked as most important by 39.4 percent of the respondents. "Provide individuals with the credentials necessary for teaching in universities" was also ranked most often as most important (5), but by fewer respondents (30) or 31.9 percent. Although these items were ranked highest, the low actual number of practitioners ranking the items as most important is consistent with earlier results noting less than half agree or strongly agree graduate education provides the profession with new information (49.0%) and that graduate education is a primary

Table 4.12

Practitioners' (n=94) Perceptions of the Importance of Graduate Education in Interior Design for the Profession, Frequencies and Percentages

Statements	(Strongly Disagree) 1		2		3		4		(Strongly Agree) 5		Mean	S.D.
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%		
Provides opportunities for specialization in design areas	2	2.1	8	8.5	15	16.0	42	44.7	27	28.7	3.89	.99
Raises the prestige level of the profession	6	6.4	13	13.8	22	23.4	27	28.7	26	27.7	3.57	1.21
Trains individuals in research skills	4	4.3	18	19.1	44	46.8	22	23.4	6	6.4	3.52	.90
Provides the profession with new information that can be used in solving design problems	3	3.2	16	17.0	29	30.9	29	30.9	17	18.1	3.44	1.07
Is a primary component for competent educators	3	3.2	15	16.0	32	34.0	28	29.8	15	16.0	3.40	1.04
Trains individuals to become consumers of research findings	4	4.3	18	19.1	44	46.8	22	23.4	6	6.4	3.09	.92
Emphasizes real world applications	20	21.3	22	23.4	34	36.2	12	12.8	5	5.4	2.57	1.13
Graduate education is not important for the profession	35	37.2	17	18.1	24	25.5	15	16.0	3	3.2	2.30	1.22
The importance is unclear to me	41	43.6	16	17.0	22	23.4	5	5.3	7	7.4	2.13	1.27

Table 4.13 Correlation Matrix of Importance of Graduate Education to the Profession

Importance Options		X_1	X_2	X_3	X_4	X_5	X_6	X_7	X_8	X_9
					Spearman Rho[1]					
Provides new information to solve design problems	X_1	1.00								
Raises the prestige level of the profession	X_2	.576 (.000)	1.00							
Provides opportunities for specialization in design areas	X_3	.539 (.000)	.439 (.000)	1.00						
Is a primary component for competent educators	X_4	.332 (.001)	.398 (.000)	.241 (.020)	1.00					
Emphasizes real world applications	X_5	.402 (.000)	.511 (.000)	.230 (.027)	.401 (.000)	1.00				
Trains individuals to become consumers of research findings	X_6	.421 (.000)	.306 (.003)	.175 (.091)	.482 (.000)	.496 (.000)	1.00			
Trains individuals in research skills	X_7	.257 (.012)	.186 (.073)	.357 (.000)	.263 (.011)	.199 (.056)	.467 (.000)	1.00		
The importance is unclear to me	X_8	-.418 (.000)	-.225 (.032)	-.562 (.000)	-.268 (.011)	-.269 (.010)	-.405 (.000)	-.498 (.000)	1.00	
Graduate education is not important for the profession	X_9	-.558 (.000)	-.350 (.001)	-.493 (.000)	-.347 (.001)	-.474 (.000)	-.372 (.000)	-.359 (.000)	.718 (.000)	1.00

[1]Number in parenthesis is p value.

component for competent educators (45.8%). In addition, 19 respondents (20.2%) also ranked provides credentials to teach third, and 24 respondents (25.5%) gave it a one or least important ranking.

Two items had mean ranks below 3.00. Ranked as second most important was "create an expert in a specialized area of interior design". Twenty-nine respondents or 30.9 percent gave this option a four ranking. "Enhance the prestige of interior designers in the eyes of allied professions" was most often ranked as a three (27 respondents, 28.7%) or a two (28 respondents, 29.8%). Exactly half of the respondents (50.0%) ranked "enhance the prestige of interior designers in the eyes of the public" as either a two or a one (least important).

Table 4.14
Importance of Graduate Education to the Profession Item Rankings, Frequencies and Percentages

Importance Items	Ranking 1(least)-5(most)	Respondents #	Respondents %	Mean	S.D.
Increase the body of knowledge of the profession	5	37	39.4	3.66	1.36
Provide individuals with the credentials necessary for teaching in universities	5	30	31.9	3.17	1.59
Create an "expert" in a specialized area of interior design	4	29	30.9	3.00	1.44
Enhance prestige in the eyes of allied professions	3 / 2	27/28	28.7/29.8	2.65	1.33
Enhance prestige in the eyes of the public	2 / 1	23/24	24.5/25.5	2.62	1.15

Spearman correlation coefficients were calculated to determine if importance of graduate education to the profession rankings were interrelated (Table 4.15). Of the ten coefficients, four were significant. Correlations were negative in three of the four significant instances. Significant coefficients ranged from a high of .334 between "enhance the prestige of interior designers in the eyes of the public" and "enhance the prestige of interior designers in the eyes of allied professions" to a low of -.234 between enhance prestige in the eyes of the public and create an expert in a specialized area.

Table 4.15
Correlation Matrix of Importance of Graduate Education to the Profession Item Rankings

Importance Options		X_1	X_2	X_3	X_4	X_5
				Spearman Rho[1]		
Increase the body of knowledge of the profession	X_1	1.00				
Enhance the prestige of interior designers in the eyes of allied professions	X_2	-.024 (.820)	1.00			
Create an "expert" in a specialized area of interior design	X_3	-.029 (.786)	-.186 (.075)	1.00		
Enhance the prestige of interior designers in the eyes of the public	X_4	-.098 (.352)	.334 (.001)	-.234 (.024)	1.00	
Provide individuals with the credentials necessary for teaching in universities	X_5	-.286 (.005)	-.258 (.013)	-.096 (.359)	-.189 (.070)	1.00

[1]Number in parenthesis is p value.

To summarize and answer the research question, Spearman correlation coefficient tests were performed between the importance of graduate education to the

profession (Q9D) and the nine importance items of graduate education (Q3) (Table 4.16). Significant correlations were found for seven of the relationships. "Graduate education is not important to the interior design profession" was the strongest negative correlation. This may indicate practitioners find graduate education important to the profession. In addition, the positive significant relationships indicate practitioners perceive graduate education important in relation to the following items: to provide the profession with new information, to raise the prestige level of the profession, and to offer specialization.

Research Question 4: What do practitioners perceive as the advantages of graduate education in interior design for the individual interior design practitioner?

In question four of the survey, respondents were given a five point Likert-item scale ranging from strongly disagree (scored as one) to strongly agree (scored as five). Respondents were asked to indicate the extent to which they agreed with 12 statements regarding the advantages of graduate education in interior design to the design practitioner (Q4).

Frequencies, percentages, and mean scores describing practitioners perceptions of the advantages of graduate education to the practitioner are reported in Table 4.17 and displayed in order of mean scores. Items receiving the highest percentages of agree and strongly agree ratings were "provides an opportunity for study in specialized

Table 4.16
Correlation Matrix of Importance of Graduate Education to the Profession (Q9D) and the Importance Items of Graduate Education (Q3)

	Importance Items (Q3)								
	New Information	Prestige of Profession	Special-ization	Competent Educators	Real World	Consume Findings	Research Skills	Importance Unclear	Not Important
Importance option (Q9D)					Spearman Rho[1]				
Graduate education to profession	.522 (.000)	.452 (.000)	.404 (.000)	.278 (.007)	.396 (.000)	.158 (.130)	.088 (.403)	-.340 (.001)	-.502 (.000)

[1]Number in parenthesis is p value.

design areas" (67.0%) and "provides the degree necessary to teach in colleges and universities" (66.0%). Over half agreed or strongly agreed to "provides me with new information that can be used in solving design problems" (57.5%), "raises my prestige level as a designer" (56.4%) and "trains me in research skills" (52.1%). Conversely, items receiving the largest percentage of disagree and strongly disagree ratings were the advantages are unclear (57.4%), followed by emphasizes "real-world" applications (54.3%), and there are no advantages (51.1%). However, it should also be noted that one-quarter (25.5%) of the respondents agreed or strongly agreed with the statement "graduate education lacks advantages for me as a practitioner" and nearly one quarter (23.4%) were neutral in their responses.

Figure 4.7 compares the data of agree and strongly agree statements for the importance of graduate education to the profession and the advantage of graduate education to the practitioner. Interestingly, practitioners feel more strongly about graduate education providing the degree necessary to teach in a university (66.0%) than they do about that degree creating competent educators for the profession (45.8%). In addition, many practitioners agree or strongly agree that graduate education trains individuals to become consumers of research findings (46.8%), but feel less strongly that training others in the profession to consume those findings is important (29.8%). More practitioners perceived training in research skills as advantageous to practitioners (52.1%) than important to the profession (29.8%). Lastly, more practitioners believe graduate education providing the profession with new information is important to

Table 4.17

Practitioners' (n=94) Perceptions of the Advantage of Graduate Education in Interior Design for the Practitioner, Frequencies and Percentages

Statements	(Strongly Disagree) 1		2		3		4		(Strongly Agree) 5		Mean	S.D.
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%		
Provides opportunity for study in specialized design areas	1	1.1	8	8.5	21	22.3	38	40.4	25	26.6	3.84	.96
Provides the degree necessary to teach in colleges and universities	3	3.2	11	11.7	17	18.1	31	33.0	31	33.0	3.82	1.12
Provides me with new information that can be used in solving design problems	3	3.2	15	16.0	22	23.4	34	36.2	20	21.3	3.56	1.09
Trains me in research skills	6	6.4	5	5.3	34	36.2	35	37.2	14	14.9	3.49	1.02
Gives me greater breadth of interior design knowledge	5	5.3	18	19.1	21	22.3	30	31.9	20	21.3	3.45	1.18
Raises my prestige level as a designer	11	11.7	20	21.3	10	10.6	34	36.2	19	20.2	3.32	1.33
Trains me to become a consumer of research findings	5	5.3	14	14.9	31	33.0	35	37.2	9	9.6	3.31	1.02

Table 4.17 (Continued)

Statements	(Strongly Disagree) 1		2		3		4		(Strongly Agree) 5			
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	Mean	S.D.
Justifies higher salaries	12	12.8	21	22.3	24	25.5	27	28.7	10	10.6	3.02	1.21
Provides me with an edge over those with an undergraduate degree in interior design	10	10.6	22	23.4	27	28.7	27	28.7	7	7.4	2.99	1.13
Graduate education lacks advantages for me as a practitioner	37	39.4	11	11.7	22	23.4	16	17.0	8	8.5	2.44	1.38
Emphasizes "real-world" applications	20	21.3	32	34.0	29	30.9	9	9.6	4	4.3	2.41	1.06
The advantage is unclear to me	41	43.6	13	13.8	22	23.4	11	11.7	4	4.3	2.16	1.25

individuals (57.5%), than that information would be to the profession as a whole (49.0%).
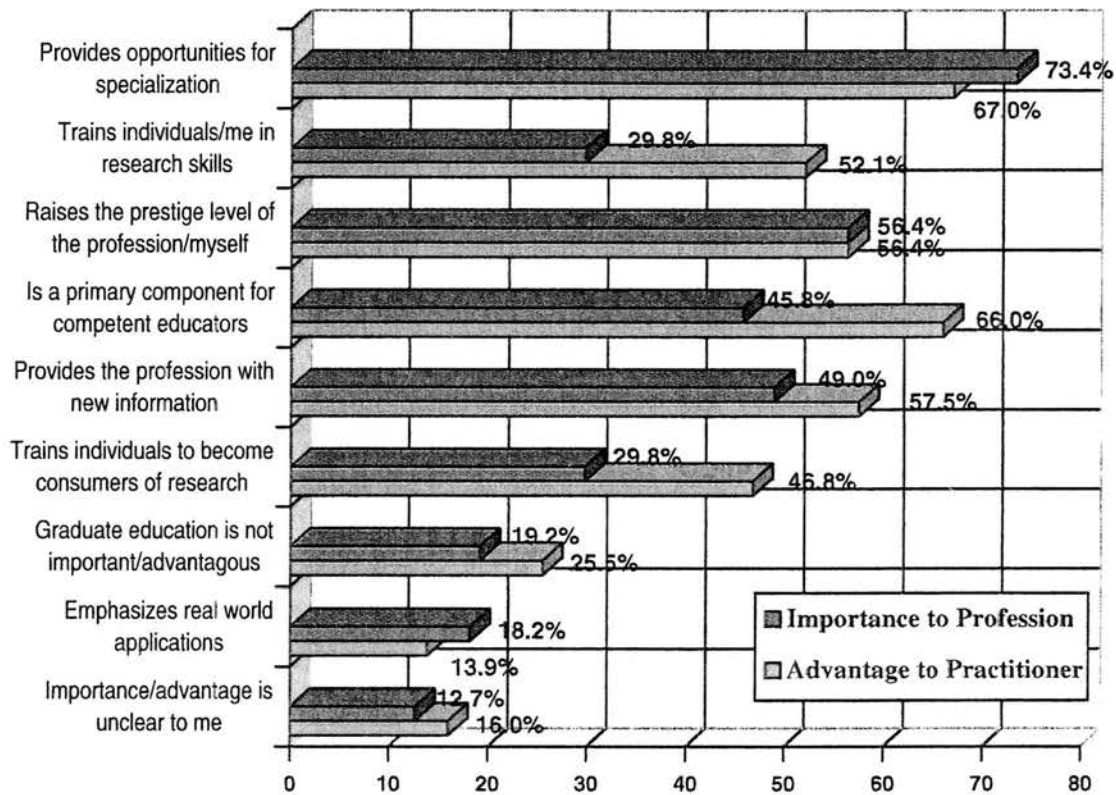
Figure 4.7 Percentages of Respondents' Rating Graduate Education, Comparing Graduate Education Importance to Profession and Advantage to Practitioner, Agree and Strongly Agree

Spearman correlation coefficients were calculated to determine if advantages of graduate education to the practitioner were interrelated (Table 4.18). Of the 66 correlations, 64 were found to have significant relationships, 11 of which had considerable to high correlations according to Horowitz (1979). "Gives me greater breadth of knowledge" had four considerable to high relationships showing that those

who agree an advantage of graduate education is to give them greater breadth of knowledge are also more likely to agree graduate education would provide them with new information, raise their prestige level, and provide an opportunity for specialization. They are also less likely to agree graduate education lacks advantages because this relationship was negative.

