



Integrating Performance-based Design into Interior Design Education from the Start

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While environmentally sustainable interior design (ESID) has become a major issue in interior design practise, the frequency with which interior designers make sustainable choices in real practise is still limited, according to the literature, especially when it comes to material selection. The goal of this study was to gain a thorough understanding of what constitutes a sustainable material choice, as well as to investigate the current supply and demand for green, sustainable, and Fair Trade (GSFT) products in the interior design field. In the first instance a desk study of currently available GSFT materials was undertaken.

Following this non-participant structured observation of accessibility of GSFT products and a survey on the supply of GSFT materials was undertaken. Finally, semi-structured interviews were conducted with retailers.

The findings show the wide range of GSFT products currently available in the market (fabrics, window treatments, surface materials, flooring, walls, and ceilings), and many of these materials and products can be found in the retail outlets surveyed during the study.

However, identifying GSFT items was not always easy, and the researcher had to sift through large amounts of data, relying on personal knowledge and manufacturer literature to determine the provenance of the materials sold. Sourcing goods in this manner is expensive and time consuming, and has been identified in the literature as an obstacle to ESID participation. Just a few of the retailers polled said they strongly encourage their customers to buy GSFT. This reluctance to promote GSFT may be due to a lack of awareness on the provenance of products on hand, as well as a perception that people are unaware of the advantages of sustainable or green materials, and therefore are not interested in ESID.



Retailers may want to promote GSFT materials more aggressively if they believe there is a higher demand for them. The study confirmed how difficult it is to find knowledge on content provenance in order to promote ESID. It would be easier to gain a basic understanding of sustainability as well as more current details about sustainable materials. Traditionally, the interior design profession has focused on a one-dimensional practise: providing architectural improvements to a client's interior space. Traditional interior design can be defined as conservative and backward, focusing solely on fashion and luxury design in small spaces; an approach that ignores energy conservation and emissions reduction, as well as the negative effects on consumers' mental and physical health and pollution. However, in recent years, interior design has undergone a significant transformation, with design practises focusing on creating safe and sustainable spaces for people to live, work, and play in. Clients are starting to understand their position and effect on the environment as society begins to recognise the interconnectedness of buildings, individuals, and culture in the development of an environmentally friendly built environment.

The studies cited above illustrate the importance of putting a greater emphasis on ESID education and CPD for designers and clients alike, especially when it comes to sustainable materials selection in design practises. While ESID is becoming more widely used in the field, it is clear that challenges and barriers are preventing interior designers from fully converting.