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ABSTRACT

THE IMAGE OF INTERIOR DESIGNERS: A STUDY OF CLIENT AND NON-CLIENT PERCEPTIONS AND ATTITUDES

by Bonnie Maas Morrison

The present study is an investigation of the image of the interior designer in a group of married women, 50 clients and 50 non-clients, all from the same upper-middle socioeconomic level of one community. The sample of one hundred women was acquired through a "snow-ball" non-probability technique where study respondents nominated potential respondents of similar, high socioeconomic backgrounds. The data for the study were gathered using a researcher administered interview schedule and a self-administered questionnaire.

The first hypothesis, that clients have a more positive image of interior designers than non-clients, was supported using a semantic differential format. Consistency, magnitude of mean difference, and patterning were the main points of specific comparison between clients and non-clients. The second hypothesis, that the more positive image clients have of interior designers is, in part, a consequence of the design experience, was supported using a seven point attitude change scale. Both hypotheses were further substantiated using a number of specifically operationalized attitude and opinion items. Attitude and background factors related to

the use and non-use of interior design services were studied in an attempt to explain why some persons use interior designers and others do not. The evidence suggests that though clients and non-clients have similar backgrounds and attitudes, clients have somewhat higher incomes, more valuable homes, and value a well decorated home slightly more than non-clients. Non-clients have more training in interior design and state more confidence in their own design abilities.

THE IMAGE OF INTERIOR DESIGNERS: A
STUDY OF CLIENT AND NON-CLIENT
PERCEPTIONS AND ATTITUDES

By

Bonnie Maas Morrison

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS	ii
LIST OF TABLES	v
LIST OF GRAPHS	vi
LIST OF APPENDICES	vii
Chapter	
I. INTRODUCTION	1
Statement of the Problem and Justification	1
Related Literature	4
Assumption and Hypotheses	7
Definition of Terms	8
II. THE DESIGN OF THE STUDY	11
The Main Variables	11
Image	11
Interior Designer	12
Designer Use: Clients and Non-clients	13
The Study Community	13
The Survey Instrument	14
The Sample	15
The Interview Procedures	18
III. THE FINDINGS	20
Introduction	20
The Study Findings	20
Hypothesis 1	20
Method of Testing the Hypothesis	21
Results of the Findings	22
Hypothesis 2	33
Method and Rationale for Testing the Hypothesis	33
Results of the Findings	34

Chapter	Page
Attitudinal and Background Data	38
Results of Reasons for Use or Non-use Responses	38
Results of Responses Concerning Importance of a Well Decorated Home .	41
Background Factors	43
IV. SUMMARY, LIMITATIONS, IMPLICATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS	46
LITERATURE CITED	56
APPENDICES	58

LIST OF TABLES

Table	Page
1. Background Characteristics of the Sample. . .	19
2. Client and Non-client Six Highest and Four Lowest Means of Items from the Semantic Differential Format	27
3. Client and Non-client Friends' and Relatives' Experience with Interior Designer.	28
4. Client and Non-client Comparison of Interior Designer Stereotypes.	30
5. Client and Non-client Reasons for Use or Considered Use of an Interior Designer and Non-client Reasons for Non-use of Interior Designers	39
6. Client and Non-client Comparison of Background Factors	44

LIST OF GRAPHS

Graph	Page
1. Client and Non-client Comparison of Means on Semantic Differential Format (S.D.F.) Measure of Interior Designer Image	23
2. Client and Non-client (Husbands and Wives) Attitudes Toward Interior Designer	35
3. Client and Non-client (Husbands and Wives) Attitudes Toward the Importance of a Well Decorated Home.	42

LIST OF APPENDICES

Appendix	Page
A. Letter of Introduction	59
B. Interview Schedule and Questionnaire . . .	61
C. Additional Findings (Tables)	83
A-1.--Specific Factor Related to Interior Designer Experience of Clients . . .	84
A-2.--Client Satisfaction in Using the Services of an Interior Designer . .	85
A-3.--Client Dissatisfactions in Using the Services of an Interior Designer . .	86

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Statement of the Problem and Justification

"We need to know a great deal more about human behavior and human responses . . . before we can put together better spaces for people. . . ." ¹ This is not the call of a behavioral scientist concerned with problems of human behavior and human environment; this is, in fact, a noted San Francisco interior designer, Wallace Jonason, speaking to a group of professional designers. ² The idea voiced here is not new, but the fact that it is voiced by an interior designer is of interest. The crucial question then becomes: have interior designers been more often concerned with creating interesting spaces than with understanding the people who must necessarily live and work in the spaces they create? A "'Think People' attitude" is the second call issued the same group by John Wheatmen, a former mentor of the researcher, who added that "People are the most important ingredient of any interior." ³

¹"News," Interiors, September, 1967, p. 22.

²Wallace Jonason, A.I.D. and John Wheatmen, A.I.D. (mentioned later) were guest speakers at a program of the National Home Fashions League (Northern California Chapter) during the Summer Home Furnishings Market in San Francisco, Summer, 1967.

³Interiors, op. cit., pp. 20, 22.

Though the above ideas were not the specific impetus for this study, the idea that if human behavior and human responses are important considerations to the interior designer when designing interior spaces for people, then this concern will be reflected in positive images and favorable attitudes toward the interior designer and the services they perform for people. The general objective of this study are to consider the relationship between the designer and his public, both the users of designer services (clients) and the non-users (non-clients). Specifically, this study will focus on the public image of interior designers and, in particular, whether the image differs between users and non-users of designer services, along with an attempt to explain how and why the image differs. Furthermore, the study will attempt to provide some insights on the factors involved in the use and non-use of designers services.

The present study is an important undertaking mainly for its practical applications. The practical supposition of the study is then that an understanding gained by practitioners in interior design which helps explain the nature and sources of client and potential client viewpoints related to interior design, will be helpful in designing service improvements, better training programs and improved public relations. "It is an unfortunate thing, but the most

important thing in any designer's office is a client."¹ The designer, just as any other professional, is largely dependent on achieving a positive popular image for his very existence. While interior design is a thriving profession, it is not difficult to find examples in the popular press, often in the form of humor, which promote a negative image or stereotype of the designer.² Are mostly negative stereotype aspects of the interior designer image actually perceived by the public? Does experience with interior designers affect the image perceived? These are crucial questions which the present study seeks to examine.

To this researcher's knowledge no studies have been done which attempt to examine the image of the interior designer, the influence use of designer services has on images, or the sources of the image. The present study is, then, a first exploratory step toward filling these important knowledge gaps. While in no sense definitive in either design or results, the study aims at providing some knowledge on the problems discussed above, as well as pointing up certain research and measurement possibilities worthy of further study. Though the present study is primarily practical in nature, it is not, however, irrelevant to

¹Francis Schroeder, Anatomy for Interior Designers (New York: Whitney Publishing, Inc., 1948), p. 48.

²Russell Lynnes, "What Did They Do Till the Decorator Came?" House Beautiful, October, 1965, p. 250.

broader theoretical and methodological concerns of students of occupations.

Related Literature

As indicated above no empirical research studies were found which focus directly on the image of the interior designer. The occupational literature found in the field of interior design had to do mostly with descriptions of the profession and the career opportunities it presents.¹ The few studies available on the images of other occupational groups give only limited insights into concepts, problems or methods which could fruitfully be used in the present investigation. Smigel reported in his postwar survey of occupational research, published in 1954 that "the area of occupational image was one in which little investigation has been done."² Rosencranz, who made an extensive search of literature dealing with occupational images since 1954, suggests that the main areas covered by occupation research have been (1) ". . . descriptions of specific occupations . . . all yielding quite complete pictures of the roles and

¹Victoria Ball, Opportunities in Interior Design and Decoration (New York: Universal Publishing and Distribution Corp., 1963); Suzanna Conn, Opportunities in Interior Decoration (New York: Grosset and Dunlap, 1951); Michael Greer, Your Future in Interior Design (New York: Richard Rosen Press, Inc., 1963); and, Ronald Allwork, Manual of Professional Practice (n.p., 1955).

²Erwin O. Smigel, "Trends in Occupational Sociology in the United States: A Survey of Postwar Research," American Sociological Review, Vol. 4 (August, 1954), 398.

way of life of persons holding such jobs . . . ,"¹ (2)
 ". . . the largest category of studies of occupational perception is that represented by the occupation ranking type . . . "² or occupational prestige studies. The most important point made by either the Smigel or Rosencranz reviews is ". . . the common assumption of the existence of images surrounding occupations."³

The concept of "image" varies considerably from ". . . centrally aroused sensations,"⁴ to ". . . perceptions . . . influenced by needs, interests, past experiences, and the capacity of the individual perceiver. And, further, perception is 'selective,' and is related to the perceiver's occupation, class, age . . . in short, his social background."⁵ Other leads on the concept of "image" related to the present study are provided in market research literature which reports studies of product images. These studies, because of their applied rather than theoretical emphasis, have more meaning for the present study, even though they

¹Howard A. Rosencranz, The Relation of Social References to Imagery of Occupational Life Styles (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Dept. of Sociology, Michigan State University, 1960), p. 8.

²Ibid., p. 9.

³Ibid., p. 16.

⁴Charles H. Griffitts, "Individual Differences in Imagery," Psychological Monographs, Vol. XXXVII, No. 3 (The Psychological Review Co., 1927), p. 1.

⁵A. Lindesmith and A. Strauss, Social Psychology (New York: Dryden Press, 1949), p. 65, quoted in Rosencranz, op. cit., p. 1.

seldom give careful definitions of the notion of image.¹ Clearly, there are no well accepted conventions for the concept of "image," though the notion is often regarded as a valuable, if vague, implement in the behavioral researcher's tool kit. In a situation, then, where the literature provides no concrete guidelines for defining a concept which nevertheless on general grounds of intuitive appeal, usage, and relevance seems worth studying, it is only possible to be somewhat arbitrary in definition. Consequently, this research defines "image" to mean the evaluative perceptions which attach to a range of various relevant general role-expectation dimensions of the occupational category "interior designer."