It is interesting to note the considerable positive correlation between "the advantage is unclear to me" and "graduate education lacks advantages." This information shows the stronger practitioners agree graduate education lacks advantages, the stronger they agree the advantages are unclear to them.

Another considerable positive relationship was found between justifying higher salaries and raising prestige level. Consequently, practitioners who agree an advantage of graduate education is to justify a higher salary are more likely to agree an advantage is to raise the prestige level of the designer. A strong positive relationship was also found between emphasizing real world applications and justifying a higher salary indicating designers who agree graduate education emphasizes real world experience are also more likely to agree graduate education justifies a higher salary. This would be consistent with designers comments in the open-ended section of the questionnaire where many of them noted experience is more important than graduate education in interior design. A considerable positive relationship was found between justifying higher salaries and an edge over those with an undergraduate degree in interior design. Lastly, a considerable positive correlation showed that practitioners who agree an advantage of graduate education as training to be a consumer of research findings are

also more likely to agree an advantage is training in research skills. Other considerable correlations were found between provides opportunity for specialization and provides me with new information to solve design problems, gives me an edge over those with an undergraduate degree in interior design and raises my prestige level, and justifies higher salaries and gives me an edge over those with an undergraduate degree in interior design.

In another question (Q8), given ten items, practitioners were asked to rank what they viewed as the top five advantages of graduate education to the practitioner in order from least advantageous (ranked as one) to most advantageous (ranked as five). Table 4.19 shows the results in order of mean ranks. Receiving the two highest mean ranks and considered most important (a five ranking) were "expand my knowledge base" (3.76, 32 respondents, 34.0%) and "provides me with the credentials necessary for teaching in universities" (3.67, 22 respondents, 23.4%). "Gain personal satisfaction from earning the degree" (14 respondents, 14.9%) was also considered most important, though not by as many respondents. Most often ranked as a one, least important, were "enhance my prestige as an interior designer in the eyes of allied professionals" (17 respondents, 18.1%) and "salary increase" (13 respondents, 13.8%).

Table 4.18
Correlation Matrix of Advantage of Graduate Education to the Practitioner

Advantage options		X_1	X_2	X_3	X_4	X_5	X_6	X_7	X_8	X_9	X_{10}	X_{11}	X_{12}
						Spearman Rho[1]							
Gives me greater breadth of knowledge	X_1	1.00											
Provides me with new information to solve design problems	X_2	.816 (.000)	1.00										
Raises my prestige level	X_3	.613 (.000)	.586 (.000)	1.00									
Provides an opportunity for specialization	X_4	.622 (.000)	.602 (.000)	.525 (.000)	1.00								
Provides the degree necessary to teach	X_5	.333 (.001)	.303 (.003)	.362 (.000)	.406 (.000)	1.00							
Gives me an edge over those with an undergraduate degree in interior design	X_6	.575 (.000)	.425 (.000)	.643 (.000)	.426 (.000)	.320 (.002)	1.00						

[1]Number in parenthesis is p value.

Table 4.18 (Continued)

Advantage options		X_1	X_2	X_3	X_4	X_5	X_6	X_7	X_8	X_9	X_{10}	X_{11}	X_{12}
							Spearman Rho[1]						
Justifies higher salaries	X_7	.555 (.000)	.447 (.000)	.676 (.000)	.381 (.000)	.366 (.000)	.741 (.000)	1.00					
Trains me in research skills	X_8	.451 (.000)	.520 (.000)	.498 (.000)	.525 (.000)	.296 (.004)	.304 (.003)	.309 (.002)	1.00				
Trains me to be a consumer of research findings	X_9	.382 (.000)	.482 (.000)	.414 (.000)	.469 (.000)	.320 (.002)	.316 (.002)	.377 (.000)	.775 (.000)	1.00			
Emphasizes real-world applications	X_{10}	.579 (.000)	.516 (.000)	.611 (.000)	.322 (.002)	.165 (.114)	.557 (.000)	.615 (.000)	.361 (.000)	.433 (.000)	1.00		
The advantage is unclear to me	X_{11}	-.593 (.000)	-.517 (.000)	-.381 (.000)	-.430 (.000)	-.319 (.002)	-.376 (.000)	-.307 (.003)	-.401 (.000)	-.340 (.001)	-.290 (.005)	1.00	
Graduate education lacks advantages	X_{12}	-.680 (.000)	-.540 (.000)	-.460 (.000)	-.471 (.000)	-.187 (.073)	-.464 (.000)	-.454 (.000)	-.371 (.000)	-.313 (.002)	-.464 (.000)	.774 (.000)	1.00

[1]Number in parenthesis is p value.

Table 4.19
Advantages of Graduate Education to Practitioners' Item Rankings, Frequencies and Percentages

Advantage Items	Most Frequent Rank 1(least)-5(most)	Respondents #	%	Mean	S.D.
Expand my knowledge base	5	32	34.0	3.76	1.37
Provide me with the credentials necessary for teaching in universities	5	22	23.4	3.67	1.41
Gain personal satisfaction from earning the degree	5	14	14.9	3.23	1.46
Develop a broader vision of the profession	5/4	13/14	13.8/14.9	3.15	1.41
Keep up to date on interior design issues and trends	3	10	10.6	3.08	1.32
Become an "expert" in a specialized area of interior design	4	15	16.0	3.02	1.42
Increase my marketability	3	17	18.1	3.00	1.41
Enhance my prestige as in the eyes of the public	4	12	12.8	2.93	1.37
Salary increase	1	13	13.8	2.87	1.48
Enhance my prestige in the eyes of allied professionals	1	17	18.1	2.46	1.43

Spearman correlation coefficients were calculated to determine if rankings of advantages of graduate education to the practitioners were interrelated. Results can be found in Table 4.20 and are ordered according to listing in the questionnaire. Correlations were positive in all 12 significant instances. There was a positive

correlation showing practitioners who ranked advantage of graduate education is to enhance prestige in the eyes of the public were also more likely to rank graduate education would enhance prestige in the eyes of allied professionals. A positive correlation was found between salary increase and each of develop a broader vision of the profession, keep up to date on issues and trends, and gain personal satisfaction from earning the degree. In addition, a relationships was found between keeping up to date on issues and trends and developing a broader vision of the profession.

To summarize and answer the research question a Spearman correlation coefficient test was performed between the advantage of graduate education to the practitioner (Q4) and the advantage items of graduate education (Q10D) (Table 4.21). Significant correlations were found for 11 of the 12 relationships. Moderate Spearman rho correlation coefficients revealed practitioners who agreed there were advantages to graduate education were more likely to agree the advantages included greater breadth of interior design knowledge, new information that can be used in solving design problems, and an edge over those with undergraduate degrees in interior design.

Table 4.20 Correlation Matrix of Advantages of Graduate Education to Practitioners' Item Rankings

Advantage Items		X_1	X_2	X_3	X_4	X_5	X_6	X_7	X_8	X_9	X_{10}
						Spearman Rho[1]					
Enhance my prestige in the eyes of allied professionals	X_1	1.00									
Become an "expert" in a specialized area	X_2	.116 (.551)	1.00								
Enhance my prestige in the eyes of the public	X_3	.586 (.001)	.179 (.363)	1.00							
Provide me with the credentials to teach	X_4	.362 (.054)	.065 (.717)	.347 (.076)	1.00						
Expand my knowledge base	X_5	.195 (.229)	.190 (.165)	.076 (.661)	.026 (.868)	1.00					
Increase my marketability	X_6	.109 (.545)	.454 (.003)	.164 (.363)	.048 (.773)	.197 (.146)	1.00				
Develop a broader vision of the profession	X_7	.410 (.030)	.076 (.634)	.297 (.118)	.200 (.264)	.243 (.072)	.308 (.064)	1.00			
Keep up to date on issues and trends	X_8	.491 (.020)	-.061 (.754)	.511 (.021)	.253 (.244)	.126 (.471)	.316 (.124)	.409 (.016)	1.00		
Gain personal satisfaction from earning the degree	X_9	.447 (.025)	-.038 (.834)	.379 (.047)	-.267 (.154)	-.022 (.883)	.124 (.459)	.272 (.098)	.413 (.063)	1.00	
Salary increase	X_{10}	.258 (.162)	.135 (.447)	.276 (.155)	.072 (.727)	.154 (.338)	.336 (.045)	.586 (.003)	.503 (.028)	.473 (.008)	1.00

[1]Number in parenthesis is p value.

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Table 4.21

Correlation Matrix of Advantage of Graduate Education to the Practitioner (Q10D) and the Advantage Items of Graduate Education (Q4)

	Advantage Items (Q4)					
Advantage Option (10D)	Greater Breadth	New Information	Prestige as a Designer	Special-ization	Degree to Teach	Edge over Undergrads
	Spearman Rho[1]					
Graduate education to practitioner	.533 (.000)	.457 (.000)	.277 (.007)	.248 (.017)	.317 (.002)	.412 (.000)

	Higher Salaries	Research Skills	Consumer of Findings	Real World	Advantage Unclear	No Advantage
Graduate education to practitioner	.339 (.001)	.223 (.032)	.081 (.439)	.363 (.000)	-.347 (.001)	-.356 (.000)

[1]Number in parenthesis is p value.

Interior Designers' Perceptions of Research

The purpose of this section is to answer the research questions related to practitioners' perceptions of the importance to the profession and advantage to the practitioner of research in interior design. In addition, although not specifically addressing the research questions, comparisons between responses to similar items regarding importance to the profession and advantage to the practitioner are discussed.

Research Question 5: What do practitioners perceive as the importance of research in interior design to the interior design profession?

Respondents were asked to indicate the extent to which they agreed with eight statements measuring perceptions of the importance of research in interior design to the profession (Q1). A five point Likert-item scale was used with responses ranging from strongly disagree (scored as one) to strongly agree (scored as five).

