

Strategies in Interior Design for Cultural Integration Without Compromising Local Identity

Prof. Dr. Olaa Ali Hashem

Professor of Furniture Design Department of Interior Design and Furniture- Helwan University

Dr. Ebtesam Mohamed Khamis

Assistant Professor Interior Design and Furniture Faculty of Applied Arts, Helwan University

Alaa Mohammed Al-Fadil Ahmed

PhD Candidate, Interior design department, Faculty of Applied Arts, Helwan University,
Alaaelfadil88@gmail.com

Abstract:

With the continuous increase in cultural interaction due to globalization and technological advancement, interior design has become a field that reflects this cultural diversity by integrating elements from various cultures to create spaces that express richness and multiculturalism. However, a major challenge arises in preserving authentic cultural identity within this diversity, particularly in communities striving to maintain their cultural and national heritage. This study aims to analyze the impact of cultural diversity on interior design and explore strategies to preserve cultural identity amidst such diversity. An analytical methodology was adopted, relying on literature review and previous relevant studies, in addition to case studies of interior design projects that combined cultural diversity with efforts to preserve cultural identity. The results showed that cultural diversity can enrich interior design when integrated thoughtfully, with a focus on local cultural elements and heritage symbols. Preserving cultural identity requires a deep understanding of the local culture and incorporating its elements in a way that reflects the community's cultural heritage. The study recommends adopting effective design strategies that help achieve a balance between cultural diversity and cultural identity preservation, through incorporating local cultural elements into interior design and raising designers' awareness about the importance of safeguarding cultural identity in the face of global influences.

Research Problem: The core issue addressed by this research is how to achieve a balance between incorporating elements from diverse cultures into interior design while preserving the community's authentic cultural identity. In light of increasing globalization, cultural diversity may risk marginalizing or erasing local identity, which necessitates a thorough exploration of ways to integrate diversity in a manner that enhances rather than weakens cultural identity.

Research Objectives: To analyze the extent of cultural diversity's impact on interior design in: Spain (Barcelona) b- Tanzania (Zanzibar Island) To explore strategies for preserving cultural identity amid cultural diversity. To provide recommendations for interior designers to achieve a balance between cultural diversity and the preservation of cultural identity.

Significance of the Study: The significance of this research lies in the urgent need to understand how to address cultural diversity in interior design without compromising a community's cultural identity. The study offers insights and practical strategies for interior designers to create spaces that reflect cultural diversity while simultaneously reinforcing cultural belonging and identity.

Research Hypotheses: Cultural diversity can enrich interior design if integrated thoughtfully. Preserving cultural identity in interior design is possible through the careful selection and application of appropriate cultural elements that reflect the local heritage. There are effective design strategies that can balance cultural diversity with identity preservation while fostering creativity in design.

Results: Enriching Interior Design through Cultural Diversity. The integration of elements from multiple cultures in interior design can enrich the visual environment and give it a global and humanistic character—provided this integration is done consciously and with respect for the original identity. Preserving Cultural Identity Requires Deep Awareness of Local Culture

Maintaining identity does not imply rejecting other cultural elements; rather, it requires a true understanding of the local cultural roots and utilizing them in a creative and balanced manner. Unconsidered Design May Marginalize Identity. Certain case studies revealed that excessive reliance on foreign elements without regard to the local context can lead to distortion or erasure of cultural identity. Case Studies: Barcelona and Zanzibar: In Barcelona, the Catalan architectural character has been successfully blended with modern design elements that reflect cultural openness—without losing the local Spanish identity. In contrast,

Zanzibar shows clear efforts to preserve the traditional Swahili style while integrating some contemporary design concepts

Paper History:

Paper received July 28, 2025, Accepted September 29, 2025, Published online November 1, 2025

Keywords:

Strategy, Cultural Integration, Local Identity

References:

- 1- Álvarez, J. M. (1992). *Mudéjar Architecture in Spain*. Ediciones Akal.
- 2- Garg, R. (n.d.). Adding VALUES in Architectural Design of Built Environment (p.54).
- 3- Hall, A. (2009). A Green Lung For The Stone Town: The challenge of developing a green structure for the users of Zanzibar historical city core (Master's thesis, Department of Landscape Planning, Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences, Alnarp, Sweden).
- 4- Haji, et al. (2006). Shaping the Change. XXIII FIG Congress, Munich, Germany, October 8–13.
- 5- Korner, A. R. (2003). *Stone Town Styles of East Coast Africa*. Bell-Roberts, Cape Town, South Africa.
- 6- Lanchester, H. V. (1923). *Zanzibar: A Study in Tropical Town Planning*. Burrow and Company, Cheltenham.
- 7- Mwalim, A. M. (1998). *Doors of Zanzibar*. HSP Publications, London.
- 8- Njue, P. N., & Kimeu, M. (2010). 'Impenetrable' Urban Maze of East African Coastal Towns: Its Implications on Climate Change. 46th ISOCARP Congress.
- 9- Reilly, L. (2000). *The Art and Architecture of Medieval Spain*. Harper & Row.
- 10- Ruggles, D. F. (2009). *Islamic Art and Architecture: From Islamic Spain to Morocco*. Thames & Hudson.
- 11- Sheriff, A. (1995). *The History & Conservation of Zanzibar Stone Town*. The Department of Archives, Museums and Antiquities, Zanzibar and James Currey, London.
- 12- Sheriff, A., & Jafferji, J. (2008). *Zanzibar Stone Town: An Architectural Exploration* (4th ed.). The Gallery Publications, Zanzibar.
- 13- Siravo, F. (1996). *Zanzibar: A Plan for the Historic Stone Town*. Historic Cities Support Programme, Geneva, Switzerland.
- 14- Steel, T., et al. (2001). *Conservation and Design Guidelines for Zanzibar Stone Town*. Aga Khan Trust for Culture, Geneva.
- 15- Steyn, G. (2001). An Analysis of an Omani House in Stone Town, Zanzibar. *Journal of Art History*, 16, 110–131.
- 16- Steyn, G. (2002). The Lamu House – An East African Architectural Enigma. *Journal of Art History*, 17, 157–180.
- 17- Stoddard, R. (1997). *The Mudéjar Architecture of Spain*. University of California Press.
- 18- Syversen, I. (2007). In Search of the Influence of International Policy Documents on Contemporary Sustainable Local Heritage Management: Case Zanzibar Stone Town, Tanzania (Doctoral thesis, Department of Architecture, Chalmers University of Technology, Göteborg, Sweden).
- 19- UNESCO World Heritage Centre. (n.d.). Zanzibar Stone Town Nomination File. Retrieved from: <http://whc.unesco.org/uploads/nominations/173rev.pdf> (accessed on 20 December 2013).
- 20- Zanzibar Revisited. (1991). *Mimar Magazine*, 41, 62–33.

CITATION

Alaa Hashem, et al (2025), Strategies in Interior Design for Cultural Integration Without Compromising Local Identity, *International Design Journal*, Vol. 15 No. 6, (November 2025) pp 361-369