

# Between Education & Profession: An Evaluation of Graduation Projects in the Field of Interior Architecture in Turkey

Gulay Usta 

*Department of Interior Architecture and Environmental Design, Istanbul Kultur University, Istanbul, Turkey*

Armagan Secil Melikoglu Eke 

*Department of Interior Architecture and Environmental Design, Istanbul Kultur University, Istanbul, Turkey (Corresponding author)*

Ozge Ilik Saltik 

*Department of Interior Architecture and Environmental Design, Istanbul Kultur University, Istanbul, Turkey*

Received: August 3rd 2022, Revised: September 2nd 2022, Accepted: September 7th 2022.

Refer: Usta, G., Melikoglu Eke, A. S., Ilik Saltik, O., (2022), Between Education & Profession: An Evaluation of Graduation Projects in the Field of Interior Architecture in Turkey, Journal of Design Studio, V.4, spi:2, ICMEK-5 Rethinking, pp 5-20,  
G. Usta ORCID: 0000-0002-5262-6078, A. S. Melikoglu Eke ORCID: 0000-0002-7185-8480, O. Ilik Saltik ORCID: 0000-0002-1405-518X  
DOI: 10.46474/jds.1154794 <https://doi.org/10.46474/jds.1154794>

© JDS

This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License.



**Abstract:** Design studios are at the core of architecture, interior architecture, or design education. Different design problems are experienced and solved in these studios every term or year. The last step of the design studios is the graduation/degree project, which is characteristic of a threshold between education and profession. The scope of the study is to examine the graduation/degree projects' approaches of the schools that are providing interior architecture education in Turkey and to evaluate their project outputs. Thus, quantitative analyses and qualitative evaluations have been made on the documents of the MEKAN/İç Mimarlık Öğrencileri Ulusal Bitirme Projeleri Yarışması (Interior Design Students National Graduation Projects Competition), which are served as an important archive.

In this respect, within the scope of the study, an inventory has been tried to be put forward by evaluating the competition processes through the participant projects between 2012-2021. Firstly, an analysis has been made on the numerical distribution of all the participant projects according to the years and the diversity of the participating schools. Then, more detailed analyses have been carried out on the award-winning projects by narrowing the sample group. In addition, developments in the matters of the perspectives of different schools on design problems, their proposals for solutions, their design representations, etc. have been brought to light. As researchers and educators, it has been tried to open a way for how interior architecture education to reconstruct itself in the future, by rethinking the education itself.

**Keywords:** Interior architecture education, Graduation project, MEKAN competition, Design studio, Degree project

## Introduction

Design disciplines that are concerned about many fields of our daily lives vary. Along with the familiar ones such as architecture, interior architecture, graphic design, and fashion design, other fields such as gaming design have

occurred in recent years. Disciplines of architecture and interior architecture differ from other design fields by focusing on humans, directly affecting life, and with aspects of making life easier or not.

According to Brooker and Stone "Interior Architecture is only interested in reshaping the structures; and that is limited to the existing spaces, structures, principles of reusing and organizing the buildings. This approach establishes the connection between architecture and interior architecture." And they state interior design as "Interior Design is an interdisciplinary practice that deals with manipulation of spatial dimensions, organizational changes regarding the furniture or surfaces, creation of interior environments displaying the identity and atmosphere. Interior designers do not interfere with the structure of the building, or they make very little changes". The Council for Interior Design Qualification (URL-1, 2022) defines interior design as:

*"Interior design encompasses the analysis, planning, design, documentation, and management of interior non-structural/non-seismic construction and alteration projects in compliance with applicable building design and construction, fire, life-safety, and energy codes, standards, regulations, and guidelines for the purpose of obtaining a building permit, as allowed by law. Qualified by means of education, experience, and examination, interior designers have a moral and ethical responsibility to protect consumers and occupants through the design of code-compliant, accessible, and inclusive interior environments that address well-being, while considering the complex physical, mental, and emotional needs of people."*

International Interior Design Association (URL-2, 2022) also defines interior design as;

*"Interior design is defined as the professional and comprehensive practice of creating an interior environment that addresses, protects, and responds to human need(s). It is the art, science, and business planning of a creative, technical, sustainable, and functional interior solution that corresponds to the architecture of a space, while incorporating process and strategy, a mandate for well-being, safety, and health,*

*with informed decisions about style and aesthetics."*

As seen from the definitions above, the task of interior architecture can be explained as creating comfortable, safe, and healthy interiors to meet people's physical, mental, and emotional needs. When the studies on the design discipline of interior architecture are examined, it is seen that education studies are high in number as in many fields. When the history of the interior architecture field that has been educating professionals who are designing the organization of existing buildings' interiors is examined, the field had been shaped firstly as decoration at the beginning of the 20th century in the USA. Later, the field has become popular and preferred nowadays with its progress in the context of social changes.

Interior architecture as a professional branch, can be dated to the beginning of the 20th century. However, its flourishing as a discipline enough to raise professionals, and the teaching process have started only after the 1970s. Interior architects with professional awareness have emerged in the 1980s thanks to organized education. Evaluating the impacts of organizations and the design processes that develop under the leadership of these organizations keep the profession within a contemporary structure (Kaptan, 1998).

The first interior practices are encountered at the beginning of the 20th century in the USA where the concept of professionalism developed. What is more, the USA is where the theoretical and practical background of interior architecture as a profession has been established, and interior architecture education has first been institutionalized. The initial education was in the form of short courses. Later, it spread into the fields such as art, architecture, and human sciences.