Percentages of agree and strongly agree ratings are displayed in Figure 4.8. "Creates alternative solutions, tools and/or technology to solve interior design problems" (87.2%) and "adds to the body of knowledge of the profession" (84.0%) received the highest percentages of agree and strongly agree. Only 2.1 percent of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that research is not important to the profession.
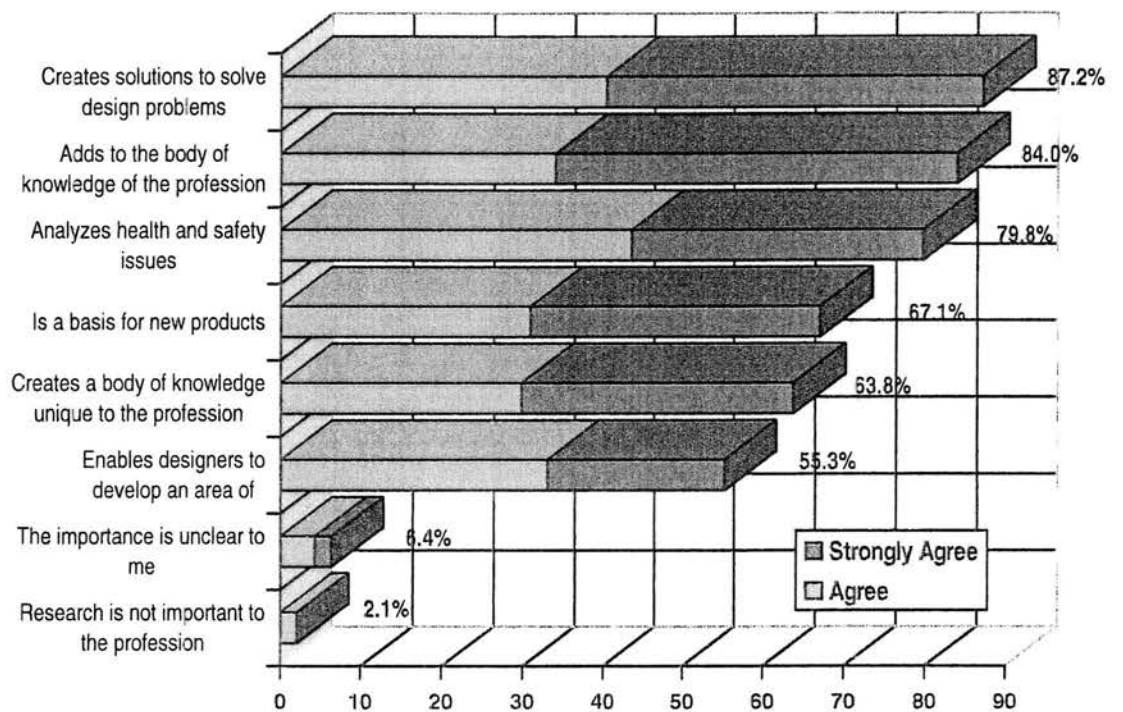
Figure 4.8 Percentages of Respondents' Rating Importance of Research to the Profession, Agree and Strongly Agree

Frequencies, percentages, and mean scores regarding practitioners perceptions of the importance of research are shown in Table 4.22 and are displayed in order of mean scores. Nearly one-third rated enables specialization (29.8%) and creates a unique body of knowledge (28.7%) as neutral on importance to the profession. Items with high percentages of disagree to strongly disagree were research is not important to the interior design profession (89.4%) and the importance of research for the profession is unclear to me (81.9%). It is apparent practitioners do perceive research as important to the profession.

Table 4.22

Practitioners' (n=94) Perceptions of the Importance of Research in Interior Design to the Profession, Frequencies and Percentages

Statements	(Strongly Disagree) 1		2		3		4		(Strongly Agree) 5		Mean	S.D.
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%		
Creates alternative solutions, tools and/or technology to solve interior design problems	0	0.0	2	2.1	9	9.6	38	40.4	44	46.8	4.33	.74
Adds to the body of knowledge of the profession	0	0.0	3	3.2	11	11.7	32	34.0	47	50.0	4.32	.81
Analyzes health and safety issues	0	0.0	5	5.5	13	13.8	41	43.6	34	36.2	4.12	.85
Is a basis for developing new products	0	0.0	5	5.3	24	25.5	29	30.9	34	36.2	4.00	.93
Creates a body of knowledge unique to the profession	1	1.1	5	5.3	27	28.7	28	29.8	32	34.0	3.91	.97
Enables the designer to develop an area of specialization	1	1.1	11	11.7	28	29.8	31	33.0	31	22.3	3.65	1.00
The importance is unclear to me	57	60.6	20	21.3	9	9.6	4	4.3	2	2.1	1.63	.72
Research is not important to the interior design profession	69	73.4	15	16.0	7	7.4	2	2.1	0	0.0	1.38	.72

Spearman correlation coefficients were calculated to examine relationships between items (Table 4.23). Of the 28 correlations, all were found to have significant relationships. Items with significant positive relationships show that practitioners who agree to the importance of research to the profession for any item are also more likely to agree research is important for any other item. In the cases of significant negative relationships, practitioners who agree that research is not important to the profession would be more likely to agree with other items on research's importance. The strongest correlation was between research is not important to the profession and the importance is unclear. A moderate negative correlation coefficient was found between research is not important and creates alternative solutions to solve design problems.

Importance Options		X_1	X_2	X_3	X_4	X_5	X_6	X_7	X_8
					Spearman Rho[1]				
Is a basis for developing new products	X_1	1.00							
Analyzes health, safety, and welfare issues	X_2	.500 (.000)	1.00						
Adds to the body of knowledge of the profession	X_3	.298 (.004)	.271 (.004)	1.00					
Creates alternative solutions, tools and/or technology to solve interior design problems	X_4	.337 (.001)	.275 (.008)	.466 (.000)	1.00				
Enables the designer to develop an area of specialization	X_5	.499 (.000)	.275 (.008)	.306 (.003)	.218 (.037)	1.00			
Creates a body of knowledge unique to the profession	X_6	.371 (.002)	.277 (.007)	.526 (.000)	.515 (.000)	.379 (.000)	1.00		
The importance is unclear to me	X_7	-.465 (.000)	-.399 (.000)	-.410 (.000)	-.469 (.000)	-.447 (.000)	-.400 (.000)	1.00	
Research is not important to the interior design profession	X_8	-.345 (.001)	-.269 (.009)	-.360 (.000)	-.499 (.000)	-.219 (.036)	-.374 (.000)	.666 (.000)	1.00

[1]Number in parenthesis is p value.

To summarize and answer the research question a Spearman correlation coefficient test was performed between practitioners' perceptions of importance of research to the profession (Q9E) and the importance items of research (Q1) (Table 4.24). Significant correlations were found for five of the eight relationships. Coefficients ranged from a high of .326 for solutions to problems to a low of .213 for creates a unique body of knowledge.

Table 4.24

Correlation Matrix of the Importance of Research to the Profession (Q9E) and the Importance Items of Research (Q1)

	Importance Items (Q1)							
	New Products	Analyzes Issues	Body of Knowledge	Solutions to Problems	Special- ization	Unique Body of Knowledge	Importance Unclear	Not Important
Importance Option (Q9E)				Spearman Rho[1]				
Importance of research to the profession	.202 (.053)	.220 (.034)	.213 (.040)	.326 (.001)	.003 (.979)	.143 (.172)	-.280 (.007)	-.291 (.005)

[1]Numbers in parenthesis is p value.

Research Question 6: What do interior design practitioners perceive as the advantages of research in interior design to the individual interior design practitioner?

Respondents were asked to indicate the extent to which they agreed with eight statements measuring perceptions of the advantage of research in interior design to individual interior design practitioners (Q2). A five point Likert-item scale was used with possible responses ranging from strongly disagree (scored as one) to strongly agree (scored as five).

Figure 4.9 displays percentages of agree and strongly agree responses. "Creates solutions, tools, and/or technology to help me solve interior design problems" (86.1%), "adds to my body of knowledge" (83.0%), and "gives me a basis for decision justification" (83.0%) received the highest percentages of agree and strongly agree responses. More than 50 percent of respondents agreed or strongly agreed to each of the items with the exceptions of the advantage is unclear and research is not advantageous.
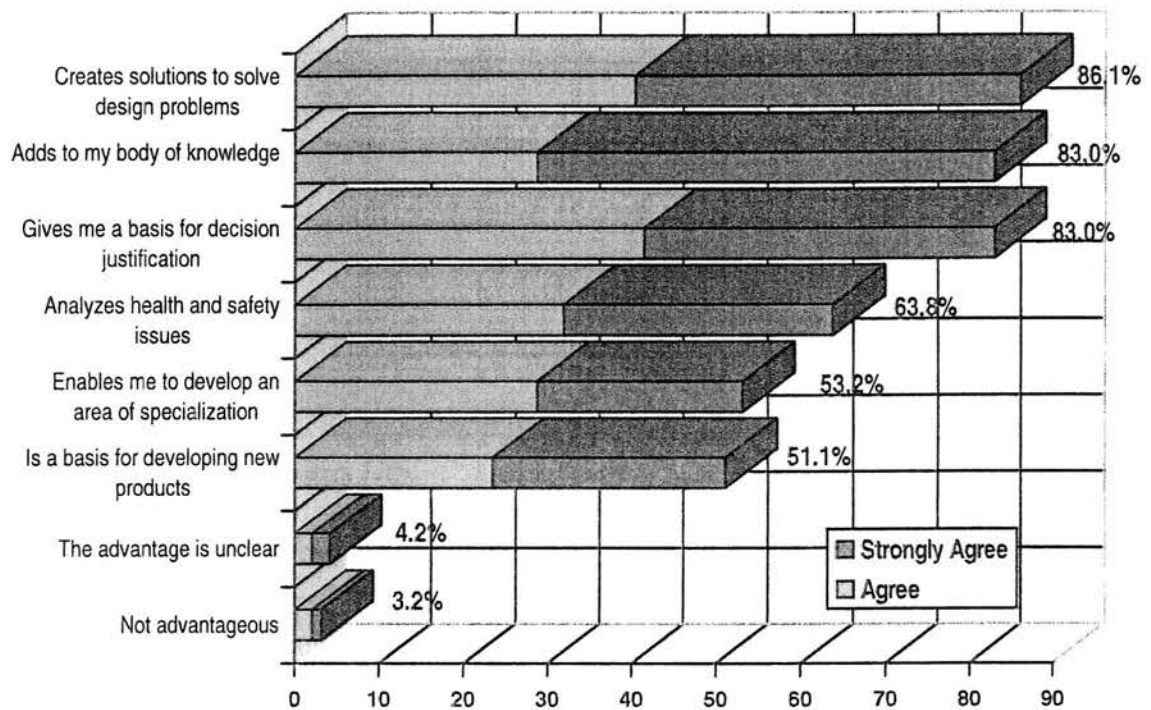
Figure 4.9 Percentages of Respondents' Rating Advantage of Research to the Practitioner, Agree and Strongly Agree

Figure 4.10 compares agree and strongly agree responses of each item for both the importance to the profession and the advantage to the practitioner. It is interesting to note virtually the same percentage of practitioners felt strongly about research creating solutions to design problems and adding to the body of knowledge for both the profession and the practitioner. It is equally interesting to note the largest gap between the perception of importance/advantage of research as analyzing health and safety issues and as a basis for developing new products.
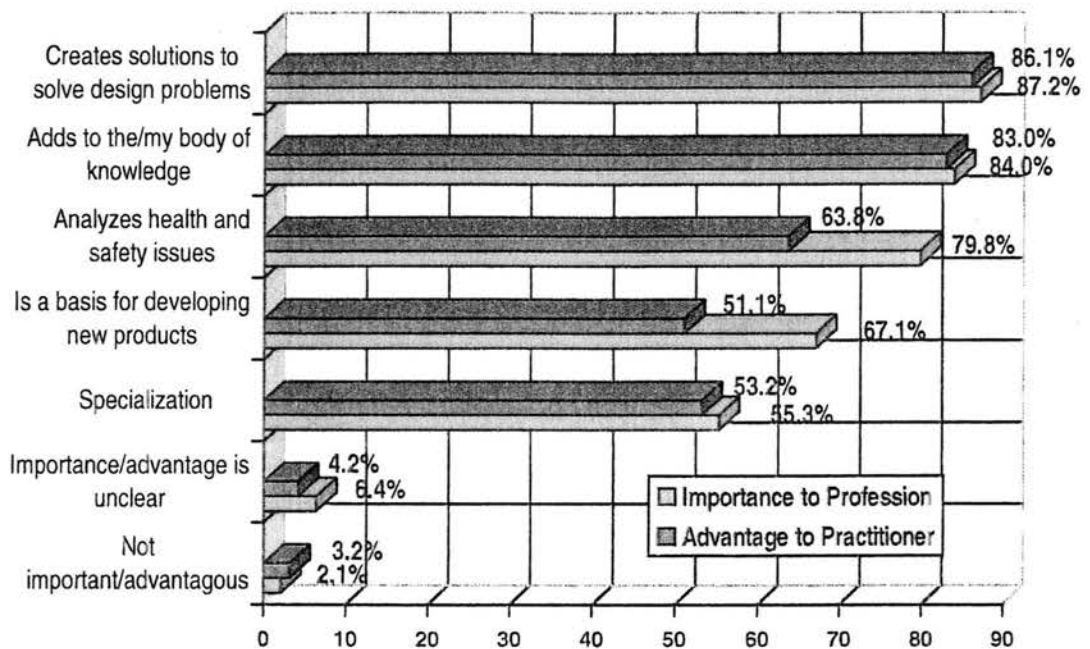
Figure 4.10 Percentages of Respondents' Rating Research Comparing Importance
to Profession and Advantage to Practitioner, Agree and Strongly Agree

Frequencies, percentages, and mean scores regarding practitioners' perceptions

of the advantage of research to the practitioner are shown in Table 4.25 and are

displayed in order of mean scores. Over one-third (35.1%) of practitioners were neutral

in agreement to enables me to develop an area of specialization. The highest

percentages of disagree and strongly disagree were "there are no advantages of research

to me as a practitioner" (87.2%) and "the advantage of research is unclear to me"

(81.9%). Thus it appears as though respondents do perceive an advantage of research to

the practitioner.

