

THE INTERIOR DESIGN MARKET IN ALBANIA

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Abstract

Interior design is a beautiful and difficult process. The art of interior design is the conglomerate of aesthetics, comfort, space, texture, color, lighting, and shape. The architect is the most efficient design manager of a building. Housing is a physiological need, so having a comfortable and beautiful home is not a luxury. Human nature is keen to appreciate beauty. In the science of architecture, beauty is the derivation of the creativity of an architect. The client trusts the architect an investment, thus the latter should be cautious and understand what the client wants from him.

Albania is in the first step of the development of architecture and interior design. Recently, Albanians are increasingly paying attention to internal design and the choice of an architect for the realization of the project. This paper aims to explore and identify the impact of architecture and interior design in the construction market, the demand for this service, and the challenges that Albanian architects face. The methodology of this study is qualitative, and the results are based on the research findings.

Keywords: Architect, Interior design, building, construction market, demand

1. Introduction

Architecture is the science and art that combines innovative and attractive ideas to create pleasant and useful spaces. An important human characteristic is an influence in an architectural composition that represents a need and desire to intensify sensible effects (Wagner, O., 1988: 87). He manages the project rationally by putting costs and benefits in an equilibrium. A professional architect works to improve the quality of life by representing an added value where the home or office designed by him turns into a pleasant and relaxing environment.

A building is a collection closely linked to the land, that provides total or almost total housing for cars, processing equipment, human activities, the preservation of human properties, or any combination of them (Ricketts, J, 2001: 1). Architects as designers use drawings for sharing their ideas, drawings serve as the main means of communication for constructing buildings, interior spaces, furniture, and other objects (Kilmer W and Kilmer R., 2003: 6). According to Ehteshami. 2019 the interior design uses interior details, furniture, and other design instruments to create a different space that meets the physical and psychological needs of those who will live there.

Aim of study

The purpose of this study is to identify the level of Albanian people's demands for architects in the design of interior spaces.

Objectives of the study

- To know the interior design market in Albania
- To identify the requirements for an architect in interior design
- To learn the role of the architect in Albania
- To understand the challenges faced by architects in Albania

Research question

What is the role of the architect in the market of interior design in Albania?

Hypothesis

There is a low level of demand for architects in the market of interior design because this market is relatively new in Albania

Study contribution

This study is an important contribution in the field of architecture because we have a significant lack of literature and studies in the field of interior design not only in Albania but everywhere in the world. This study will serve researchers in the field of construction mainly architects, architecture students, interest groups, and costumers.

Study limits

This paper contributes to the growth of studies in the field of interior design. For the realization of this work, we have faced challenges such as:

- Lack of literature and studies in this field
- Limitations on time and study budget

Some of the limitations of the questionnaire are:

The questionnaire was also completed by individuals who do not have the same level of education and information about the topic of the study. Therefore, some of them, (despite attempts to design clear questions), may not have understood them.

The questionnaire was also completed by individuals who may not have incomes, thus their reactions to situations may not be completely factual.

Methodology

This study includes the qualitative method to understand the importance of the architect in the design of interior spaces and conceptual approaches in this field. The paper begins with observations on the phenomenon of interior design based on existing materials, and then as a research tool is designed a questionnaire with closed-ended questions.

Secondary sources are taken from online books, international scientific journals, and various articles by foreign authors. From the secondary data, we are familiar with and have understood the main issues and key elements of the topic addressed.

There are many alternatives of designing a study, however, due to the nature of the study problem, a questionnaire was thought of as the most appropriate method by agreeing that questionnaires are needed to understand the phenomenon in its complexity.

The sample taken in the study consists of 250 individuals from which 60% belong to the age group of 40-60 years and 40% are individuals under the age of 40 years. The study was conducted in some major cities in Albania that live and work in urban and semi-urban areas, about 82% and 18% live in rural areas. The econometric model was constructed using a qualitative method, by which the hypothesis was verified, and the results of the study were derived.

2. Challenges of the architects in Albania

1. Meeting the client's requirements- clients are divided into two types:

a. Clients who trust the architect's work and do not interfere with the ideas and implementation of the project.

b. Clients who trust the architect's work but intervene in the project, they want to combine their ideas with those of the architect, often their ideas do not match with the architect's ideas or designed architectural style. This situation can advance to communication problems between clients and architects, which can be technical and social (Norouzy N, Shabak M, Embi M, Khan T., 2015: 636). In such cases, the application of the architect's ideas becomes challenging.

