G. Smith

Misunderstood and Mysterious: How Design and Designers are Perceived by Design Professionals, Design Educators and the Public

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Abstract

This study is focused on the field of design. It examines how people understand and perceive designers and the design professions. The study draws on a phenomenologically informed interactive perspective to provide a methodological approach to understanding what the perception of design is. The relationships between design and occupational prestige, professional status and consumerism are the principal themes that run throughout the research, but the analysis also draws on the data obtained to profile the demographics of designers, particularly in relation to income, gender and education.

The research included an occupational prestige assessment, completed by 304 participants from Swinburne University and the University of the Third Age, using multidimensional scaling analysis to provide a mapping of the occupations. Overall, the results indicated that participants find it difficult to differentiate between individual design occupational specialties, but that they see design as distinct from proximate occupations such as artist and architect. The results also confirmed the premise that occupational prestige is multi-dimensional and that raters will use a variety of constructs (including service to the community, not just education and income), to determine their understanding of the perceived social standing of occupations. The findings were further explored within three focus group discussions involving both design and non-design students from Swinburne University. The results indicated that most participants, including the design students, knew relatively little about design and that what they did know was often skewed by media depictions and stereotypes.

The final research stage was the development of a mail-out survey questionnaire that was distributed to design educators, members of the Design Institute of Australia and to a non-design, public group. Seven hundred and fifty three questionnaires were completed. As expected the results showed that there are differences between the level of knowledge and understanding of the three participant groups. The lack of knowledge of design and designers, particularly by the public participants, was quite evident, with the two design groups tending to rate design as more professional and of greater importance to society and the economy than the public group. Analyses of the incomes and occupational situations of the design respondents revealed that the designers generally worked
in a unique environment characterised by low to middle incomes and very small organisations (except for those in the education sector). Gender differences between income and the positions held in an organisation were also found and would be a useful area for further investigation.

The study was useful in that is served to clarify and quantify issues that have been raised in the literature about the poor understanding of design and designers. It provides a platform of information that could be further used in future studies to make more detailed examinations of specific issues.
I would like to thank all those people who provided me with support and encouragement whilst I have been writing this thesis. In particular I would like to thank my family, Cliff, Erin, and Andrew, as well as my supervisor, Allan Whitfield, for their assistance and their faith in my ability to finish this work.
DECLARATION

I Gillian Smith declare that this thesis:
Contains no material which has been accepted for the award to the candidate of any other degree or diploma, except where due reference is made in the text of the thesis;
To the best of the candidate’s knowledge contains no material previously published or written by another person except where due reference is made in the text of the thesis; and
Where the work is based on joint research or publications, discloses the relative contributions of the respective workers or authors.

Signed __________________________________________________ on this ________________________________
__________________ day of _________________________, 2006.
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**PART 1 LITERATURE REVIEW**

Chapters 1 to 6 provide the context for this research. The literature review focuses on three key themes significant to design. The first is the location of the design occupations within the broader occupational structure. Second is the professional status of design and third is the relationship between design and the rise of consumerism. While professional status for occupational groups is frequently seen as desirous, people’s perceptions on the level of professionalism are often determined relative to other occupational groups. Occupational prestige scales have been used for almost 80 years as a tool for measuring people’s understanding of the occupational structure. The links between level of professionalism and occupational prestige are strong and so this study examines the previous research in this area and again looks at the implications for the field. The significance to both a particular occupational sector and to persons working in the field of having an occupation perceived as professional is discussed and the implications of this are articulated with respect to design and designers.

Design is a product of the social, economic and cultural milieu of contemporary society. The work of designers is closely linked with the consumerist predilections of modern cultures, particularly in Western countries, but increasingly in third world and Asian societies. Any discussion about the place of design in the current milieu needs to be placed in the context of the growth and development of consumerism. Changes in technology, ways of thinking, social structures (e.g. family relationships) and consumer expectations have necessitated changes in the way design is practiced, applied and taught. As people look for new ways of expressing themselves, experiencing life and establishing their places within the social structure of society, so too has design needed to respond by developing as a profession, adapting to new ways of working (e.g. computer-aided design) and branching out into new areas (e.g. environmental design, multimedia design, animation, digital media and web design).
While the way design is taught and practiced has clearly changed over the years, it still seems apparent that not many people outside of the design arena know what design is, how it impacts on our daily lives and what opportunities and benefits there are for organisations and individuals to engage with the design professions. Part 2 of this research looks closely at what people know about design, how they see design within the context of the broader social, economic and educational structure and what the potential implications are for the field of design and for design practice.
1 Introduction

Although design per se has been around for centuries, it is only in the past few decades that it has begun to significantly impact on society and all individuals within society, particularly those in the more developed countries, but increasingly in other countries such as China and South Korea. Mass production and flexible manufacturing processes have enabled a vast array of products to be made quickly and cheaply, and the constant demand for new products by both producers and consumers has resulted in an increased demand for those professions involved in the innovation, invention, and marketing of goods and services. Designers are an integral element in the growth of a consumer-led capitalist economy and in the study of consumerism and consumer culture. Miles (1998: 36), for example, has argued that:

“Although on the surface, the nature of design may appear to be relatively inconsequential, it might well be said to play a formative role in the history of capitalism and, in turn, in the social expression of capitalist practices...The suggestion here is that design does indeed play a key role in maintaining consumerism as a way of life and that, by considering the impact of design in some detail, it may begin to be possible to come to terms with the complexities inherent in any sociological analysis of the day-to-day nature of consumer culture.”

Contemporary Western countries rely heavily on increasing consumer spending to maintain and expand their economies. This demand has created an environment where products and services are constantly being invented and updated. Products are no longer acquired purely for their utilitarian value, but also for the fashion and lifestyle choices that they embody. While researchers have given considerable attention to production processes and the effects of consumerism and mass production on lifestyles, community development and ways of thinking, surprisingly, almost no research attention has been given to the ‘creators and innovators of production’ – the designers. My aim is to address what I feel is a deficit in sociological writing and research in this important field.
**Defining Design**

The first important question to emerge from this analysis must be the question of ‘what is design?’ and ‘what makes a designer?’ Is design creating a new product? Is it improving an existing product?, Is it ‘prettying up’ a product so that it will be more appealing to consumers?, or Is it ‘re-arranging the cushions’ to make things more aesthetically appealing? The answer is that it is all of these and none of these. What this means is that there is no clear definition of what design is and the definition of design will change depending on the setting, and the period in time and on who is doing the defining. As will be discussed later, the definition of design has altered since Josiah Wedgwood first coined the term ‘design’ in the late eighteenth century. For Wedgwood, designers were artists employed to add decoration to his pottery products. However, as I will attempt to show throughout the thesis, the definition has come to mean much more and design is now more likely to be linked with the development of the total product. In other words the designer is now far more likely to make the whole cake, not to just artistically place the cherry on top.

Molotch (2003) suggests that design is “the intentional use of cultural and material resources to create a worthwhile artifact”. While this might be one interpretation, some might question the inclusion of ‘worthwhile’ into this definition. The Oxford dictionary (Turner, 1987) defines worthwhile as that which is “deserving, worthy of, bringing compensation for, has value or merit, or excellence”. It is also defined as “something that has some moral worth”.

Most people would agree with the assertion that products designed for practical purposes (such as the toaster that Molotch discusses) or for the handicapped, or for our enjoyment (such as the television), are worthwhile. However, there are many products one could question their ‘worthwhileness’. In this age of political unrest, few would argue that weapons of mass destruction are ‘worthwhile’. What if the intention is to create a worthwhile artifact, but it causes harm (such as a toy that causes injuries?), is that still design? Is it just bad design?

Despite the apparent importance of design to our culture, our economy, and our personal identities, it is notable that there is no real agreement of what design is. It is not just the general public - the consumers of design - that hold incongruent notions of what design is, it is quite evident that there is confusion and a lack of
agreement within the design community. As a consequence, concern has been raised from within design that design suffers from an identity crisis - no one is quite sure what it is (de Forest, 1990; Evamy, 1994; McDermot, 1990). George Gendron, the Editor of Inc. Magazine, stated in a recent interview that “...in an age where companies, large and small, are desperately looking for any possible source of competitive advantage, its astonishing to me that design is still as misunderstood and overlooked as it is” (Lawrence, 2000b). He further argued that there is a general perception that design is either not necessary or is a luxury that only large organisations can afford. These sorts of perceptions he puts down to the lack of education about the value of design (ibid). Gendron went on to say, however, that he has seen a shift in the way design is presented. He suggested, for example, that the home design magazines of the 1970’s and 80’s were more about decorating, while more recently there has been a shift to actual design (ibid). This then begs the question, has this shift (if indeed there has been one) raised the understanding of design or changed the perceptions of design? Unfortunately, due to the dearth of knowledge about the perceptions of design and designers, it is not possible to determine if there has been a shift in understanding of the design occupations, but it is possible to determine, to some degree, the extent to which design is currently understood.

Clearly, there is no agreed definition of design and we may all have our own notion of what design is. This study will attempt to determine if there are wide variations among people in what these notions are. Is this important? Fry (2005) argues that the design community believes that having a clear definition is important. It is just that there is not agreement on what that definition is. While at first thought it might be defensible to argue that that designers need to know how to define design, it could be questioned why the general public needs to also understand what design is. However, the ‘public’ is an extremely deceptive term, meaning not just men and women on the street who might be picked-up in a straw poll, but rather government agencies, funding bodies, industry and all of those who constitute the ‘public’. It is the public who confer status, attach significance, and provide both funding and opportunities. So from this perspective the public is a critical ally in the future of design.

The one commonality between most people though is that they do generally have an understanding of design. It is just that it differs. So maybe it is important that I state my personal understanding of design. For me, design is the manipulation of
materials to create an output that is meant for commercial use. The designer is someone who has received formal training in the creation of these outputs. For me, these ‘designed’ things may or may not be worthwhile, they may or may not make it to the retail market, however the intention is there that they do so. I can hear readers asking, what about the outlandish clothes we see at the fashion shows, or the concept car at the motor show? True, these are not meant for commercial reality and we will not see them on the racks at the local boutique or the car salesroom, but they are aimed at opening our mind to the possibilities. To this end they are an advertisement or marketing tool for either the designers to get their designs in the stores, or for the manufacturers to sell their wares (“if Ford/Holden can design something as great as that, then my next new car will be a Ford/Holden!”).

Fry (2005) examined the various ways design is characterized. Of significance, are his quite negative views. He argues that the design bodies often “speak for design”, but do so in a manner that is “uncritical, often inflated and very much within the framing of design as a service industry”. He goes on to say that this view is reinforced and caricaturized by the media in their portrayal of designers as being “obsessed with the delivery of ‘sexy things’ to the marketplace”. Fry’s biggest concerns however are the inability of designers to be able to articulate what it is that they do and the impact that this has on the public’s perception of design.

While we, as the general public, do not need to ruminate over what design and designers mean to us, it is concerning that those working in the field have a lack of clarity around their purpose and objectives. This is evident in literature that consistently reiterates that design is perceived as one of the more ‘mysterious’ occupations and that there is a poor understanding of what design is and how it fits into the broader societal context. In analysing industrial design, Richardson (1993: 34) argued “Whether it [industrial design] recognises it or not, it is in a crisis of identity, purpose, responsibility, and meaning that has largely gone uncommented upon by the practicing community...”. Similar concerns were raised for other design disciplines such as graphic design (Scher, 1993) and fashion design (McRobbie, 1998). With respect to fashion design, Crane (1993: 56) argued that:

"Most sociological studies of fashion design examine the phenomenon from the perspective of the clothing industry, or the consumer, or in the context of clothing trends. Alternatively, the fashion designer is treated as an artist
with special talents and gifts. There are virtually no sociological studies of fashion design as an occupation”.

Depending on the particular setting, design is regarded as an art-based activity, while in other settings it is regarded as engineering-based, with the emphasis on the development of sophisticated components for complex systems. Others have expressed concern about the term ‘design’ itself. Fry (1999) suggested that one of the problems for design is that it is ubiquitous - that is, it is everywhere and, as a consequence, people are so used to the idea of design, that they are not aware of it. In an editorial article in The Economist (1995), it was contended that “the biggest problem for designers is quantifying the value of their contributions”, however the editor argued that design is becoming more important to American companies with design budgets growing in manufacturing companies at 15 – 20 per cent per year. Despite this it was also noted that design remained a “cottage industry” proliferating as small agencies.

Courting the Consumer

Another difficulty for design is the separation of the design process from the process of purchase. Unlike professions, such as medicine, law and architecture, where the interface between the practitioner and receiver is more personalised, the interface between design and the consumer is, at best, quite nebulous and often imperceptible. Fashion design and interior design are perhaps the main exceptions to this where the public relationship between the designer and the product is often more concrete, although even with fashion design and interior design, the consumer may never know more than the designer’s name and reputation. This is not a phenomenon peculiar to design though. A similar observation is often made in relation to primary industry, with few (city) people being aware of where our food comes from or how it is farmed.

Consumerism is closely linked to capitalism and the need to make money and to grow economies. However, it is apparent that consumerism has a major impact on our lifestyles, personalities and our sense of self. It has been suggested that our personal identities are nowadays linked with our lifestyle choices, including the products and services we surround ourselves with (Langer, 1996). In a recent interview, James Moore, CEO of GeoPartners Research, emphasised the importance of design to business and argued that “in an environment where it is necessary to
distinguish your product from others, design is integral to good business”. In addition, he suggested, “that design provides the process and expertise to enable companies to produce the intangible aspects that customers’ value” (Lawrence, 2000a). In examining the role of the designer, Moore also argued that a physical product is often imbued with an emotional dimension that can add value to the user. This value may be a sensual pleasure, may enhance a person’s personal identity, or it may make life simpler for the user. It is the role of the designer to create this value (ibid).