Interior architecture education in Turkey concerns a more recent past. The starting point can be determined as 1925 the opening of Sanayi-i Nefise Mektebi, which is now called Mimar Sinan Fine Arts University. Beaux-Arts was the dominant ecote adopted by the school

for education at that time. Accordingly, the workshop-studio model that was followed by Sanayi-i Nefise Mektebi, was the basis of interior architecture education. The approaches embracing the French Ecole have retreated under the effect of the Bauhaus eole which had developed in parallel to international developments starting from the first half of the 20th century. Marmara University's department of interior architecture (which was founded in 1957), indicates an authentic module of interior architecture undergraduate education free from the architectural discipline, its dominance, and decisiveness (Işıkgör, 2007). The establishment of interior architecture education at Mimar Sinan Fine Arts University and Marmara University was followed by Hacettepe University, Bilkent University, Anadolu University, Karadeniz Technical University, and Çukurova University. Bauhaus Ecole was taken over by its American counterpart as the department of interior architecture was founded at Bilkent University. Interior architecture education in Turkey- as it was determined by YÖK (Institute of Higher Education)- is a four-year undergraduate program. The number of universities offering Interior architecture education has risen due to its expanding popularity. Nowadays, there are nearly more than 80 universities offering this education.

When education curriculums of the universities providing interior architecture education in Turkey are examined, it can be determined that education plans have been updated in the context of the Bologna Process. Common qualifications to bring all the programs together in one frame. Therefore, there are many parallelisms between studio courses, compulsory courses, and elective courses in terms of academic qualifications and curriculum similarities in interior architecture programs in Turkey, which is worth noticing.

One of the common points of curriculums is the graduation or degree project, which is the last studio course the graduate-to-be students should take. Graduation projects are the first experience of the students who are considered to have reached a certain competence in the means of knowledge and skills in the last year of their studies. The graduation project, in

which the students experience the project process alone for the first time, is also a simulation of professional practice and an important threshold between education and practice.

When the interior architecture education programs in Turkey have been examined, common degree/graduation project courses have been determined in all universities. Since it is an important threshold between the profession and education, graduation project courses are meticulously designed in the context of objectives and learning outcomes in all universities. Within the scope of the study, it has been aimed to read the interior architecture education in Turkey through the graduation projects, and participants of the MEKAN competition. Additionally, determining the approaches of different universities in this matter with the evaluation of the projects participating in the MEKAN competition has also been able to count as a reason for this study. There have been studies that include similar approaches in research on interior architecture education (Güzelci et al., 2017; Kutlu et al., 2018). This study which has been focused especially on the MEKAN competition differs from others with

- evaluating the whole process of the competition between 2012-2021
- evaluating the participants' award-winning projects with determined parameters
- making inferences about the graduation projects of interior architecture in Turkey.

### **Competitions at Interior Architecture Education and MEKAN Competition**

Competitions are events that are based on the electoral system with their open nature to developing different options in the contexts of design and production. Moreover, they level the field for professionals and are open to everyone in the framework of competition agreements. Every design competition can be seen as an opportunity for design research. According to Chupin, Cucuzzella, and Halal (2015), every competition remains a world of possibilities: an intermediary space-time locus for the search for excellence in architecture. In some ways,

competition projects function like utopias. Design competitions such as in the fields of architecture and interior architecture have been accepted as one of the most important design and production approaches in Turkey as well as the world. Additionally, competitions have been seen as the most prestigious way to begin professional practice.

According to the Guidelines of the Competitions in Architecture, Landscape Architecture, Engineering, Urban Design Projects, Urban Planning, and Fine Arts which is currently in use in Turkey, the aims of the competitions have been stated as "In their own field, competitions should improve the values of culture, art, science, and environment via rivalry while focusing on the public welfare. Among many possible options, the most economical, functional, and innovative solution should be selected. An appropriate environment should be provided for determining the project owners, for encouraging the fine arts, for improving the professions, for accepting the ethical values, and for having an international competition" (URL-3, 2022).

Within the scope of design disciplines, competitions also serve as an educational platform by leading the emergence of different ways of thinking, spreading the culture of teamwork, and directing the designer to research. Competitions that enable the development of professionals also play an active role in the formation of design languages and the development of design methods by providing students with a unique informal experience outside of the university.

Unique cultural environments of the competitions provide opportunities for young ones to participate in the profession and have new experiences. These environments support the project owners whose ideas are found to be favorable. Additionally, they provide equivalent evaluations for creative ideas and make it possible to discuss architectural values via these evaluation results. Due to these, qualified design products can be supported. Competitions are like holy events or cults that contain cultures and provide power due to

participating in them. Architecture without competition is less than architecture (Dinç, 2009).

At the same time competitions offer a laboratory environment by preparing the most original and avant-garde designs and by providing different solutions to a specific design problem. They reveal the possible consequences of different design solutions. Thanks to the competitions, architects at every stage of their profession, whether newly graduated or experienced, can see how their colleagues solve a design problem that may be required to overcome in the future. By determining the positive and negative aspects of the represented designs; they can create their own strategies. Therefore, design competitions also serve as a guide for architects. For these reasons, it is important to read about the problem of new building approaches in the historical environment through architectural competitions to obtain information about the subject and to explore new design methods (Özüer & Öktem Erkartal, 2019).

From the perspectives of young designers who participated in, competitions are a way to have self-awareness and make their qualities of profession visible. Competitions are informal events where students decide their own path and create their own learning methods in terms of design education. While competitions provide opportunities for students to gain new perspectives and extend their networks, as Yürekli and Yürekli state, they also create chances to recognize the world and their own with exercises that improve the student both intellectual and intuitional at the same time (Yürekli & Yürekli, 1995).