The architect has the task of interpreting the client's needs using the intended principles, allowing variations and abstractions as required to fit the target solution.

2. The lifestyle of the client- the architect prior to the design should know the client and their lifestyle in advance, so that will be close to the client's requirements.

3. Creativity in accordance with the client's taste - the architect is the individual who needs to create a novelty for his client. So, every architect's project embraces a unique work, but this creativity should represent what the client expects from the architect. To reach such a balance is a long and difficult way because beauty is a subjective assessment; what is beautiful for the architect cannot be for the client.

4. Budget- An important task of architects after creating the project, is the project budget and project cost management, detailing each item with respective prices. Project Cost Management includes the costs of resources needed to carry out project activities (PMI, 2008: 167).

The architect's difficulty does not stand in the fact that the architect must determine the budget, but in the fact that the budget must be precisely predicted because a project may end up more expensive than it was previously planned (Brouwer Ph., 2015: 126).

5. Timing- the development and completion of the project on time is the primary responsibility of the architect, but to be as efficient as possible the architect should develop a plan, where he details the work flow processes and then manage the plan effectively (Darnall. and Preston P., 2012: 28).

6. Market Trends - The construction market is constantly changing, and this is due to economic, social and technological changes. The architect must be coherent with these changes. According to the International Trade Administration (2016), the construction sector is projected to be dynamic around the world over the next decade¹

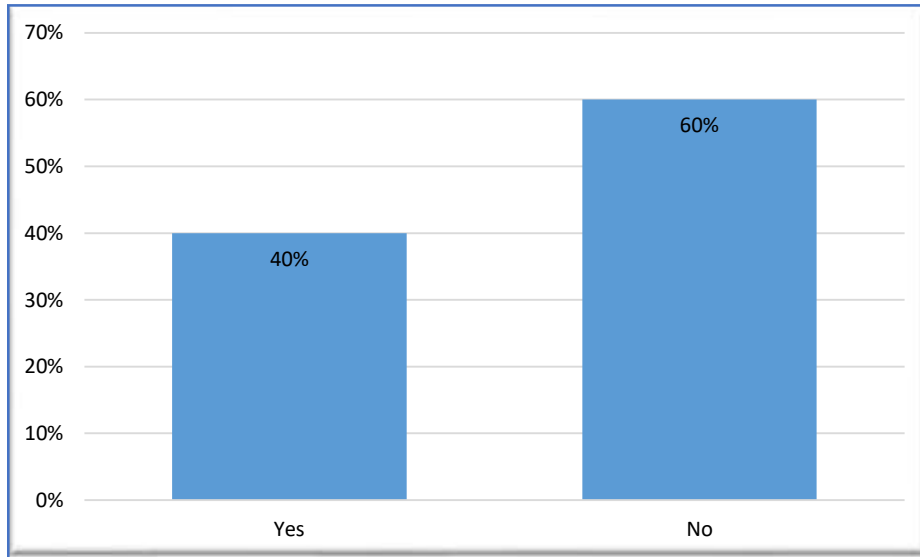
A project is a unique product (Wallace W., 2016: 8) which requires an integrated implementation system. Architects in interior design have more difficulty in getting existing structures and reforming them to fit within the new functions (Dodsworth, S., 2009: 9).

In terms of this paper, concrete research was conducted to better understand the reality regarding the role of the architect in the design of interior spaces in Albania.

¹ https://www.trade.gov/topmarkets/pdf/building_products_top_markets_report.pdf

Respondents were first asked if they worked with an architect for designing interior spaces.