Consumers are primarily concerned with their experiences of the goods – namely the availability, price and quality. This separation of the production process from the process of consumption results in a widening of the cognitive gap between what a product is (to them) and where and how the product was produced. With the rise of consumerism it is argued that we are so immersed in the outcomes of design that we don’t question their origins or meanings. Consumers have seemingly become conditioned to a society where choice, change and innovation are the norm, with a continual array of new and/or improved products to quench our thirst for spending our surplus dollars (or contributing to the ever increasing credit-card debt!).

While it might be argued that it is not so important that the public have a clear understanding of design’s origins, professional status and influence on society, it is surprising there has not been more interest and study by social scientists or from within design itself. The study of occupations is a major research area within the field of sociology. A large number of occupations have been subjected to critical discourse and examination of their relationships and impacts on society. Occupations such as medicine, law, architecture, engineering, teaching, the trades and clerical work are just a handful of fields that have received critical attention over the years. The relationship between work, society and people is not only diverse and complex, but is fundamental to our very existence.

Research into occupations and professions has been examined from a variety of perspectives and disciplines. Some have examined the process of professionalisation (e.g. Dunkerley, 1975; Esland, 1980; Halmos, 1973; Probert, 1989; Rothman, 1987; Turner and Hodge, 1970), while others have focussed on aspects such as occupational status and prestige, (Caplow, 1964, Congalton, 1969, Daniel, 1983). Researchers have examined the relationship between work and the
social structure (e.g. Encel, 1970; Hall, 1975; Krause, 1971, Zollars and Cantor, 1993), whilst others have studied the way that work serves to establish our personal and social identities (e.g. Broughton et al, 1991; Dutton et al, 1994; Forgas, 1985; Royse and Rompf, 1991).

There have also been studies that have examined specific occupations or professions, studies that have focused on areas such as work and technology, gender, workplace issues, (e.g. equal opportunity, trade unionism, occupational health and safety, etc.) to mention a few. Johnson (1972) suggested that one basic problem with this body of research is that it misses the question of what professions contribute to society (economically, politically and socially) and instead focuses on defining the general attributes of professions. The theories underpinning the various studies of occupations have also been diverse and include the classical perspectives such as Marxist analyses, Durkheimian approaches examining occupations from a social reformist or collective conscience perspective, Weberian frameworks based on social action, class and status, or the more recent paradigms such as structural functionalism, neo-Marxism or interactionism. Additionally, there have been studies based on feminist theory, post-modernism, phenomenology and ethnomethodology. In short, the scope and range of ways occupations have been studied are diverse and complex, and it was apparent from the start that a study of the design occupations could have been approached from a number of directions.

**Conclusion**

This study will focus on issues of professionalism, consumerism, social identity and occupational status and prestige, based on a phenomenologically informed interactionist perspective. The study will attempt to determine the understandings and perceptions of designers and the design professions by those working in and teaching design and by various groups of non-designers.

In studying the design occupations an attempt has been made, within the bounds of financial, logistical and resource availabilities and capabilities, to provide a broad overview of contemporary design in Australia. In doing so, this task could have been tackled in a number of ways including an analysis of secondary sources such as Australian Bureau of Statistics data, the terms of reference and regulatory or monitoring functions of peak bodies, comparative analysis of design both within design academia and in relation to other fields of studies, face-to-face interviews
with designers and/or their clients, and so on. All of these avenues for obtaining information about design and designers would no doubt have revealed a wealth of information and are legitimate avenues for studies in this area.

In their studies of the professions, Pemberton and Boreham et al (1976: 34) argued that “...if we are to begin to understand the professions, then considerable methodological innovation will be necessary...” and approached their study of professions from a conflictual perspective, rather than the more traditional functionalist approach. In a similar vein, a phenomenologically informed interactionist perspective was used to underpin this study rather than the more traditional approaches to studying occupations. To this end, the findings are presented as the perceptions, understandings and meanings of those who participated in the study. These perceptions may or may not be representative of the wider population, although the aim was to obtain broad and diverse participation, particularly for the design questionnaire administered in the third stage of the study.

Finally, contemporary design in Australia is an occupation that is steadily growing in terms of the numbers of practitioners, but appears to be a field of work that is often misunderstood, misrepresented and has received minimal critical attention despite its importance to the economy and capitalist enterprise. The aim of this study is to examine a number of design disciplines – graphic design, industrial design, interior design, furniture design, product design and fashion design – in terms of how they are perceived and understood. The six disciplines were chosen on the basis that they are generally taught as distinct specialities (although furniture design is often taught within industrial design, it is also taught as a separate discipline within the TAFE sector), they have been defined by the Australian Bureau of Statistics as distinct occupational specialities and they are the disciplines that have the most established body of knowledge and the longest history within the occupational group. In addition, they were regarded as the disciplines that were most likely to be understood and recognised by the general population.

Given the dearth of academic investigation into design, the difficulty was to determine where to start, when there are so many unanswered questions, un-investigated lines of study and a general lack of information and resources. It is anticipated that this study will not answer so many questions, as it will raise issues and matters for further investigation. There may be questions regarding the choice
of design disciplines, the choice of subject materials and topics of study in terms of those included and those excluded, for being too broad, or for not being broad enough. In defence of what was studied, how it was studied and why it was studied, the choices were driven by personal interest, available resources and through the guidance and direction obtained through the literature, academic peers and personal experience. If this study contributes to the general body of knowledge about design, provides others with similar interests with some basis for further research in this area, or stimulates debate or discussion within the design arena, then it will have achieved its overall aim.

The following chapters will focus on a number of specific topics and areas of study. The literature review examines a number of key areas, specifically occupational prestige, professionalism and consumerism. Chapter 2 examines the issue of professionalism and the debates around which occupational groups ‘qualify’ as professional, why they qualify and the significance of achieving professional status. The chapter explores the issues with respect to the professions in general, as well as an examination of the professional status of design. Chapter 3 examines the rise of consumerism over the past few decades and the importance of design as both an agent and a product of this ‘consumer revolution’. There follows a discussion of how design has contributed to the shaping of society, both economically and culturally, and design’s role as an agent of cultural production. Given that some of the readers of this thesis will not have a design background, chapter 4 provides a brief history of the development of contemporary design in Australia. The chapter intentionally focuses on the growth and expansion of design education, the practice of design, and the changes in relationships between design and society. Chapter 5 examines the relationship of social identity, occupational identity and prestige. It examines the way that our choices of occupation not only affect the way we perceive ourselves, but the way we are perceived by others. These perceptions are quite significant in that they can affect the levels of power and influence we have, levels of remuneration and rewards we get from the work that we do, and our own perceptions of personal self-worth and self-identity.

Chapter 6 details the theoretical assumptions that underpin this thesis and presents the overall aims of the research. Chapters 7 to 9 detail the results from the research. The research project was conducted in three stages and included an occupational prestige survey, a series of focus group surveys and an extensive questionnaire distributed throughout Australia. The aim of each research stage was
to build up a picture of design and how it is perceived and understood. The intention was that each stage would build on the previous to achieve a comprehensive understanding of the perceptions of design and designers, and would contribute to the overall understanding of design in Australia today. The findings of the study were therefore presented not only as part of a discussion within each of the results chapters, but form the basis of chapter 10. In this chapter, the findings from the study are linked back to the themes of occupational prestige, professionalism and consumerism. In addition the chapter will present a brief conclusion and summation of the thesis in relation to the overall aims and recommendations of areas for future research.
2. **The Professional Status of Design**

**Introduction**

Sociologists have a long tradition of studying the professions. Irrespective of the approach used, what has emerged is a consensus that the professions enjoy a privileged status in comparison to occupations. With this status comes influence, power and prestige and it is these attributes of professionalism that encourage occupational groups to aspire to this category (Esland, 1980; Probert 1989). It has been argued that professionals are pivotal in the “creating and shaping of the social and cultural climate of society” (Boreham et al 1976: 8).

Anderson and Western (1976) argued that the professions arose out of a societal response to the need for skilled administrators, technical experts and service personnel with a range of complex skills to support the changing structure of the work environment. As such, it is only relatively recently that clearly defined professional groups have emerged, along with the educational institutions necessary to support them. The concept of professionalism has changed in recent years reflecting changes in organisational structure, the rise of the middle-class, and changes resulting from new technology. Occupations that once lacked professional status, or indeed were not traditionally considered an occupation (e.g. sport), are establishing themselves as professionals.

The debate over which occupations qualify as professions has been around since early last century (c.f. Flexner, 1915 cited in Freidson, 1994: 14). This debate, however, has been bogged down in issues focusing on the central traits of professions and the lack of consensus by researchers in the definition of what constitutes a profession (Freidson, 1994). Freidson doesn’t see this debate as problematic per se, but instead argued that the issues of empirical and intellectual analysis must be addressed before a theory of professions can be fully conceptualised (ibid). There have also been concerns raised that even within the concept of the ideology of professionalism itself there are substantial differences (Johnson, 1972: 2). There are clear differences between the ‘degree of professionalism’ associated with (say) medicine or law and social work, which are rarely addressed in the literature. The first issue then is that the professions are...
not a homogeneous group and the term ‘professionalism’ has been used in many different ways (ibid).

Johnson (1972) described three ways the term ‘professionalisation’ has been used. First is in reference to the broader changes in the occupation structure, second it is used to describe the increase in the number of occupational groups trying to adopt the hallmarks of professional occupations such as restricted entry and regulatory control, and thirdly, it is the process by which occupational groups go through the stages of organisational change and emerge as professions.

Other discussions on the professions have variously ranged from the opinion that the professions provide a positive moral exemplar by providing leadership, intellectual and cultural ideals (Halmos 1971); to a more critical analysis that emphasises and recognises the part the professions play in the creation and perpetuation of discriminatory practices and social stratification (Pemberton and Boreham 1976). The former approach is the one most commonly adopted and is generally based on a Durkheimian notion of the contribution of the professions to the maintenance of social order and harmony (ibid). Irrespective of personal views on this matter, it is important to recognise that most bids for professional recognition and status are grounded in the notion that professionalism is a positive and forward moving step for an occupational group. Further to this, the trait approach whereby occupations are ‘rated’ on the degree to which they meet the criteria for professionalism is arguably the most commonly adopted paradigm and one that is commonly used to describe the process needed to acquire professional status (c.f. The Senate Inquiry into the Status of the Teaching Profession, 1998).

Elliott (1972: 94) suggested that the impetus behind the emergence of the professional ideal was the “tradition of the status of professionalism and the historical circumstances in which occupational professionalism emerged as a contrast to industrial and commercial values”. Rothman (1987) argued that the term ‘profession’ is often used to create a positive public image. The notion that those who acquire professional status can achieve greater recognition and rewards and increased control over their work often compels individuals and occupational groups to aspire to this goal. Professions are also generally recognised by their own members and by society as having a high degree of prestige. This is supported by the many occupational prestige studies in which the professions consistently rate at the top end of the prestige scales (see chapter 5). Certainly
the occupations regarded as ‘the most professional’ – medicine, engineering, and law – are nearly always identified as the three most prestigious occupations, at least in Western cultures\(^1\) (Probert 1989).

However, it should be remembered that the medical profession was not always a profession, and was not always the recipient of considerable influence, government funding, and major research bequests. Historically, these are recent achievements. The medical profession is the contemporary success story, and its self-positioning provides a model for others to aspire to. Above all, it has captured the public imagination and exists as undoubtedly the most powerful professional construct in the public’s occupational category structures. Design has a long way to go to achieve such advantageous construct formation – and the public are crucial to this and hence their inclusion throughout the three stages of this research (Smith & Whitfield, 2005a).

Others contend that professionalism is nothing more than mere rhetoric. Becker (1962), for example, argued that the term ‘profession’ is simply an ‘honorific’ title and that there are no true professions: there are only those with the title and those without (the occupations). What is apparent is that the focus of attention in the study of professions has mostly been on the medical and health professions, whereas occupations that are situated in the economic or cultural domain have received sporadic or little attention (Abbott, 1995; Western, 1998)

It is not the purpose of this thesis to discuss at length the various approaches to the study of the professions. Rather, the goal is to determine the place of the design occupations within the perceived occupational structure. Having said this, it is useful to provide a brief summary of some of the theoretical perspectives used to

\(^1\) In some other cultures (c.f. China), government officials have generally rated the highest in terms of occupational prestige. However, this may be changing as recent studies (Nan and Wen 1988; Smith, 1999) show that, like the Western nations, medicine, law and engineering are generally rated the most prestigious. The biggest difference between China and Australia, though, was the very high status accorded to teaching in China compared to Australia. If, as is suggested by Anderson and Western (1976: 45), perceptions of occupational prestige are highly influenced by perceptions of perceived professional status, then it may be that teaching is regarded as more ‘professional’ in a country such as China than in Australia.
study the professions, and then to examine some of the ways professionalism has been defined. I will then examine how the notion of professionalism is socially constructed in such a way that professional attainment is seen as a legitimate pursuit in the context of perceived desirability and social standing. Finally, this chapter will examine the literature in relation to how the design occupations are perceived in terms of professional standing.