Guilherme identifies benefits arising from architectural competitions:

*Competitions, in particular international competitions, test architect's capacities beyond controlled systems of social relations, comfort zones, age, gender or even expertise, in a fast sublimation process, as well as induce a recognition and publicity that surpasses the investments in time, energy and financial*

*resources, forcing a (re)interpretation of the role of the architect (Guilherme, 2014).*

It can be said that the competition culture has a long history in the field of architecture in Turkey. However, in the field of interior architecture, the formation of the competition tradition and professional-student categories can be considered historically new. The number of competitions that interior architecture students and professionals in the field can participate in is quite limited compared to other disciplines. Considering the outcomes of the competitions, each competition in this field will make positive contributions to both the field of education and the profession.

Competitions that make the students improve their abilities such as problem-solving and exploring are not sufficient in the fields of architecture and interior architecture. In the study of Garip and Garip, it has been determined that in a six-year period between 2007-2012, 43 competitions that interior architecture students could have participated in have been held. 40% of these competitions have been focused on the space, 49% have been focused on the product and 11% have been focused on the idea (Garip & Garip, 2012). In this context, it can be said the number of competitions that are related to interior architecture both student and professional categories has increased since 2012. Nevertheless, competition as a method hasn't been set enough in terms of creating an interior design.

In this context, MEKAN competitions in which the students who are studying in the field of interior architecture can participate, fill an important gap. The MEKAN competition which was first held in 2012 and is ninth in the progress nowadays, has gained an important place in the field of interior architecture in terms of having a corporate identity and a sustainable structure. In addition, the presence of academicians from different universities and leading designers from professional practice in the jury has been an effective aspect in gaining an important place among other competitions.

With this research, the changes, and developments in interior architecture education between the years 2012-2021 have been read through the graduation projects, which are important thresholds in interior architecture education. Additionally, developments in the matters of the perspectives of different schools on design problems, their proposals for solutions, their design representations, etc. have been brought to light. As researchers and educators, it has been tried to open a way for how interior architecture education to reconstruct itself in the future, by rethinking the education itself.

### **Analysis & Evaluations of MEKAN Competitions**

As it has been known, competitions are one of the most effective and prestigious ways to bring creative forces together on a common platform. The MEKAN aims to create an awareness of design-oriented thinking and expression in students, develop a sense of constructive competition, and bring them together from different schools on a common platform. Nevertheless, due to the lack of competition organizations in the field of interior architecture, MEKAN is thought to bridge an important gap. The sample group of the research consisted of interior architecture students participating in the competition from Turkey and the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus, which is important for both showing different approaches of the schools and becoming an important archive for interior architecture education.

The eighth of the MEKAN competition has been held in 2021. The number of entries in the competition has gradually increased and diversified with the participation of different schools.

This study aims to examine the graduation/degree projects' approaches of the schools providing interior architecture education in Turkey and to evaluate their



Figure 1: Posters of MEKAN Competitions in different years (URL-4, 2022)

project outputs. Thus, quantitative analyses and qualitative evaluations have been made on the documents of the MEKAN/İç Mimarlık Öğrencileri Ulusal Bitirme Projeleri Yarışması (Interior Design Students National Graduation Projects Competition), which are served as an important archive.

In a ten-year period, it is obvious that there have been changes in design problems, solutions, etc., in the context of interior architecture education. It has been a process worth investigating, as this period also includes the pandemic process which has evolved and differentiated education itself. In parallel with these changes, it is foreseen that there is a lot of development in design problems, design tools, and representations of projects.

Examining the graduation projects of the MEKAN competition was carried out in two

steps. In the first step, the number of participants and their universities in the MEKAN between the years 2012-2021 have been determined. The aim of this general evaluation is to reveal the situation in the adoption of the competition culture in the field of interior architecture. It has been predicted as the increasing number of interior architecture departments in the universities in time, would cause an increase in the number of students and therefore the number of participants.

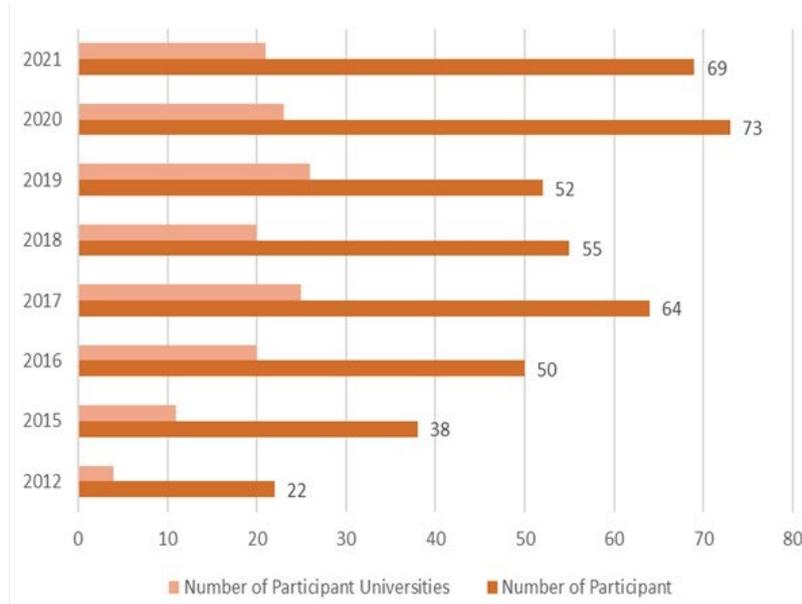
When the number of participants and participating universities in the MEKAN competitions which have been held between 2012 and 2021, it is possible to see the existence of an accelerated rise in these numbers in Table 1. There is a significant increase in the number of participants, especially in the years of 2020 and 2021.