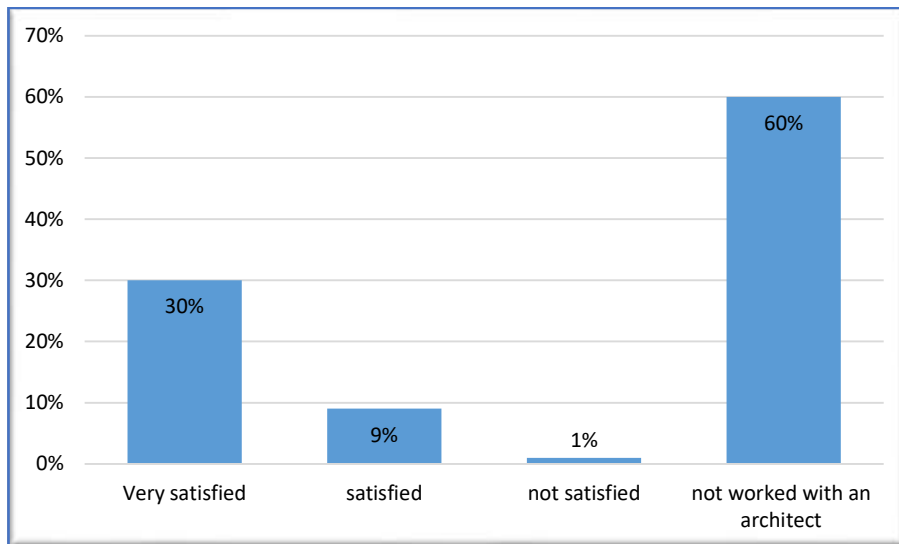
Graph 1. Have you worked with an architect to furnish your spaces?



Source: Author (2019)

The results of this study proved that Albania is in the early stages of employing an architect in interior design because about 60% of the respondents claim they have not worked with an architect to furnish their spaces.

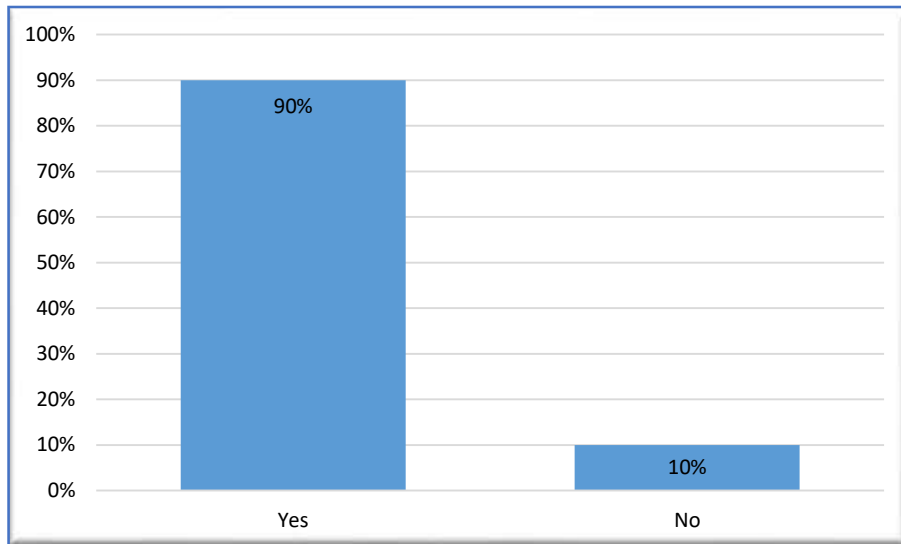
Graph 2. The level of satisfaction of service



Source: Author (2019)

From 40% of the interviewed who have hired an architect, about 30% of them have been very pleased with the work of the architect, even state that the architect has exceeded their expectations. This is an important data because it confirms the level of service the architect offers in meeting the needs and desires of the client.

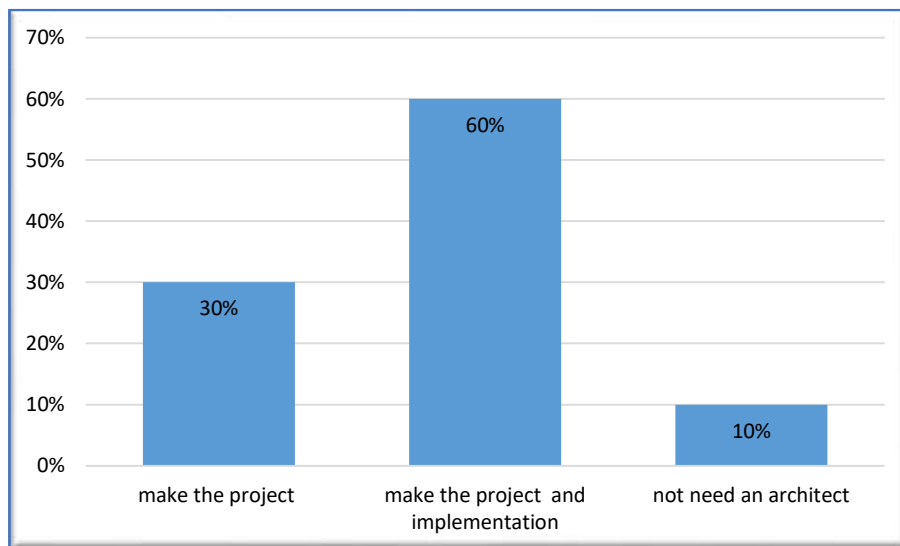
Graph 3. Would you trust an architect, a project for furnishing your spaces?