There are also no well accepted conventions for the measurement of image. Instruments for measuring image range from photographs used to determine perceptions of occupation according to facial characteristics,² to scales for ranking the prestige of occupational images.³ The market research literature provides specific attempts to

¹Willard R. Simmons, "Researching Images in the Marketplace," The Image We Market By, ed. Joseph C. Seibert (Oxford, Ohio: Bureau of Business Research, Miami University, 1960), pp. 7-16.

²Paul F. Secord, William Bevan, Jr., and W. F. Dukes, "Occupational and Physiognomic Stereotypes and the Perception of Photographs," Journal of Social Psychology, Vol. 31 (May, 1953), pp. 261-270.

³Lillian Wald Kay, "Social Norms as Determinants in the Interpretation of Personal Experiences," Journal of Social Psychology, Vol. 19 (1944), pp. 359-367.

measure product images and leaves little doubt as to the operational meaning of image. One study, in fact, provided an example of the use of the semantic differential format in measuring a product image.¹ Though this was not the specific stimulus for the development of the semantic differential format used to measure image in the present study, it lends support to the idea that "image" can and has been measured using semantic differential techniques.

Assumption and Hypotheses

The present study assumes that occupations such as interior design create public images that can be studied with validity, reliability, and in a quantitative manner using field survey techniques. The first hypothesis of the study is that persons who have used interior designer services (hereafter "clients") have more positive images of interior designers than non-users ("non-clients"). A commonsense implication of this hypothesis is, however, the notion that, if a profession is offering a service of value, persons who receive that service should become more favorably disposed toward the practitioners as a result of their experience, if indeed, their experience at the hand of the practitioner was a positive one. It is thus also important to investigate, in the case that the first hypothesis is supported, the question of whether the more positive image

¹William A. Mindak, "Fitting the Semantic Differential to the Marketing Problem," Journal of Marketing, Vol. 25 (April, 1961), pp. 28-33.

of the clients is, at least to some important degree, a consequence of their design experience or whether it is simply a reinforced manifestation of the positive image which clients brought to the design experience. Hence, the second hypothesis (which assumes support for the first) is that the more positive image clients have of interior designers than non-clients is, in part, a consequence of the design experience.¹ Support of this hypothesis only focuses on the explanation of one source of more positive designer images, the design experience. In itself the hypothesis does not provide an explanation of why some persons use designers and others do not. Beyond this formal hypothesis, then, this study will investigate both attitude and background factors which may offer leads on the question of why some women become clients and others do not.

Definition of Terms

The following list of terms and their definitions are offered here to set the stage for a better understanding in the ensuing chapters. Several of the terms listed will be dealt with directly in the next chapter in a more detailed manner as the main variables of this study.

¹The two hypotheses could be combined into one complex hypothesis: Persons who have used interior design services have more positive images of interior designers than non-users in part as a consequence of the design experience. From the standpoint of simplicity and workable strategy for research, however, the hypothesis is considered in two parts.

Image

The evaluative perceptions which attach to a range of various relevant general role-expectation dimensions of the occupational category "interior designer."

Interior Designer (Decorator)

"The interior designer and decorator is a person qualified by training or experience to plan and supervise the design and execution of interiors and their furnishings, and to organize the various arts and crafts essential to their completion."¹

Use of Interior Designer Services

When the consumer seeks and takes advise for the design and furnishing of his home, and further, when the interior designer, by some means, receives pay for the services rendered.

Client

The client is a consumer who has consulted with a professionally trained or experienced interior designer (decorator) in a personal interview in a studio, place of business or in the consumer's home which results in the designer being retained by the consumer to solve problems related to the design and furnishing of the home. In this study the client must have used the designer to the extent

¹Greer, op. cit., p. 21.

of \$500.00 for either design services or design related materials.

Non-Client

The non-client is a consumer who has never consulted with or retained a professionally trained or experienced interior designer (decorator) to solve problems related to the design or furnishing of the home.

Design Experience

The actual event or events where the interior designer (decorator) serves the client when designing and choosing furniture and accessories for the home.

Stereotype

Are the specific views, opinions and knowledge concerning the expected or actual design services elicited from clients and non-clients.

CHAPTER II

THE DESIGN OF THE STUDY

Main Variables

The independent variable of greatest interest in the study is the use of interior designer services, the two crude categories of use here being clients and non-clients. The main dependent variable of the study is the image of the interior designer. The variables controlled in the study through the manner of sample selection are sex, marital status, socioeconomic level (income, education, occupation) and locale: only presently married women of upper socioeconomic status in one suburban area within the city limits of the same community were interviewed.

Image

Image was previously defined as the evaluative perceptions which attach to a range of various relevant general role-expectation dimensions of the occupational category "interior designer." Since image is the most important as well as the most complex concept of this study, the operational definition of it appears just prior to the presentation of the findings on the basic hypothesis in Chapter III. In the present study the notion of image refers to the positive or negative kind of predispositions held by

clients or non-clients, which are quite general, and which are measured by the semantic differential format (Appendix B, questionnaire, p. 75). The use of the semantic differential format, as a measure of image, in the particular form it took for the study, allowed a simple and economic means for gathering image data. The measure also facilitated a comparison between client and non-client viewpoints, as gathering reliable responses from clients and non-clients alike was possible.

Several other kinds of client and non-client predispositional data were gathered and reported in this study. Usually of a more specific nature, these measures are relevant to further understanding designer image and designer use. The notions of "attitudes," "impressions," "opinions" and "perceptions" will be used to refer to these measures in a general and somewhat liberal manner.

Interior Designers

Interior designers and interior decorators were considered synonymous terms for the study, and were defined as: "a person qualified by training and experience to plan and supervise the design and execution of interiors and their furnishings, and to organize the various arts and crafts essential to their completion."¹ Interior designer-decorator was operationalized in the method of sample gathering and in

¹Ibid.

setting up appointments with prospective respondents. Persons nominated as clients were simply screened in the telephone conversation prior to setting up an interview appointment by asking if they had sought and used the services of a person fitting the above definition.

Designer Use: Clients and Non-clients

If further telephone questioning revealed that a designer had been used to the extent of no less than \$500.00 for design related services and/or designer-obtained goods in the last 10 years, the prospective respondent was identified as a "client" and an appointment for an interview was set up. Only nominees who had never consulted or used a designer were identified as non-clients.

The Study Community

The data for the present study were gathered in Madison, Wisconsin during May and June of 1967. One hundred and fourteen women (10 pre-test, 104 for study), from Madison were personally interviewed in their homes by the researcher. Madison, the state's second largest city, capitol of the state and home of the University of Wisconsin, is located about 80 miles from Milwaukee, the state's largest city, and about 180 miles from Chicago. The population of Madison was approximately 120,000 in 1960. Madison's central industries are education, government, light industry, medicine and trade. While the primary reason for the selection of Madison was

simple expediency (the researcher was in Madison during the data collection stage of the research), there is no reason to think that the special characteristics of Madison would influence the results of this study. At the very least Madison's special characteristics are only slightly different from Lansing's--the only other realistic alternative for data gathering, given the fact that the researcher had no resources other than her own. The size and characteristics of Madison allowed the supposition that an adequate sample of clients and non-clients could readily be obtained. Though no specific count of individual interior designers or decorators is available, 17 interior design concerns are listed in the Madison telephone book, compared to 14 in Lansing's telephone book.

The Survey Instrument

A copy of the interview schedule and questionnaire used in the present study is found in Appendix B. These instruments were developed on the basis of some insights gained in the literature, as well as some common-sense notions based on the kind of data required to answer the questions posed in the study. The instrument was pre-tested on a group of 10 upper-middle class women in Madison, known to the researcher (upper-middle social class crudely checked on the Warner-Meeker-Eells criteria). Five were clients and five were non-clients. On the basis of pre-test experience, questions were added, dropped, changed and re-ordered to accomplish

more relevant content and a more logical flow of ideas plus greater ease in handling the interview situation.

The Sample

Respondents were selected on the basis of a non-probability "snowball" technique. It is important to note that the non-probability nature of the sample makes the use of significance tests inappropriate: there is no way that the precise reliability of the present findings for a larger universe can be estimated in probability terms. As Phillips says:

From a strict point of view, of course, any generalization to a larger population on the basis of a non-probability sample is not possible because it is not possible to calculate the probability of Type I error, since the sample itself has no known probability of occurrence when compared with other possible samples.¹

Significance tests are thus not used in this study as a basis for making firm, discrete judgments about the "acceptance" or "rejection" of the hypotheses. Besides being the technically more accurate approach given the present sampling procedure, this approach is more appropriate in an exploratory study such as the present which seeks to pay heed to all available leads on knowledge rather than produce definitive answers to the questions posed. In an exploratory study it is not necessary to place negative judgments on otherwise interesting findings that do not meet high, arbitrary significance levels.

¹Bernard S. Phillips, Social Research (New York: The Macmillan Co., 1966), p. 267.

In terms of the way that the present sample "represents" something, the best that can be said is that every effort was made not to introduce special biases in the sample selection process, which could in turn affect the results. Beyond this it is only possible to make judgments on the data based on its consistency, patterning, and to interpret the differences and relationships of small magnitude conservatively. The only unequivocal answer to the question of the "generalizability" of the findings beyond the present sample lies in replication.

The snowball sampling technique is useful when there is little confidence that other sampling techniques (area and list sampling) will yield the needed variation in respondents (such as client and non-client). It is particularly useful when the respondents needed possess some "unique" or "rare" characteristic (as in the case of clients) and where some controls are introduced in the method of sample gathering. In some cases this can only be done by gaining a foothold on some respondents who possess the needed characteristics and using their knowledge and contacts to find other "like" respondents, a process implied in the "snowball" notion.

In the present study the snowball sampling technique was initially used when pre-test respondents and professors

in the University of Wisconsin School of Home Economics were briefed by the researcher and then asked to nominate persons they knew to be clients or non-clients of approximately upper-middle socioeconomic (income, educational, occupation and housing) level and whom they felt would be willing to be interviewed. Permission to use the name of the nominator in a letter sent to prospective respondents was also sought and obtained in all instances. A copy of the individually typed letter sent to all prospective respondents appears as Appendix A. Letters were sent, nominees subsequently contacted by telephone, and, in the case telephone screening revealed the person qualified as a client or non-client, an appointment and interview ensued. At the completion of the interview the respondents were requested to nominate two client and two non-client acquaintances of approximately similar income, occupational, educational and housing status. This process continued until a usable sample size of 50 clients and 50 non-clients was obtained. Only one nominee who qualified flatly refused to be interviewed (several, of course, who were willing could not conveniently meet or fit the existing appointment schedule of the researcher and her limited time in the city). However, four of the 104 interviews were discarded before the analysis: one respondent's answers were judged invalid, one respondent was found to be a widow, and two respondents were not considered upper-middle class from questionnaire information given.