**Table 1: Number and university names of the participants in MEKAN**

	University Names / Number	Number	of Participants
MEKAN 2012	Istanbul Kültür University, Istanbul Technical University, Bahçeşehir University, Yaşar University	4	22
MEKAN 2015	Kocaeli University, Istanbul Technical University, Mimar Sinan Fine Arts University, Okan University, Istanbul Kültür University, Marmara University, Bahçeşehir University, Çankaya University, East Mediterranean University, Hacettepe University, Karadeniz Technical University	11	38
MEKAN 2016	Çankaya University, Hacettepe University, Bilkent University, Gediz University, Kocaeli University, Istanbul Technical University, Yaşar University, Istanbul Bilgi University, East Mediterranean University, Selçuk University, Marmara University, Istanbul Kültür University, Doğuş University, Bahçeşehir University, Karadeniz Technical University, Haliç University, Mimar Sinan Fine Arts University, Near East University, Avrasya University, Istanbul Gelişim University	20	50
MEKAN 2017	Yaşar University, Selçuk University, Istanbul Technical University, Cyprus International University, East Mediterranean University, Istanbul Aydın University, Girne American University, TOBB University of Economics and Technology, Mimar Sinan Fine Arts University, Karadeniz Technical University, Kadir Has University, Marmara University, Istanbul Ticaret University, Bahçeşehir University, Hacettepe University, Altınbaş University, Istanbul Bilgi University, Başkent University, Avrasya University, Hasan Kalyoncu University, Fatih Sultan Mehmet Vakıf University, Istanbul Arel University, Istanbul Kültür University, Eskişehir Anadolu University, Beykent University	25	64
MEKAN 2018	Izmir Economy University, Toros University, Bilkent University, Istanbul Kültür University, Kadir Has University, Eskişehir Technical University, Istanbul Bilgi University, Istanbul Technical University, Fatih Sultan Mehmet Vakıf University, Karadeniz Technical University, Bahçeşehir University, Istanbul Gedik University, TOBB University of Economy and Technology, Mimar Sinan Fine Arts University, Kocaeli University, Yaşar University, Marmara University, Altınbaş University, Işık University, Hacettepe University	20	55
MEKAN 2019	Istanbul Okan University, MEF University, Istanbul Medipol University, Mimar Sinan Fine Arts University, Nuh Naci Yazgan University, Altınbaş University, Yaşar University, Abilim University, Istanbul Kültür University, Özyeğin University, Başkent University, Istanbul Technical University, Kadir Has University, Istanbul Sabahattin Zaim University, Istanbul Ticaret University, Karadeniz Technical University, Akdeniz University, Istanbul Arel University, Marmara University, Izmir Economy University, Fatih Sultan Mehmet Vakıf University, Istanbul Bilgi University, Kocaeli University, Çankaya University, TOBB Economy and Technology University, East Mediterranean University	26	52
MEKAN 2020	KTO Karatay University, Yaşar University, Bilkent University, Selçuk University, Işık University, Istanbul Kültür University, Istanbul Arel University, Özyeğin University, Kadir Has University, Istanbul Technical University, Istanbul Ticaret University, Maltepe University, Izmir Economy University, Karadeniz Technical University, Eskişehir Technical University, Marmara University, Mef University, Bahçeşehir University, Başkent University, Çankaya University, Istanbul Medipol University, Haliç University, FMV Işık University	23	73
MEKAN 2021	Selçuk University, Kadir Has University, Altınbaş University, Doğuş University, Haliç University, Bahçeşehir University, Karadeniz Technical University, Yaşar University, TOBB University of Economy and Technology, Mimar Sinan Fine Arts University, KTO Karatay University, Bilkent University, Istanbul Kültür University, Başkent University, Istanbul Esenyurt University, Istanbul Technical University, Eskişehir Technical University, Işık University, Marmara University, Mef University, Fatih Sultan Mehmet Vakıf University	21	69

The most important reason for this can be considered the adoption of the MEKAN competition among interior architecture departments of the universities and students. There are very few competitions for evaluating the designs of the project courses, which are the focus of interior architecture education. One of these competitions is the IM competition

(İçmimarlık Öğrencileri Proje Yarışması), where the projects of every semester are evaluated. IM competition (İçmimarlık Öğrencileri Proje Yarışması), which has a history of about four years, is similar in approach to the MEKAN. It contributes to the formation of the tradition in the field of interior architecture with its sustainability.



**Figure 2:** Number of the participants by years

Another reason for the high participation is that the projects, which were hand-delivered in previous years, have been delivered digitally after 2020, considering the pandemic conditions.

Similarly, as can be seen from Table 1 and Figure 2, both variety and quantity have increased with the increase in the number of participants and their universities. The most participating universities in the MEKAN competition are Istanbul Technical University (49), Istanbul Kültür University (38), and Marmara University (30).

After this general evaluation, a detailed qualitative evaluation has been carried out on the award-winning projects such as 1st-2nd-3rd degrees, honorable mentions, and juries' encouragement awards in eight MEKAN competitions. It has been thought that the evaluations that have been made will be a source for rethinking interior architecture education.