**Theories of Professions**

Professions and professionalism have been studied from a variety of perspectives. Much of the theory of professions evolved from Durkheim’s work on the relationships between the division of labour, social life, and social structure (Boreham et al, 1976). Durkheim recognised a potential for conflict and tensions within the occupational structure, particularly between the power relations of the various occupational groups. His premise was that in order to regulate these tensions and conflicts, a ‘new morality’ was required. This would be based on occupational membership that regulated activities and legitimised differences in rewards between certain occupations. From this perspective, the concept of the ‘profession’ is legitimised and endorsed within the occupational structure. That is, it is legitimate for certain occupations to receive greater rewards than others because they require far greater commitment from their practitioners. This commitment is generally based on length of education and perceived level of intellect. The rewards are higher income levels, higher perceived social standing and increased power and privilege. For Durkheim, the professions were a means for legitimising the moral dominance of one occupation over another on the ground of maintaining social order.

Traditionally, the sociological study of the professions has been situated within the functionalist paradigm. Professions are classified according to certain objective criteria such as educational standards, ethical considerations, protection of title, and exclusivity of knowledge. There is a general acceptance that the professional will possess complex knowledge that is beyond the understanding of the lay person and that they, as professionals, have the authority to perform tasks that may otherwise be unacceptable (e.g. an intimate examination by a doctor). Within this paradigm, professions are seen as static entities, largely uncriticised by those outside of the professional group, and infer an acceptance of the definitions and characteristics of the professional model. This ‘trait’ approach will be described
more fully later; however, it has been criticised as based on flawed assumptions, the most obvious being that to have a prescription of the professional model, there must be a true or ideal profession on which to base the traits. Medicine and law are typically held up as ‘pure’ professions, but one could question why they are more ‘professional’ than other occupational groups. Architecture has adopted many of the traits of a profession and yet it consistently rates lower on occupational prestige assessments as a profession than medicine or law. Clearly there are other forces at work to be a profession than simply adhering to the core elements of the professional model. Johnson (1972:8) suggested that professional traits might not be indicators of professional status, but of organisational control. This will be explored later.

One of the most famous and influential figures to draw on Durkheim’s works was Talcott Parsons. Parsons examined the professions from a functionalist perspective and was very much an advocate of the consensus model whereby society was “dependent on the smooth running of the professions” (1964: 64). Parsons argued that the professions are ‘stabilising’ forces within society and that they are essential for their ability to engender a sense of moral and ethical standards, a sense of stability in an often turbulent world, and for their idealistic and noble attributes which others can aspire to (Carr-Saunders and Wilson, 1964).

What is apparent here is the unquestioning assumption that the professions are beneficial and necessary for the smooth running of society. A criticism of the assumptions underlying this paradigm is the tendency to regard professional status as a natural outcome of the social structure of society. Inherent in this concept is that professionalism is a goal to be aspired to and that to be professional is to be ‘good’ and to be unprofessional is to be ‘bad’. It is this approach that is most widely appropriated and used by occupational groups when examining their professional status or the means to acquiring professional status (c.f. The Senate Inquiry into the Status of the Teaching Profession, 1998).

Medicine has been the target of numerous studies into the professions and professionalism and, as such, has been the primary model for conceptualising professionalism (Freidson 1994). However, the 1980’s brought dissatisfaction with this situation from both historians and sociologists, and many researchers began to broaden their studies into other occupational groups such as law, teaching, and
The Professional Status of Design

engineering (Freidson, 1994). To date, the design occupations have received little sociological attention.

A further criticism of these early approaches to the study of professions is that they do not take into account the culture and the social conditions that exist when new occupations are emerging. Is the process for professionalisation the same today as it was a century ago? Does it need to be? Certainly, as will be discussed later, the concept of professionalisation has changed significantly over the years. With respect to this study, does design need to go through the lengthy process of professionalisation (as described by trait theory) to be regarded as professional? Are there elements of traditional professionalism that are redundant in today’s society? For example, there is reluctance by the design community for compulsory certification (Swanson, 1995). The argument against certification is that it would threaten diversity and creativity that is the hallmark of the occupation. Swanson argued that certification for interior design has not made any significant differences to business practices, nor does it reflect the abilities of the designer. In contrast the Dezignaré Interior Design Collective (2004) argues that interior design certification is important for the “role it plays in the quality, safety, level of professionalism and consumer satisfaction with which projects are completed”. Similarly, Shapiro (1994) argues that certification will distinguish ‘real designers’ from the ‘pretenders’, such as the desktop publishers with no formal qualifications, just an Apple Mac! Can occupations such as design be a profession without core elements such as certification and licensing? This will be discussed later when examining the theoretical approach for this study.

Defining Professionalism

Much of the work on the professions has been centred on defining professionalism. Anderson and Western (1976) suggested that the definition of what is a profession is somewhat arbitrary and has altered over the years. An early definition by the Commonwealth Statistician of Australia, 1921 described professionals as “those persons mainly engaged in the government and defence of the country, and in satisfying the moral, intellectual, and social wants of its inhabitants” (cited in Boreham et al, 1976). In more recent years the definition has broadened significantly to include persons working in the private sector, but the educational and moral elements have been retained. As a means of identifying professions, researchers have, over the years, developed a set of criteria that are regarded as
fundamental to professional status. This is essentially based on the trait approach discussed earlier in this chapter. These criteria have been based on the analysis of what are regarded as the prototypic professions - medicine and law - and it is generally agreed that the most common characteristics of professions are:

- Autonomy in determining codes of practice and educational and ethical standards;
- A service ethic that incorporates characteristics such as altruism and confidentiality;
- Specialist knowledge of which the profession is the guardian;
- Restricted entry or membership into the profession; and
- A long period of education and training (Esland 1980).

Esland (1980: 219) argued that occupational groups will tend to aspire to professionalism through a process of meeting the ascribed criteria and that the relevance of the criteria to the particular occupational group is often overlooked. He contended that the descriptions of professional status are inadequate due to the complex nature of the professions, but that the emphasis on these criteria and the perceived autonomy of the professions serves to draw attention away from the fact that the criteria are intimately related to capitalist power and organisation. He further suggested that “the professions, as concentrations of middle-class culture, have become generators of ideology which legitimates the operation of social order in society” (ibid: 219). As discussed previously there are many flaws with this approach and it has been generally rejected by sociologists in more recent years.

An alternative perspective is where the professions are analysed in terms of an historical approach to the study of white-collar occupations aspiring to professional status. Within this paradigm, the process of professionalisation is the essential element. Another is the one described by Veysey (1988) in which the professions are simply a group of random occupations that historically have been called ‘a profession’. In this context, Veysey described the professions as a ‘folk category’. Turner and Hodge (1970) identified two approaches to the study of the professions: the community approach and the formal organisation approach. The community approach was first described by Goode (1957) who suggested that professionalism is an outcome of a professional community. The professional group is characterised by its members being bound by a sense of community, that once in that community few leave it. Its members also share common values and role definitions are agreed on by both members and non-members and are the same for all members. Additionally members share a common language, and maintain control over membership through the training process. The formal organisational approach
focuses on the organisational mechanism and techniques and their consequences for specific organisational goals (Turner and Hodge 1970). This approach further emphasises monetary reward, registration and licensing, codes of practice and conduct, and the application of formal controls over members (ibid).

An alternate approach emerged in the 1970’s where the professions were seen as part of a wider occupational and societal context. Freidson (1973) approached the subject of professionalism in the context of the professions being founded in the social organisation of occupational labour markets, but, as mentioned previously, his main concern was that the study of the professions lack adequate theoretical grounding and that it should be grounded in a theory of occupations, rather than within class theory. Freidson suggested that there are two types of professions. The first are those that are characterised by their educational status, and the second are those that are identified by their particular ideological and institutional traits. The ‘educational group’ consists of a broad stratum of professions and is, in general, a fairly vague and indistinct category. In contrast, the status professions refer more specifically to those occupations that share more characteristics than just higher education, such as professional status and high social standing (ibid). The “status professions” typically include the groups such as medicine, law and the clergy. The ‘ideological’ professions are less distinct as they have fewer defining features (e.g. educational standards), but sit within the social and cultural milieu of a particular society at a particular point in time. It could therefore be argued that this is where design sits. In a culture of material wealth, capitalism and globalisation, design is an important feature.

As an occupational group that emerged during the industrial revolution, design has developed in partnership with advances in technology and economic growth, particularly in Western cultures. Esland (1980) proposed that the growth of the professions is a ‘phenomenon of industrialisation and the expansion of technological rationalisation’. The change in the structure of society from the pre-industrial to the industrial era resulted in a proliferation of white-collar, technically demanding occupations, and it is these occupations that have either achieved or aspired to professional status. Teaching, nursing and social work are some examples. Increasingly, many new occupations emerging that are also keen to establish professional status. These include occupations involved in information technology, computing, and communications. In this context, design would be included with
the emergent occupations, as its educational requirements would mean that design is granted ‘professional status’, but is not regarded as a ‘status profession’.

Despite the rhetoric and the hubris that surrounds the discussions about professionalism, it remains apparent that many occupations are proud of their professional status and many others are extremely keen to obtain it (e.g. teaching, nursing).

**The Phenomenology of Professionalism**

The central interest of this study is how the design occupations are perceived. One of the key presumptions is the centrality of occupation in the social structure. As children we are educated with the expectation that as adults we will work until we reach retirement age. We are encouraged to find work that brings both personal and monetary rewards, and our relationship with work is often used as a measure of our self-worth. To work is seen to be a positive experience. For those who don’t work (but do not have a ‘good’ excuse, such as being retired or ill), they may find that they are marginalised. Even those who have a ‘good’ excuse, such as caring for children, find that their status within the community is lower than if they were in paid employment. It is argued here that occupation is central to an individual’s sense of self-worth and is a critical factor in how people perceive each other. It is further contended that occupations are important in establishing an individual’s place in society and that there is a significant association between occupational status and personal status. What has been argued in the previous discussion on professionalism, and in the chapter on occupational prestige is that certain jobs are perceived as having higher levels of status and prestige, and that these high status occupations are more likely to be those that have been ascribed ‘professional’ status.

The individuals that work in these ‘professional’ occupations are thus generally ascribed with higher personal status within the community and with these come higher levels of power and privilege. These rewards will often be extrinsic, such as monetary rewards, but are also the intrinsic rewards of an increased sense of self-worth or self-identity. It is therefore in the interests of those working in a particular occupational group to aspire towards that occupation achieving perceived professional status. Recent examples of this jostling for professional status are
teaching, nursing, and social work (c.f. The Senate Inquiry into the Status of the Teaching Profession, 1998).

It should be noted that the key word in this discussion is that these occupations need to be perceived as professional. Thus, it is the way that people, both those working in the occupation as well as those outside of the occupation, perceive that occupation that is important. In this regard it is the process of professionalisation that is pre-eminent on the road to professional acceptance. While it would be possible to determine the ‘professional status’ of design by a pre-determined set of criteria (such as that proposed by Esland), this study is concerned with obtaining a subjective understanding of the professional status of design rather than ticking off against prescribed benchmarks. This process can be explained by the phenomenologically informed interactionist approach that forms the theoretical basis of this study. This approach is described more fully in chapter 6.

The concept of professionalism is a socially constructed reality that serves to delineate one set of occupations from another, usually with the goal of asserting power and authority. Freidson (1973) argued that it is through a process of political negotiation and persuasion that society comes to accept an occupation as having professional status. This consensual process fits well with the phenomenologically informed interactionist theoretical assumptions of this study. Professions should be studied from the perspective that they are socially constructed, continually negotiated and that the meaning of professionalism is dependent on the interpreter. However, as mentioned previously, an occupation has a relationship with the social and cultural milieu in which it has emerged. Thus people’s concepts of which occupational groups are more important to society, more ‘professional’ or more influential will be tempered by the values and mores of society at a particular point in time. For example, an environmentally and ecologically sustainable society is seen as increasingly important to more and more people. It will be interesting to see if the work in this area increases in perceived professional status and whether there are associated new professions emerging over coming years. Certainly environmental design is poised to gain increased significance and value. Whether this will translate into higher professional status and prestige remains to be seen.

The process of ‘professional socialisation’ (in other words, acquiring the skills, knowledge and culture of the profession) is also a process of acquiring shared
meanings. Through the process of shared experiences and meanings, individuals learn and internalise the norms and values of the profession. The foundations of professional identity are generally laid during the process of formal education, but are continually acquired and negotiated through the whole of a person’s professional career (Anderson and Western 1976). In this sense, the professional status of occupations is a constant negotiation, and because shared meanings (in this case the professional status of a particular occupation), are created by people, they are always subject to control by people, and so can be broken down just as easily as they are constructed (Berger and Luckman 1967).

Using this perspective in reference to the design occupations, we can now postulate that in order for design to achieve professional status, enough people must share the view that design is indeed worthy of such status. For this to occur, individuals need an understanding of the concept of ‘professionalism’. It is this concept that has been the subject of much research and it has often focussed on the defining traits and characteristics of the professional occupation. Individuals will then compare what they know of the design occupations to see if they meet their concept of the prerequisite criteria. One of the aims of this study is to ascertain if enough people view design as a profession, then it is justifiable that the design occupations should be regarded as legitimately professional.