Table 1 shows some of the basic characteristics of the sample. This is a sample of high socioeconomic level--upper middle class or better. It is also a relatively young group. Some interesting though relatively modest differences between clients and non-clients on these variables will be discussed later.

Interview Procedures

Respondents were adequately informed (vaguely, in order not to bias the data) of the nature of the study in the letter and ensuing telephone conversation. Thus, the interviewing proceeded almost immediately after assuring the respondents of the confidential nature of their answers, and after explicitly noting that "interior designers" and "interior decorators" were to be considered synonymous in the questioning.¹ On completion of the introduction, the general interview schedule portion was administered by the researcher, followed by the appropriate special client or non-client section, with the self-administered questionnaire done last. With few exceptions respondents grasped the questions well and cooperated easily. The interviews lasted an average of 30 minutes for non-clients and 45 minutes for clients.

¹The terms "interior designer" and "interior decorator" were considered synonymous in this study as a discernable difference between the terms is not common in lay language or understanding.

TABLE 1.--Background characteristics of the sample.¹

Characteristics	(N = 100)
Mean gross family income, 1966	\$20,980.00
Mean value of house and lot	41,950.00
Mean age of house	12.9 years
Mean size of house, not including baths	7.6 rooms
Mean number of children living at home	2.6 children
Mean age of husbands	41.9 years
Mean age of wives	38.9 years
Mean education of husbands (12 years = high school)	18.1 years
Mean education of wives (12 years = high school)	15.9 years
Husbands' occupation	
Percentage in business	49
Percentage in professions	50
Percentage in other occupations	1
Wives' employment	
Percentage outside the home	20
Percentage not outside the home	80

¹A more complete discussion of these background characteristics is given in the findings chapter, pp. 43-45, where differences between clients and non-clients on these items contribute to understanding use and non-use of interior designer services.

CHAPTER III

THE FINDINGS

Introduction

The findings of the present investigation into the image of interior designers will be reported in this chapter. The two hypotheses under consideration will be stated, the instruments used to test the hypotheses will be discussed, and presentation of the results will ensue. Supplementary data relevant to the hypotheses under consideration and which help explain the findings will then be presented.

Beyond the consideration of the two hypotheses and the related supplementary data, findings on attitudinal and background factors related to use or non-use of interior designer services will be presented. Additional findings of some general interest but not of specific relevance to the problem under investigation will be reported in Appendix D, p. 83.

The Study Findings

Hypothesis 1

Clients have more positive images of interior designers than non-clients.

Method of Testing the Hypothesis

A semantic differential format¹ (hereafter, "S.D.F.") was used to test the first hypothesis. Sets of 20 bipolar adjectives (hereafter, "sets of items") were designed to determine the image of interior designers by having respondents record responses on a seven point scale. Various qualities were tapped in an attempt to obtain a complete word profile of the characteristics of an interior designer. Such qualities as personality, professional characteristics, quality of service, expense and usefulness were used. Several of the sets of items were suggested in Phillips,² and Osgood, Suci, and Tannenbaum³ while other sets of items were designed by the researcher in an attempt to complete the word profile of the image of interior designers.

Clients and non-clients received specific, neutral, verbal instructions on how to respond to the S.D.F. Clients were instructed to think only in terms of the interior designer they had most recently used, non-clients were asked

¹The semantic differential was used in this study simply as a convenient format for gathering the data needed. It is fully understood by the researcher that this instrument can be used in more sophisticated ways in the measurement of "meaning," using factor analysis, etc. Using the semantic differential other than as a format is, however, beyond the scope of this study.

²Phillips, op. cit., p. 210.

³Charles E. Osgood, G. J. Suci, and P. H. Tannenbaum, The Measurement of Meaning (Urbana, Ill.: University of Illinois Press, 1957), pp. 37, 43, 45, 53-61.

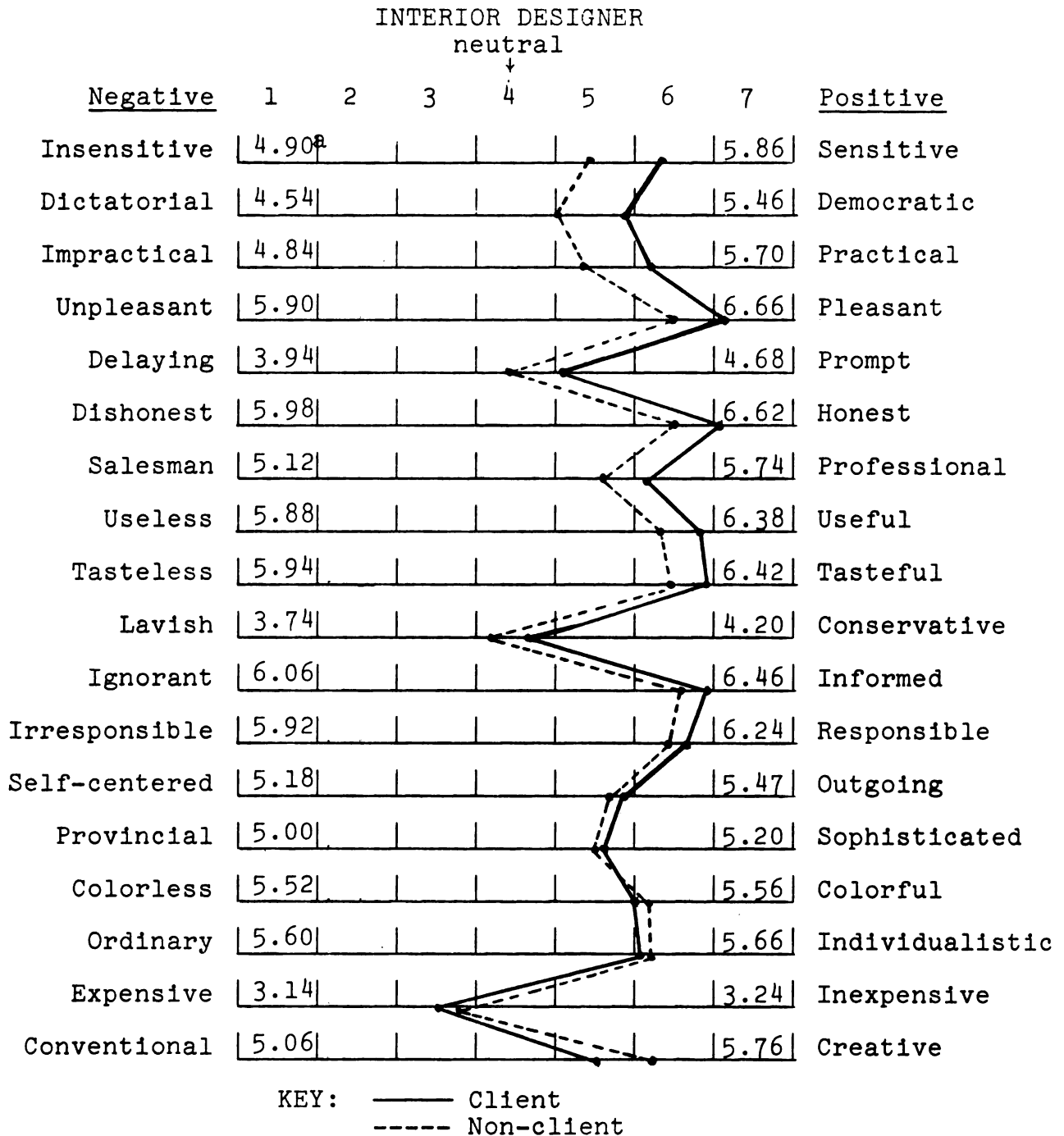
to think in general terms and to respond to what they thought interior designers were really like, rather than what they thought they "should be" or "ought to be." Both groups were also instructed to respond in an off-the-top-of-the-head fashion in an attempt to discourage lengthy deliberation over responses and in order to get actual feelings rather than rationalized judgments.

Results of the Findings

The specific concern in this section will be to present findings on the consistency, magnitude of differences, and patterning of the S.D.F. data, when comparing client and non-client images of interior designers. Consistency is defined as the relative frequency with which clients hold a more positive image (higher means) of interior designers, than non-clients. Magnitude of difference is defined as the amount of difference in means on each set of items observed between client and non-client images of interior designers. Patterning is defined as the similarity in the shape of the S.D.F. profiles shown graphically.

Graph 1 shows that on the whole clients have a slightly more positive image of interior designers than non-clients. Out of the 18 sets of items on the S.D.F.¹ used to

¹Only 18 out of the original 20 sets of items were used for the measurement and analysis of designer image. Two sets of items (feminine-masculine, artist-technician) were discarded because the meaning of these terms in the present context was often vague to respondents, and because there is no clear basis for deciding the positive or negative polarity of these items.



Graph 1.--Client and non-client comparison of means on semantic differential format (S.D.F.) measure of interior designer image.

^aMeans are reported in column 1 and 7 of graph to expedite a comparison between clients and non-clients. The vertical divisions on the graph read .5 in each number category.

test the hypothesis, clients have a more positive image on 14. Clearly, then, these data support the hypothesis with a high degree of consistency. The four exceptions to the general picture of more positive client images have to do with the cost of designers and the general sense in which the personality, perspective or contribution of the designer is "unique." Clients rate designers slightly more expensive, less colorful, more ordinary and less creative than do non-clients.

The average magnitude of difference in the means between clients and non-clients is, however, small. The mean differences are never one complete category (number) apart. The greatest positive mean difference (difference which supports the hypothesis, clients having higher means than non-clients), is 0.96 on the insensitive-sensitive item. The greatest negative mean difference is 0.70 on the conventional-creative item. On the average the positive mean differences are greater than the negative mean differences.

