"Picture This:" A Content Analysis of Popular Interior Design Trends On Pinterest

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INTRODUCTION

"The US economy is driven by consumer demand for goods and services, which accounts for approximately two-thirds of all US economic activity. The home furnishing industry's contribution to US economic activity in 2007 alone totaled $115.3 billion, up 58.4 percent from 1997 ($72.9 billion)" (Burnsed and Hodges. 2014:24). Many people use social media to spark inspiration in popular interior design ideas for their own homes. This study aims to analyze how current popular interior design trends differ on Pinterest.

People use Pinterest all over the world and can contribute to the online experience by posting images from their own personal taking or from blogs and websites. Pinterest is a free popular social bookmarking website founded in 2010 that allows users to share and like images. Users can browse through thousands of images in a wide variety of categories. Users can save the images by "pinning" what they like to their "board." Users usually organize their Pinboards by categories and can publically share their boards with other members. Choosing paint colors, organization of furniture, and where art is placed in homes can influence peoples' moods and depictions of one's self. There are entire studies and books written completely focused on trying to plan out the layout of your home to increase productivity and to make the most of the space you are working with. Sociology is the study of social behavior and while everyone has a place that they call home, analyzing interior design trends is an important topic to study that requires further sociological analysis.

LITERATURE REVIEW

There is a growing body of research that revolves around interior design trends. The studies that are done regarding on the topic of interior design cover a large variety of topics

and categories. Because there are so many different aspects of interior design, it can be difficult to search and find research that contributes to the sociological research that I am conducting. The research articles that I chose covers a great variety of topics that I specifically wanted to cover when exploring popular interior design trends. The articles explore many different ideas such as; home furnishing and layout, paint colors and the psychological effects they have, and how interior design affects and contributes to the feeling of home. Studying something as simple as interior design illuminates trends that are in society. The following section will describe key themes in the current research, discussing interior design and how popular interior design trends differ on Pinterest.

Research on interior design has joined the larger discussion in societal trends. There has been a drive towards eco-friendly characteristics of homes and a shift towards greener living. The trends that have influenced society this shift towards sustainable living have in turn affected interior design. Homes are an important way to show off an owner's lifestyle. Homeowners spend so much of their personal time putting in the effort to make their house feel like their home. Graham, Gosling, and Travis (2015) discuss how essential it is to study design and the psychological effects that rooms can have on the mind. They believe that, "…the home is more than a place in which an individual resides but rather a unique place where a person's past, present, and future selves are reflected and come to life" (Graham, Gosling, and Travis. 2015:346). Society influences everyone and using the creative outlet of interior design can shape a homeowner's identity and emotions. Read and Owens (2011) explain that the United States is a melting pot of different cultures, and that assimilation happens naturally in society. That phenomenon can be applied to interior design. They explain that different cultures and their influences on design trends in turn affects the United

States Western design trends. Cultures other than the United States has already taken steps towards more sustainable living and their designs spark creativity in U.S. designers.

Studying interior design specifically adds depth to our ability to answer how interior design trends differ on the social media site Pinterest. When someone is interested in interior design, they look at websites, magazines specifically for design, and ads for furniture. Colombo, Laddaga, and Antonietti (2015) specifically looked at Ikea and other brand furniture ads and how their participants felt when looking at the different images. Interior design is all about evoking emotion in the consumer and homeowners. What attributed to the overall positive feelings that the participants felt was the fact that the Ikea images had human figures seen in the images. The images of someone cooking in the kitchen and having a child coloring on the floor of a perfectly designed room had an overall more positive response from their participants. Burnsed and Hodges elaborate on Colombo, Laddaga, and Antonietti's findings by exploring why the home furnishing industry is so profitable. Their study found that, "…the key factors influencing participant's value perceptions were quality, comfort, and price, yet desires and wants were more salient than needs" (Burnsed and Hodges. 2014:37). Having high quality ads that provoke positive emotions and feelings contribute to the sale of furniture. While Ikea's ads sell their furniture, their message is about sustainability and moving towards a greener business. Their stores use solar energy and recycle. Their furniture reflects in their greener initiative by using environmentally friendly materials and less packaging. Decorating a house to feel like a home is incredibly important to people. The person decorating wants to decorate to their style but also wants their guests to find their space appealing. By following society's trends, furniture stores and ads have made it clear that they are doing their part to be green.

Finally, and most specifically, research on how emotion is affected by interior design is an important component when analyzing interior design trends. Reddy, Chakrabarti, and Karmakar (2012) explained that interior design and harmonizing a space with furniture can result in "a perfect interior space design." They found that elements like color, texture, forms and empty spaces, and lightning go into designing a space. Yildirim, Hidayetoglu, and Capanoglu (2011) focused on interior paint colors. They found that even something as simple as paint color could influence the feeling and mood in a room.