The expansion of tertiary education and the introduction of new technologies have also changed the perception of many occupations. Occupations that were once considered trade or craft-based, such as horticulture, nursing and design, are now degree-based and their methods of learning and accreditation are increasingly emulating those of the professions. Technology has had both positive and negative impacts on the professional status of many occupations. On the one hand, some professions such as those in the banking sector and some areas of medical and engineering practice have lost their professional status due to the de-skilling of the area. On the other hand, some jobs (e.g. office administrators) have increased their professional status due to the necessity of acquiring greater technical expertise. Some craft occupations have managed to create a sense of corporate identity and organisation similar to the professions. This has occurred through years of tradition or unionisation. These occupations often will regulate entry, set codes of practice and determine suitable rates of pay (Esland, 1980).
The design occupations have been described as the ‘engineers of designer capitalism’ (Murray 1989: 44). It has also been argued that design has played a ‘formative role in the history of capitalism and, in turn, the social expression of capitalist processes’ (Miles 1998: 36). No one would deny that humans have always ‘designed’ things. Design, as a contemporary occupation however, is a relatively recent phenomenon. Essentially the design occupations in their present form emerged with the rise of industrialisation and the increased demand for consumer goods. At the beginning of this chapter it was postulated that the rise of ‘professionalism’ is a relatively recent phenomenon, emerging with the need for workers with highly specialised, technical skills. If we examine those occupations regarded by most as professions – medicine, law, architecture and engineering – it can be seen that at some point in their history all of these occupations were situated in a public domain. That is, everyone practiced them, and the community shared the knowledge. For example, healing and caring for the sick and injured was the responsibility of the family or community; building structures were designed and built by the potential ‘owner-occupier; and laws were made by the local community group. Certainly, there might be those with higher levels of skills than others, but essentially the tasks were carried out as an adjunct to normal activities such as food production, caring and raising families.

In this sense the occupations can be regarded as a set of skills necessary for the survival of the community group, but these jobs remained firmly in the public sphere in terms of skills and knowledge. In contrast, the professionalisation of an occupation is aimed at removing that occupation from the public sphere to a situation where only a ‘properly qualified’ member of that professional group can practice the occupation. Thus the setting and interpretation of laws is done in the private sanctum of the law courts (or government houses), and is removed from the public sphere both in a physical sense and in a virtual sense through the complex private language used by the practitioners.

Similarly, White (1976) contended that teachers have attempted to position themselves as people with skills that are in short supply. In reality, however, teaching skills are not particularly rare, in that everybody does it much of the time and one only has to think of our roles as parents, workers, or friends where we are in positions of instructing and teaching. Thus, to establish professional status there
needs to be the establishment of beliefs that there is something more that can be offered to the student in the formal context of the classroom. From a phenomenologically informed interactionist perspective, it is through this process of changing the meanings and understandings of the majority of the population that establishes the professional ideology of the teaching occupation. In this same context, for design to be perceived as a profession it too may need to make the step from something that is ‘done by everyone’ to an occupation that is perceived as having a complex set of skills, and a knowledge base that is regarded as not available within the public sphere of non-professional design (Pacey 1992: 224).

One of the traits consistently identified as central to the concept of professionalism is a specialised body of knowledge (c.f. Esland, 1980). This body of knowledge incorporates a collective history of the occupation, shared methodologies and research, and a critical analysis. A study of occupations such as medicine, law, and architecture, reveals that these occupations, through being both academic disciplines and professional practices, have well-established and recognised bodies of knowledge. In contrast, design is awash with technicians and practitioners, but few researchers, historians and critics (de Forest, 1990). In his commentary on the state of graphic design in America, Poynor (1994:41) regarded the “gradual emergence of a new spirit of critical inquiry and reflection” as one of the most significant developments in recent times. Poynor further argued that the process of critical review is essential in the establishment both standards of ‘good practice’ and the appropriate measures for assessing and evaluating these standards (ibid).

Margolin contended that what differentiates the non-professional from the professional designer is the professional’s “motivation, experience, access to tools and equipment, along with the criteria determined by professional associations, cultural institutions, and the media” (1995: 126). Margolin (1995) acknowledged the importance of the non-designer’s role in defining the design profession. He suggested that whilst some aspects of design might be accessible to the non-professional, there are other aspects of the occupation that are the sole domain of the professional. In the case of the graphic designer this might be the ability to apply aesthetic judgement or taste to reflect a client’s own understandings of their requirements. Manovich (1991) differed from most in his definition of what distinguishes a professional from a non-professional. He argued that access to expensive equipment such as photographic equipment or specialised computer applications, is the hallmark of the professional. It is arguable though, whether the
ownership of expensive equipment could be regarded as a reliable indicator of professionalism. Certainly the professional might have more reason for purchasing expensive equipment, but the purchase of the equipment does not make the purchaser a professional. In terms of the public perceptions of design, it is argued that the formalising of professional status through professional associations, and the meanings and portrayals of design in the media and within the general cultural milieu, are the most influential qualities for professional recognition.

Frayling (1996) argued that design in Britain lacks importance and reputation due to the absence of professional standards, and the absence of a representative body to set and monitor them. He contended that the design bodies that exist in Britain are more about education, lobbying and research, but are not professional bodies. In relation to this he stated:

"There is clearly a direct relationship between the absence of professional standards and the reputation of a profession. Is design even regarded as a profession? Charters, diplomas, examinations have enormous impact, especially in a society such as Britain, in which ascribed status is much more important than achieved status in sociological terms" (ibid: 39).

In a recent interview, Frayling continued to criticise the design professions for "their lack of leadership" and questioned whether design is a profession at all due to its lack of "minimum standards, benchmarks and brass plates" (Editor, The Times Higher, 2000: 2).

In Australia there are a number of design bodies that represent the various design specialities (cf. Design Institute of Australia (DIA), Australian Graphic Design Association (AGDA)). However, whilst these organisations might petition governments for funding and support, or provide valuable source of resources and information, they do not preside over educational practices and codes of ethics, although they do have panels to review complaints. It is not compulsory to join the various organisations, nor do they restrict entry to only properly and formally accredited persons, though, in some organisations, potential applicants are scrutinised to ensure they meet the entry criteria. In addition, design lacks protection of title such that anyone can call himself or herself a designer.

Sparke (1986) argued that there is still a sense of confusion and mystery about what exactly industrial design is. Similarly, Holland asserted that graphic design is in a "perpetual state of identity crisis" and that design is perceived as a trade by
many schools and the U.S. government (ibid: 12-3). Holland highlighted a need to change “peoples’ perception of graphic design” and argued that the establishment of a cohesive and comprehensive library can do this (ibid: 13). Whilst not arguing with the importance of professional resource materials, it is debatable that the existence of a professional library will be fundamental in changing peoples’ perception and awareness of graphic design. Perhaps one of the boldest assertions came from Behrens (1998: 21) when he argued that graphic designers:

- “Are servants, not artists. That is they work for a client to a specific brief rather than pursue personal desires and interests;
- Create forms that are both subordinate and ephemeral. That is their work is disposable. People might read it then throw it away (e.g. catalogues, books, etc.); and
- Get no respect, because they don’t deserve any. They don’t have a profession. Anyone can call themselves a graphic designer, irrespective of qualifications and experience”.

Salmon and Gritzer (1992: 80) advocated the incorporation of studies in the social sciences into design courses on the grounds that this will enable them to “develop social awareness and thereby increase their professional competence”. The authors reasoned that designers have a “professional responsibility” to be aware of the “social consequences” of what they are designing (ibid: 83). They concluded that this would enhance the development of professional competence through a sense of responsibility to the community (ibid). This stance fits comfortably with Friedson’s (1994) notion of the ‘ideological’ profession whereby it is not the formal credentialing that is the hallmark of the design profession, but its relationship to social and community ideology and values.

There has been debate for some time within the graphic design community about the professionalism of the industry. Many designers regard education as the cornerstone of professionalism and have campaigned on a number of fronts to change the perceptions of design. Fry (2005) is concerned though that design education in Australia is essentially the “technical transfer of design practice” and that educators need to be able to give students the ability to fully use and realise their capabilities, give them an understanding of the political, cultural, social and economic forces that have historically impacted on design, and impart a sense of responsibility towards the future and world in which they live and work.
Like Fry (2005), Swanson (1997) is also derisive of graphic design education, arguing that it is not education but narrowly specialised vocational training. He further argued that design lacks a design scholarship and that there needs to be a greater balance between skills training and a general understanding of society, which he suggested can be obtained by combining design and social science. Salchow (1993: 8) blurs the issue of professionalism by claiming, “In any discipline...training, dedication, education, and practice are required of anyone who hopes to excel. The doers who get paid for such activities are professionals, even when their turf may not constitute a discrete dictionary occupation”. Whilst this statement certainly has a kernel of truth, dedication, education and practice do not necessarily equate to professionalism, either in a phenomenological or structural sense. A person with many years of trades education, work experience and who may be the best in their field is still not regarded as a professional, as this is often related to such things as exclusivity of title (e.g. medicine, law, engineering or architecture), an established body of knowledge, control of standards, career paths, autonomy in organising and carrying out work, and a professional code of practice.

One of the more subliminal aspects of professionalism in the West is that the members of the professional occupations are invariably middle or upper class white males. If we look at some of the individual design occupations we find that the practitioners do not generally reflect this trend. For example, fashion design is typically associated with females, as is interior design. Crane (1993), in her analysis of fashion design, showed how the status and prestige (professionalism) of fashion design has varied between cultures and over time due to the social positions of the people entering the field. The proportion of women fashion designers was found to be a significant negative factor in the prestige of the occupation (ibid). In England, fashion design generally attracted young working class girls whose educational standards were not adequate for higher levels of scholarship. Crane concluded that although there are differences between cultures in the status of fashion design, it is generally regarded as a “semi-profession” which has little occupational control over the industry (ibid).

Furniture design is, in some ways, a difficult topic. There is little debate or critical analysis of the occupation itself and, what little there is, focuses on a history of furniture design from the perspective of the evolution of styles and fashions. Although it is possible to find reference to the role of the practitioner (c.f. Gloag 1969; Kirkham, 1987), there is no debate at all about the state of furniture design as an occupation today. One can only conclude that this may be because furniture
design is seen by many as a sub-discipline of industrial design; or alternatively it could be seen as support for the argument that furniture designers are skilled workers (not professionals) and, as such, do not have the same need to conform to the professional necessities of academic critique.

Attfield (1996) argued that it was the development of ‘good design’ awareness that underscored the professionalisation of furniture design in Britain in the mid-1900s. Attfield noted that there seemed to be reluctance within the field of furniture design to disassociate itself from the craft industry (ibid). Even today the notion of hand-made equalling good quality is still firmly entrenched in the public psyches, associated with hand-made, cottage industries and craftwork. Although skill and expertise is clearly acknowledged, this does not mean that furniture designers are recognised as professionals.

Interior design is an interesting occupation in that there appear to be two ways that it is associated with proximate occupations and, depending on the perception; there is quite a difference in the way it is perceived and understood. On the one hand, interior design is often associated with interior decoration, on the other with architecture. Unfortunately, interior decoration does not have the same level of perceived prestige and professionalism as architecture (Daniel, 1983; Massey, 1990). The early interior decorators were generally untrained women and, as such, the occupation carried little status (Massey, 1990). Massey (1990: 162) argued that:

"Other areas of design had become the preserve of the expert since the war. Commercial artists were now graphic designers, and the industrial designer enjoyed an improved status. The failure of interior design to match these areas in terms of professionalism harks back to its foundation by decorators."

It is also suggested that interior design is “in turmoil” and that few understand what interior designers do, including both people outside of the occupation and those working in it (Knackstedt and Haney, 1995). They argued that interior design lacks the more formal working structures and theories that are central to those occupations recognised as professions (c.f. architecture, medicine and law) (ibid). Unlike the other design disciplines, interior design appears to be committed to the establishment of professional certification and licensures, although it is recognised that there are still many issues to be addressed (ibid).
USA only those suitably qualified and experienced are permitted to practice as registered interior designers. In Australia there is no mandatory registration required for interior design and, like the other design disciplines, there is no protection of title.

The tendency to glamorise the design professions (particularly fashion design and interior design), can give the perception that it is a somewhat unreal profession. Often media reporting goes hand in hand with ‘Hollywood’ representations of the profession and the world of supermodels, mansions, glitz and glamour, glossy magazines and fame and fortune.

In the broadest sense of the word, design (i.e. to plan or to conceive) is something we all do. It might be putting together an outfit to wear, placing furniture and fittings in our homes, designing and constructing a garden bed, a set of bookshelves and so on. In addition, the terms ‘design’ and ‘designer’ are used often and thus have a strong sense of familiarity (Sparke, 1989). In fact, we are all lay designers in some sense and there is a concern that “everyone thinks they know what design is about” (de Forest, 1990; Evamy, 1994; McDermot, 1990).

A number of possibilities have been raised in the literature for design’s low status. These are the feminisation of the profession, low salaries, lack of career progression, the casualisation of the workforce and inadequate recruitment and training structures. Molotch (2003) suggests that, in America, the evidence of inattention to design begins at school. In America, children are taught the names of explorers, inventors and artists, but not designers (p: 27). In Australia, art is part of the educational curriculum from an early age. Children learn the names of artists and to recognise rudimentary styles of art. Effectively, they construct a cognitive category around art, whereby it is difficult to conceive of a Western-educated adult being unable to name at least one artist. However, as found in a previous study, Australians and Koreans could not name designers, with the exception of fashion designers (Chung and Whitfield, 1999). So while design has become a feature of the curriculum for most secondary schools over the past 10 years and increasingly attention is being given to the work produced in schools and tertiary institutions through such events as exhibitions of works by the top VCE students (in Victoria) and young fashion designers (in Fashion Week), it is still very closely linked with art and does not appear to have developed its own identity. Design appears to lack the power and status accorded to other professional groups,
and this I suggest, stems from a number of influencing factors, including the feminisation of the profession, the remuneration levels, poor career structure, casualisation of the workforce, inadequate recruitment and training of younger designers, the lack of control over the field of work and the poor understanding of design and designers by the public and will be discussed in more detail.