On the whole, clients and non-clients both are quite positive in their image of interior designers. On only one item (expensive-inexpensive) are both clients and non-clients on the negative side (below theological midpoint, four) of the seven point scale; on two other items non-clients only are below this point (conservative-lavish; delaying-prompt). On the expensive-inexpensive item clients are very

slightly lower than non-clients, the means being 3.14 for clients and 3.24 for non-clients. The fact that clients register a lower (more negative) mean on this item than non-clients and the fact that both the means on this item are the lowest of all the items lends support to the notion that the services of interior designers and/or perhaps materials purchased through the designer are perceived as expensive. It should be noted here that subsequent analysis will further substantiate the idea that economic considerations are important in determining who becomes a client or remains a non-client.

The average magnitude of client and non-client difference on a total image index (the individual item scores for each respondent summed for all 18 items) is likewise slight, but it further describes the data of Graph 1 in more complete terms and substantiates the hypothesis of slightly more positive client images. The client total image index mean is 96.7, compared with 93.0 for non-clients.

Graph 1 shows the shape of the response profile of clients and non-clients to be very similar. The graph orders the items, top to bottom, in terms of ranked differences in client and non-client means. If the first 14 means of the non-client profile were moved slightly in a mainly horizontal plane to the right and the last four non-client means were similarly moved to the left, the client

and non-client profiles would be virtually identical. Such horizontal movement could not create such profile identities if, for instance, the profiles in Graph 1 made a definite X or V picture, even though the latter would show consistency. This is only to say, of course, that the client and non-client profiles would not be shaped the same (form a common pattern) as is true in the present case. Table 2 illustrates the patterning in a different way: Clients and non-clients agree on the six highest ranking and the four lowest ranking sets of items, though the order of ranking these means for clients and non-clients varies slightly.

The above presented S.D.F. data on patterning showing the similarity of clients and non-clients suggests that both groups are getting their images in something of the same manner. One explanation of this might be (since both clients and non-clients nominated both clients and non-clients as prospective respondents for the study) that nominators (here actual study respondents) have close friends and neighbors from both client and non-client groups with whom impressions about interior designers are shared. An exploration into shared impressions and sources of information concerning interior designer services which tend to affect the designer image is presented in Table 3.

Clients and non-clients alike were asked if they had friends or relatives who had used the services of an interior designer and, further, if any discussion of this experience

TABLE 2.--Client and non-client six highest and four lowest means of items from the semantic differential format.

Item	Client (N=50) (Means)	Non-client (N=50)
Six highest means		
Unpleasant-pleasant	6.66	5.90
Dishonest-honest	6.62	5.98
Ignorant-informed	6.46	6.06
Tasteless-tasteful	6.42	5.94
Useless-useful	6.38	5.88
Irresponsible-responsible	6.24	5.92
Four lowest means		
Expensive-inexpensive	3.14	3.24
Lavish-conservative	4.20	3.74
Delaying-prompt	4.68	3.94
Dictatorial-democratic	5.46	4.54

TABLE 3.--Client and non-client friends' and relatives' experience with interior designers.

Respondents	Clients (in percent)	Non-clients
Respondents with friends or relatives who <u>have used</u> the services of an interior designer	100 (50) ^a	92 (50)
Respondents who <u>have discussed</u> the design experience with their friends and relatives	90 (50)	91 (45)
Among respondents who <u>have discussed</u> the design experience with their friends or relatives:		
a. Respondents with friends and relatives who have had <u>satisfactory</u> experiences with the interior designer	74 (45)	90 (40)
b. Respondents with friends and relatives who have had <u>unsatisfactory</u> experiences with the interior designer	4 (45)	0 (40)
c. Respondents with friends or relatives who have had <u>mixed</u> (satisfactory and unsatisfactory) experiences with interior designers, or who <u>don't know</u> what the experience has been	22 (45)	10 (40)

^aBase Ns in parentheses.

had taken place as well as what impression the client or non-client respondent had gained from this discussion about the satisfactory or unsatisfactory nature of the experience their acquaintances had.

Nearly all clients and non-clients reported having acquaintances who have used the services of an interior designer (Table 3). A high and nearly equal percentage of clients and non-clients also reported having discussed these designer experiences with their acquaintances (client percentage was 90%, compared to 91% for non-clients). What was the outcome of the discussion? Table 3 suggests that more non-clients than clients have acquaintances who have had satisfactory experiences with designers (non-clients reporting 90% of acquaintances with satisfactory experiences, compared to 74% for clients). Though this percentage difference is not great, the inference could be made that the influence of friends and relatives having satisfactory experiences with designers is reflected in the non-client's relatively positive image of interior designers. The finding does not, of course, help explain the more positive image of clients' to the contrary.

Besides the indication of shared impressions and sources of information just discussed above which are reflected in the patterning of the S.D.F. image data generally, more specific views, opinions, and knowledge (hereafter "stereotypes") about interior designer services were gathered and are presented in Table 4.

TABLE 4.--Client and non-client comparison of interior designer stereotypes.^a

Respondent	Stereotype Indicator	Yes	No (in percents)	Don't Know (in percents)
Client	Normally "better quality" purchased through the designer	44	44	12
Non-client		36	34	30
Client	Normally "better taste" purchased through the designer	56	30	14
Non-client		52	24	24
Client	Fees included in the purchases	82	12	6
Non-client	Fees expected above and beyond the cost of materials	28	36	36
Client	Did designer suggest replacement of valuable items of furniture?	18	82	--
Non-client	Would the designer suggest replacement of valued items of furniture?	20	70	10
Client	Were the designer suggestions impractical?	10	90	--
Non-client	Would the designer's suggestion be impractical?	18	72	10
Client	Was work done by the designer more costly than expected? Wife	32	68	--
Non-client	Would the designer urge more costly purchases? Husband ¹	43	57	--
		38	46	16
Clients	Did you understand <u>how</u> the designer was going to charge before using him?	82	18	--
Clients	Did your designer inform you honestly about the time it would take to get furniture and materials needed to complete the job?	88	12	--
Non-clients	Would a designer be overly critical of your present furniture and decoration?	18	68	14
Non-clients	Would the designer urge you to make changes you might like?	26	64	10
Non-clients	Do you think designers only take large jobs?	10	82	8
Non-clients	Would a designer limit your choices in furniture and materials?	46	52	2

^aClient N=50, Non-client = 50.

¹Wife answered for husband in all cases. See p. 32 for discussion.

These data are related to specific non-client expectations about designers and their services and, to the actual experiences clients had with the designers. Six items were designed to get non-client expectations compared to client actual experience with designers (the first six items on Table 4). Six additional items are included, though comparisons between clients and non-clients are not possible, which show non-client expectations and actual client experiences with designers.

There is no clear indication that "better quality" in purchases made through interior designers is expected by non-clients or actually received by clients. Percentage differences are small between clients and non-clients and "yes" and "no" responses for both are quite evenly divided.

Other items indicate clearly, in general, that non-clients do not have a negative stereotype of interior designers, and in fact the percentage differences between clients and non-clients are quite small on most items. Except on the item concerned with fees, where clients indicated a clear majority in the "yes" category (fees included in the purchases) and where non-clients are quite evenly divided among the "yes," "no" and "don't know" categories (that fees would be above and beyond purchases), clients and non-clients alike hold positive and basically similar views. Though it is observable from the data that clients are more positive (slightly higher client percentages in

positive direction in the "yes" or "no" categories, depending on the question), a majority or at least a plurality of non-clients are positive on most items. These comparative data are submitted as a further indication that on specific aspects of designer services clients and non-clients hold very similar views which reflect the more general indication presented above in the S.D.F. image data. This inference is also supported in the six non-comparative items where clients and non-clients separately adhere to quite positive views (higher percentages in the positive direction) concerning various actual or expected aspects of interior designer services (Table 4).

It has been pointed out that though clients hold slightly and consistently more positive views of interior designers, clients and non-clients alike hold quite similar, positive views. The foregoing discussion has been mostly an attempt to explain why the similarity in client and non-client images was found. Little, however, has been submitted to this point which would help explain why clients hold a slightly more positive image. The question is posed: Is the more positive image held by clients just a reflection of a prior held more positive image of designers which led them to seek designer services, or is it in part the unique product of the design experience? With this question in mind, the second hypothesis is offered. It is based on the idea that if designers are in fact giving

their clients a service of value, at least a part of the clients' more positive image of designers should be a product of the design experience.

Hypothesis 2

The more positive image clients have of interior designers is, in part, a consequence of the design experience.