Table 4.25

Practitioners' (n=94) Perceptions of the Advantage of Research in Interior Design for the Practitioner, Frequencies and Percentages

Statements	(Strongly Disagree) 1		2		3		4		(Strongly Agree) 5		Mean	S.D.
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%		
Adds to my body of knowledge	0	0.0	1	1.1	14	14.9	27	28.7	51	54.3	4.38	.78
Creates solutions, tools and/or technology to help me solve interior design problems	0	0.0	1	1.1	11	11.7	38	40.4	43	45.7	4.32	.72
Gives me a basis for decision justification	1	1.1	1	1.1	13	13.8	39	41.5	39	41.5	4.23	.81
Analyzes health and safety issues	1	1.1	7	7.4	25	26.6	30	31.9	30	31.9	3.87	.99
Enables me to develop an area of specialization	1	1.1	9	9.6	33	35.1	27	28.7	23	24.5	3.67	.99
Is a basis for developing new products	2	2.1	11	11.7	31	33.0	22	23.4	26	27.7	3.64	1.09
The advantage is unclear to me	60	63.8	17	18.1	11	11.7	2	2.1	2	2.1	1.58	.94
There are no advantages of research in interior design to me as a practitioner	74	78.7	8	8.5	8	8.5	2	2.1	1	1.1	1.37	.82

Spearman correlation coefficients were calculated to examine possible relationships between paired items (Table 4.26). Of the 28 correlations, 23 items were found to have significant relationships. All items having significant positive relationships show practitioners who agree with an advantage of research to the practitioner of any item are also more likely to agree research would be advantageous for any other item. In the case of a significant negative relationship, practitioners who agree to an advantage of research to the practitioner of one item would also be less likely to agree to an advantage for any other item.

Five pairs had moderately significant coefficients above +/- .50. A significant positive relationship indicated practitioners who agreed an advantage of research is that it creates solutions to help solve design problems were also more likely to agree research adds to my body of knowledge. A significant positive relationship also existed between agreement to there is no advantage of research in interior design and the advantage is unclear. This shows practitioners who agreed there are no advantages to research also agreed the advantages are unclear to them. A significant negative relationship existed between the advantage is unclear and adds to my body of knowledge. This indicated practitioners who are unclear as to the advantages of research are less likely to agree research adds to the practitioners' body of knowledge. Lastly, a negative relationship was found showing practitioners who agree they are unclear as to the advantages of research to the practitioner are also less likely to agree research creates solutions to help solve design problems.

Table 4.26
Correlation Matrix of Advantage of Research to the Practitioner

Advantage options		X_1	X_2	X_3	X_4	X_5	X_6	X_7	X_8
					Spearman Rho[1]				
Is a basis for developing new products	X_1	1.00							
Analyzes health, safety, and welfare issues	X_2	.582 (.000)	1.00						
Adds to my body of knowledge	X_3	.323 (.002)	.304 (.003)	1.00					
Creates alternative solutions, tools and/or technology to help solve interior design problems	X_4	.418 (.000)	.361 (.000)	.665 (.000)	1.00				
Enables the designer to develop an area of specialization	X_5	.315 (.002)	.229 (.028)	.315 (.002)	.399 (.000)	1.00			
Creates a body of knowledge unique to the profession	X_6	.159 (.131)	.162 (.122)	.497 (.000)	.474 (.000)	.396 (.000)	1.00		
The importance is unclear to me	X_7	-.280 (.007)	-.221 (.034)	-.577 (.000)	-.582 (.000)	-.321 (.002)	-.345 (.001)	1.00	
Research is not important to the interior design profession	X_8	-.183 (.080)	-.132 (.206)	-.451 (.000)	-.434 (.000)	-.132 (.208)	-.311 (.002)	.667 (.000)	1.00

[1]Number in parenthesis is p value.

To summarize and answer the research question a Spearman correlation coefficient test was performed between the advantage of research to the practitioner (Q10E) and the advantage items of research (Q2) (Table 4.27). Significant correlations were found for six of the eight relationships. Coefficients ranged from a high of .420 for solutions to problems to a low of -.256 for there is no advantage of research. Creates

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solutions to problems was the only moderate correlation, thus indicating practitioners who agree research is advantageous are more likely to agree the advantage is solutions to problems.

Practitioner Demographics and Design Firm Encouragement

The purpose of this section is to address the relationship between respondent demographics and design firm encouragement of the components of the interior design profession. In addition, the perceived importance and advantage of the components to the profession and its practitioners are discussed.

Importance of Components of a Profession to the Interior Design Profession

Practitioner demographics as well as encouragement and financial support of the components of the interior design profession (state licensing, the NCIDQ exam, graduate education, and research) by the practitioners' firms may reflect in practitioners' perceptions of the importance of these items to the profession. Respondents were asked if their firms encourage graduate education, support/pay for higher education credits, encourage passing the NCIDQ exam, support/pay for the NCIDQ exam, and conduct research in house or contract out research. Results are displayed in Table 4.4. Responses to these items were then compared to importance scores for the components of the interior design profession to the interior design profession. State licensing had the largest number of significant associations, however the majority of the statistical tests (chi-square and Spearman rho) were not significant (Table 4.28).

Table 4.27

Correlation Matrix of the Advantage of Research to the Practitioner (Q10E) and the Advantage Items of Research (Q2)

	Advantage Items (Q2)							
	New Products	Analyzes Issues	Body of Knowledge	Solutions to Problems	Special- ization	Decision Justification	Advantage Unclear	No Advantage
Advantage Option (Q10E)				Spearman Rho[1]				
Research to practitioner	.194 (.064)	.103 (.326)	.364 (.000)	.420 (.000)	.261 (.011)	.300 (.004)	-.390 (.000)	-.256 (.013)

[1]Number in parenthesis is p value.

Spearman rho correlations were used to determine if there were relationships between age and experience and the perception of importance of components of a profession to the interior design profession. Results showed a negative relationship between both age and experience and the NCIDQ exam indicating the older the practitioner or the more experience a practitioner had, the less likely they were to perceive an importance to the NCIDQ exam ($r = -.232$, $p = .025$ and $r = -.250$, $p = .016$ respectively).

Chi-square analyses were used to determine if there were relationships between other demographics and firm support and the importance of components of a profession. Significant relationships were found for gender, having passed the NCIDQ exam, field of degree, professional identity, firm encouragement of NCIDQ, firm support of the NCIDQ exam, and firm conducting research in house (Table 4.28).

Women were more likely to perceive the accreditation of undergraduate programs in interior design ($X^2 = 6.61$, $p = .037$) and state licensing ($X^2 = 6.92$, $p = .031$) as important or very important than were men. Practitioners who have passed the NCIDQ exam ($X^2 = 6.45$, $p = .040$) are more likely to be neutral in their response to the importance of graduate education than those practitioners who had not. Practitioners who have their highest degree in interior design are more likely to view the accreditation of undergraduate interior design programs ($X^2 = 12.95$, $p = .012$) as important or very important than practitioners who had their highest degree in another field. Concerning professional identification, those practitioners who identified with interior design were more likely to perceive accreditation of undergraduate interior

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design programs (X^2 = 7.13, p = .028) and state licensing (X^2 = 9.04, p = .011) as important or very important than those who identified with interior architecture or retail interior design. With regard to firm encouragement, practitioners were more likely to perceive the NCIDQ exam (X^2 = 19.77, p = .001) as important or very important if their firms encouraged passing the NCIDQ exam. Furthermore, practitioners are more likely to perceive state licensing (X^2 = 10.09, p = .039) as important or very important if their firms pay for the NCIDQ exam. Lastly, practitioners are more likely to perceive research (X^2 = 10.87, p = .028) as important or very important if their firms conduct research in house.

Table 4.28
Significant Results of Demographics and Firm Support Related to Importance of Components of a Profession to the Profession

Demographics and Firm Support	Importance to Profession	
	Test[1]	
	Chi-square	Spearman
Gender	Accreditation	-
	Licensing	-
Age	-	NCIDQ
Experience	-	NCIDQ
Licensing	none	-
NCIDQ	Graduate Education	-
Degree Level	none	-
Field of Degree	Accreditation	-
Professional Identity	Accreditation	-
	Licensing	
Firm Encourage Graduate Education	none	-
Firm Support Higher Education	none	-
Firm Encourage NCIDQ	NCIDQ	
Firm Support NCIDQ	Licensing	-
Firm Conduct Research	Research	-
Firm Contract Research	none	-
Member Professional Organization	none	-
Previous Member of Professional Organization	none	-

[1]Variables listed are those with an association/correlation significant at p ≤ .05

<u>Advantage of Profession Components to the Interior Design Practitioner</u>

Practitioner demographics and encouragement and financial support of the components of the interior design profession by the practitioners' firms may also reflect practitioners' perceptions of the advantage of these items to the practitioner. Respondents were asked if their firms encouraged the same items as above and as presented in Table 4.4. Responses to these items were then compared to advantage scores for the components of the interior design profession to the individual practitioner. The NCIDQ exam had the highest number of significant associations, however, the majority of the statistical tests (chi-square and Spearman rho) were not significant (Table 4.29).

Spearman rho correlations were negative between age and accreditation of undergraduate interior design programs, state licensing, and the NCIDQ exam. These relationships indicated the older the practitioners the less likely they were to perceive advantages to accreditation ($r = -.205$, $p = .049$), state licensing ($r = -.233$, $p = .025$), or the NCIDQ exam ($r = -.359$, $p = .000$). A negative correlation was also found between experience and the NCIDQ exam ($r = -.279$, $p = .007$). The more experience a practitioner had the less likely they were to perceive an advantage to either accreditation or the NCIDQ exam.

Chi-square analyses were used to determine if there were associations between other demographics and firm support and the advantage of components of a profession to the design practitioner. Significant associations were found for gender, level of degree, firm encouragement of NCIDQ, firm support of NCIDQ, firm conducting

research, and membership in professional organizations. The chi-squares showed men were more likely to perceive research as important (X^2 = 8.67, p = .013) than were women. Concerning level of degree, practitioners with a bachelor's degree (X^2 = 6.49, p = .039) were more likely to perceive accreditation of undergraduate interior design programs as advantageous or very advantageous than those with a master's degree. In regard to firm encouragement, practitioners were more likely to perceive accreditation (X^2 = 13.66, p = .008), state licensing (X^2 = 25.33, p = .000), and NCIDQ examination (X^2 = 26.95, p = .000) as advantageous if their firms encouraged passing the NCIDQ exam. In addition, practitioners were more likely to perceive state licensing (X^2 = 12.17, p = .016) as advantageous or very advantageous to the practitioner if their firms support/pay for the NCIDQ exam. Practitioners were also more likely to perceive research as advantageous or very advantageous to the practitioner if their firms conducted research in house (X^2 = 12.63, p = .013). Although most respondents were not members of a professional organization, practitioners were more likely to view state licensing (X^2 = 12.63, p = .013) as advantageous or very advantageous to the practitioner if they are currently members of a professional organization in interior design or architecture.

Table 4.29

Significant Results of Demographics and Firm Support Related to Advantage of Components of a Profession to the Practitioner

Demographics and Firm Support	Advantage to Practitioner	
	Test[1]	
	Chi-square	Spearman
Gender	Research	-
Age	-	Accreditation
		Licensing
		NCIDQ
Experience	-	NCIDQ
Licensing	none	-
NCIDQ	none	-
Degree Level	Accreditation	-
Field of Degree	none	-
Professional Identity	none	-
Firm Encourage Graduate Education	none	-
Firm Support Higher Education	none	-
Firm Encourage NCIDQ	Accreditation	-
	Licensing	
	NCIDQ	-
Firm Support NCIDQ	Licensing	-
Firm Conduct Research	Research	-
Firm Contract Research	none	-
Member Professional Organization	Licensing	-
Previous Member of Professional Organization	none	-

[1]Variables listed are those with an association/correlation significant at $p \leq .05$

In the final section of the questionnaire, practitioners were asked to write any further comments they would like to make concerning graduate education and/or research in interior design. Comments were grouped into six general categories based on the overall message of the practitioners. The categories were support for graduate education, research and continuing education, graduate education versus work experience, interior design degree versus a degree in another field, prestige and talent, research and teaching, and need of more information. Comments are included in full in Appendix G.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter summarizes the findings of this study. Then, recommendations based on the review of literature and these findings are made for various aspects of the profession. Lastly, implications for further research are discussed.

Summary

This study was designed to ascertain interior design practitioners' perceptions of components of a profession, with a focus on graduate education and research in interior design. The scope of this study was limited to practitioners employed in a qualifying list of the "100 Giants 1996", as listed by *Interior Design* magazine.