Feminization of the profession: A study by the Senate Inquiry into the Status of the Teaching Profession (1998) concluded that being shackled to the notion that it is a ‘female’ occupation hampered the status of teaching. Further studies have also found that the perceived ‘gender’ of an occupation can detrimentally affect the perceived level of status and prestige (Chang, 1998; Daniel, 1983). In 1996, around 50 per cent of designers were female (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 1996). A cross-cultural study by Smith and Whitfield (2003) examined the perceived gender of a range of occupations including some of the design occupations. This study sought the perceptions of both Korean and Australian design and education university students. They found that, with the exceptions of industrial designer and furniture designer, all of the participant groups generally perceived the design occupations as ‘female’. Fashion designer was regarded as the most ‘female’ of the design occupations in the study. A report by de Forest (1988) examined the economic and psychological implications of the feminization of graphic design. She too was concerned that ‘women’s’ work traditionally is marginalised and devalued and carries less status than ‘men’s’ work. Whilst prevailing attitudes continue to undervalue women’s work, it is likely that this will influence perceptions of occupational prestige. Design is regarded as a feminised profession with the majority of the workers being female, and with the bosses (and the owners) being mainly male (de Forest, 1988).

Low salary: Molotch (2003) argued that in America the low pay and power accorded to designers accounts for their marginal status within the business world. Similarly in Australia, salaries for the vast majority of designers are low right from the point of graduation through to the experienced designer with many years of employment. In 2002 average median graduate salary for design (defined as art and design) was
$30,000, well below the average for all graduates\textsuperscript{2}. In comparison, the starting salary for teachers was $38,000 and dentists topped the graduate earnings at $52,000. Design graduates receive less than graduates of architecture ($32,000), the humanities ($32,000) and social sciences ($38,800). Of the 21 professions cited, only pharmacy ($26,000) was lower than design. Graduates from disciplines such as engineering ($40,000) and computer science ($39,000) receive considerably higher median starting salaries (Graduate Careers Council of Australia, 2003). With regards to the low salary for pharmacy graduates and its effects on the perceived levels of status and prestige, it will be shown in the following chapters, that for jobs with perceived high levels of service to the community the effects of income and education are not as critical to perceptions of social status. In these circumstances, prestige is enhanced by a moral dimension of the assessment. It might be argued that design suffers not only from low income but also from an absence of perceived high moral worthiness.

Design does not generally share the advantage of the high incomes that are achieved by people working in some other areas such as information technology and engineering (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 1996). Furthermore, the Australian Graduate School of Management/Australian Graphic Design Association (AGSM/ADGA, 1996) report found that industry experience was not a good indicator of income and that other ‘unknown factors’ were more important than experience in graphic design. This may result in a lack of clarity between the usual occupational prestige constructs of income and education, making design difficult to locate within the prestige scale. This will be explored further in the course of the research.

**Inadequate career structure:** The career structure for designers is restrictive. Design businesses, particularly in Australia, tend to be small to medium enterprises\textsuperscript{3}, with little scope for a strong career structure (AGSM/AGDA, 1996). Many designers opt to own their own studio and remain in a small business. Research has shown that designers generally don’t move up the managerial

\textsuperscript{2} The report is based on the average salaries of new graduates aged 25 years or under (Graduate Careers Council, 2003).

\textsuperscript{3} The AGSM/AGD Report, (1996) found that the average number of employees for graphic design firms was 4.
The Professional Status of Design

structure of large organizations in the same way as accountants or engineers (Dumas and Whitfield, 1989). This study further found that design is not generally integrated within the company structure. In this regard design is treated differently in terms of training, experience and responsibility. Conversely the study found that the designers themselves did not fully understand and work within the company structure and so remained peripheral to the organizational functions and management. Additionally, unlike occupations such as medicine or law, whereby a practitioner can advance their professional skills and qualifications (e.g. lawyer to barrister to Queen’s council to judge), design has no such professional structure (Smith & Whitfield, 2005a).

Casualisation: Casualisation is an increasing trend within the general workforce. Traditionally, casual work has been associated with low status, low paid work, with little certainty or security of employment, and as such colours the perception of any occupational groups that rely heavily on casual workers. With many design practitioners working freelance or as contractors, they may find that this structure adversely affects the perceptions of the occupation.

Inadequate recruitment, training and induction practices: Once the designer graduates from university, there is little in the way of formal ongoing professional development. Recruitment is often casual or part-time and much of the training appears to be on-the-job. The lack of further formal training opportunities may be a cause for low status, given the increasing emphasis on continuing education, accreditation and professional development.

Lack of control over the profession and over their work: In terms of an occupation group, there is little formalised control over design practice. Although in Australia interior designers are required to belong to a professional body before they practice, there is no requirement that the other design disciplines do so and there is no protection of title for the design occupations. This situation allows the untrained and the unethical to operate within the design field. Professional bodies, such as the Design Institute of Australia and the Australian Graphic Design Association, regard this as a significant challenge for their organisations in coming years.

Lack of support and understanding by the general community: As previously discussed, design is often misunderstood (de Forest, 1990; Evamy, 1994; McDermot, 1990) and suffers an ‘identity crisis’ (Holland, 1993). A lack of
understanding by the general community can ultimately lead to a lack of support. Why support a profession that you know little about or (worse still) you think you know a lot about, and that it is not worthy of support? Design is weighted down by people’s belief that they know what the practitioners do and what the fundamentals of the field are. Robertson (2004) argues that designers need to move on from complaining that no one knows who they are and what they do and rise to the challenge of educating the community about what it is that they do. He contends that creating an awareness of design will have “direct outcomes for the design profession”.

**Conclusion**

In contemporary society there is little disputing that the professions are regarded as positive and desirable occupations. Although the professions have been studied from a variety of perspectives, it is agreed that they hold a privileged position in society, and, as such, command high levels of political, economic and social power. There is little doubt that a consequence of these factors, in addition to the benefits of achieving professional status (e.g. improved pay and personal status), is that an increasing number of occupations will endeavour to obtain professional status.

It has been acknowledged that there is disagreement (or disenchantment) with the lack of critical theoretical discourse (c.f. Boreham et al 1976: 36; Freidson 1973), but it is not the purpose of this chapter to enter into this debate. Instead it has been argued that the interest lies in the way the professions are defined and judged by the wider community, and how these perceptions affect an occupational group’s (in this case the design occupations) ability to be regarded as professional.

It is argued that, through the political manoeuvring of occupational groups, notions such as a ‘criteria for professionalism’ are established. If you hear something often enough from a variety of sources, eventually that view may become the prevailing view. For example, we are told that medicine, law and engineering are professions because they fulfil a particular set of criteria (which was originally established in hindsight with these particular occupations in mind), and this list exemplifies the significant features of professionalism. So, if another occupational group decides that it too should attain professional status, then it is often believed that the best way to achieve this is to work towards meeting the previously established criteria. Some occupational groups such as teaching, nursing, and social work are
attempting to address this issue explicitly through this process (The Senate Inquiry into the Status of the Teaching Profession, 1998). However, it is also acknowledged that society’s judgment about the merits of a particular occupational group with regard to its professional status are tempered by the social, political and economic values and mores that exist at a point in time. As will be discussed in the following chapter, the phenomenal and rapid rise in consumerism has facilitated the expansion of the design industry. It will be argued that design has the potential to gain status and prestige due to its symbiotic relationship with consumer culture, something that most of us value highly (along with our health and our legal system).

As long as the rewards that accompany professional status remain, occupational groups will continue to strive for professional recognition. Interestingly, it is the notion that to be ‘professional’ is to be ‘good’ that tends to muddy the waters, as many occupational groups regularly use the term to promote themselves in a positive light, despite not meeting the ‘list of criteria’. It is not uncommon to hear the terms ‘professional builders’, ‘professional tradesman’, ‘professional sportsperson’, etc. Clearly the people working in these occupations do not meet the ‘criteria’ of professionalism, but in order to present themselves as competent workers, with a high level of honesty and integrity, they present themselves as professionals. Others in their occupational group are perhaps often seen as ‘unprofessional’ or ‘bad’. Whether or not these occupations can be or should be regarded as ‘professional’ is not to be debated here, but the discussion serves to highlight that the concept of professionalism has meaning at a number of levels. So, whilst a builder might call him/herself a professional to emphasise their level of expertise and integrity, it does not mean that the occupation of ‘builder’ would necessarily be regarded as a profession. However, within the phenomenologically informed interactionist perspective, there is no reason why an occupation could not be perceived as a profession. If the notion was to become ‘habitualised’ through general agreement that this occupation is indeed a profession, then it is not the place of the researcher to dispute this.

In the meantime debates within design appear to be inward looking such as the dispute around the suitability of ‘graphic design’ as an occupational title (c.f. Bonsiepe 1994; Di Nucci 1996; Shapiro 1993; Wheeler 1993), or the focus on the education and perceived professionalism of the industry (Salmon and Gritzer 1992; Swanson 1997). Some have focussed on certification as a means to enhance the
professional status of graphic design (c.f. Holland, 1993; Poggenpohl, 1997; Shapiro 1992), while others are concerned that the formulation of standards would threaten the main strength of graphic design – its diversity (c.f. Swanson 1995).

In an environment of rapid change and development, many new occupations are emerging, and most of these require high levels of education and specialist knowledge (c.f. computing and information technology occupations). Many of these occupations would be perceived as having professional status. The design occupations arose out of the expansion of the economy and the increased demand for consumer products. They are characterised by flexible manufacturing technology, specialist computing skills, advanced conceptual skills, and technical expertise. Concern is expressed from within the design professions, however, that design suffers from an identity crisis - no one is quite sure what it is (de Forest, 1990; Evamy, 1994; McDermot, 1990). Additionally, while design has emerged in Western countries over the last two decades as a potent force both economically and culturally, it has remained unregulated and without protection of title and, in essence, anyone can practice design and term themselves a designer.

As mentioned earlier in the chapter, one of the key criteria of the professions is restricted entry or membership. There has been some debate on this issue (c.f. Frayling, 1996; Holland, 1993:12; Shapiro 1992), with little resolution, as some designers regard regulation and certification as a threat to autonomy and creativity (e.g. Swanson, 1995: 109). Along with this was the issue of critical inquiry and review that was seen to be lacking within the discipline (Poynor, 1994). In contrast, it has also been suggested that educational qualifications are just one aspect of professionalism and that they may not be relevant in some instances, particularly for those occupations that have strong links to the social, political and economic values and priorities of the day.

While sociological discourse has focused on problems of defining the concept of professionalism (at least to the professional), the advantages of professional status are rarely, if ever, disputed and, as such, are ideals to which many occupational groups aspire. As has also been discussed, this thesis is using an interactionist approach to examine how the design occupations are perceived. Whether or not design meets the criteria of professionalism would certainly be important if this study was using a functionalist paradigm, but is not so significant when what we really want to know is if people believe that design has professional status. Where
the key criteria become important is in their use as a ‘tool’ for convincing the
individual of the occupation’s professional legitimacy. Thus, if we ‘believe’ that the
only way we would regard an occupational group as professional is if it posses the
‘features of professionalism’, then we may reject its claim to professional status if it
doesn’t have them.

In reality though, few people would have a concrete notion of the key criteria, or
they would have their own subjective notion of professionalism, and this will
invariably influence their decision. If in addition to this we know very little about
what the work is, or what people in this occupation actually do, then that too will
influence our views about professional status. In the case of design, it has been
contended throughout this thesis that design suffers from an ‘identity crisis’ and
that people are unsure about what a designer actually does. Of course, if you don’t
know what they do, how can you judge them against a set of ‘professional criteria’?
Thus, whether or not design is perceived as a profession will depend on each
individual’s notion of ‘professionalism’ and will also depend on that person’s level of
knowledge of the design occupations.

The rewards, both extrinsic (e.g. monetary) and intrinsic (e.g. improved sense of
self-worth, autonomy over work), have meant that there are many good reasons to
work in an occupation that is perceived as having professional status. The fact that
the term ‘professional’ is so strongly associated with the concepts of ‘goodness’,
‘honesty’ and ‘integrity’ reinforces the desirability of working in an occupation that
is seen to be professional. For designers to be perceived as competent, technically
proficient, credible, and ethical, it may be that design needs to be situated securely
within the professional sector of the occupational structure.

The purpose of this chapter was to explore the issue of professionalism in relation
to the design occupations. It was not the intention to draw any conclusions on this
matter, other than to say that, from a phenomenologically informed interactionist
perspective, if enough people perceive the design occupations as professions, then
there is a solid argument for concluding that design has achieved professional
status. What is anticipated though, is that there will be differences between the
sub-disciplines of design in the perceptions of professionalism.
3. **DESIGN AND CONSUMER CULTURE**

**Introduction**

In contemporary Western society everyday life is dominated by our relationship with consumer goods. Our desire to acquire goods, our ability to do so and the plethora of products available far exceed that of any other historical era. Traditionally, social theorists and researchers have focussed on the relationship between the production process and social life. In this context, consumption has been regarded as a by-product of production (Miles, 1998). More recently, however, the focus has shifted to issues such as consumerism, mass culture, and mass consumption, and their impact on the individual and society. Many now regard consumption as the driving force behind the shaping of society and argue that it has superseded production in this regard (c.f. Bauman, 1998; Langer, 1996; Miles, 1998).