Method and Rationale for Testing the Hypothesis

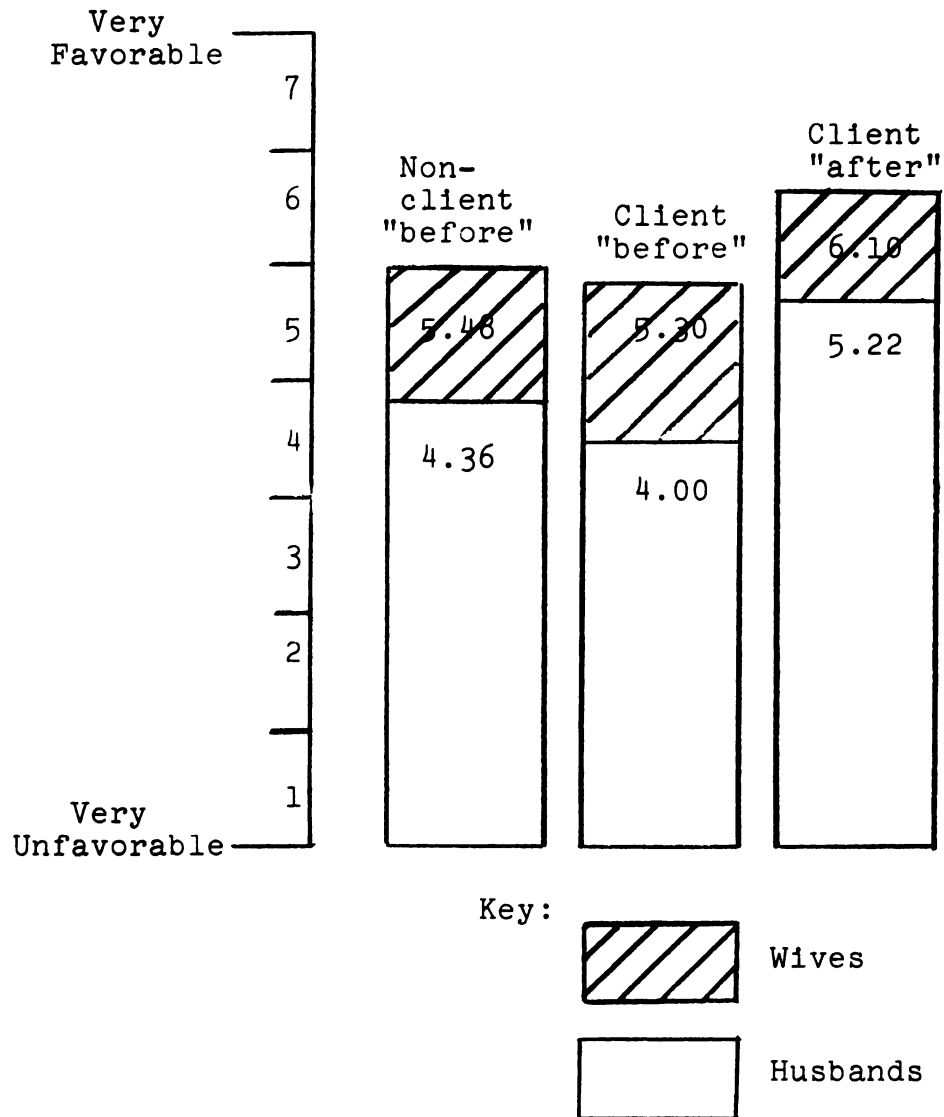
It should be noted at the outset that if the design experience contributed nothing to the development of the clients' image of interior designers, then it would be expected that clients would be more positive in their attitudes toward designers than non-clients before the design experience and further, that clients' attitude toward interior designers would not be more positive after the design experience than before. The method of testing the hypothesis was developed using a seven point attitude scale (see questionnaire, p. 76). It was used in a way which allowed the self-assessment of the attitudes (positive to negative) of clients (husbands and wives) toward interior designers before and after the design experience and, which further allowed comparative data to be gathered on non-clients' (husbands and wives) present attitudes toward interior designers. Non-client present attitudes are comparable to clients "before" attitudes, and therefore non-client attitudes on this scale are called

"before" attitudes. Client and non-client responses are, naturally, from the wives only, who in all cases assessed their own and their husband's attitudes. The data gathered using the attitude scale are presented in Graph 2.

Results of the Findings

It is interesting to note that when client husbands are compared with non-client husbands and wives with wives, clients do not report starting with more favorable attitudes toward interior designers than non-clients. In fact client attitudes are somewhat lower (less favorable) on the "before" comparison. This difference is not great: a mean difference of 0.18 between client and non-client husbands is found. A possible explanation of these somewhat surprising differences in starting attitudes of clients and non-clients, might be the previously mentioned fact that non-clients obtained their impression about interior designers from acquaintances who reported having had more satisfactory experiences with interior designers (Table 3). This does not imply that clients value a well decorated home less than non-clients, as we shall see in subsequent findings.

It is clear from Graph 2 that both clients and non-client wives are more favorably inclined toward interior designers than their husbands. This is true on both "before" attitudes of clients and non-clients and the "after" attitudes of clients. The magnitude of the mean difference on before



Graph 2.--Client and non-client (husbands and wives) attitudes toward interior designers.
(Means reported on graph)

use attitudes between client husbands and wives is 1.30, compared to 1.12 for non-clients. It is possible to see from this that non-client husbands and wives hold a more similar attitude before use than do clients, as well as being slightly more favorable.

In comparing client husbands and wives before and after use attitudes toward interior designers, it is interesting to note that client wives start more favorable and end more favorable toward interior designers than their husbands. However, the most interesting fact to note here is that the husbands' magnitude of favorable change is greater than that of the wives (husbands' mean change +1.22, wives' +0.90), according to wives' responses.

Basically favorable attitudes are reported by both clients and non-clients, husbands and wives, on both the before use attitude measure and the after use attitude measure. All before and after use attitudes toward interior designers are 4.00 or above (4.00 being the logical midpoint of the seven point scale). This last finding agrees with and supplements the previous findings on the S.D.F. image measure. The fact clients report starting with less favorable attitudes than non-clients and that client husbands and wives report more favorable attitudes after the design experience clearly supports the second hypothesis. There is the clear suggestion in these findings that the generally more positive client image of designers is in

large measure the consequence of the design experience. This conclusion is further augmented by the findings to the questions which asked clients how satisfied they and their husbands were with their designer. Most client wives (52%) reported themselves and their husbands (47%) completely satisfied; another 44% of the wives and 51% of husbands were generally satisfied, with only four wives and two husbands being dissatisfied or completely dissatisfied. Also, most clients (86%) reported that they would use the same designer again. This evidence suggests that the design experience was a highly rewarding one for clients. Perhaps they gained more realistic expectations about designers from hearing about the experiences of their acquaintances; perhaps they learned simply to select certain designers or types of design services which would lead to satisfactions.

The reasons given by clients for willingness to use or not use the services of the same interior designer are of some interest. Of the 43 clients who reported they would use the same designer again, 15 reported that they worked well with the designer and liked the designer as a person; 11 said they were satisfied with the results; six said the designer understood their needs and desires, while 11 clients gave a variety of other reasons for wanting to use the same designer. Of the seven clients reporting they would not use the services of the same designer, three reported the

designers were not realistic about expenses, two said that the designers did not correct the things which were not right, and the last two reported a mixture of these and other reasons.

Though the above data support the second hypothesis by clearly showing client satisfactions related to the design experience itself, these findings, however, do not suggest an answer to the question of why some persons use interior designers and some do not. The following section will be an attempt to shed some light on this question by offering data on attitudinal and background factors related to the use and non-use of interior designers services.

Attitudinal and Background Data

Results of Reasons for Use or Non-use Responses

This section will be an attempt to gain some insight into the question of who uses interior designers and why. First, some data gathered on client and non-client reasons for using or seriously considering the use or non-use of interior designer services will be presented.

Clients were asked to respond to an open-ended question concerning the reasons why they had used the services of an interior designer (see Appendix B, interview schedule, item 18, p. 65). The reasons given by the clients are presented in Table 5. The reason given most frequently (42% of clients)

TABLE 5.--Client and non-client reasons for use or considered use of an interior designer and non-client reasons for non-use of interior designers.

Reasons	Clients	Non-clients (percents)
Reasons given for use or considered use of interior designer:	(N=50)	(N=27)
Need help in making decisions about interior design problems	42	63
Designers have access to sources not available on local retail market	22	7
Desire to achieve a coordinated affect	18	15
Designers save time and energy	6	0
Other reasons	12	15
Reasons given by non-client for not seriously considering the use of an interior designer:		(N=23)
Respondent has confidence in own abilities, has her own ideas	--	52
Interior designer services are too expensive	--	31
Interior designers are too dictatorial	--	17

was that they needed help in making decisions about interior design problems in their homes.

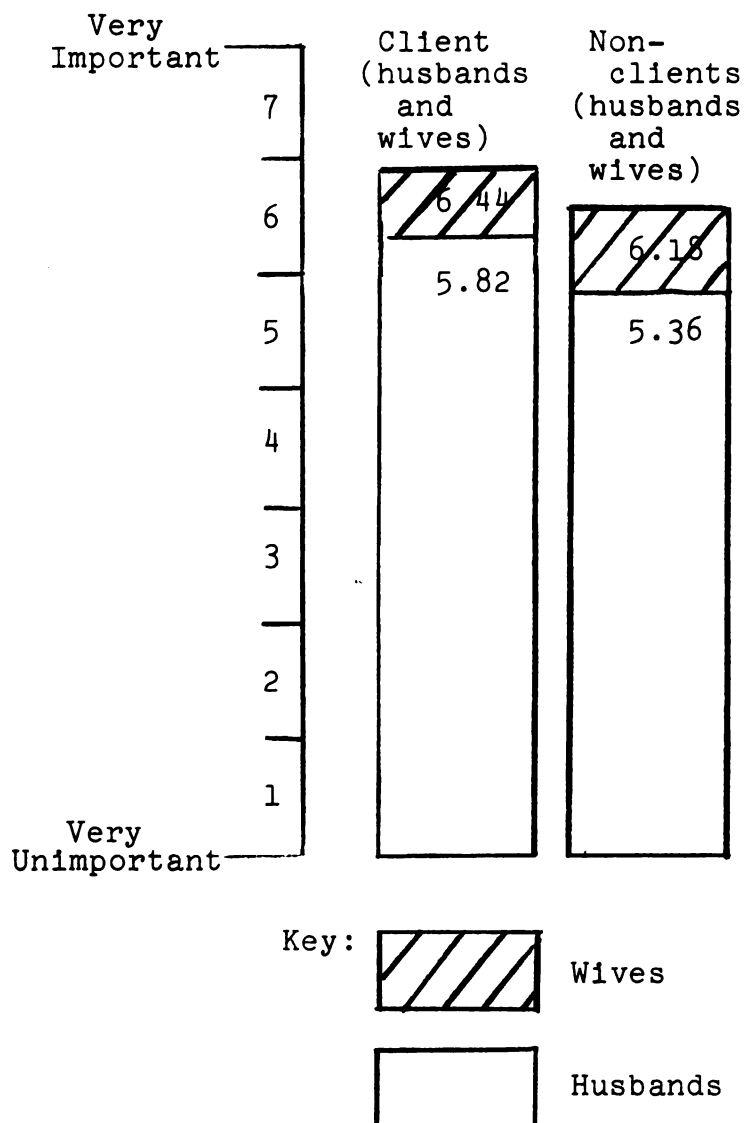
Non-clients were asked if they had ever seriously considered using the services of any interior designer and, if so, why or why not? (See Appendix B, interview schedule, item 43, p. 71). The reasons given by the non-clients for having considered using or not using designer services are given in Table 5. It is interesting to note that a little more than half of the non-clients (54%) said they had seriously considered using the services of a designer. The reason for considering use given most frequently by the non-clients who had seriously considered the use of designers services is also that they need help in making decisions about interior design problems in their home (63%). The response given most frequently for not using the services of an interior designer is that the respondent has confidence in her own abilities and has her own ideas (12 of the 23 respondents who had not considered use).