In the second step of the study, the award-winning projects between the years 2012-2021 have been analyzed mainly on the parameters of:

- Subject of the project
- Context of the project
- Methods of intervention
- Proposal of function
- Level of the solution in terms of the design problem
- Presentation techniques
- Scale of the project

due to the conduction of this evaluation has been made through the outputs of the projects, decipherable and determinable parameters have been carefully chosen.

#### **Parameter-1: Subject of the Project**

Considering the subjects of the winning projects, it has been determined that education, culture, office, accommodation, and subjects with combined functions have been primarily studied. In addition, it has been understood that commerce, health, and production-oriented subjects are included in student projects. The

**Table 2:** Distribution of the award-winning projects in terms of function by year

	Partial construction/ destruction	New form in interior space	Surface interventions	New/new creation of form	Preservation of the existing
MEKAN 2012	1	3	2	0	0
MEKAN 2015	3	3	0	0	0
MEKAN 2016	2	0	4	0	0
MEKAN 2017	4	1	1	0	0
MEKAN 2018	1	1	2	2	0
MEKAN 2019	2	0	2	1	1
MEKAN2020	0	3	1	2	0
MEKAN2021	2	3	1	4	0

distribution of subject selection between 2012-2021 can be seen in Table 2.

When the projects that received degree awards and honorable mentions have been examined, the most studied subject is combined-function interiors which can be defined as having more than one function. While culture is the second, education and office functions are the third most studied subjects. It has been determined that subjects such as entertainment, food&beverage, transportation, and health are less preferred.

Especially in recent years, the rapid change experienced in education and office spaces has required specific solutions in terms of interior architecture, and this is thought to be reflected in graduation projects at the educational scale. The fact that interior architecture education in our country has focused on current issues

related to the field can be considered as a positive achievement.

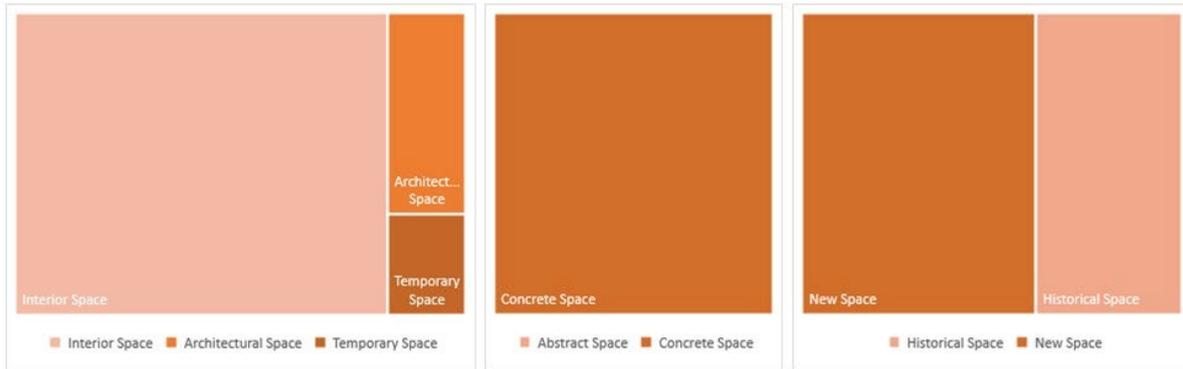
#### Parameter-2: Context of the Project

Within the scope of the study, "context" is another important parameter for the award-winning projects that have been evaluated since the "context" is important data in terms of designing in interior space scale as it is in architectural structure. The physical, social, cultural, etc. contexts of the project are considered important inputs of the design at the interior scale. Especially, in the perspective of interior architecture, the context of the project area is an important design input in the process of determining the spatial organization.

In the study, the issue of context has been handled at three levels. In the first level, context is the nature of the project area given to the student as "interior space, architectural space or



**Figure 3:** Graphic of the distribution of award-winning projects' functions



**Figure 4:** Graphic of the distribution of the award-winning projects' contexts

temporary space". For the second level, it is considered as "abstract space or concrete space" and at the third level, it was analyzed as "historical space or new space".

In this sense, when the award-winning projects in the competition have been examined, it has been determined that students were mostly given study areas at the level of "interior" in terms of context. Moreover, "abstract space" was not preferred. In comparing historical and new spaces, the results can be stated to be close to each other. However, in this evaluation, it has been determined that new buildings have been preferred more as the project area. When the results of the analysis have been evaluated, it can be stated that the graduation projects are designed according to the students who are going to graduate at the end of the project. Due to that, the interior spaces of existing new buildings have been given to the students so that

graduation projects have become a threshold between education and the profession.

### Parameter-3: Methods of Intervention

Design in interior architecture can be realized in new buildings as well as reuse and re-functioning of existing buildings. Especially in historical buildings where collective memory is kept alive in terms of collective memory. In this respect, in interior architecture education, the student is taught how to intervene in existing historical buildings.

The interior intervention methods of the award-winning projects have been examined under five headings "partial construction/deconstruction, new form in interior space, surface interventions, new/new creation of form and preservation of the existing".