Limitations

The limitations for this study are the following

1. This study used practitioners from the "Top 100 Giants" by *Interior Design* magazine. Practitioners employed in the 100 giants may be a representation of these firms, but not of all interior design practitioners. In addition, these firms may employ specialists which also may not be a representation of all interior design practitioners.

2. Architects were removed from this study because their backgrounds could influence the outcome. In doing so, this study does not represent the views of all persons practicing interior design.

3. The sample for this study was relatively small in consideration of the possible number of interior designers employed in these firms.

Components of the Interior Design Profession

The findings demonstrated that, in general, practitioners perceive an advantage of most components of a profession for interior design. They also perceive an importance of the same components to the individual interior design practitioner. More than half of the practitioners agreed with the importance and advantage of the NCIDQ exam, research, state licensing, and accreditation of undergraduate programs in interior design. Graduate education was the professional component practitioners did not view as important or advantageous as the others. In regard to the NCIDQ exam, percentages (63.9% for importance to profession and 53.3% for advantage to practitioner) were much higher than a study by Baker and Sondhi (1989) surveying practitioners in the top 200 design firms as listed by *Interior Design* magazine. These researchers found 38 percent of their respondents indicated the NCIDQ moderately to extremely important. In addition, the importance and advantage of accreditation of undergraduate interior design programs was much higher (86.2% for the profession and 79.7% for the practitioner) than Baker and Sondhi's findings of 65 percent attaching moderate to extreme importance to FIDER accredited education for entry-level interior designers.

Close to one-third of the practitioners in this study perceived graduate education as important or advantageous to interior design or to its practitioners. In addition, nearly as many respondents gave graduate education a not important (one) or a two rating as gave it a four or five (very important) rating. Most often respondents were in the middle giving it a three rating (37.2% for the profession and 35.1% for the practitioner) in importance to the profession. This distribution of opinions concerning graduate education could signal a lack of general knowledge about graduate education and its place within interior design. Greenwood noted, however, that the "skills that characterize a profession flow from and are supported by a fund of knowledge that has been organized into an internally consistent system, called a body of theory". He went on to say "acquisition of the professional skill requires a prior or simultaneous mastery of the theory underlying that skill" (1966, p. 11). A majority of interior design practitioners are not realizing the importance of research to fuel the body of theory nor graduate education's role in mastering theory and its ability to contribute to the body of knowledge upon which the profession of interior design is based.

The differences between how strongly practitioners perceived the importance of the components of the interior design profession and the advantages of the components to the practitioners ranged from six to nine percentage points. It appears practitioners believe the components are beneficial to the profession, however the individual practitioner may not want to make the commitment to achieve these components for themselves. Practitioners may also feel they have not needed some or all of these in their careers, so others would not need them either. Harmon-Vaughan stressed the

opposite of many respondents stating, "our responsibility as practicing professionals is to assure our future through legislation, education, and research" (1997, p. 106).

Statistically significant correlations were found between all combinations of accreditation of undergraduate interior design programs, state licensing, and the NCIDQ exam in regard to components of the interior design profession and the importance/advantage to both the profession and practitioners. The highest statistically significant correlation was found between the NCIDQ exam and state licensing for both the importance to the profession and the advantage to the practitioner. This relationship is not surprising in that a practitioner must have passed the NCIDQ exam to become a licensed/registered/certified interior designer in any state that has a licensing law, with the exception of grandfather clauses allowing some practitioners to become certified based on numbers of years experience.

Graduate Education

In regard to the importance of graduate education for the profession, nearly three-quarters of practitioners perceived the importance is to provide an opportunity for specialization. This is consistent with White and Dickson (1994) who found 83 percent of the practitioner leaders in their study strongly agreed that graduate education provides the opportunity for gaining more knowledge in specific areas. However, it is disconcerting that one-quarter to less than one-half of practitioners perceive an importance to four of the purposes of graduate education: increasing the knowledge base (providing the profession with new information); providing the degree necessary to

teach in colleges and universities; training in research skills; and training individuals to become consumers of research information. This is somewhat consistent with White and Dickson (1994) finding that 26 percent of their respondents felt the purpose of graduate education is to provide the requirements necessary for teaching and 16 percent noted graduate education is to develop the body of knowledge for the profession. Farrow noted "there is increasing need for interior design graduate programs. Designers must keep pace with clients and the competition. The supporting body of interior design knowledge is expanding, and advanced education is necessary to develop practitioners able to keep pace" (1995, p. 112).

It is interesting to note that nearly one-quarter to nearly one-half of the respondents were neutral in eight of nine of the graduate education response items. These neutral responses could signal a general lack of knowledge concerning the purposes of graduate education. This would also be consistent with the confusion White and Dickson (1994) experienced in their study of leading interior design practitioners and their forum of industry members, practitioners, and educators (Dickson & White, 1995). One-quarter of practitioners gave neutral ratings for both graduate education is unimportant and the importance of graduate education is unclear. These findings are also somewhat consistent with White and Dickson (1994) in that 38 percent of their respondents noted graduate education was not essential to the interior design profession.

Statistically significant relationships were found in 33 of 36 correlations between items within the importance of graduate education to the profession statements. This information revealed that those practitioners perceiving importance to the

profession are also more likely to perceive importance for most of the items provided. In addition, the considerable correlation between graduate education is not important to the profession and the importance is unclear would suggest practitioners do perceive an importance to graduate education.

When practitioners were asked to rank their perceptions of the most important reason for graduate education in relation to the profession, increasing the body of knowledge and providing credentials necessary to teach in universities tied for the highest ranking. In addition, nearly one-quarter of respondents gave provides credentials to teach a three ranking and one quarter gave it a one or least importance ranking. This may indicate practitioners have a variety of ideas as to what credentials are necessary to teach in a university setting. Rated as second most important was "create an expert in a specialized area of interior design" (30.9%). This is somewhat in keeping with earlier results stating 73.4 percent agree or strongly agree with "provides opportunities for specialization", though not as strong as one would expect given the high percentage earlier. Practitioners could be indicating that although graduate education allows one to specialize within the profession, it may not necessarily create experts. Prestige enhancement in the eyes of allied professions ranked most often as a three or a two, and half of the respondents ranked prestige enhancement in the eyes of the public as either a two or a one (least important). Practitioners could be saying prestige in relation to allied professions and the public is unimportant. These data could also mean they perceive that graduate degrees in interior design would not raise the prestige of the profession. In either case, practitioners perceive the least important

reason for graduate education in interior design is for prestige for the profession. These results are not consistent with White and Dickson (1994) who found 51 percent of their respondents rated graduate education as important to raise the prestige level of the interior designer.

Moderately significant correlations showed practitioners perceived three items related to importance of graduate education for the profession: provides the profession with new information that can be used in solving design problems; raises the prestige level of the profession; and provides opportunities for specialization in design areas.

In terms of the advantages of graduate education to the practitioner, more than one-half of the respondents perceived specialization, training in research skills, raising practitioner prestige, primary component for competent educators, and provides new information to solve design problems as advantageous. This differs somewhat from what practitioners perceived was important to the profession. A larger percentage of practitioners (22.3% percentage point difference) viewed training in research skills as advantageous to the practitioner than viewed it important to the profession. This could be indicating practitioners would be interested in gaining research skills from graduate education, however they do not necessarily think the profession at large needs to be trained in research skills. Many more practitioners (20.2% percentage point difference) perceived "providing the degree necessary to teach in universities" an advantage to the practitioner than perceived "a primary component for competent educators" as important to the profession. It appears as though practitioners would want to possess a graduate degree if they were to teach, but do not find it is necessarily a requirement for

anyone else who was teaching. Also, 17 percentage points separated the advantage of training to become consumers of research findings to the practitioner and training individuals to become consumers of research finding to the profession. It appears as though consuming research findings is perceived as beneficial for the individual practitioner, but of less advantage to the profession. Lastly, more practitioners perceive an advantage of graduate education as providing new information to solve design problems than perceive new information as beneficial to the profession. Perhaps practitioners believe they would use new information, but do not know if the rest of the profession would.

As with advantages for the profession, over one-quarter of the practitioners were neutral in their responses to many of the options. This could signal an uncertainty as to what the purposes of graduate education are for the interior design practitioner. Dohr warns, however, that "graduate education, in order to contribute fully to the field, must also be embraced and valued by the field and its practitioners" (1992, Fall, p.3).

Statistically, 64 of the 66 correlations among pairs of the advantages of graduate education for the practitioner proved significantly related showing practitioners who perceived one item as advantageous were more likely to perceive other items as advantageous. Greater breadth of knowledge had a high positive correlation with provides new information and a moderate correlation with emphasizes real world applications. This is in keeping with White and Dickson's (1994) study that found a large percentage of practitioners feel the type of graduate program most important and beneficial is one that emphasizes real-world applications and builds upon the

undergraduate experience. Of lesser importance in their study was the program oriented toward expanding the undergraduate studio experience. Greater breadth of knowledge also had a strong negative correlation with both the advantage is unclear and graduate education lacks advantages. This is not surprising if practitioners perceive graduate education as an extension of undergraduate education. A considerable positive correlation was found between the advantage is unclear and graduate education lacks advantages indicating practitioners believe they have a grasp on the advantages of graduate education in interior design. However,

> Society's professions generally are both challenged and built by graduate education within universities. New theories and specializations emerge and the knowledge base is continuously expanded by testing and dialogue. Yet our profession of interior design has not fully accepted its responsibility for supporting the research and development required to expand an emerging knowledge base. Very few practicing interior designers have graduate degrees, nor do they hire researchers with graduate degrees to be a part of their design practice. Research and development aimed at generating new knowledge just is not part of professional practice as we know it today (Creating a vision..., 1995, p. 86).

Consequently, practitioners need to accept responsibility for what they are proclaiming to understand as the advantages of graduate education in interior design.

When ranking advantages of graduate education to the practitioner, three items ranked as most important: credentials to teach, expanding knowledge base, and personal satisfaction from earning the degree. Develop a broader vision of the profession was also often ranked as most important.

In addition, moderate correlations revealed three advantages respondents perceived of graduate education to the design practitioner: greater breadth of design

knowledge; new information to solve design problems; and an edge over those with an undergraduate degree in interior design. These data are consistent with previous data indicating practitioners believe graduate education should expand the undergraduate studio experience, build upon the undergraduate experience, and culminate with a degree that allows one to teach.

Although practitioners are perceiving advantages of graduate education to interior design, it must be noted that a previous study of professional organization members from practice, industry, and education plus a random sample of designers from the top 200 interior design firms as listed by *Interior Design* found graduate education would gain significance in one to ten years (approximately 55%) and roughly 21 percent of those surveyed said it would never gain respect (Hasell & Scott, 1996). Another 40 percent noted graduate education would gain respect now. It is also interesting to note from that study that approximately six percent of educators and practitioners from the professional organizations and practitioners from the top 200 selected "graduate education gains significance" as one of the top three most important trends from 12 options given.

<div align="center">Research</div>

In regard to research, practitioners perceived more importance for research to the profession than they did the importance of graduate education. Nearly 90 percent perceived an advantage to research as creating solutions to solve design problems. This high percentage could be the result of a misinterpretation of the word "research" as was

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shown by Dickson and White (1993). They found practitioners often confused the process of research with the activity of gathering information.

In contrast to Dickson and White's (1993) study, the definition was provided for respondents on the questionnaire for this study. Over 85 percent perceived an advantage of research is to add to the body of knowledge of the profession. This high percentage seems to indicate practitioners were using the scholarly definition of research dealing with the production of new knowledge as opposed to the gathering existing information definition. The high percentage is also consistent with Dickson and White's (1993) findings noting 82 percent of their respondents agreed or strongly agreed the primary purpose of research is to advance the body of knowledge of the profession. Using either definition, two percent of practitioners agreed or strongly agreed that research is not important to the profession. This is encouraging to the profession in that, even if practitioners are using the gathering of information definition, changing practitioners' ideas of the definition of research is likely to be easier than educating them to value a new entity or change an existing perception about an entity, such as in the case of graduate education.

Over one-quarter of the practitioners were neutral in their responses to "creates a body of knowledge unique to the profession." One possibility for this could be that interior design has not developed or articulated enough of its own body of knowledge but instead relies on other professions for the bulk of its knowledge. Dickson and Carll (White) note "interior design education is not producing the quantity of research data required by the profession. This forces the profession to look elsewhere for the new

knowledge required to practice interior design" (1992, p. 1). Guerin (1992a) stated research has been drawn from theories based in psychology, sociology, architecture, and anthropology and applied these to interior design. Guerin also noted the problem with relying on other disciplines for design theory is sharing issues between interior design and other disciplines, instead of focusing on issues that contribute exclusively to building interior design theory. Consequently, practitioners may not be identifying new research information with the interior design profession.