Source: Author (2019)

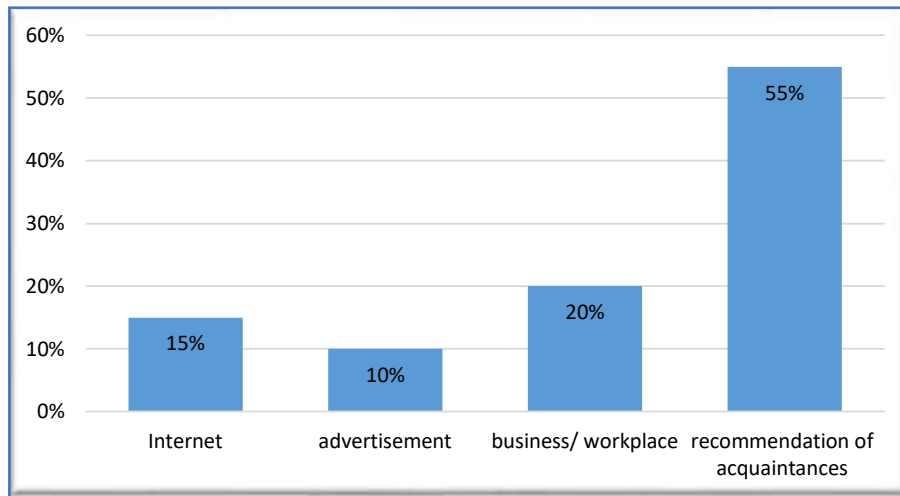
We conclude that interviewees would trust an architect the interior design, but the reason for limiting them is not the lack of confidence in the architect's professionalism, but at the cost of his service

Graph 4. What choice would you prefer?



Source: Author (2019)

About 60% of respondents claimed that if they decided to hire an architect to furnish their spaces, they would prefer that the architect not only make the project but also implement it, as they think that only in this way the idea of the project would be 100%, the costs would be lower and the level of performance and expectations would be maximum.

Graph 5. How would you find the architect?

Source: Author (2019)

Regarding this question we have a worrisome result because 55% of respondents say they hire the architect from the recommendation of acquaintances (friends) by trusting them. Individuals need to revise this choice by correcting the fact that they need to do additional research with respect to the architects that offer the market by comparing the Quality-Cost-Speed of previous services, not only from one source, because their opinion may be subjective, but even from other sources.

Conclusions and Recommendations

- ✓ Albania is its first step in architectural development and interior design, so not all individuals recognize the importance of the architect in designing interior spaces. Nevertheless, Albanians have been increasingly paying attention to the design and selection of an architect for the realization of a project.
- ✓ Investing in interior design is important, thus individuals should be careful in selecting an architect, and they should be informed about the architect's professionalism and in its assessment should be based on Quality-Cost-Speed of previous services of the architect.
- ✓ A professional architect works to improve the quality of life by representing an added value, where the space designed by him, turns into a pleasant and relaxing environment.
- ✓ In Albania there is no significant connection between the residence area and the demand for interior design, because in both rural and urban areas the level of demand depended on the level of income of individuals.
- ✓ The level of education has an impact on the interior design market as educated individuals were more informed and if they had the financial means, they said they would hire an architect to design the interior spaces, so it is seen that the financial aspect dominates.

- ✓ In Albania we have a lack of promotion and information of architects and interior design, as there is no consolidated promotion platform or strategy to recognize the architects who are ten jour in the country, this is why most individuals choose an architect from the suggestions of acquaintances.
- ✓ Demand in the interior design market is low because it is a new market and not promoted in Albania.
- ✓ The architect must manage the project in a rational manner, thus balancing cost-benefit.
- ✓ The architect must be innovative, creative, and flexible to meet the requirements and needs of the client.

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