**Figure 5:** Distribution of the award-winning projects' methods of interventions

**Table 3:** Distribution of the award-winning projects' methods of intervention by year

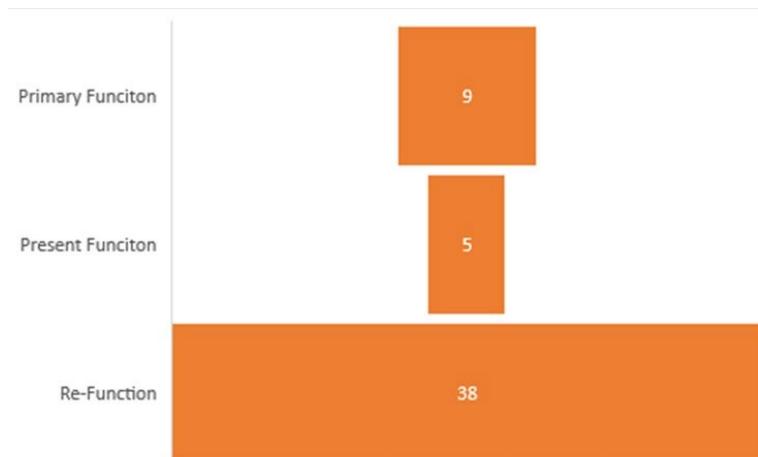
	Partial construction/ destruction	New form in interior space	Surface interventions	New/aneu creation of form	Preservation of the existing
MEKAN 2012	1	3	2	0	0
MEKAN 2015	3	3	0	0	0
MEKAN 2016	2	0	4	0	0
MEKAN 2017	4	1	1	0	0
MEKAN 2018	1	1	2	2	0
MEKAN 2019	2	0	2	1	1
MEKAN2020	0	3	1	2	0
MEKAN2021	2	3	1	4	0

As can be seen in Table 3 and Figure 5, when intervention methods of the award-winning projects have been examined, it can be stated that students tried to create a new atmosphere in the interior with "partial construction/deconstruction, new forms, and surface interventions". On the contrary, "new/aneu creations of forms" or "preservation of the existing" have appeared as undesirable levels of intervention. This situation has revealed the preference for creating a new space atmosphere by interfering with the interior space within the project structures without ignoring the space that has been given to them.

**Parameter-4: Proposal of Function**

As another parameter, the award-winning projects have been analyzed in terms of "proposal of function" under the headings of "primary (original) function, present (existing) function, and re-function".

Within the scope of the study, the primary function has been accepted as the original function of a building when it is built. The present function has been accepted as the existing function of a building which must be known to be different from the primary function. Lastly, re-functioning has been accepted as a new function for the space which differs from both primary and present functions.



**Figure 6:** Graphic of the distribution of award-winning projects' proposal of functions

Accordingly, the re-functioning approach has mostly been adopted as a proposal of function in award-winning projects. The reason for this can be stated as the students exhibited an attitude toward giving the interior a new function by analyzing the current function of the interior in the face of the given design problem in addition to considering the conditions of the environment and users' expectations. Due to the value loss of the functions in processes such as the physical aging of the structures, students have developed up-to-date approaches by understanding the nature of interior architecture in their graduation projects and ensuring the sustainability of the interior.

#### **Parameter-5: Level of the Solution in Terms of the Design Problem**

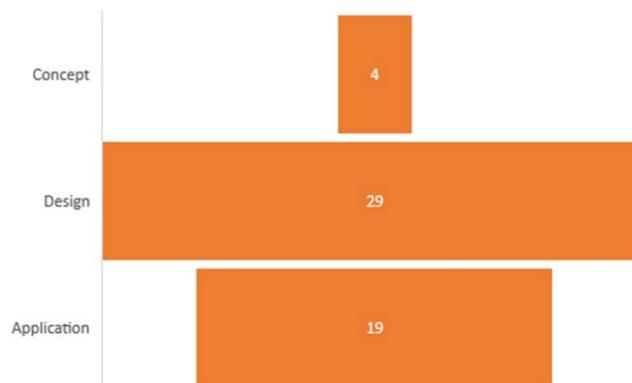
Within the scope of the study, the "level of the solution in terms of the design problem" has been selected as another important parameter. It has been tried to determine the solution levels (in terms of the given design problem) of the spaces suggested by the students under the headings of "concept, design, and application". The concept level has been accepted as an idea project which doesn't give any estimation for the spaces but explains only the main idea of the project with, mostly, diagrams. The design level has been accepted as the projects which have been giving an image of interior spaces mostly with technical drawings and 3D images. Lastly, the application level has been accepted as the projects which have detailed technical drawings (1/20 scale) for interior spaces or detailed joint

combination drawings/diagrams with the scale of 1/10, 1/5, 1/2 for the furniture, forms, etc.

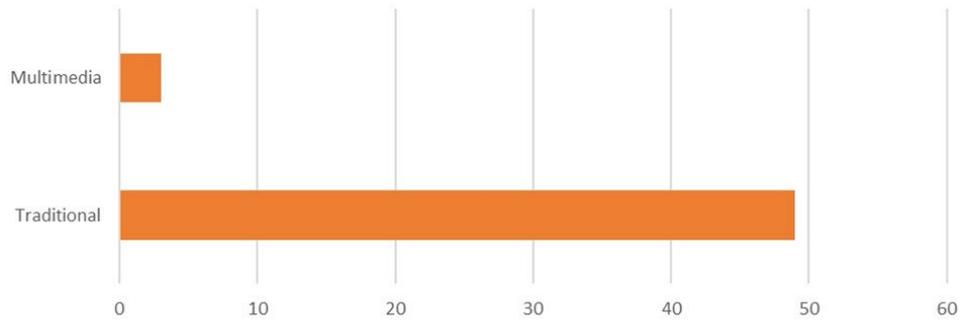
Accordingly, when the award-winning projects have been examined, the level of "design" has been determined with a significant difference. In the examination, where the "concept" solution level has been determined as weak, it has been revealed that the "application" level has an average value. The most important information that the results have shown in terms of interior architecture education is that the students who are on the verge of graduation are poorly equipped in terms of application. The reason for this result can be attributed to the scarcity of project courses containing application solutions in the education curriculum. However, in order to reach detailed information, research that includes examination in this respect is required. On the other hand, when the design is considered in terms of creating new ideas, it is thought that the obtained results are promising in terms of interior architecture education.