Overall, the analysis of interior design contributes to many psychological and sociological studies that cover a wide variety of characteristics of interior design. Researchers study the consumption of furniture and home goods, how advertisements of furniture speak to consumers, how a perfectly set up space can contribute to feelings of comfort and happiness and how something as simple as paint color can influence a person's mood and complete their feeling of a room. The above research articles contribute to the study of popular interior design Pinterest images by helping to dive deeper when analyzing an image. With the research in mind, I can now not just look at the images at face value, but I now have the knowledge to be able to pull apart and analyze why it is a popular image on Pinterest. All of the Pinterest images are an organic combination of all of the information that the research touched on. Using the chosen research articles, the information that they provide adds to an overall understanding on why the Pinterest interior design trend images are so popular and have so many likes.

DATA AND METHODS

This study utilizes an unobtrusive method to analyze how current popular interior design trends differ on Pinterest. I conducted a content analysis method of 60 popular Pinterest interior design images. The content analysis method is an unobtrusive method of analysis that analyzes research outside the social interactive life. I chose that mode of research because it is unobtrusive, meaning I was not involved with any people when conducting the study. I did not conduct any interviews or ask anyone their opinions on my research topic or use their responses in the research paper. Ultimately, I chose a content analysis method for this research project because the data existed independent of the research and it was an effective method of gathering data. For the purpose of this study, I will be using visual research to find patterns in the collection of 60 images. I chose the first 60 images that came up when I searched "popular interior design trends" in the Pinterest search bar.

Pinterest is a free popular social bookmarking website founded in 2010 that allows users to share and like images. Users can browse through thousands of images in a wide variety of categories. Users can save the images by "pinning" what they like to their "board." Users usually organize their Pinboards by categories and can publically share their boards with other members. Pinterest is most widely known for its do-it-yourself ideas. Their category page ranges from gardening and health and fitness to home décor and weddings and everything in-between. In 2014 there was "approximately 53 million unique visitors, second behind Facebook" on Pinterest and their numbers have almost doubled today (Phillips, Miller, McQuarrie 2014:633). Pinterest was chosen based on its popularity and the fact that it is a photo-based site that includes a wide selection of interior design and

home décor ideas. Their home décor has subcategories that include contemporary, modern, traditional décor, just to name a few. Pinterest also has an app for phones and tablet devices that allow for hours of inspiration.

Because I was interested in how current popular interior design trends differ on Pinterest's large image database, a content analysis method was the most appropriate for gathering and analyzing data for my research question: how current popular interior design trends differ on Pinterest.

I gathered 60 currently popular images by searching "popular interior design trends" in the Pinterest search bar. A few characteristics of each photograph that I analyzed were paint colors, furniture, furniture layout, overall color pallet, art, the use of space, and natural light/windows. I made sure to keep my data analysis and interpretation of the data interrelated and happening simultaneously. I remained open to new ideas and findings in my data. After collecting all of the images and analyzing the visual material, I began coding the data. I maintained a fluid process of interpreting the data and continued to connect the coded categories to my research question. Once coded, the themes began to emerge. I was able to sort though the images and group them into themed categories. I grouped my data to find clear themes in the visual research. I was able to then reduce all of the images into three categories or themes.

There are limitations to this study. Firstly, there are many different websites that have pictures of interior design that could have influenced the study further. Secondly, there are many different magazines that have a focus on interior design, and there is a possibility of missing valuable data from those sources. Thirdly, I did not use any other method to gather data such as in-depth interviews or focus groups. Fourthly, because Pinterest is a website

dominated by posting images, every search resulted in different sets of images. I made sure to collect all 60 images in one day to prevent any discrepancies in the data and research. Despite the listed limitations to the study, conducting a content analysis was an unobtrusive and sufficient way to gather material and help to answer my research question.

DATA ANAYLSIS

The purpose of this study was to explore how current popular interior design trends differ on Pinterest. To do this, I examined the first 60 images from the website Pinterest that came up when I searched "popular interior design trends" in the Pinterest search bar. An analysis of the 60 images helps discover different interior design trends on the site. The findings answer my research question, how current popular interior design trends differ on Pinterest.

Upon the completion of my data collection and the analysis done, three major themes emerged. (1) The majority of the images have a modern interior design style; (2) The images promote a push towards eco-friendly designs and options; (3) The colors seen in the images revolve around a natural color pallet. Below I discuss each theme to provide readers with the opportunity to seek out trends in interior design and how those trends correlate with society.