It has been suggested that in the USA around 90 per cent of the workforce are in the business of producing consumer goods and services (Rosenblatt, 1999). Many of these are working in those occupations that have developed as a response to the rise of a consumer culture, such as retail, advertising, marketing, and the design professions.

The recent rise of the design professions both culturally and economically has been attributed to the industrialisation of society and the increased demand for consumer goods (Pacey, 1992). However, there has been little discussion of the role of design and the designer within the context of either production or consumption. Over the past two decades, design has emerged as a potent force both economically and culturally and, given the considerable impact that design can have on the shaping of material consumption within society, it is surprising that it has received such little research attention.

The design professions as we know them today, are not only agents of mass consumerism and mass culture, but are a product of it. A history of design is invariably bound with a history of mass production and technological advance, and, in turn, each of these is shaped by the economic, the social and the political. In the previous chapter Friedson’s notion of the profession whose professional status
and prestige is linked to the ideology and institutional was raised. He offers an alternative view on professional attainment that doesn’t focus on education and traits, but takes into account the cultural and social. The focus of this chapter is on social and cultural relationships between design and consumer culture. Through exploring the relationships between design and consumerism, an attempt is made to understand the connection between the design and the broader cultural context in which this occupation sits.

This chapter will begin by very briefly examining the rise of mass consumerism (with an intentional focus on the West), and will touch on how the political, economic and social relationships that exist in any given society will affect, shape and influence the development of goods and services and the design professions. It will be argued that in order to appreciate and understand Design, it is necessary to understand the cultural milieu in which it exists today and has developed from in the past. There will be an examination of the shift from a production-led society to a consumption-led society, and how this has had a profound effect on the structure of society and on the individual. This links in with the more detailed examination of occupational prestige and social identity in chapters 5 and 7. This will be followed by a discussion of two of the most dominant and influential theories of consumption and mass consumerism, which will be followed by some concluding remarks and observations about how design might be influenced by the prevailing attitudes toward mass culture and mass consumerism.

The Rise of Consumer Culture and Mass Consumerism

Bauman states, “Our society is a consumer society” (1998:79). Few would argue against this today, although many might deplore this, whilst others might celebrate this, it hasn’t always been this way. Not that long ago society was more accurately described as a ‘producer’s society’, in that the bulk of the population was engaged primarily as ‘producers or soldiers’ (ibid: 80). In more recent years this situation has changed to one whereby members of society are, from the time they are born, shaped to consume (ibid; Langer, 1996). Production and consumption are inseparable activities (Horowitz and Mohun, 1998) and, as such, we have always produced and consumed. So, it is not the case that we do one but not the other (this would be a nonsense), but the difference is that there has been a fundamental psychological shift in focus of the activity and in the minds of the masses. It is contended that where we once lived to work (produce), we now work to live
(consume). This shift was coined the ‘consumer revolution’ by Mort (1996) and is underpinned by a significant and profound change in social and cultural life that is marked by a move from production to consumption-led values (ibid).

But what is consumerism? Miles (1998:4) defines consumerism as “the cultural expression and manifestation of the apparently ubiquitous act of consumption” where ‘consumption’ is the act of buying and using goods. Miles stated that “consumerism is not purely of sociological interest, but its significance crosses disciplinary boundaries. Consumerism intersects sociology and design theory, as the rise in consumerism has influenced the scope and practice of design. Consumption is also regarded as both a material and a cultural process (Horowitz and Mohun, 1998). By this we mean that embedded in that act of consumption there is both a material and physical side to consuming, in that there is an inherent cultural meaning assigned to the act of consumption over and above the simple purchase of the goods. A product may have both use value and a status or significance value over and above its use value. In the last few decades this has resulted in what could be regarded as the 'mass produced designer product'.

Some, such as Bauman, (1998) and Adorno (1991), were critical of the consumer society. Bauman argued that it is based on the ever-shifting horizon of need and satisfaction. We see it, we aim for it, but we can never reach it. As Bauman said, it is “the promise of bliss” and because this “state of bliss” can never be achieved, we are in “a perpetual state of suspicion and steady disaffection” (1998: 83). Similarly, Greider (1999) raises concerns about the long-term impact of global consumerism. In his paper he suggests that we are “One world of consumers” (ibid: 23), and that increasingly it is becoming evident that the world of consumerism has few geographical boundaries. One can only speculate on how this negative view of consumer society might affect the ‘engineers of consumerism’ – the Designers.

The rise of the design professions in the West is linked closely with the development of consumer culture. The expansion of the design industry reflects our desire for the acquisition of goods and services. Invariably these goods and services are displayed as confirmation of achieving our ambitions, aspirations and desires. The goal is to send messages to others in the community that this is who I am, this is what I am, and this is where I am heading. Design facilitates this as it enables us to put our personal stamp on many of the goods and services we
purchase. The customised car, the clothes, the furniture and other products we assemble around us serve to create a particular image whether we mean to or not. At the other extreme, rejecting the accoutrements of our modern consumer lifestyle also says much about who we are.

Although the West may be the forerunner in the mass consumption of products, it is arrogant to believe that the poorer countries don’t aspire to attain the giddy heights of Western mass consumption. As du Gay et al (1997) showed in their analysis of the Sony Walkman, when it comes to mass consumption, there are few social barriers. Class, culture and economic circumstance might make a difference around the edges, but there are few differences in the desire to consume. The ramifications of having a ‘world of consumers’ is beyond the scope of this thesis to discuss and debate, but it might be worth pausing to think about the impact of every Chinese or Indian or African having a car or refrigerator. There are items that we take for granted in the West, but as yet are still out of the reach of the majority of the world’s population. Similarly, Greider (1999) contended that it is a fallacy to believe that the people in these poorer nations do not want access to consumer goods, and it is naive (or arrogant) to believe that they shouldn’t have them.

The desire by emerging nations to acquire the accoutrements of Western designer culture has been suggested as one reason why, in a recent study by Smith and Whitfield (2003), South Korean participants consistently rated the design professions higher on a number of dimensions related to occupational prestige and social standing than the Australian participants. Given that the design professions were perceived to be predominantly female and that there was evidence to suggest gender discrimination in Korean society, then this was something of an anomaly, as it would be expected that the design professions would not be perceived as highly. It was posited in this study that the findings could be a consequence of a number of socio-economic reasons, such as the importance of manufacturing and industry for the economy of Korea, and the high status attributed to Western cultural imports (such as designer clothes and furniture).

Childers (1989) examined the question of whether designers reflect culture in their work, or whether they help shape culture. He argued that if design is simply a reflection of the culture, then the designer has little responsibility. If designers are, however, agents of cultural development and cultural change, then the designer
has a great deal of responsibility. The 'truth' probably lies somewhere in-between and will no doubt vary depending on the product and the social forces that impact on the development of products. Referring to the South Korean study above, then it could be argued that if indeed Western designer imports are highly valued, there is the potential for local culture to be transformed by Western products and Western culture (due to the meanings that the products impart). This relationship between cultural change and the agents of change has been neglected in sociological research: this is an area ripe for further research.

In recent decades one of the most significant changes in the West has been technological development. Artifacts such as computers, cars, mobile phones, and television are only a fraction of the raft of 'technical' products that have had a significant impact on society and the individual. The following section will briefly examine the relationship between technology and design and will look at design's role in this Cultural Revolution.

**The Social, Political and Economic Influences on Consumer Culture**

It is difficult to separate technological development and social development. Technological development has invariably been seen to result from human needs and preferences (Pantzar, 1997). Horowitz and Mohun, (1998) argued that "Consumers make choices based on what technology means but also on how it functions... Producers must reconcile what they think consumers want with the economical and technological constraints of manufacturing objects or shaping physical spaces". Design is an important tool for imparting meaning to a product. The look of a product and/or the brand name of the product will invariably be a key deciding factor for the purchase of a particular product. Cars are a prime example of this. Notwithstanding differences in engine and technical performance, it is the design of the car – its exterior shape, interior fit-out, colour, etc that will be a key determinant in its purchase. However, there are social, political and economical constraints that are embodied within the product. If we continue with the example of the car we might speculate that there are social constraints about what is acceptable as a 'car', political constraints about minimum safety and environmental standards that all cars must have. At the micro level, there are economical constraints about how much people will pay for certain types of cars and at the macro level, what car manufacturers are prepared to invest in research and
development, corporate alliances that might determine particular aspects of the car.

Winner (1986: 19) argued that material products can be “...accurately judged not only by their contributions to efficiency and productivity and their positive and negative environmental side effects, but also for the ways in which they embody specific forms of power and authority” (ibid). Winner gives the examples such as the television, the car and the telephone as having been variously described as “democratising, liberating forces” (ibid). Molotch (2003: 12-3) describes the ‘ordinariness’ of the toaster as an example of how goods serve to ground us in a sense of shared reality. That we all own a toaster (at least in countries such as Australia and America), Molotch argues, is confirmation that “we all see the world in a similar way”. We could juxtapose this to argue that this is why we are different to the Asians, the Indians and the Europeans; they don’t routinely use toasters and other artifacts that we regard as part of normal daily life. Thus it is the ordinary not the extra-ordinary that gives us our sense of identity and our cultural roots. It is the trimmings that we use to define our place within our culture. To use Molotch’s toaster example, our choice of a $20 Tiffany toaster over a $200 Elesse toaster says something about where we are (or would like to be) in our culture, and the fact that we all have a toaster says something about where we place ourselves between cultures.

The degree to which designers influence and shape our lifestyles against the degree to which they are merely reacting to other forces is something of a chicken and egg question. However, what is certain is that designers will bring their own views, values and ethics into the products they design. Design is essentially an evolutionary process. Rarely does a product come into being that does not have a kernel of an idea in some other product. Thus new goods and services develop from the needs of organisations to satisfy not only their economic needs, but also consumer demands and tastes (Molotch, 2003). However, Molotch argues that there is a “corporate hold” over our needs and desires that drive production. This, he argues, underpins such notions as ‘planned obsolescence’ and ‘creative waste’. Producers, advertisers and designers use this process to persuade us (or manipulate us) to want that something that is a bit better, a bit newer and perhaps a bit better than our friends.
However, some designers are challenging this throwaway attitude. Fry (1999) confronted the issue of unsustainability and design's role in creating a sustainable future. Fry regarded design as a pivotal profession within the context of a global future. In his treatise on ‘defuturing’ he examined how it is possible to “read the history of design and technology as a history of error and unthinking at the very centre of a progressive advancement toward unsustainability” (ibid: 3). He argued that design is “implicated in the world we conceptually constitute, materially produce, waste (rather than consume), occupy and use as an available material environment” (ibid: 11). It is this moral dimension to design and consumption that will become increasingly relevant in futures years as more pressure is put on the availability of finite resources.

Fry also argued that “Design is prior to, within and independent of, both the sciences and humanities. Although we, and the worlds we occupy, are significantly determined by design it has never actually arrived as a serious object of inquiry” (ibid: 4-5). This opinion is concomitant with others, such as Margolin (1989) and Sparke (1989), who have made similar observations.

Design does not exist in a vacuum. It is as much a product of the social, economic and political relationships within a society as is science and engineering, indeed as social life itself. However, within these constraints is choice, and the choices made about the products can have, as Winner argued in relation to technology, “important consequences for the form and quality of human associations” (1986: 33).

Economics plays a significant role in the development of technologies and products. It is often difficult to separate the economic reasoning from technological reasoning (Mackenzie and Wacjman, 1999). The same can be said for most goods and services. Childers (1986) argued that “The Age of Consumption has transformed the economic structure of society...”. The change in consumption and lifestyle patterns originated from the Western industrialized nations and is seen by developing nations as the goal or ideal. This attitude has the potential to subsume the cultural identities of whole nations. This view was shared by Neumeister (1989) who observed that there is a danger of cultural independence being destroyed rather than developed due to a doctrine of mass culture and mass consumerism. If indeed designers are the agents of consumption, then this deserves much closer scrutiny.
There seem to be two opposing views about consumer culture. On the one hand it is seen as something that aids the common good, it improves a country’s bottom line (the Gross Domestic Profit or GDP), and it gives us more choice and flexibility with our lives. On the other hand, it is seen as bad, or that it destroys the moral fibre of society. Our quest for goods leave us dissatisfied and unfulfilled, is bad for the environment and is grossly unfair and unjust. How do these views influence one’s opinion of the “engineers of consumer culture”? Could this account for the ambivalence about design? Designers may be caught up in a perception that their role is to convince us to spend our money on products that are of little utilitarian value. Thus to buy a ‘designer’ product is to purchase frivolity and inconsequentiality; with the understanding that what we have acquired will eventually be superseded for the ‘new’ best thing.

**Designers as Agents of Cultural Production**

Marx stated that wants “may spring from the stomach or from the fancy” (Lovell, in Storey: 1994: 467). Cultural artefacts are wants of fancy. These artefacts may vary in the degree of usefulness they have. Du Gay et al (1997: 59) argued that “designers occupy a place as important cultural intermediaries at the interface or ‘cusp’ between production and consumption”. Further, they argued that this concept is often used to define what designers are. They argued that design is often misrepresented as akin to art, and because of this, design is usually discussed and critiqued in the same way as art is. Du Gay et al regarded this as inherently wrong in that they contended that designers differ from artists in that they “have to *embody* culture in the things they design” (ibid: 62), and there is a necessity to imbue meaning into the products they design.