Statistical analysis revealed significant relationships between all options within the advantages of research to the profession question, stating that practitioners finding an advantage to research in one option will most likely find an advantage of research in another option. This is encouraging in its implications for the profession. Research provides the basis of the profession offering "the language and the connections necessary to link knowledge and ideas about design concepts with the practice of designing" (Edison, 1986), which can be used to measure design effectiveness and improve understanding and effectiveness of design practitioners and designed spaces (Duvall, 1994), and document the value of interior design to the public. It is also encouraging that the strongest correlation was between research is not important to the profession and the importance is unclear showing those individuals who are uncertain of the importance of research are also the individuals who find research unimportant. However, practitioners who are unclear as to the importance of research should note, "scientific research requires scientific methods that most of us do not even profess to understand, or are able to provide. Yet reading and understanding the research that

exists, and implementing these methods is a benefit for both individual firms and the industry as a whole" (Duvall, 1994, p. 17).

Correlations revealed four significant relationships practitioners perceived as important for research to the profession: is the basis for developing new products; analyzes health and safety issues; adds to the body of knowledge; and creates solutions to help solve design problems. However, these correlations were less than moderate which could also be an indication of the uncertainty of the definition of research or of practitioners' perceptions of research. Ruga has this information for fellow design practitioners:

> There is research. There is practice. Both have an important place in the totality of a design professional's work....An enormous body of research is based more in theoretical issues of design. Typically, but not always, this research is conducted in academic settings as dissertations or funded studies. To utilize this information, one must first be aware that it exists. Second, one must figure out how to obtain the specific material that is useful to a particular project. Third, one must be able to critically evaluate the quality of the material. Fourth, one must be able to appropriately apply the material to the needs of the project (1996, p. 137).

When all practitioners and the profession understand research as stated above, interior design will have made real progress in the applicability of research information to design.

Regarding perceptions of the advantage of research to the practitioner, creating solutions to solve design problems and adding to the practitioners' body of knowledge were equally as strong in importance to the profession. Over three-quarters of the practitioners also perceived advantages of research as a basis of decision justification. In addition, more than half perceived an advantages to analyzing health and safety

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issues, specialization, and developing new products. Items respondents perceived were more important to the profession than to the practitioner were analyzing health and safety issues and a basis for developing new products. Perhaps this difference stems from a perception that they themselves do not analyze health and safety issues, they instead utilize codes that have been written for them to respond to these issues, just as they do not develop new products, but choose and utilize products developed by manufacturers.

Just over one-third of respondents were neutral concerning the advantage of research to develop an area of specialization. It is interesting to note that practitioners feel an advantage of graduate education is to specialize, but do not feel as strongly about developing an area of specialization through research. Perhaps practitioners are not aware research can be integral to graduate education, in turn allowing for specialization.

Significant statistical relationships were found for 23 of the 28 correlations between items of the advantage of research to the practitioner indicating practitioners who perceive an item as advantageous to the practitioner will most likely perceive most others as advantageous. Specifically, four advantages of research for the practitioner were significant: adds to my body of knowledge; development of a specialization; basis for decision justification; and creates solutions to design problems.

Practitioner Demographics and Design Firm Encouragement

Significant correlations were found indicating practitioner demographics and design firm encouragement and support of the components of the interior design

profession (state licensing, the NCIDQ exam, graduate education, and research), relate to practitioners' perceptions regarding the importance of the components of a profession to interior design. A Spearman correlation indicated the more experience practitioners had, the less likely they were to perceive an importance to the NCIDQ exam. One possible explanation for this is that practitioners who have worked in the field and have not needed an examination, consequently perceiving it as unimportant.

Chi-square analysis revealed practitioners were more likely to perceive the NCIDQ exam as important if their firms encouraged passing the NCIDQ exam. In addition, practitioners were more likely to perceive state licensing as important if their firms pay for the NCIDQ exam. This could indicate practitioners participate in and are encouraged by the suggestions and support of their employers. Lastly, practitioners were more likely to perceive research as important if their firms conduct research in house. Perhaps exposure to research within the firm educates practitioners as to its purpose and role within the interior design profession and its applicability to design projects.

Significant correlations were found indicating practitioners' perceptions of the advantage of components of a profession to interior design practitioners is related to practitioner demographics and design firm encouragement and support of the components of the interior design profession. Significant correlations showed the older the practitioner the less likely he/she was to perceive advantages to accreditation of undergraduate interior design programs, state licensing, and the NCIDQ exam. In addition, the more experience practitioners have, the less likely they are to perceive the

NCIDQ exam as advantageous. Perhaps these negative correlations stem from older practitioners with more experience perceiving they did not need accreditation, state licensing, and the NCIDQ exam to practice design, consequently they do not perceive these as advantageous. In addition, many interior design practitioners with years of experience do not have an undergraduate degree in interior design, much less from an accredited program. Ketter supports this explaining "conflicts develop with old-timers [when] any attempts to upgrade the nature of the work in a profession, through education and/or membership restriction, leave some practitioners feeling as thought they're being defined out of the system" (1992, p. 11).

Regarding firm encouragement and support, practitioners were more likely to perceive accreditation, state licensing, and the NCIDQ exam as advantageous if their firms encouraged passing the NCIDQ exam. It is possible if employers provide incentives for practitioners to pass the NCIDQ, therefore practitioners find it advantageous. It is also possible practitioners identify with the values of their employers finding what they suggest advantageous to themselves. Practitioners were more likely to perceive state licensing as advantageous if their firms support/pay for the NCIDQ exam. This could indicate practitioners realize the relationship between the NCIDQ exam as a requirement to become state licensed/certified/registered. Practitioners were also more likely to perceive research as advantageous if their firms conducted research in house. It is likely the exposure to research within the practitioners' firm communicates the applicability and purpose of research information. Lastly, practitioners who were currently members of a professional organization in

interior design or architecture were more likely to view state licensing as advantageous to the practitioner. One possibility for this relationship could be the information about licensing that professional organizations pass on to their members. Another possibility is those practitioners participating in the professional organizations are more aware of professional credentials such as licensing. Fowles attributes the interest by professional organizations in the professional development of designers to a "maturing sense of professionalism" (1984, p. 12).

Recommendations

Based on the review of literature and the results of this study the following recommendations are presented. First, recommendations are made for interior design and architecture firms. Additionally, recommendations are made for practitioners, the Foundation for Interior Design Education Research (FIDER), academic programs and educators, graduate students, and professional organizations.

Interior Design and Architecture Firms

It appears as though the encouragement and support of design firms in relation to the components of the interior design profession could push the NCIDQ exam, state licensing, graduate education, and research into the mainstream for interior design practitioners. It is imperative then that design firms both encourage and monetarily support the components of the profession for their interior design practitioners. Large companies such as the 100 giants supporting interior design credentials could send a

loud message to practitioners regarding what is important not only to specific firms and their requirements for employment and advancement, but to the profession as a whole.

Design firms can develop job descriptions for interior designers that incorporate the skills and competencies gained in graduate study. For example, research that is applicable to specific design projects can be conducted in house by interior designers. Consequently, this could expose designers to information pertaining to the purpose, importance, and advantage of graduate education and research in interior design.

Design firms need to document their work to be able to add information to the knowledge base of interior design. When appropriate research information is implemented in a design, firms need to measure and document results (e.g., a post-occupancy evaluation). For example, when workers are performing better, staying with a company longer, and benefiting from their environments, interior design will have proof of its effectiveness for the public and allied professions.

Design firms can support graduate education through paying higher wages for advanced degree holders. This could encourage many practitioners to investigate graduate education and possibly educate them as to the process and purpose of graduate education. Firms can also sponsor or contract graduate students to produce needed research information for their firm. This could expose other designers to research and possibly educate them concerning the purpose, importance, and advantage of research in interior design. It could also expose designers to the research process and educate them to the applicability of research to interior design. Lastly, it could expose practitioners to

graduate students and dialog could develop regarding the value, purpose, and importance of graduate education and research in interior design.

Practitioners of Interior Design

Based on the findings of this study, it is apparent interior design practitioners perceive the importance of the components of the interior design profession with the exception of graduate education. Practitioners of interior design must now take ownership of the various components interior design has developed to meet the requirements of a profession and acquire these credentials for themselves. A larger percentage of practitioners need to:

- become NCIDQ certified

- encourage and get legislation passed for state licensing

- support undergraduate accreditation through FIDER and the universities they identify with

- learn to consume research based information and utilize it in the workplace

- support graduate education through higher wages for advanced degree holders

- sponsor or contract graduate students to produce needed research information

- acquire a general understanding of the post-professional graduate degree

- pursue a post-professional graduate degree

It is not enough to say these things are important for the profession without wanting and pursuing them as a practitioner.

Practitioners also need to communicate to educators what research would benefit practice. Educators and graduate students can then produce this information for utilization in the field. In addition, joint research projects among educators and graduate students and business and industry would produce needed research that is applicable to the design problems interior design practitioners must solve. This will continue the cycle of research information and will assist in the growth and development of the profession of interior design.

Foundation for Interior Design Education Research

The Foundation for Interior Design Education Research should revise its standards and guidelines to incorporate a better understanding of research and graduate education at the undergraduate level. Educating future practitioners about the purpose, need, importance, and application of research and graduate education in interior design will create a new generation of designers with a different level of knowledge about research than current designers.

Academic Programs and Educators

Interior design programs across the country should standardize the nomenclature of interior design programs. The educational background data collected showed many different names for programs producing interior designers. This is possibly causing

confusion for the public and allied professions concerning what interior designers do. There is no question in anyone's mind what a physician is and has studied. Interior design should be no different. Also, a physician's specialization still equates with the medical field. Interior design should be the same. If someone says they are a healthcare designer, the recipient of those words should still be able to equate that with interior design. Programs could offer interior design degrees with a specialization, but should not waver from a standard title.

The professional level graduate degree should be eliminated. With few graduate programs contributing to the knowledge base and the immediate need for enhancement of a unique body of knowledge, interior design must draw upon all possible sources that are capable of producing research information. Interior design cannot afford to turn out graduate students who have little understanding of what research is and/or what its purpose is to the profession. The professional level graduate degree also contributes to the confusion of practitioners concerning the purpose of post-professional graduate education when they see practitioners with a graduate degree with no more interior design knowledge than a practitioner with an undergraduate degree.

It appears as though interior design educators have been talking to themselves when it comes to graduate education and research in the field. Graduate education and research are most often addressed in scholarly journals which cater to academia. A few articles written by educators have appeared in the professional organizations' publications, but is this helping interior design when so few practitioners are members of these organizations. This information must be published in the mainstream where

practitioners read it. This study identified the publications most often read by practitioners. These sources should be solicited to publish articles that prove the worth and importance of interior design and research information thus communicating and promoting the fact that a portion of research is produced at the graduate level.

Interior design faculty should be responsible for conducting research, publishing research information for their peers as well as for practitioners, seeking funds to support research, and expanding the theoretical base of the profession. In addition, educators can identify the body of knowledge of the profession, trace its evolution, and keep it up to date for the profession.

Graduate Students in Interior Design

Graduate students in interior design must take it upon themselves to make a contribution to the knowledge base of the profession. This can be done first, by enrolling in a post-professional program of study requiring a thesis, and second, by disseminating research created to practitioners through publication. In addition, graduate students must realize they are the future research producers whether they choose to go into a teaching or practice environment. They have been trained to produce research, it is now up to them to keep using that knowledge to benefit the profession.

Graduate students and master's degree holders must also be educators of the public and other interior designers as to what a graduate degree involves, teaches, and produces. Holders of a post-professional master's degree must prove their worth as

designers, but must also be accountable for the additional education they have acquired. Graduate students shall not gain the professional status and recognition they may feel they have earned until they contribute to their own areas of expertise. The graduate student's responsibility does not end with conducting a research project and analyzing the data. The results of the study must be communicated with educators and practitioners. Many times findings should also be communicated with the public, especially if they are to have the greatest impact on society as well as the public's perceptions of the interior design profession.

Professional Organizations

More research based information should be available through professional organizations. This can be accomplished through the organizations' publications and conferences. Making research based information available to practitioners through many different sources will expose them to research, its content, potential benefits, and possible applications. In addition, professional organizations should include the research based information practitioners have requested in the conferences they sponsor. Specifying which sessions are utilizing research based information will ensure the practitioner is receiving the type of information they want.

Professional organizations should support research activity through sponsorship of research projects, research grants, and the subsequent publication of the research based information. In this way, professional organizations will contribute to the

knowledge base of the profession through the development, identification, and dissemination of research based information.

Professional organizations should also strongly encourage passing the NCIDQ exam, state licensing, research, and graduate education. It has been shown there is a relationship between professional organization membership and perceived importance of licensing and examination. Professional organizations should continue to encourage these, but should also add the other components of the interior design profession. In addition, high standards and expectations of members of professional organizations can set a standard for the rest of the profession.