#### **Parameter-6: Presentation Techniques**

As a matter of course, interior architectural design has based on the clear and creative presentation of new ideas along with producing solutions. As well as the quality of the space, it is also necessary to present the space with contemporary presentation methods and creative tools. While the students are asked to express their designs with traditional methods in the first years of interior architecture



*Figure 7: Graphic of the distribution of the award-winning project' level of the solutions in terms of the design problems*



**Figure 8:** Graphic of the distribution of the award-winning projects' presentation techniques

education, they are expected to use creative up-to-date tools in the upper years.

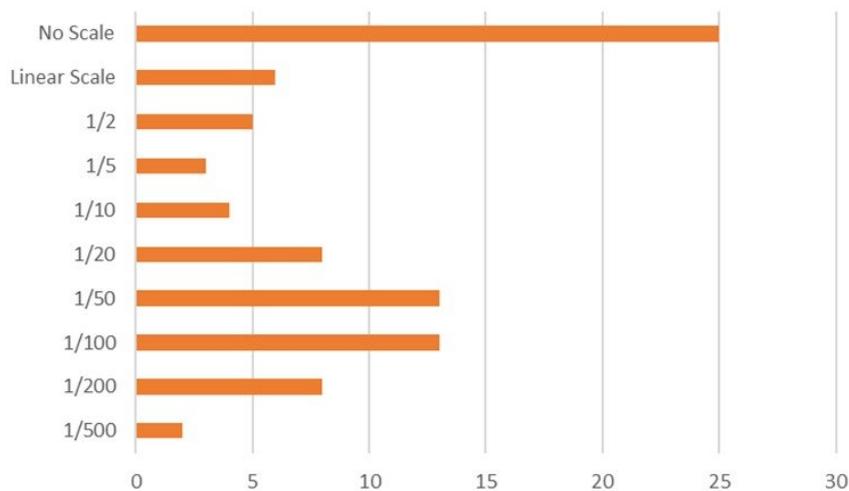
In this respect, the award-winning projects within the scope of the study have been examined according to the "presentation techniques" parameter which includes "traditional tools" and "multi-media tools".

As can be seen in the graphic, in the award-winning projects, students have mostly preferred traditional tools which can be stated as technical drawings, and three-dimensional expressions such as renders. On the contrary, presentation tools consisting of video, etc., which are defined as multimedia, have not been preferred. When these results have been evaluated in terms of interior architecture education, it is thought that traditional tools are

used intensively in universities. However, when the education plans of some interior architecture departments have been examined, it can be known that presentation tools that trigger creativity and innovation are included in the curriculum within the scope of the courses also called "visual communication techniques". Nevertheless, the widespread use of these tools by students is in parallel with professional practices. It is thought that the preference for traditional tools in the sector, which also helps to establish communication with the customer, also directs the preferences of the students.

#### **Parameter-7: Scale of the project**

The scale helps to design spaces, objects, or buildings by understanding them at different levels of detail. It is important for the comprehension and representation of the



**Figure 9:** Graphic of the distribution of the award-winning projects' scale

design. It is possible to talk about different scales in design disciplines. 1/100, 1/50, and 1/20 scales are used in interior architectural design, as well as 1/10, 1/5, and 1/1 scales in the system and manufacturing details. It is noteworthy that different universities exhibit different approaches in terms of scale in interior architecture education.

The award-winning projects within the scope of the study have been analyzed according to the "scale" parameter. With this analysis, it has been tried to reveal which scales had been used to present students' graduation projects.

As can be seen in Figure 9, an unusual situation in the use of scale has been detected. It has been observed that 25 of the 52 projects did not use any scales. It is rather a confusing result that the scale is not used while traditional presentation tools are highly preferred. This can be caused by the obligation to submit only two posters in the conditions/agreements of the competition. Due to that, it is possible to think that the participants may have placed the presentations of their projects, such as plans and sections, without scale.

However, when the posters with scaled expressions have been examined, it is possible to say that 1/50 and 1/100 scales are used the most. Although the interior design scale is accepted as 1/20 and 1/50, the result does not support this.

### **Conclusion**

This study aims to examine the graduation/degree projects' approaches of the schools providing interior architecture education in Turkey and to evaluate their project outputs. Thus, quantitative analyses and qualitative evaluations have been made on the documents of the MEKAN/İç Mimarlık Öğrencileri Ulusal Bitirme Projeleri Yarışması (Interior Design Students National Graduation Projects Competition), which have served as an important archive.

In this respect, within the scope of the study, an inventory has been tried to be put forward by evaluating the competition processes through

the participant projects between 2012-2021. Firstly, an analysis has been conducted on the numerical distribution of all the participant projects according to the years and the diversity of the participating schools. Then, by narrowing the sample group, a detailed analysis has been carried out on the award-winning projects.

With this research, the changes and developments in interior architecture education between the years 2012-2021 have been read through the graduation projects, which are important thresholds in interior architecture education.

Analyzing graduation/degree projects which are common courses in interior architecture education and are kept in a separate position by all the partners from other project courses, in the context of certain parameters, is also important in terms of revealing the approach to interior design. Since the only condition for gaining professional competence in Turkey is to have a diploma by fulfilling the graduation requirements. Whereas, in many countries abroad, admission and registration to the profession are based on various conditions. Due to the lack of such a system in Turkey, graduation projects should be seen as a critical threshold. With the analyses presented in this study, the minimum standards must be determined by all interior architecture education institutions and put into practice in terms of acquiring professional competence in interior architecture. Especially in terms of recognizing the interior architecture environment in our country at a global level, it should be ensured that the criteria related to graduation projects reach universal standards.