It is this *meaning* that appears to be the root of concern for some commentators. Neumeister (1989), raised the argument that there are a growing number of lifestyles and sets of values that are no longer rooted in a defined cultural or social context. He further stated that concepts such as capitalism, socialism, progress and growth are losing their legitimacy and are giving way to “heterogeneity of lifestyles”. The term ‘modernisation’ has become synonymous with ‘Westernisation’, old explanations for social hierarchies such as class and social standing are no longer valid and reflective of the current situation. He argued that economic status and social standing are losing importance and that ‘age specific’
aspects are gaining place. He suggested that these structures are being replaced by a myriad of groupings, subcultures, scenes or milieux.

As discussed previously, a person’s cultural identity may have more in common with their age or peer group, regardless of that other person’s cultural heritage, place of living or economic standing. The social groups become ‘lifestyle groups’, which are recognisable worldwide through their pattern of consumption. Their pattern of consumption becomes their ‘symbol of identification’. The product becomes the identifying characteristic of the social and societal environment of the person and provides distinction and identity (ibid). Molotch (2003: 17) describes the concept of “positional goods”. These are products that people either want or do not want because others have them. This, he suggests, sets up an internal dynamic for change. For example, we may want a particular product because it is seen as cutting edge and sets us apart as distinctive, or a trendsetter. However, as others do the same, the product eventually becomes common and so we must go in search of a new product that will restore our ‘trendsetter’ status.

Neumeister (1989) also contended that one of the challenges for design is not to fall into the trap of cultural homogeneity, but to applaud cultural differences, promote cultural identities, and to re-establish and strengthen the relationship between the social and cultural identity. It is perhaps worth questioning, whilst we still can, if we want to live in a world where there are uniform patterns of living and consumption, where we lose our cultural independence, or whether we want to maintain and promote the cultural heritages that have up until recently been a global norm. Do we want, as Ritzer terms, a “MacDonaldised” society where everything is the same no matter where in the world you might be (Ritzer, 1993)?

Molotch (2003) claims that through gaining an understanding of design practice, we can then gain an understanding of “where stuff comes from” and the relationships between culture, economy and products. It could also be argued that such an analysis should also give us an understanding of the political, moral and ethical relationships within a society.
Conclusion

Whilst many social researchers have examined the history, the social consequences of, and the social, political and economic relations of production and consumption, few have studied the ‘agents of consumption’ – the designers. One sociologist who has acknowledged the significance of design and designers on lifestyles and consumption is Steven Miles. Miles stated that:

“Design does indeed play a key role in maintaining consumerism as a way of life and that, by considering the impact of design in some detail, it may begin to be possible to come to terms with the complexities inherent in any sociological analysis of the day-to-day nature of consumer culture” (1986: 36).

Schor argued that we are always negotiating our position within society in order to maintain our position within the social hierarchy. As a consequence there is constant pressure on individuals to keep spending.

“Thus, belonging to a particular social class now entails consuming a requisite set of goods and services. In such a world there is always a dynamic process by which that requisite set of goods and services is upgraded, expanded, and modified.” (1999: 41).

It is from this dynamic process that the design professions have been conceived, nurtured and grown. In an environment of consumer spending and a growth in what can be called the ‘designer lifestyle’, where increasing importance is given to the ‘designed’ product as a means of acquiring status, the demand for designers has grown and will continue to grow.

One of the anomalies of this, however, is that whilst the ‘designed’ product is regarded by the consumer as a means to obtaining status and prestige, the ‘designer’ and the ‘design professions’ seem to lack the same level of status within society. Some, it could be argued, may have achieved fame and fortune, but they have not necessarily achieved high levels of status and prestige. Or if these few individuals have achieved high levels of status and prestige, this does not appear to flow down to others in the profession. In other words, it is the individual that has achieved the position, and not their profession.
So why have social researchers neglected design? One reason could be that design is ubiquitous – it is all around us and has permeated the fabric of society. Design is fundamental to our way of life. Fry examined the issue of the lack of intellectual study and contended that it has not yet achieved the recognition as a “critical area of study”, nor is the depth and breadth of the field acknowledged or understood. As a consequence, the study of design is regarded as a marginal activity. He concluded that while “Design is universally everywhere – it remains intellectually nowhere” (1999: 5). It is this very argument that forms the fundamental basis of this thesis. We are immersed in design, design is influential in how we live our lives, and design is important to us. The neglect of design, in this sense, might be understandable, but it is a serious oversight. The tendency by researchers to focus on the outcomes rather than the processes of production and consumption has resulted in a significant gap in our understanding of this most significant area of our social fabric. The next chapter will examine how design emerged in Australia, educationally, culturally and professionally.
4. **THE EMERGENCE OF DESIGN IN AUSTRALIA**

**Introduction**

The purpose of this chapter is to provide readers with a brief overview of the history of design and, in particular, a history of the emergence of design in Australia. Although people have been ‘designing’ *per se* throughout recorded history, the design occupations, as we know them today are contemporary occupations and, as such, the focus of this chapter is on the development of contemporary design rather than the complete evolution of design since its earliest beginnings. It should also be noted that this is intentionally a history of Western design as it is the United Kingdom and the USA that have had the greatest influence in terms of educational models and occupational practice in Australia. This chapter will also be limited to the development of the design occupations in terms of their societal, professional and educational development, and their relationship with the broader community rather than a broader history encompassing design styles, techniques, etc.

The history of the design occupations shares similar beginnings for each of the fields being investigated in this study (i.e. graphic design, industrial design, interior design, furniture design and fashion design). This chapter will therefore consist of two main sections: first, a general history of design and secondly, a brief overview of each of the design professions being discussed in this thesis in order to provide a clearer picture of the development of each of the disciplines. As readers will notice, the sections on industrial design and graphic design are more comprehensive than those on the other design occupations, and it should be noted that this reflects the general lack of research and writings on the various design occupations, particularly on furniture design.

**A General History of Design**

"The existence of designers as a particular occupational group is, of course, the consequence of centuries of development, the division of labour, and the specialisation of function associated with the growth of human knowledge, industry and the emergence of ever more complex societies"

Walker (1989: 53-4)
It is generally agreed that two developments were critical to the rise of the contemporary design occupations. The first was the division of labour within the manufacturing process that saw the production of goods and services broken down into various component tasks, and the second was the rise of mass consumption (Bayley, 1985). It is also contended that the development of flexible manufacturing processes allowing for short runs with only minor variations between models or versions of the same product has had an even greater significance on contemporary design development. After all, mass production didn’t necessarily mean a significantly greater variety of products. Originally it allowed for greater quantities of a single product to be produced with greater uniformity at a much cheaper rate per unit than producing the product by hand.

For example, Henry Ford, the first person to apply mass production techniques to the production process, originally produced only one model of car (the T Model Ford), and in one colour (black). This certainly opened up affordable motoring to the masses, but logic would suggest that you don’t need a big team of designers if you are only producing one identical product. In contrast, designers are critical to contemporary motor car production, as consumers demand more choice with both the models of cars available, and the fittings and fixtures available with each model. A competitive market has meant that manufacturers are constantly changing models on offer as well as the range of fixed and optional extras on the cars, as consumers demand to ‘customise’ their car to their particular lifestyle. Henry Ford’s adage of “any colour you like as long as it is black” is no longer acceptable to the present day consumer. As will be discussed later in this chapter, design was important to the mass production process, but it was flexible manufacturing that enabled design to expand as an occupation and bring the ‘designed’ product to the masses. Thus it must be argued that it was the development of the flexible manufacturing processes that was critical to the evolution and expansion of contemporary design, as manufacturers constantly compete for the consumer dollar.

Mass consumption or consumerism was a critical development for the design occupations. For the first time in history, the masses had access to an unprecedented range of affordable goods and services. The value of products began to shift from a utilitarian value to status value as people acquired goods as cultural objects. This trend was most prevalent in the United States and continues today worldwide. When you look at the global penetration of companies such as
Coca-Cola and McDonalds it is easy to see how pervasive consumerism has become. Few people would fail to recognise the Coke bottle or the ‘golden arches’. As the previous chapter has shown, the rise of consumerism has been linked closely with the development and expansion of the design industry as companies recognise the need for new products, the advertising of their products and the power of the company image.

It is generally agreed that contemporary design emerged concurrently with the Industrial Revolution in Britain during the eighteenth century (c.f. Bayley, 1985; Conway, 1991; Dormer, 1993; Sparke, 1986). It has been during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries though that design practice has flourished and matured, and it was through the emergence of mass production that art and industry were first united, and designers were employed to provide a source of culture to the production process.

Prior to this, it was the craftsman/designer that dominated the production process, whereby the craftsman would invent, design, craft and merchandise a product himself as an individual process. This resulted in small ‘production runs’ that lacked the uniformity and the cost effectiveness of the mass produced product. As a consequence, the designed product was only available to the wealthy elite. With the advent of the Industrial Revolution and mass production, the designer became the planner and inventor of the products whilst others were employed to produce and market it. It is generally recognised that the first designers per se employed into this process were artists working for Josiah Wedgwood in the production of the renowned Wedgwood pottery from the late eighteenth century. It was Wedgwood himself who is credited with creating the occupation and the term ‘designer’ (Conway, 1991).

Educationally, however, the road for the designer was something of a roller coaster and whilst in 1836 Britain established the first School of Design, by 1846 it was deemed a failure and the school closed (Bogle, 1998). The reasons for the failure were believed to be the lack of commercial training in the design process. Most of the students were being trained in fine arts but lacked the commercial skills needed to successfully work in industry (ibid). Tensions between design education and commercial practices resulted in design becoming somewhat stagnant in Britain, but by this stage other countries, notably the United States and Germany, were surpassing Britain in terms of the development and integration of design in
industry. Both of these countries went through a very rapid industrialisation process and were particularly quick to take on and develop new industrial processes such as electricity and the application of new materials such as synthetics and plastics (ibid).

It is generally agreed that a defining milestone for the development of the contemporary design professions in the 20th century was the Second World War (Bogle, 1998; Dormer, 1993; Molotch, 2003; Sparke, 1986). It was during the post-war reconstruction period that design became a profession in its own right, with educational institutions offering specific courses in design and companies employing designers (either in-house or as a consultant) to develop, advertise and promote their products, and to create the company image. It was also in this post-war period that design undertook an ideological shift by moving from an association with art and decoration, to taking on a more quasi-scientific role, grounded in defined procedures, methodologies and theories (Dormer, 1993). For designers to be taken seriously as professionals it was recognised that they needed to be seen as more than just ‘creatives’ and ‘artists’, but also needed to have the ‘scientific’ and ‘business’ knowledge to design products that will be commercially attractive and viable to the consumer. Thus design schools began to alter their curriculum to provide this commercial aspect to their students, and now young designers combine their creative skills with subjects such as business/marketing, ergonomics, materials, computing, design history and theory, research, and sociology. However, as argued in chapter 2, design generally has struggled to achieve professional status and is perceived by some within the occupation as having an identity crisis.

Design in Australia

Design is very much an occupation that reflects the cultural and economic conditions of the time and country in which the designers work. Although Australian designers were trained in the British tradition and have been influenced by designers from America and Europe, some of the products designed in Australia have reflected the uniqueness of the Australian environment and life-styles. Products such as the Furphy water cart, and many other agricultural tools were invented in Australia to address particular needs within the community. Many other products, fashions and textiles, illustration and advertising reflected the uniqueness
The Emergence of Design in Australia

of the Australian environment through decoration depicting Australian flora and fauna, Australian lifestyles and Australian humour (Bogle, 1998).

The early designers were artisans trained in the tradition of the master and apprentice. There were no formal design schools or training arenas until the early 1800’s when Mechanics Institutes were established (e.g. Hobart, 1827, Sydney, 1833, Melbourne, 1839), providing support, access and instruction for ‘artisans in design’. By the late nineteenth century it was clear to those in industry that there was a need for more specialized design training, although it was still some years before there any significant changes occurred in this area (ibid).

In 1870 the School of Design had been established at the Melbourne museum, although much of the curriculum reflected the tendency to equate design with the fine arts and focused on drawing, painting and sculpture. Just prior to the establishment of this school, another school, the ‘Artisans School of Design’, was opened in Melbourne. This school was established by a number of Melbourne painters and decorators and could be regarded as the beginnings of interior design education in Australia. It was on this educational platform that the 20th century post-war boom sat and enabled design to quickly adjust meet the demands of the changes in consumer lifestyles and expectations, and the growing economy (ibid).

The changes in design education have reflected the growing and emerging consumer culture and the rapid advances in technology. These changes not only affected the types of goods and services available to consumers, but also had a significant impact on manufacturing processes and, most importantly for this study, design practice. This in turn has impacted upon design education.

A number of other educational institutions offering design training opened around the turn of the century such as the School of Applied Art in Melbourne in 1896, the School of Mines in Ballarat in 1905 and a course in applied art at Swinburne Technical College in 1908. The Sydney Mechanics Technical College was established in 1873, and the Sydney Technical College in 1884 as well as many other art and design courses in other states and regional areas around Australia (ibid). However, design training still lacked the commercial and business instruction that is now a major component of contemporary design courses.
Although design emerged in the late 1800’s, it was not until as recently as the 1960’s that design emerged as a potent influence within the workforce. Notably, this corresponds to the same post-war period of rapid growth in consumer spending and mass consumerism. One of the most significant milestones was the support of design by the Australian government through the establishment of university courses of study: thus design education began to shift from technical to tertiary and from certificate/diploma to degree qualifications. Design education became widely available during the 1970’s. Around the late 70’s, bachelor’s degree courses and a few post-graduate courses were offered, whereas prior to this period the courses were generally certificate or diploma level only (Davis and Broadbent, 1987).