Keep It Simple

Theme 1: The majority of the 60 images seen on Pinterest's "popular interior design trends" search have a modern interior design style.

Primarily when studying and analyzing the images, there is an obvious focus of a more modern decorating style becoming a popular trend. Based on the images analyzed, a modern design style is keeping everything as simple as possible. Rooms are spacious and

open. There is a definite focus on everything being in its place. There is no clutter seen in the images. The images promote a clean and fresh lifestyle. Throughout the images there is a minimalist theme that ties into the modern design. Less is seen as more. There is not one image that was collected that was not picture perfect. The overall layouts of the images were spread out and airy. All of the furniture seemed to be perfectly placed and facing each other that sent an inviting message of communication rather than having couches and chairs pointing towards televisions. In fact, in all 60 images, there are no interior design pictures that had a television. Some of the images showed how popular trends of open layouts in homes are. Living, dining, and kitchen areas all flow together in one continuous room without walls blocking the different areas. Sociologically, modern interior design reflects current trends seen in society. Society is constantly changing and evolving. Companies have moved towards a more organic and naturally flowing office spaces with no cubicles. Offices are leaning more towards personal rooms and spaces and feeling less business strict. Modern styles are a reflection of the direction that society is moving towards every day.

Go Green Or Go Home

Theme 2: Current popular interior design trends on Pinterest promote a push towards eco-friendly designs and options in the images.

While the images may not be labeled as eco-friendly or green, there are many indicators that point to the theme of eco-friendly design. Wood floors, natural light, wood furniture, and plants seen in the images are themes that reinforce the eco-friendly theme. Large windows popped up in a lot of the images, allowing for a bright space. Plants can be seen in every room in a house and stylishly potted on the wall of a kitchen to organically grow herbs. Eco-friendly products can be seen in some images like recycling mason jars into

a unique light fixture. The use of wood floors in place of carpet is an eco-friendly solution to flooring that many images can be seen having. Sustainable design is so popular because society has driven towards a more sustainable lifestyle and way of life. Society has moved towards more efficient means and interior designs have been motivated to keep up with societies demands and trends. Interior design is all around us. Interior design is in business buildings, schools, shops, and homes. Those designs decisions that are all around are reflective of society.

Naturally Beautiful

Theme 3: Images of current popular interior design trends on Pinterest tend to have a natural color pallet.

All 60 images that I examined and analyzed had interior designed rooms that had natural colored walls and furniture of some type. Most of the images had crisp white walls that brightened up the space and made the room seem large and inviting. Some rooms had grey walls, which seems to be a popular color for paint currently. Fabric on couches and chairs were mostly white, cream, or tan. Accent colors that added color to the room were even on a natural color pallet like earthly greens from houseplants. White kitchen cabinets brighten up the eating space, making the kitchen feel more like another addition to the house rather than a separate area only for cooking and cleaning. Metal colors like gold, silver, rose gold, and copper shine as accents in an interior designed space. Even rooms like baby nurseries are following the trend of natural neutral colors. The rooms are gender neutral and greys and yellows take center stage. Long gone are the pink and blue rooms that defined the child's gender by a specific color. Society has moved into a more neutralizing place and that

has influenced interior design. Color can affect our mood, our mind, and our bodies and well-being. Certain colors can impact an entire room and can influence emotions.

CONCLUSIONS

This study aimed to analyze how current popular interior design trends differ on Pinterest. The analysis of 60 images revealed three different themes. These themes are supported by analyzing the visual media images pulled from the Pinterest website. The first theme is that the majority of the images have a modern interior design style. This finding rang true when analyzing the images. Most images had a modern style of design that was clean and minimalistic.

The second theme was that the images promote a push towards eco-friendly designs and options by having pieces of furniture made of wood, wood floors, houseplants that purify the space, and large windows for natural lighting.

The third and final theme was that the colors seen in the images revolve around a natural color pallet. Natural color pallets seem to be a popular trend because the colors are pulled from nature and are visually pleasing.

How paint colors and the set up of furniture and art in homes can influence peoples' moods and depictions of one's self. Having a perfectly designed home is extremely important to some people because it is a piece of who they are. Their home is a piece of themselves that they get to decorate however they please. Pinterest can spark inspiration in designers to see the current trends and inspire their next home project. Society has an impact on interior design by encouraging sustainable designs and greener homes. Interior design can impact society by increasing productivity, energy and overall well-being, and

influencing a person's mood. Interior design touches everyone in a different and unique way by allowing one's creativity to create the space around them.

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