Interior Design Magazine Editors

Popular design magazines are one of the most referenced publications by interior designers. Magazine editors must realize their part in the portrayal of the interior design profession. Editors should broaden the range of articles incorporated into their magazines to include research based information that can be utilized by designers in their projects. Educational background should be a requirement for publication, and articles covering design installations should incorporate solutions to problems faced in the design process along with research based information that was utilized to complete the design.

Implications for Further Research

A greater understanding of each of the topics of graduate education, research, and the components of a profession is needed for the interior design knowledge base. It is necessary to determine the actual number of graduate programs offering professional level master's degrees, post-professional master's degrees, and what the expectations are of graduate students in the way of retrievable research based information. This information could give interior design further understanding as to the rate at which the knowledge base is being expanded through masters' theses, the number of students pursuing graduate education, and the levels of knowledge master's degree holders are acquiring. Further information is needed on how practitioners define "research" and what implications this word has to practitioners. An in-depth study of the other components of a profession is also necessary to truly gauge the status of interior design as a profession.

Research is needed to determine what the clients of interior designers are interested in, if educational level matters, and if they are willing to pay more for a highly educated or specialized practitioner.

Further investigation is needed to discover what conducting research and using research information means to the practitioners to clarify their understanding of the purpose, importance, and applicability of research in interior design. A study should be conducted to discover what practitioners know and understand of research journals, and what they consider scholarly.

A study of the magazines read by practitioners should be performed to investigate their perceptions of graduate education and research, their likelihood to publish articles based on research information, if educational levels are considered when seeking interviewees for articles, and the like. Editors should be interviewed to ascertain how they perceive research and graduate education, as well as the components of the interior design profession, and if their perceptions influence what is published.

A research agenda should be developed with input from practitioners, educators, and industry as the basis to create a large database of topics for educators, graduate students and industry.

A content analysis of information sources should be performed to discover if practitioners are in actuality receiving the information they are seeking from the various sources.

A study investigating to what extent undergraduate programs inform students about graduate education, use research based information, and identify the components of a profession is needed to explore the extent to which this education affects later perceptions of the three topics.

Further study needs to be conducted concerning effectiveness of design firm encouragement and support/payment for interior design credentials such as the NCIDQ exam and state licensing. What is the propensity of designers to pursue these credentials when their firm encourages and/or supports them?

These studies will further assist interior design in understanding and evaluating its status as a profession.

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02. Whether or not you have personally conducted research, in the list below indicate your level of agreement with each statement by circling the number that best describes your response:

An *advantage* of *research* in interior design to me personally as a *practitioner* is that it. . .

	strongly disagree				strongly agree
a. Is a basis for developing new products	1	2	3	4	5
b. Analyzes health and safety issues	1	2	3	4	5
c. Adds to my body of knowledge	1	2	3	4	5
d. Creates solutions, tools and/or technology to help me solve interior design problems	1	2	3	4	5
e. Enables me to develop an area of specialization	1	2	3	4	5
f. gives me a basis for decision justification	1	2	3	4	5
g. The advantage is unclear to me	1	2	3	4	5
h. There are no advantages of research in interior design to me as a practitioner	1	2	3	4	5

SECTION 2: GRADUATE EDUCATION

For the purpose of this section, please use the following definition of graduate education:
Formalized study beyond the undergraduate degree through specialization and
scholarly research which builds upon the existing foundation of the field.

03. Whether or not you have attended graduate school, in the list below indicate your level of agreement with each statement by circling the number that best describes your response:

The importance of *graduate education* in interior design for the *profession* as a whole is that it...

	strongly disagree				strongly agree
a. Provides the profession with new information that can be used in solving design problems	1	2	3	4	5
b. Raises the prestige level of the profession	1	2	3	4	5
c. Provides opportunities for specialization in design areas	1	2	3	4	5
d. Is a primary component for competent educators	1	2	3	4	5
e. Emphasizes real world applications	1	2	3	4	5
f. Trains individuals to become consumers of research findings	1	2	3	4	5
g. Trains individuals in research skills	1	2	3	4	5
h. The importance is unclear to me	1	2	3	4	5
i. Graduate education is not important for the profession	1	2	3	4	5

04. Whether or not you have attended graduate school, in the list below indicate your level of agreement with each statement by circling the number that best describes your response:

An *advantage* of *graduate education* in interior design for me personally as a *practitioner* is that it...

	strongly disagree				strongly agree
	1	2	3	4	5
a. Gives me greater breadth of interior design knowledge	1	2	3	4	5
b. Provides me with new information that can be used in solving design problems	1	2	3	4	5
c. Raises my prestige level as a designer	1	2	3	4	5
d. Provides an opportunity for study in specialized design areas	1	2	3	4	5
e. Provides the degree necessary to teach in colleges and universities	1	2	3	4	5
f. Provides me with an edge over those with an undergraduate degree in interior design	1	2	3	4	5
g. Justifies higher salaries	1	2	3	4	5
h. Trains me in research skills	1	2	3	4	5
i. Trains me to become a consumer of research findings	1	2	3	4	5
j. Emphasizes "real-world" applications	1	2	3	4	5
k. The advantage is unclear to me	1	2	3	4	5
l. Graduate education lacks advantages for me as a practitioner	1	2	3	4	5

SECTION 3: WHAT ARE YOU LOOKING AT?

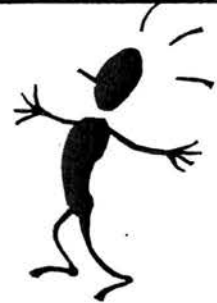05. Please list the three interior design publications (journals or magazines) you read or reference most often:

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

SECTION 4: WHAT ARE YOU LOOKING FOR?

06. In reference to the information sources below, what specific information are you most looking for if and when you use/go to these sources? Circle the appropriate response(s) using the following scale:

RI: Research information
PI : Product information
CEU: Continuing education credits
DI: Design ideas
NA: Not applicable

a. Manufacturers' representatives	RI	PI		DI	NA
b. Continuing education courses	RI	PI	CEU	DI	NA
c. Conferences sponsored by professional organizations	RI	PI	CEU	DI	NA
d. Trade magazines	RI	PI		DI	NA
e. Popular design magazines	RI	PI		DI	NA
f. Graduate education courses	RI		CEU	DI	NA
g. Internet/World Wide Web	RI	PI		DI	NA

07. On average, ***within the last two years***, circle the number of times in which you participated in the following:

a. Completed a graduate education course   0   1-2   3-4   5-6   7-8   9-10   11 or more

b. Completed a continuing education course   0   1-2   3-4   5-6   7-8   9-10   11 or more

c. Attended conferences sponsored by design organizations   0   1-2   3-4   5-6   7-8   9-10   11 or more

d. Read or referenced scholarly journals (different issues)   0   1-5   6-10   11-15   16-20   21-25   26 or more

e. Read or referenced trade magazines (different issues)   0   1-5   6-10   11-15   16-20   21-25   26 or more

f. Read or referenced popular design magazines (different issues)   0   1-5   6-10   11-15   16-20   21-25   26 or more

g. Met with manufacturers' representatives   0   1-5   6-10   11-15   16-20   21-25   26 or more

h. Browsed the Internet for design related information   0   1-5   6-10   11-15   16-20   21-25   26 or more

SECTION 6:   THE BIGGEST ADVANTAGE

08. Rank the following list in order of your opinion with "1"
being the least important or advantageous. *Please use
each number only once.*

The *importance* of *graduate education* for the *profession* is to: rank order
1(least) – 5(most)

_____ increase the body of knowledge of the profession
_____ enhance the prestige of interior designers in the eyes of allied professions
_____ create an "expert" in a specialized area of interior design
_____ enhance the prestige of interior designers in the eyes of the public
_____ provide individuals with the credentials necessary for teaching in universities

The *advantages* of *graduate education* to me as a *practitioner* are to: (rank only
your top 5)   1(least) – 5(most)
_____ enhance my prestige as an interior designer in the eyes of allied professionals
_____ become an "expert" in a specialized area of interior design
_____ enhance my prestige as an interior designer in the eyes of the public
_____ provide me with the credentials necessary for teaching in universities
_____ expand my knowledge base
_____ increase my marketability
_____ develop a broader vision of the profession
_____ keep up to date on interior design issues and trends
_____ gain personal satisfaction from earning the degree
_____ salary increase

SECTION 7: OPINIONS
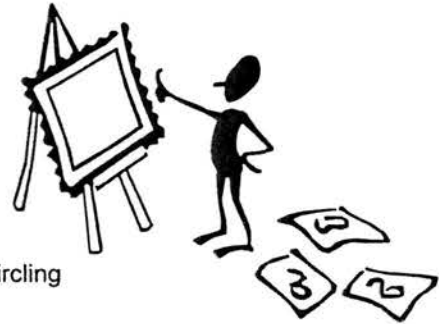
09. In the list below, indicate your opinion on the importance of each item for the *profession* by circling the number that best describes your response:

	not important				very important
a. Accreditation of undergraduate interior design programs	1	2.	3	4	5
b. State licensing	1	2	3	4	5
c. Examination (NCIDQ)	1	2	3	4	5
d. Graduate education	1	2	3	4	5
e. Research	1	2	3	4	5

10. In the list below, indicate your opinion on the advantages of each item for you as a *practitioner* by circling the number that best describes your response:

	not advantageous				very advantageous
a. Accreditation of undergraduate interior design programs	1	2	3	4	5
b. Licensing	1	2	3	4	5
c. Examination (NCIDQ)	1	2	3	4	5
d. Graduate education	1	2	3	4	5
e. Research	1	2	3	4	5

SECTION 8: ALL ABOUT YOU

Please check the correct response.

1. Gender: Female_____ Male_____

2. Your age:
_____under 25 _____26-35 _____36-45 _____46-55 _____over 55

3. Years as an Interior Designer?
_____0-3 _____4-6 _____7-10 _____11-15 _____16-20 _____over 20

4. Are you a state licensed/certified/registered interior designer?
_____yes (state(s)?)_____ _____no

5. Are you NCIDQ certified?
_____yes (year?)_____ _____no

6. Which of the following best describes the highest level of education you have completed?

_____high school diploma
_____some course work in an interior design program
_____graduated from a 2 year interior design program
_____graduated from a 2 year program in a related field
         specify_____
_____graduated from a bachelor's degree interior design program
_____ graduated from a bachelor's degree program in a related field,
         specify major_____
_____currently pursuing a graduate degree
         (specify masters or doctorate)_____
         (specify interior design or related field)_____
_____completed Masters degree in
         (specify)_____
_____completed Doctorate degree in
         (specify)_____

7. As a professional, do you most identify with?
         _____interior design
         _____architecture
         _____other (specify) _____

8. Does your firm:
   a. encourage graduate education?   Yes   No   Don't Know
   b. support/pay for higher education credits? Yes   No   Don't Know
   c. encourage passing the NCIDQ exam?   Yes   No   Don't Know
   d. support/pay for the NCIDQ exam?   Yes   No   Don't Know
   e. conduct research in house?   Yes   No   Don't Know
   f. contract out research?   Yes   No   Don't Know

9. Do you now belong to one or more professional interior design or architecture organizations?

_____ yes, (specify all) _____

_____ no

10. Did you belong to a professional organization(s) in the past, but are no longer a member?

_____ yes, (specify all) _____

_____ no

11. Do you hold an office in one or more of the professional interior design or architecture organizations:

currently? (circle one)   Yes   No
was it elected? (circle one)   Yes   No

in the past? (circle one)   Yes   No
was it elected? (circle one)   Yes   No

SECTION 9: YOU TELL US

Please use this space to add any comments that you may have concerning graduate education and/or research in interior design.

Continue onto the back page if necessary.

If you are interested in an abstract of the results of this study, please write your name and address below, or staple your business card, and they will be sent to you. Again, all individual responses will be kept confidential.
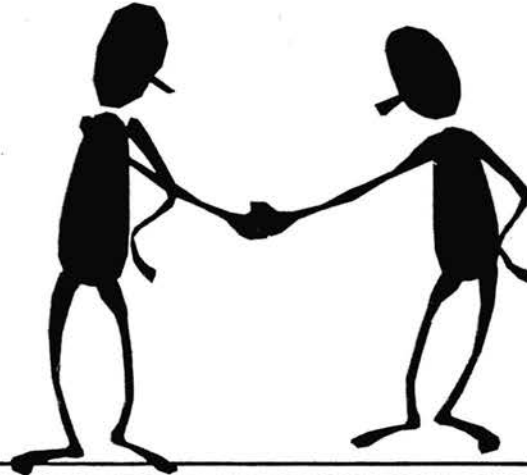
_____

_____

_____

YOU'RE FINISHED!!!

THANK YOU!!!