For clients and non-client alike then the most frequent reason given for the use or considered use of interior designer services is the need for help in making decisions about interior design problems whereas most of the non-clients who have not seriously considered using the services of an interior designer say that they have confidence in their own abilities. The important implication here is that the persons who used or seriously considered using a designer

do so, in part at least, because they simply do not have the confidence it takes to do a job of designing on their own; they need someone's help, i.e., they are more dependent on the ideas of others (in this case the designer). In contrast, most non-clients who do not seriously consider using an interior designer, exude a feeling of self-confidence and independence. The interesting question becomes, then, what factors can be isolated which help explain the fact that some persons have confidence in themselves, while others do not when it comes to decorating their homes? Some of the background factors presented later will bear on this question.

Results of Responses Concerning Importance of a Well Decorated Home

While it is reasonable to suppose that the degree of confidence a housewife has in her ability to do her own decorating will influence whether she is or will be a client or non-client, the value or importance she places on a well decorated home should also be a factor in the use and non-use of designers. Graph 3 shows the results of scale II (Appendix B, questionnaire, p. 77) on the importance that a well decorated home has for both clients and non-clients. Although it can be seen clearly that only slight differences separate clients and non-clients (both husbands and wives) on this item and that a well decorated home is of substantial importance to both groups (all responses being well over the logical midpoint 4), clients value a well decorated home



Graph 3.--Clients and non-clients (husbands and wives) attitudes toward the importance of a well decorated home. (Means reported on graph.)

slightly more than non-clients. The fact that clients (both husbands and wives) value a well decorated home even slightly more than non-clients, could, in part, help explain why clients overcame their slightly less favorable past attitudes toward interior designers and subsequently used the services of an interior designer. The differences between clients and non-clients are, of course, small. But such differences may have considerable importance in pushing a potential user over the threshold so that she becomes a client. A large proportion (54%) of non-clients, it will be recalled, had considered using designers: these may become clients in the future.

Background Factors.--Table 6 shows client and non-client comparisons on a number of background factors of possible relevance to the problem under consideration. While there is no doubt that both clients and non-clients come from the same general, high socioeconomic level, it is also the case that economic differences between clients and non-clients are the most noticeable and consistent ones in Table 6. Clients have slightly higher incomes and considerably more expensive (as well as larger and newer) houses. The latter finding would seem to reflect the greater importance clients put on a well decorated house, and perhaps also the greater need for help and advice in decorating that clients feel: they are dealing with a bigger investment in housing and a larger job of decision making in decoration.

TABLE 6.--Client and non-client comparison of background factors.

Background Factors	Client (N=50)	Non-client (N=50)
Mean gross family income, 1966	\$22,000	\$19,960
Mean spent on interior designer services or materials	2,660	--
Mean value of house and lot	45,600	38,300
Mean age of house	11.1 years	14.6 years
Mean size of house	7.7 rooms	7.4 rooms
Mean number of children living at home	2.4 children	2.7 children
Mean age of husbands	41.3 years	42.5 years
Mean age of wives	38.9 years	38.9 years
Mean education of husbands (12 years=high school)	17.6 years	18.5 years
Mean education of wives (12 years=high school)	16.0 years	15.8 years
Husbands' occupation		
Percentage in business	56	42
Percentage in professions	44	56
Percentage other	0	2
Wives' employment		
Percentage outside the home	16	24
Percentage not outside the home	84	76
Wives' training in interior design		
Percentage who have had training	26	38
Percentage who have not had training	74	62
Where wives received their training	(N=13)	(N=19)
Percentage in college	69	68
Percentage in adult classes	31	32

All of the data presented so far indicate that designers are perceived as expensive, and it is thus not surprising clients are apparently somewhat better able to manage such expense. It is worth noting that the \$2000 difference in clients' and non-clients' income matches very closely the average amount clients reported spending on furniture, material and services through a designer.

Table 6 also indicates that slightly more clients' husbands are engaged in business than in professions (academic, medicine and law, mainly and in that order of frequency). This finding would seem to support the stereotype notion that businessmen find an impressive home of importance for entertaining customers; professionals are probably more dependent on highly specialized skills than on personal contacts for their occupational advancement.

Finally, Table 6 shows that slightly more non-clients are employed outside the home and also that more non-clients have had training directly related to interior design skills. These data obviously reinforce and support what has already been noted concerning the greater independence and design confidence of non-clients.

CHAPTER IV

SUMMARY, LIMITATIONS, IMPLICATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

The present study was an exploratory attempt to investigate differences in the perceived image of the interior designer in a group of 50 clients and 50 non-clients, all women from the upper-middle socioeconomic level of Madison, Wisconsin.

The sample was acquired through a "snowball" non-probability sampling technique, where pre-test and study respondents alike nominated two clients and two non-clients as prospective respondents, known to be from similar, high socioeconomic backgrounds. The sample N was achieved when nominations slightly exceeded the 50 client and 50 non-client goal set up in the project proposal. Information was gathered from clients and non-clients alike in a researcher administered interview schedule and a self-administered questionnaire.

The first hypothesis offered in the study, that clients have more positive images of interior designers than non-clients, was supported using a measure of the designer image based on the semantic differential format S.D.F. Consistency, magnitude of difference, and patterning

were the specific points of comparison between clients and non-clients on the S.D.F. items. Clients were consistently more positive, though the magnitude of the mean differences was slight. The findings also reveal that the non-client images are by no means negative and, in addition, are very similar in patterning.

Supplementary data offered as a possible explanation for the small differences and the similarity in patterning found, show that nearly all clients and non-clients have acquaintances who have used the services of a designer and, a high percentage of both groups had also discussed the experience with their acquaintances. A larger percentage of the non-clients than clients reported friends or relatives who had satisfactory experiences with designers. This finding leads to the inference that the influence of friends and relatives having satisfactory experiences with designers may be reflected in the non-clients relatively positive image of interior designers.

Other supplementary data related to the specific designer expectations of non-clients and actual experiences of the clients, indicate clearly that non-clients do not have a negative stereotype of interior designers, though clients are more positive than non-clients on the majority of the items used to elicit these data.

The second hypothesis (which assumed support for the first) that the more positive images clients have of interior

designers than non-clients is, in part, a consequence of the design experience, was supported using a seven point attitude scale. The results of this scale show that clients (both husbands and wives) do not start with a more favorable attitude toward interior designers than non-client (husbands and wives) but that clients do, in fact, become more favorable toward interior designers after the design experience. Client husbands showed a greater magnitude of positive change "after" the design experience than the wives. The findings, however, show that neither clients nor non-clients (husbands or wives) have an unfavorable attitude toward interior designers, as both groups have "before" mean attitudes and clients have "after" mean attitudes above the logical midpoint of the seven point scale.

The second hypothesis was further substantiated by data gathered from clients which showed a high degree of satisfaction with the work done by the interior designers in husbands' and wives' attitudes. Also, a very high percentage of clients reported they would use the same interior designer again.

Attitude and background data related to the use or non-use of interior designers was offered in attempting to answer the question: Why do some persons use interior designers, while others do not? The results from these findings show that the reason given most frequently by clients for having used designers and by non-clients for having

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seriously considered using a designer is that of needing help in making decisions about interior design problems. The reason given most frequently by non-clients who had not seriously considered using the services of an interior designer was that of having confidence in their own abilities and their own ideas about the interior decoration of their homes. These findings lead to the inference that clients and non-clients alike who "need" help are dependent on the ideas of others, while the non-clients who stated a feeling of self-confidence are independent of the ideas of others.

Data concerned with the importance of a well decorated home were gathered on a second attitude scale. Clients were found to value a well decorated home slightly more than non-clients, which could, in part, explain why clients overcome their slightly less favorable past ("before") attitudes toward interior designers and subsequently used the services of a designer.

The background factors presented in a further attempt to explain why some persons are clients and some are not, reveal that though clients and non-clients come out of the same general high socioeconomic level (upper-middle class or above), client and non-client differences do help explain the use or non-use of interior designers. The economic differences found between clients and non-clients are the most apparent and consistent. In general, clients have slightly higher incomes and have considerably more expensive and

newer homes than non-clients. More clients than non-clients have husbands engaged in business. More non-client wives are employed outside the home and have more formal training in interior design than clients, which may, in part, explain the "confidence" that non-clients gave as a reason for not using the services of an interior designer.

These findings make it quite clear that clients have more money to spend on luxuries above and beyond normal family expenditures, as well as having a greater need for the services rendered by an interior designer, when compared to the non-clients. The larger incomes and investments in their homes and the greater demands made by the husband's business entertainment needs made the use of an interior designer both logical and feasible for clients.

Several limitations of the present study should be held in mind. This study was designed as a first exploratory step in an attempt to discover reliable ways and means to uncover information about the image of the interior designer. The nature and size of the sample used in this study does not allow precise generalizations on probability estimates of whether the findings will hold beyond this sample. Precise generalizations beyond this sample can only be made after future replications of this study have produced larger and more representative samples than this study achieved. The fact that the data were gathered only in the upper-middle socioeconomic level of one community, from a group of married women

who themselves nominated other like respondents, limits the scope of the study to a very homogeneous group whose patterns of interaction color somewhat the image of interior designers found. This researcher would suggest then, that a future study could be done which compares clients from the upper-middle socioeconomic level with clients and non-clients from middle or lower socioeconomic levels, to see if the findings of this study still hold true.

Though this researcher felt confident that the instruments used to measure the image and attitude items were basically valid and reliable, improvements could certainly be made. It was noted that two of the sets of items of the S.D.F. were found to be faulty and, therefore, were not used in the analysis of the present data. Perhaps, then, other sets of bipolar adjectives could be designed and more thoroughly pre-tested which would add strength and scope to the image measure used in this study. Some of the questions on the interview schedule and questionnaire could be deleted as irrelevant to the main problem of the study. Data from some of these items are presented in Appendix D. Other questions should be changed and some additions made to arrive at a more tightly knit and consistent comparison between clients and non-clients. The questions referred to here are the group of questions presented in Table 4.