In the meantime, the structure of the graduation projects and the way the process works should be considered. Limited information has been reached since the examinations carried out within the scope of the study have been carried out with the final products. Considering that this study has been conducted with the award-winning projects of eight competitions, it is unlikely to make a generalization through these outputs while there are more than 80 universities with an interior architecture department. With the examination of the award-

winning projects, some implications have been made on the graduation project approaches of different universities. In this respect, the most important subject in the project courses can be stated as the planning of the process. It cannot be said it is sufficient to analyze the projects only through presentations without considering how the subject or the design problem is presented to the student. It is possible to conduct more comprehensive research by obtaining data on how the graduation project design problem is given to the students and how the institutions plan and implement the process.

The data obtained as a result of the analyzes made in the context of the parameters determined in this study also reveal the approaches of universities regarding project courses in interior architecture education. Analyzes that have been made on project presentations show that there are similar and different approaches. In fact, as mentioned above, more detailed research on the construction of the process can provide in-depth information on this subject. If further studies cover the design studio's process, methodology, and nature in more depth, more clear implications can be made about the graduation projects. Therefore, including the non-award-winning projects in the evaluation would have been more accurate. As a consequence, the second step of this study will be planned accordingly.

## References

Brooker, G., Stone, S. (2012). *İç Mimarlıkta Biçim+Yapı*. İstanbul: Literatür Yayıncılık.

Chupin, J. P., Cucuzzella, C., & Helal, B. (Eds.). (2015). *Architecture competitions and the production of culture, quality and knowledge: an international inquiry. Potential architecture books.*

Dinç, P. (2009) *Mimarlığa Yarışanlar, Ulusal Mimarlık Yarışmalarında Gazi'li Mimarlar*. Ankara: Eflatun Yayınevi.

Garip, E., Garip, B. S. (2012). *İç mimarlık eğitiminde yaratıcılık ve yarışmalar*. In: *İÇMEK / İçmimarlık Eğitimi 2. Ulusal*

*Kongresi*, 20 December 2012, İstanbul. Türkiye: İstanbul Kültür Üniversitesi Yayınları. pp. 24-33.

Guilherme, P.M.H.S., (2014). Competitions serve a larger purpose in architectural knowledge. *Revista Lusófona de Arquitectura e Educação*, 1, 11, 425-451.

Güzelci, H., Terlemez A.K., Güzelci, O. Z. (2017). *Mekan İç Mimarlık Öğrencileri Ulusal Bitirme Projesi Yarışması Üzerine Bir İnceleme, İÇMEK İç Mimarlık Eğitimi 4. Ulusal Kongresi, İstanbul Kültür Üniversitesi, İstanbul, Turkey.*

Işıkgör, M. (2007). *Bauhaus Ekolü Işığında Devlet Tatbiki Güzel Sanatlar Yüksekokulu ve Marmara Üniversitesi Güzel Sanatlar Fakültesinin Dünü Bugünü*. İstanbul: MUGSF 50. Yıl Yayınları.

Kaptan, B. (1998). *İçmimarlığın Oluşum ve Örgütlenme Süreci*. *Anadolu Sanat*, 8(11), <https://hdl.handle.net/11421/954>

Kutlu, R., Usta, G., Erçetin, A., Güzelci, H., Güzelci, O. Z., Terlemez, A.K., (2018). *Evaluation Of Multiple Design Criteria In Interior Design Projects/ The Case Of Mekan 2017 Competition. 4<sup>th</sup> International Conference on New Trends in Architecture and Interior Design*, 11-13 May 2018, St. Petersburg, Russia

Özüer, M. O., Öktem Erkartal, P. (2019). *Designing The New Into The Old Architectural Design Competitions For Historical Context. ICEARC'19: International Civil Engineering and Architecture Conference.*

Yürekli, H., Yürekli, F., (1995). *Öğrenci ortaktır. Yapı Dergisi*. 168, pp. 65-68.

URL-1, (2022). *Council for Interior Design Qualification. (1st July 2022). Definition of Interior Design Abbreviated Definition of Interior Design*. Retrieved from [https://www.cidq.org/\\_files/ugd/0784c1\\_16c47b1a47de44f7b8f3f87367e483ac.pdf](https://www.cidq.org/_files/ugd/0784c1_16c47b1a47de44f7b8f3f87367e483ac.pdf)

URL-2, (2022). IIDA. (1st July 2022). What is interior design. Retrieved from <https://iida.org/about/what-is-interior-design>

URL-3, (2022). (1st July 2022). Mimarlık, Peyzaj Mimarlığı, Mühendislik, Kentsel Tasarım Projeleri, Şehir Ve Bölge Planlama Ve Güzel Sanat Eserleri Yarışmaları Yönetmeliği. Retrieved from <https://www.mevzuat.gov.tr/MevzuatMetin/yonetmelik/7.5.4716.doc>

URL-4, (2022). Istanbul Kultur University. (1st July 2022). Mekan İç Mimarlık Öğrencileri Ulusal Bitirme Projesi Yarışması. Retrieved from <https://icmim.iku.edu.tr/tr/genel-bilgiler/mezan-ic-mimarlik-ogrencileri-ulusal-bitirme-projesi-yarismasi>