

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

**Isabel Makwara Mupfumira**

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

### **ABSTRACT**

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

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