Besides the suggestion for future studies given above, this researcher feels that a study which would compare the

images of designers held by interior designers and educators in the field of interior design (really their self image) with the images held by clients and non-clients of varying socioeconomic levels might also be a fruitful avenue for future research. An important hypothesis for future research might be that persons who have used the services of an interior designer have more positive images of interior designers than do the practitioners and educators in the field of interior design! It is this researcher's observation that designers are somewhat more defensive about their role than this study suggests is warranted. However, before any trumpets can be sounded in celebration of the state of perfection reached in the field of interior design (intimated in this study), further, more rigorous research must be designed and executed on the nature and sources of the image of the interior designer.

Though the limitations stated above restrict generalizations of the present findings, they do not prevent this researcher from offering some speculations based on the present study. Thus, in an attempt to fulfill the pragmatic goal of this study, some practical implications are presented.

The future growth of the profession of interior design depends on a positive public image. This is obvious. But what about the potential clients who, as this study shows, hold only slightly less positive images of interior designers

than clients and, who have seriously considered use of a designer, but who have not? The positive step from being a potential client to becoming an actual client must be specifically encouraged if the growth of the profession is to be sustained. What insights gained from the present study seem to bear on this problem?

The fact that even clients perceive the services of and/or the materials purchased through an interior designer as expensive, implies that many practitioners in the field of interior design are perceived as pricing themselves out of the reach of some persons (non-clients) whom as this study has shown hold views and values very similar to clients, but who have slightly lower incomes and housing levels. It must be understood that this researcher is not suggesting that professionals must necessarily lower the prices they charge for the very specialized service they perform or for the unique materials which can only be purchased through them. The established designers in all probability could not handle the increased business lower prices would bring. Designers apparently have more clients than they can handle even at the prices they charge if the data presented in Appendix C, Table A-3, p.86 is an indication. The reason offered most frequently by clients for the dissatisfaction experienced with the interior designer they used (among the two-thirds of the clients who experienced any dissatisfaction with their designer) was that the interior designers were not responsive to their calls for help.

One salient implication of the above may then be that more interior designers are needed in order to stimulate competition in the field and provide service to a somewhat broader income range of clientele. And, of course, in order to firmly establish and maintain the positive image of interior designers indicated in this study, those entering the field must be well trained, competent persons. Another implication might be that public relations and advertisement efforts sponsored by the professional associations should aim at playing down or at least rationalizing the costs involved. This could be done by stressing the quality of the purchases, by emphasizing the social and psychological rewards of having confidence in a professionally designed house, or, perhaps better yet, emphasizing the long run greater costliness of mistakes made in do-it-yourself designing.

In conclusion, keeping the limitations of the present research in mind, this study indicates that persons (clients) who have used design services have a more positive image of interior designers than those persons who have not used a design service. In addition, there is evidence that the more positive image found was, in fact, the consequence of the design experience. Though clients have a more positive image of interior designers than non-clients, it must also be pointed out that non-clients are not negative in their images or attitudes about interior designers, and

non-clients have only slightly less positive images of interior designers than clients. Why do some persons become clients while others do not? The answer to this interesting question seems to lie in the fact that non-clients have somewhat lower incomes and somewhat less valuable housing than clients and the fact that non-clients place slightly less value on a well decorated home. Non-clients also have more training in interior design and confidence in their own design abilities. On many background factors and attitudes, however, client and non-clients are similar. Will these potential clients ever become actual clients? It is hoped that this first exploratory study, done in the spirit of discovery, will become the stimulus and impetus for future more rigorous research that will, indeed, be able to answer much more emphatically this and other practical questions developed in the field of interior design.

The present study has dealt generally with the relationship of the interior designer and the public he serves or could potentially serve, on specific image and attitude items. Though no explicit evidence was gathered to indicate the extent to which the interior designers themselves are concerned with human behavior and human responses when designing interior spaces; it can, however, be inferred from the data presented that the image and attitudes found perhaps would not have been as positive or as favorable if the interior designer had not been concerned with the needs of people.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A
Letter of Introduction

Date _____

Name _____
Address _____
City _____, State _____

Dear Mrs. _____:

I would like to introduce myself. I am a graduate student at Michigan State University. I am here in Madison for three months while my husband is a Visiting Professor in the Department of Rural Sociology at the University of Wisconsin.

While we are here I am collecting information for my Master's thesis. The thesis has to do with how women feel about using an interior designer when choosing furniture and accessories¹ for the home. I am going to talk to about 100 women in Madison, both those who have used interior designers and those who have not. I would very much like to have an interview with you. Mrs. _____ suggested that you might enjoy this experience and be able to provide me with valuable information.

The interview will take about one-half hour. All information collected will be held in strict confidence and will be used for research purposes only. I will be phoning you to set up an appointment at a time and place convenient for you.

Thank you for considering this request for your cooperation.

Sincerely,

Bonnie Morrison
1932 University Ave.
Madison, Wisconsin
(Phone 233-5793)

¹The researcher's intention here was to make a statement which could easily be interpreted by the layman as potential respondents. The researcher fully understands the more complicated nature of the interior design service.

APPENDIX B

Interview Schedule and Questionnaire

Study of the Image of the Interior Designer

Bonnie M. Morrison
Graduate Student
Dept. of T. C. R. A.
College of Home Economics
Michigan State University
Spring 1967

GENERAL INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

Col
1____ID
2____ID
3____ID
4 1 Deck

I would like to begin this interview by asking you some general questions about your home and family.

5. How many rooms does this house have (including finished basement or attic rooms, but not including bathrooms)? _____ # of rooms (8=8 or more) 5____
- 6,7. Approximately when was this home built? _____ # of years old 6____
7____
8. How many children, if any, do you have living at home? _____ # of children (8=8 or more) 8____

What are the ages and sexes of your children (oldest to youngest)? oldest _____ M F
_____ M F
_____ M F
_____ M F
youngest _____ M F

9. What is your husband's occupation? (specific: _____) Col

(interviewer also check best category)

1 _____ business

2 _____ professional

3 _____ other

9 _____

10. Do you currently have a regular job for pay outside the home?

1 _____ Yes

2 _____ No

10 _____

Now I would like to ask you some general questions about interior design.

11. Do you have any friends or relatives who have used the services of an interior designer?

1 _____ Yes

2 _____ No

11 _____

12. Have some of these friends or relatives discussed their experience with you?

1 _____ Yes

2 _____ No

12 _____

13. Would you say their experience with the interior designer has been, in general

1 _____ satisfactory?

or

2 _____ unsatisfactory?

3 _____ Don't know

13 _____

Col

14. Have you ever had any courses or training in interior design or interior decoration?

1 ____ Yes

2 ____ No

14 ____

15. Where? (check one)

1 ____ high school

2 ____ college

3 ____ adult class
(vocational school,
extension group,
Y.W.C.A., etc.)

15 ____

16. Do you feel that purchases made thru an interior designer would normally be of better quality than would be purchased otherwise?

1 ____ Yes

2 ____ No

3 ____ Don't know,
depends

16 ____

17. Do you feel that purchases made through an interior designer would normally be in better taste than would be selected otherwise?

1 ____ Yes

2 ____ No

3 ____ Don't know,
depends

17 ____

GO TO CLIENT OR NON-CLIENT INTERVIEW

Puncher: ____ put 9's in cols. 18-42.
____ put 9's in cols. 43-51.

INTERVIEWERS INSTRUCTIONS
FOR
QUESTIONNAIRE

SCALE ONE

1. I would now like you to register your present attitude toward interior designers on scale one. Please mark a line through the area on the seven point scale which best reflects your feelings.

All

Label the line you have drawn "A".
2. Now mark a line in the area which best reflects your attitude toward interior designers before you used one.

Client only

Label it "B".
3. This time mark a line in the area which best reflects your husband's present attitude toward interior designers.

All

Label this line "A₂".
4. Also mark a line in the area which best reflects your husband's attitude toward interior designers before you used one.

Client only

Label this line "B₂".

SCALE TWO (BOTH CLIENTS AND NON-CLIENTS)

1. Place a "W" on scale two which best reflects how important a well decorated home is to you.
2. Now place on the same scale an "H" in the area that you feel best reflects how important a well decorated home is to your husband.

SCALE THREE (BOTH CLIENT AND NON-CLIENT).

1. On scale III please draw a line through the approximate value of your house and lot at the present time.

SCALE FOUR (BOTH CLIENTS AND NON-CLIENTS)

1. Now please draw a line through your family's (husband and wife combined) approximate gross annual income (before taxes and social security) in 1966.

Study of the Image of the Interior Designer

Bonnie M. Morrison
 Graduate Student
 Dept. of T. C. R. A.
 College of Home Economics
 Michigan State University
 Spring 1967

CLIENT INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

Col

18. Why did you decide to use an interior designer? 18_____
19. Was your interior designer male or female? 1_____M 19_____
- 2_____F
20. Was your interior designer from a local firm or from outside the local area? 1_____local 20_____
- 2_____other
21. Did any of your friends or relatives recommend the interior designer you used? 1_____Yes 21_____
- 2_____No
22. Prior to using this interior designer did you see any work done by the designer? 1_____Yes 22_____
- 2_____No
23. Did your interior designer have any special training beyond high school for (his/her) profession? 1_____Yes 23_____
- 2_____No
- 3_____Don't know

Col

24. Was the interior designer you used a member of any of the professional interior design associations such as AID, or NSID?

1 ____ Yes

2 ____ No

3 ____ Don't know 24 ____

25. Was your first contact with the interior designer by phone, or in your home or in (his/her) place of business?

1 ____ phone

2 ____ home

3 ____ business

4 ____ other 25 ____

26. How many times did you go to the designer's place of business?

____ # of times 26 ____
 (8=8 or more)

27. How many times did the designer come to your home?

____ # of times 27 ____
 (8=8 or more)

28. Did you pay your interior designer an hourly fee, a fee included in the purchases you made, a flat fee for the job, or was some other method of payment used?

1 ____ hourly fee

2 ____ fee included

3 ____ flat fee

4 ____ other

5 ____ Don't know 28 ____

Col

29. Did you understand how the interior designer was going to charge before you started using (him/her)?

1 ____ Yes

2 ____ No

29 ____

30. Did the designer volunteer information about how he would charge?

1 ____ Yes

2 ____ No

30 ____

31. Now I would like you to look at this card and tell me which comes closest to your attitude about the work the interior designer did for you.