APPENDIX B

Telephone Contact Script
Voice Mail Contact Script

Telephone Contact Script

This is Patti Lawlor. I am a graduate student in interior design at Colorado State University. I'm conducting a study that involves filling out a questionnaire. I'm calling to find out if you would be willing to fill out a survey that I would mail to you, and also to distribute four surveys to other interior designers within your firm, preferably with varying amounts of design experience.

<If contact person agreed> I'll send the package out today. All directions you'll need and other information about the study will be enclosed. Thanks so much for your help.

Questions answered, for example: what is the study about? how long will it take? who do I distribute the other ones to again?

<If contact person does not agree> Thanks for your time. Have a good day.

Voice Mail Contact Script

Hi. This is Patti Lawlor. I am a graduate student in interior design at Colorado State University.

I would like to have the input of you and your interior designers for a study I am conducting. When I talked to the receptionist, she mentioned you would be the best person to talk to regarding this matter.

I'm going to send your firm a package of 5 questionnaires. One is for you and the other 4 should be distributed to 4 other interior designers in your firm (or you can distribute all five if you'd rather). The survey is short, it only takes about 15 minutes. All information and instructions are enclosed in the package, along with a phone number for questions.

Your opinions and those of the designers in your firm are extremely important, as only a small number of firms were selected for participation.

Thank you for your help.

APPENDIX C

Email Contact Script
Fax Contact Script

Email Contact Script

Subject: opportunity
Date: Tue, 25 Nov 1997 12:25:50 -0700
From: Patti Lawlor <email address>
Organization: Colorado State University
To: <contact person's email address>

Dear <contact person's name>,

My name is Patti Lawlor. I am a graduate student in interior design at Colorado State University. I am emailing to present you and your firm the opportunity to participate in a study. Participation would involve filling out a questionnaire which I would send to you through the mail (snail mail, that is).

<firm name> was selected from the 1996 100 Giants list in Interior Design magazine. My efforts are to assess the opinions of interior designers within the leading firms in the United States and Canada, of which yours is one. A select group of firms was chosen from the 'Giants' list to ensure the participation of competent practicing interior designers.

I would like to send 5 surveys to your firm; one for yourself and 4 others to be distributed by you to other interior designers within your firm (or you could distribute all 5 if you prefer). Each designer will return the questionnaire directly to me in a provided return envelope. The questionnaire, which deals with issues in the interior design profession, would take about 15 minutes to complete. Please agree to participate.

I look forward to your email response. Upon receipt of your reply, the five questionnaires will be sent. The input of designers in your firm is important.

I appreciate your helpfulness and will share results with participating firms.

Yours sincerely,
Patti Lawlor

APPENDIX D

Contact Person Cover Letter
Design Participant Cover Letter

Dear <contact person's name>,

I enjoyed talking with you on the phone today. Thank you for agreeing to participate in this study. As we discussed, there is one questionnaire for you and 4 to be distributed to interior designers in your firm with varying levels of experience.

<firm name>was selected from the 1996 100 Giants list in Interior Design magazine. My efforts are to assess the opinions of interior designers within the leading firms in the United States and Canada, of which yours is one. A select group of firms was chosen from the "Giants" list to ensure the participation of competent practicing interior designers.

The survey will take approximately 14-19 minutes to complete. You are assured complete confidentiality. You will see an identification number on the front of the return envelope. This is to track of the number of questionnaires returned. The envelope will be discarded upon receipt. Neither your name, nor the name of your firm will be placed on the questionnaire or associated with any of the information you provide.

When you have completed the questionnaire, simply fold it in half and return it in the enclosed envelope. Please return the questionnaire on or before January 9, 1998. Your participation is sincerely appreciated.

If you have any questions, please call us at 970.491.7046. We would be happy to answer any questions you might have.

Sincerely,

Craig Birdsong, IDEC, IIDA
Professor

Patti Lawlor
Graduate student

December 18, 1997

Department of Design,
Merchandising, and Consumer Sciences

150 Aylesworth SE
Fort Collins, Colorado 80523-1575
(970) 491-1629
FAX: (970) 491-4855
http://www.colostate.edu/depts/dmcs

Dear Design Participant,

<contact person's name> has agreed to have your firm participate in a study being conducted by the Interior Design program at Colorado State University. We sincerely appreciate your help, and ask that you fill out and return this questionnaire concerning graduate education and research in interior design. Your opinions will be very helpful in exploring these topics.

<firm name> was selected from the 1996 100 Giants list in Interior Design magazine. My efforts are to assess the opinions of interior designers within the leading firms in the United States and Canada, of which yours is one. A select group of firms was chosen from the "Giants" list to ensure the participation of competent practicing interior designers.

The survey will take approximately 14–19 minutes to complete. You are assured complete confidentiality. You will see an identification number on the front of the envelope. This is to track the number of questionnaires returned. The envelope will be discarded upon receipt. Neither your name, nor the name of your firm will be placed on the questionnaire or associated with any of the information you provide.

When you have completed the questionnaire, simply fold it in half and return it in the envelope it came in. Please return the questionnaire on or before January 9, 1998. Your participation is sincerely appreciated.

If you have any questions, please call us at 970.491.7046. We would be happy to answer any questions you might have.

Sincerely,

Craig Birdsong, IDEC, IIDA
Professor

Patti Lawlor
Graduate student

APPENDIX E

Follow-up Postcard
Elvis
Cows
Follow-up Email Script

Elvis in concert, c. 1976. This photograph was used for the cover of Elvis's second-to-last album, *From Elvis Presley Boulevard, Memphis, Tennessee. 1976.*

Dear Robin,

Recently you received a package survey titled "Graduate Education and Research in Interior Design." If you have completed and returned your copy of the survey, accept my sincere thanks. If not, please complete and mail it on or before January 9, 1998.

If the four surveys have been distributed to other designers in your firm, route this card to them to remind them to return the survey. If the 4 surveys have not all been distributed, please do so now.

IT IS VERY IMPORTANT TO HAVE THE OPINIONS OF THE DESIGNERS IN YOUR FIRM.

many thanks! Patti Lawlor

Ms. ROBIN McDONALD
ROBINSON MILLS : WILLIAMS
160 PINE ST.
SUITE 509
SAN FRANCISCO, CA
94111·5504

(970) 491·7046

USA 32

· C O W S ·

Dear Andrew,

Recently you received a package
of surveys titled "Graduate
Education: Research in Interior
Design." If you have already
completed and returned your
copy of the survey, accept my
sincere thanks. If not, please
complete + mail it on or before
January 9, 1998.

MR. ANDREW McQUILLIN
FITZPATRICK DESIGN
2109 BROADWAY
SUITE 203
NEW YORK, NY
10023. 2106

If the four surveys have been distributed to interior
designers in your firm, route this card to them to
remind them to return the survey. If the 4 surveys
have not all been distributed, please do so now. IT IS
VERY IMPORTANT TO HAVE THE OPINIONS OF THE DESIGNERS
IN YOUR FIRM.

© 1993 David Lorenz Winston

(970) 491· 7046   Many thanks! Patti Lawlor

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Email Follow-Up Script

Subject: follow up
Date: Wed, 10 Dec 1997 10:40:06 -0700
From: Patti Lawlor <email address>
Organization: Colorado State University
To: <contact person's email address>

Dear <contact name>,

Recently you received a package of surveys titled "Graduate Education and Research in Interior Design". If you have already completed and returned your copy of the survey, accept my sincere thanks. If not, please complete and mail it on or before December 19.

If the four surveys have been distributed to interior designers in your firm, forward this email to them to remind them to return the survey. If the four have not all been distributed, please do so now. IT IS VERY IMPORTANT TO HAVE THE OPINIONS OF DESIGNERS IN YOUR FIRM.

If you have any questions, or need more copies of the survey please email me at lawlorp@lamar.colostate.edu or call 970.491.7046

**so far, I have received one completed survey from your firm. :)

A very appreciative thank you.
sincerely,
Patti Lawlor

APPENDIX F

Magazines Listed
(Question 5 of questionnaire)

Publications Practitioners Read or Reference Most Often

Frequencies and Percentages

PUBLICATION LISTED	RESPONDENTS	
	Frequency	Percent
Interior Design	77	81.9
Interiors	45	47.9
Contract Design/Contract	31	32.9
Architectural Digest	28	27.8
Visual Merchandising and Store Design (VMSD)	12	12.8
Architectural Record	10	10.6
Architecture	8	8.5
Hospitality Design	8	8.5
Metropolis	8	8.5
Display and Design Ideas (D&D)	3	3.2
I.D. Magazine	3	3.2
Interiors & Sources	3	3.2
Elle Decor	3	3.2
Abitare	2	2.1
Facility Planning	2	2.1
World of Interiors	2	2.1
Wallpaper	1	1.1
Architectural Lighting	1	1.1
Building Design & Construction	1	1.1
Decoration Internacional	1	1.1
Design	1	1.1
Fast Magazine	1	1.1
Florida Design	1	1.1
Focus	1	1.1
House & Garden (HG)	1	1.1
Identity	1	1.1
Metropolitan Home	1	1.1
Product Design	1	1.1
Retail Image	1	1.1
Stone World	1	1.1
Topic specific trade journals	1	1.1
Veranda	1	1.1
Women's World Daily	1	1.1

APPENDIX G

Comments Received on Questionnaires

Comments received on the questionnaire are grouped by overall content of the comment. Each bullet indicates a different respondent's comment.

Support for graduate education, research, and continuing education

- Reasons for continuing education/research differ from individuals. I personally see it as a mind, eyes, and hands exercise to experience life and the improvements in other peoples lives.

- I feel that the graduate study is very important. In undergraduate, you get a broad education but not in depth in your profession.

- -Graduate education increases quality and knowledge level of design professionals.
  -Continuing education is a great way of keeping fresh and current with many issues related to the profession.
  -Research is a valuable tool providing advantages that design professionals can offer clients.

- A broad knowledge base seems inherently important to any design/architecture field. Course of study need not be and probably shouldn't be completely professionally derivative. Research is an invaluable skill that has real opportunity for development at the graduate level.

Graduate education versus work experience

- You should not only be asking practitioners what they think, the real issue is knowing what our customers (clients) want & expect from us, otherwise we are talking to ourselves. A graduate degree in this profession is of marginal real-world value to a client, it is no substitute for 2 years of experience with a firm.

- The best tool is knowledge. The more you know about the products that affect your area of work, the more efficient and creative you can be.

- Not having a graduate degree in ID it is difficult to answer this survey. On the job information is crucial.

- Graduate education needs to become more practical emphasizing use of materials, presentation skills, business skills.

Prestige and talent

- I am currently taking classes towards a graduate degree in interiors. I however can not find a graduate program which is challenging (or prestigious enough) in interior architecture to enroll in.

- If you don't have the creativity no amount of education will help in that area, but probably will in support areas.

- The graduate programs in most schools with an interior design program need to weed out the no talents. A graduate degree in interior design will not buy talent. Schools are wasting design principals valuable time by just handing out degrees.

- Graduate education should not be utilized to attempt to gain higher "prestige". It should be utilized to aid us in becoming more knowledgeable and skilled in being good problem solvers. With this being our main goal, "respect" and "prestige" will come. I think that all national organizations which represent architects and designers, (i.e. AIA) need to help the professionals to communicate better to the public exactly what our professions entail. This will aid professionals in gaining more educated and diverse clients as well as boosting the professional image.

- As a designer, one area that is often overlooked is the aspect of designing a space to compliment the "business" within. As for graduate degrees in general, I have seen many individuals with different skill levels. Completing a masters may show a level of focus but the individual must be able to demonstrate a high level of skill in creating a space that looks good, and is in good taste. Research is important but can fail if not combined with good "looking" design.

- One of the most important qualities to have is talent. Anyone can get a degree, but it is the talent that is the soul of interior design.

Research and teach

- I know little about graduate education in interior design. The only people that I know who have done are teaching... I do not see where it would help me in my career. I wish my firm would support NCIDQ and AIA more.

- I think graduate education is most important for research and those becoming teachers. However in this profession I don't think that it is regarded as very important - it doesn't guarantee rewards (salary increases, prestige) unlike other professions like business.

- Research is vital for designers to produce efficient and usable spaces, however much of the research is done and funded through manufacturers. Continuing education should be looked at as an accomplishment and deserves higher salaries, but does not. The only advantage is if you're going to teach and I believe all teachers of design should be required to have work experience. The key to understanding design is to realize it is constantly changing due to technology, trends and products. The only way to keep on top of it is to be out doing it and continue to utilize the research.

- The benefits in a day to day practice are unclear to me unless one is going to teach or do specific research.

- In my opinion, not enough time has been allocated for research. Hopefully this will soon change.

Need more information

- Is graduate research published? Who has access or how does one gain access to this research?

- I am not really familiar with the graduate programs curriculum and their benefits. I would like to learn more about it. My emphasis in interior design has always come from an architectural background and focus.

- I'd be interested in getting feedback on these results from more experienced professionals to gauge my future.