1 ____ Completely satisfied

2 ____ Satisfied

3 ____ Dissatisfied

4 ____ Completely dissatisfied

31 ____

32. Using the same card, tell me what you think is your husband's attitude about the work the interior designer did for you?

1 ____ Completely satisfied

2 ____ Satisfied

3 ____ Dissatisfied

4 ____ Completely dissatisfied

32 ____

33. Do you think the interior designer's suggestions were practical for your family?

1 ____ Yes

2 ____ No

33 ____

34. Was the work done by the interior designer more costly than you expected it to be?

1 ____ Yes

2 ____ No

34 ____

Col

35. Was the work done by the interior designer more costly than your husband expected it to be?

1 ____ Yes

2 ____ No

35 ____

36. Did the interior designer suggest replacement of any of your family's favorite pieces of furniture?

1 ____ Yes

2 ____ No

36 ____

What?

37. Did the interior designer inform you honestly about the time it would take to get furniture and materials needed to complete the job?

1 ____ Yes

2 ____ No

37 ____

38. How long did the designer say it would take to complete the job?

38 ____

39. How long did it actually take?

39 ____

40. If you had it to do over again
would you use the services of
the same interior designer?

	1 <input type="checkbox"/> Yes	2 <input type="checkbox"/> No	40 <input type="text"/>
Why?			
Why not?			

What one or two things satisfied you most about using the
services of the interior designer?

1.

2.

What one or two things were you most dissatisfied with about
using the services of the interior designer?

1.

2.

Col

41, 42. Approximately how much have you spent on furniture, materials, and service while using an interior designer?

\$ _____

41 _____

42 _____

What exactly did the interior designer do for you?

GO TO QUESTIONNAIRE

Study of the Image of the Interior Designer

Bonnie M. Morrison
 Graduate Student
 Dept. of T. C. R. A.
 College of Home Economics
 Michigan State University
 Spring 1967

NON-CLIENT INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

Col

43. Have you ever seriously considered using the services of an interior designer?

	1 ____ Yes	2 ____ No
Why?		
Why not?		

44. Do you think an interior designer normally charges a fee for his services above and beyond the price of furniture and materials purchased from him?

1 ____ Yes 2 ____ No 44 ____
 3 ____ Don't know

45. Do you think an interior designer would want you to replace items of furniture that you would not care to part with? Col
- 1____Yes 2____No 45____
- 3____Don't know
46. Do you feel that if an interior designer were to come to your home, he would be overly critical of your present furniture and decoration?
- 1____Yes 2____No 46____
- 3____Don't know
47. Do you feel that an interior designer would urge you to make changes which you and your family might not like?
- 1____Yes 2____No 47____
- 3____Don't know
48. Do you feel an interior designer would urge you to purchase furniture and accessories that would be more costly than you would purchase otherwise?
- 1____Yes 2____No 48____
- 3____Don't know
49. Do you think an interior designer would make suggestions for changes that would not be practical for your family?
- 1____Yes 2____No 49____
- 3____Don't know

Col

50. Do you think interior designers only take big jobs and would not want to undertake small jobs, for instance, just draperies, just carpeting, or just a few pieces of furniture?

1____Yes 2____No

50____

3____Don't know

51. Do you feel an interior designer would limit choices in furniture and materials more than if you decorated without using a designer?

1____Yes 2____No

51____

3____Don't know

GO TO QUESTIONNAIRE

Study of the Image of the Interior Designer

Bonnie M. Morrison
Graduate Student
Dept. of T. C. R. A.
College of Home Economics
Michigan State University
Spring 1967

GENERAL QUESTIONNAIRE

INTERIOR DESIGNER

Neutral



Colorful	_ _ _ _ _ _ _	Colorless	52	_____
Conventional	_ _ _ _ _ _ _	Creative	53	_____
Feminine	_ _ _ _ _ _ _	Masculine	54	_____
Technician	_ _ _ _ _ _ _	Artist	55	_____
Outgoing	_ _ _ _ _ _ _	Self-centered	56	_____
Sophisticated	_ _ _ _ _ _ _	Provincial	57	_____
Ordinary	_ _ _ _ _ _ _	Individualistic	58	_____
Professional	_ _ _ _ _ _ _	Salesman	59	_____
Pleasant	_ _ _ _ _ _ _	Unpleasant	60	_____
Delaying	_ _ _ _ _ _ _	Prompt	61	_____
Practical	_ _ _ _ _ _ _	Impractical	62	_____
Honest	_ _ _ _ _ _ _	Dishonest	63	_____
Irresponsible	_ _ _ _ _ _ _	Responsible	64	_____
Informed	_ _ _ _ _ _ _	Ignorant	65	_____
Sensitive	_ _ _ _ _ _ _	Insensitive	66	_____
Tasteless	_ _ _ _ _ _ _	Tasteful	67	_____
Useful	_ _ _ _ _ _ _	Useless	68	_____
Dictatorial	_ _ _ _ _ _ _	Democratic	69	_____
Expensive	_ _ _ _ _ _ _	Inexpensive	70	_____
Conservative	_ _ _ _ _ _ _	Lavish	71	_____

72 _____

74 _____

Deck 2

Col

1 _____

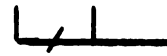
2 _____

3 _____

4 2 _____

SCALE I. ATTITUDE TOWARD INTERIOR DESIGNER

EXAMPLE:

 A_1 Very
favorableVery
unfavorable5A₁ _____6B₁ _____7A₂ _____8B₂ _____

9 _____

10 _____

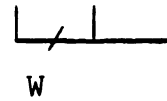
11 _____

12 _____

Col

SCALE II. IMPORTANCE OF A WELL DECORATED HOME.

EXAMPLE:

Very
importantVery
Unimportant

13W _____

14H _____

15 _____

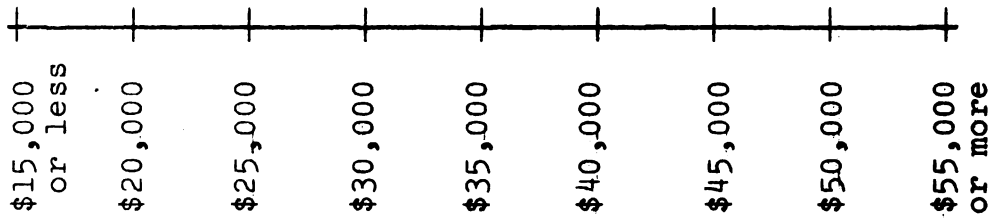
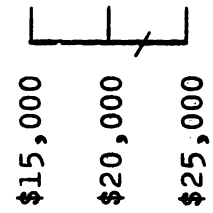
16 _____

17 _____

18 _____

SCALE III. PRESENT VALUE OF HOUSE AND LOT.

EXAMPLE:

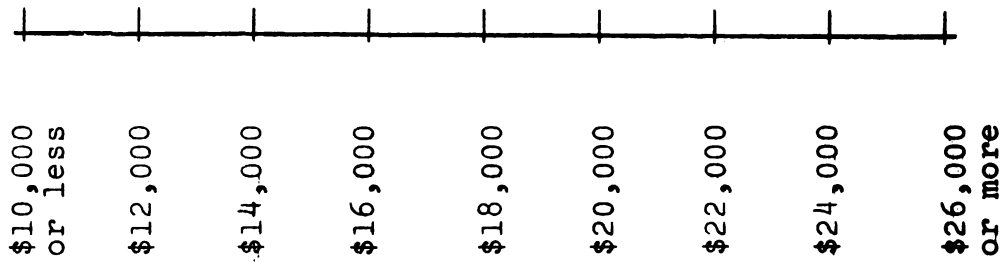
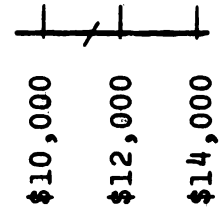


19 |

20 |

SCALE IV. GROSS FAMILY INCOME, 1966.

EXAMPLE:



21

22

Col

23, 24. What is your husband's age
(nearest birthday)? _____Years old 23_____

24_____

25, 26. What is your age
(nearest birthday)? _____Years old 25_____

26_____

27, 28. How many years of formal
education does your husband
have (12 years High school)? _____Years 27_____

28_____

29, 30. How many years of formal
education do you have
(12 years High school)? _____Years 29_____

30_____

31_____

32_____

33_____

34_____

35_____

50_____

1_____Client

2_____Non-client 80_____

APPENDIX C

Additional Findings (Tables)

TABLE A-1.--Specific facts related to interior designer experiences of clients.

Facts	Clients (N = 50)		
	Yes	No	Don't Know
Was your interior designer male or female?	40 ^a 60	-- --	-- --
	male female		
Was your interior designer from a local firm or from outside the local area?	90 10	-- --	-- --
	local other		
Did any of your friends or relatives recommend the designer you used?	58	42	--
Did you see any work done by the designer before using him?	56	44	--
Did your designer have special training beyond high school?	68	2	30
Was your designer a member of A.I.D. or N.S.I.D.?	46	10	44
What was your first contact with the designer?	62 14 16 8	-- -- -- --	-- -- -- --
	phone at home studio other		
Mean times clients went to designer's place of business	4.12		
Mean times designer went to client's home	4.66		

^aIn percents, except as indicated.

TABLE A-2.--Client satisfaction in using the services of an interior designer.

Sources of Satisfaction	First Mentioned (N=50)	Second Mentioned (N=50)
Designer informed, competent, gave tasteful suggestions, had good ideas	22 ^a	22
Designer time saving, had good resources, was efficient, gave good service, prevented errors	38	18
Designer pleasant, had helpful attitude, was considerate, cooperative	12	18
Client pleased with cost	4	0
Other specific sources of satisfaction	18	8
General satisfaction with experience	4	2
None mentioned	2	32

^aIn percents.

TABLE A-3.--Client dissatisfactions in using the services of an interior designer.

Sources of Dissatisfaction	First Mentioned (N=50)	Second Mentioned (N=50)
Designer incompetent, had bad ideas, bad taste, made mistakes	16 ^a	4
Designer slow, inefficient	10	4
Designer dictatorial, unresponsive to needs and calls	22	10
Work too expensive, designer unrealistic about costs	10	2
Other specific sources of dissatisfaction	6	4
General dissatisfaction with experience	0	0
None mentioned	36	76

^aIn percents.

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