Today there is a wide range of design courses on offer ranging from the certificate level to the post-graduate level. Despite this shift to the higher education sector, there continues to be a reliance on the Technical and Further Education (TAFE) system for much of the education, particularly for fashion design, interior design and furniture design. In a report by the Commonwealth Tertiary Education Working Party on Design Education (Davis and Broadbent, 1987: 9), concern was raised that the diverse range of design courses being offered was:

“not matched by any clear differentiation of design occupations as is found in some other professions. In the field of engineering, for example, the various types of qualifications from certificate to degree are linked with occupations ranging from technical assistant, to technician, to associate engineer, to professional engineer.”

This situation has not changed significantly in the eighteen years since this statement was made.

The inability of design to integrate fully into the higher education sector may be one of the biggest hurdles for designers in establishing themselves as skilled professionals on a similar basis to proximate professions such as architecture or engineering. Concern has been raised that the design education system has stunted the development of the design profession (Fry, 2005). Fry argues that design history tends to focus on its “particularist, historicist and aesthetically grounded connoisseurship predilections” and does not appreciate the relationship and importance of design as an agent of historical and cultural change at the broader socio-cultural level.
Design education in Australia was based on the British model of education whereby the designers were trained more as crafts persons or fine artists. By the early 1900’s industry was expanding in Australia although many of the goods for sale were still imported from offshore due to a poorly established mining industry and the general unavailability of raw materials (particularly iron) to make products. As a consequence the early crafts people were forced to continue using traditional materials such as timber, ceramic and leather to fabricate their products. The more technologically advanced products had to be imported from Britain or America. With the upturn in the economy in the post-depression period, and the establishment of iron ore mining, manufacturing grew rapidly. This in turn created an environment with opportunities for an emergent design industry. However, it was during the Second World War and the post-war period that design really became established.

The Second World War saw a new development in design education. Australian troops were offered a range of correspondence courses and lectures. These included courses and lectures on art and design (Bogle, 1998). Much of the wartime education was geared toward the inevitable post-war reconstruction and included such areas as architecture, housing, urban planning and interior decoration. During this same period a Government initiative through the Australian Broadcasting Commission was to broadcast a series of talks by prominent designers and artists called ‘Design in Everyday Things’. The series was supplemented by a book of the same name and was responsible for generating substantial debate and innovation in the field of design (ibid).

In the post-war period the capital cities began to develop and expand, as urbanization became a reality for an ever-growing number of Australians. Along with the development of an urban infrastructure, work in manufacturing and service industries grew rapidly, creating an environment ripe for the expansion of design. Through improvements in living standards in the post-war baby boom period, people, in numbers unprecedented at any other time in history, became more aware of the cultural and aesthetic aspects of their own personal environment. Thus the consumer society was born and buying objects for the home, the decoration of the home and office, and the development of the media industry (both print and, more significantly, television) opened up a new public awareness of objects as status items. The power of television advertising was realized and
Australians embraced the consumer lifestyle through the consumption of the ‘latest and most modern’ products for the home.

The demand for new or improved products, the expansion of advertising and merchandising, and the heightened awareness of our home and work environments have resulted in an increased demand for designers within the workforce. The role of the contemporary designer reflects the need for those with the specialized skills to work at the interface of consumer taste and style, and the economic realities of business and technology.

In Australia, design is a rapidly growing occupational sector. Although exact figures are not available for most of this century, more recent Australian Bureau of Statistics figures indicate a steady rise in the number of people employed as designers. In 1986 there were 13,406 persons employed as designers and illustrators (further occupational differentiation for designers is not available for 1986), by 1991 there were 16,697 persons and by 2001 there were 23,400 employed as designers alone. Table 2.1 below shows the numbers of designers in a selection of design occupations for Australia. As can be seen, graphic design has achieved the highest growth rate of the four selected occupations, with the total numbers of graphic designers far eclipsing those of any of the other occupational groups.

Table 4.1. Total Number of Designers by Occupational Group by Year.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Designers/Illustrators</td>
<td>13,406</td>
<td>2,772</td>
<td>2,142</td>
<td>23,400*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graphic Designers</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>8,620</td>
<td>13,086</td>
<td>13,150</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interior Designers</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>1,876</td>
<td>2,986</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fashion Designers</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>2,054</td>
<td>2,666</td>
<td>3,280</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Industrial Designers</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>1,375</td>
<td>1,677</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>13,406</td>
<td>16,697</td>
<td>22,557</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Includes graphic and fashion designers

Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics Cat. Nos. 6273.0 and 6281.0

While this table shows an increase in the numbers of designers over the 15-year period, the figures do need to be interpreted with caution. As mentioned in Chapter 2, design does not have protection of title and so anyone can call himself or herself a designer. The numbers in Table 4.1 do not distinguish between
designers with and without tertiary design qualifications. In addition, as can be seen from the table, the data on the numbers of designers is somewhat sporadic and *ad hoc*. ABS data on the specific design specialties have not been collected in a uniform manner between censuses and so the data may be deceptive.

As stated earlier, the design professions essentially share a similar history and development. However, there are some differences between the professions being studied in this research. The next part of this chapter will discuss the history and development of the specific professions. In addition, a brief description of the key aspects of each of the jobs will be included in order to minimise any misunderstandings between the author and the readers as to how the occupations are being defined.

**Graphic Design**

Graphic design is essentially communication using visual images. The images may be pictorial, numeric, alphanumeric, or photographic, either separately or in combination with each other. Hollis (1994:7) defined graphic design as the "making or choosing of marks and arranging them on a surface to convey a “sign” and “that the marks may be text or picture and either may dominate or have its meaning determined by the other”. He contended that the main role of a graphic designer is to produce work that conveys:
- Identification (what something is and/or where it came from; eg logos, signs, labels, etc)
- Information and instruction (the relationship of one thing to another in positioning, scale and direction; eg maps, diagrams, directional signs)
- Presentation and promotion (to make something catch one’s eye and be memorable; eg posters and advertisements) (ibid: 10)

Aynsley (1991: 136) argued that “graphic design is a medium for transferring an object or an idea”, and that it is this notion that separates graphic design from art.

Despite a very long development, graphic design as a paid occupation (as distinct from typography, illustration, fine art, printing, etc) has only existed since the mid-nineteen hundreds. The beginnings of graphic design can be found in Europe in the late 1800's and early 1900's in works by people such as William Morris and Henry van de Velde in the way they produced for commercial purposes (Hollis, 1994). Typically, the designers were trained in the fine arts; however, in contrast to the artist, the graphic designer would design work for mass production and
reproduction; i.e. printing, film or video, computer screens (ibid). The products are also planned and produced to a client's specifications, and the result is often a consequence of a team effort rather than individual (ibid).

Posters used to advertise products have traditionally been the most common form of work. By the 1920’s film and photography were adding new dimensions to the graphic designer’s work (ibid). In terms of contemporary graphic design, its role in advertising and the media would be the most prevalent. The graphic designer generally creates designs for commercial applications in order to convey messages that may be separate from the artistic quality of the design. Company logos or forms and timetables are excellent examples of this. What is of prime importance is that the target audience understands the message being conveyed.

The Industrial Revolution was an important milestone for the development of the occupation, for this is when the demand for employment involved in the production of goods for a mass market really began to flourish. Thus, the need for packaging design and advertising began to emerge. The development of photography was the next major milestone for the early design occupations and, as a consequence, the reliance on the drawing and illustrative ability was diminished. The post-Second World War period was where most of the development of graphic design has occurred. During this period graphic design courses appeared in various academic institutions such as art colleges, polytechnics and technical colleges (Aynsley, 1991). In Britain in the 1980’s the design industry was expanding at a rate of 35 per cent per year, but by the 1990’s this trend was reversing as Britain experienced economic depression (Whitely, 1993).

The expansion of the corporate sector resulted in significant growth in the area of corporate and product identity, and in this heady time of globalisation the corporate logo and the usual identity system became an important tool in enabling companies to gain worldwide recognition. One can see that the logos for companies like Coca-Cola, the Olympic rings, Shell Petroleum and the products they produce are instantly recognizable worldwide and are able to transcend language and cultural barriers. More recent advances in computer technology and multi-media have impacted heavily on the work of the graphic designer and much of their work is now carried out using specially designed computer software packages. The graphic designer is also an integral part of software design, Internet and web-page design in addition to the more traditional design areas. Today graphic design has evolved
into a complex occupation with practitioners continually challenged by advances in technology and changes in organizational work practices.

Graphic design is one of the few design specialties that the general population appears to be familiar with. It is one of the first design specialties to have emerged and has increasingly been included in the curricula of many secondary schools and TAFE colleges over the past two decades. Traditionally graphic design has had a close relationship with art and has often been seen as the commercial side of the artistic-occupational continuum. The two dimensional nature of graphic design has meant that it has been relatively easy and inexpensive media to work with and this may have contributed to its popularity in the educational setting, particularly in secondary schools. The recent shift to more computer-based design though may impact on the ability of many institutions to be able to offer a 21st century graphic design course. The future of graphic design education will need to be monitored carefully or it could become a two-tiered shadow of its former (or future) self.

**Industrial Design**

Due to the scope and nature of industrial design, in this brief summary it is impossible, to cover all of the important factors and nuances of the development of this profession. This overview will therefore focus on the development of industrial design as a contemporary profession particularly in Australia, and on the changes to the education of the industrial designer. Industrial design can be defined simply as "the business of determining the form of objects that are to be made by machines, rather than produced by hand. "Industrial design can concern itself with everything from a teacup to a jet airplane" (Lucie-Smith, 1983: 7). The basic concept of this definition is to separate the industrial designer from the artisan or craft worker who would generally be closely involved in both the design and production processes, usually for one-off or small quantities. As such, the industrial designer's work is generally a pre-production process that is separate to the actual process of production (ibid). Lucie-Smith (1983:10) suggested that the industrial designer's main task is to:

"Create objects which not only work as intended, but which clearly indicate what their function is — things which speak a visual language which anyone who is likely to use them will understand. This means that the industrial designer has to deal with the way in which things are perceived, as well as the way in which they objectively exist. He (sic) must take into account both psychology and sociology".
Therefore if the designer's task is to examine society and reflect in their creations the mores, values, meanings and understandings of that society, and given that 'designed' objects are essential to our day to day living, then it is important that the psychology and the sociology of this very powerful and influential occupation be examined.

Industrial designers can have an enormous influence on society. Since the early to mid-nineteenth century, the trend in most first world countries has been a move toward urbanization and an ever-increasing manufactured environment. One only has to think of objects such as television, household white goods and automobiles to appreciate the scope and importance of objects to our daily lives. Although it may be engineers or technologists who design the inner workings of many of the items we use, it is the industrial designer's task to make the products usable and desirable to the consumer. For example, an electronics expert might design the inner workings of the computer keyboard, but it is the industrial designer's job to make that keyboard useable and to minimize health risks such as repetitive strain injury. In addition, most industrial designers would not be required to invent new products, but are more likely to be involved improving and re-developing an extremely diverse range of existing products (e.g. household appliances, cars, sports equipment, and medical equipment) (Heskett, 1991). Thus they occupy the interface between the consumer and the producer. The rise of consumerism and consumer society has greatly impacted upon the development of industrial design.

Despite functionality being an important element in the design of products, aesthetics and decoration are just as much, if not more, pivotal. It has been argued that design history has often focussed on the development of the aesthetic and the concept of style, rather than the many other significant developments that shaped industrial design practice (ibid). Products such as the motor vehicle, the steam engine, and the high-speed train have had enormous social significance and yet the history of industrial design tends to focus more on the art and craft movement (ibid).

As an occupation, industrial design has quite a long history, although it was the onset of the Industrial Revolution in the late 1800's that resulted in the development of the occupation to what it is today. Originally, industrial designers came from several main areas - the fine arts, architecture, and the crafts/artisans (Lucie-Smith, 1983; Sparke, 1986). In the early days the design function within a
The Emergence of Design in Australia

company was often performed by architects, artists, engineers or model-makers and it wasn’t until the late 1920's that contemporary industrial design began to emerge as a discreet and definable profession (Heskett, 1987). Undoubtedly the institution with the greatest influence on industrial design was The Bauhaus. Established in Weimar, Germany in 1919 by Walter Gropius, it is regarded as the pre-eminent and most avant-garde of the modern design movement (Conway, 1991). The ideas, design practices, methodologies, and the innovation that were incubated and developed by the Bauhaus have had a profound effect on contemporary design practice and revolutionised the teaching of design in the Western world.

The term ‘industrial design’ was first coined in 1919 and at the same time the industrial design studio first appeared in the United States. The studio concept has endured in design practice and is still the most likely workplace for the modern day designer. Contemporary industrial design emerged in the 1930’s and 1940’s worldwide (Bogle, 1998). Many professional associations were formed around this period, such as the industrial design Institute in the United States in 1938, the Council of Industrial Designers in Britain and the American Society of Industrial Designers, both in 1944. In Australia, the Society of Designers for Industry was formed in 1948 and the Society of Industrial Designers was established in 1958 (ibid). In 1958 the Interior Designers Association (originally formed in 1951) merged with the Society of Designers for Industry and became the Industrial Design Institute of Australia. A further re-name in 1983 saw this association become the Design Institute of Australia (DIA). The first industrial design course was at the Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology and began in 1953 (Caban, 1987).

In Australia, the teaching and development of industrial design was heavily influenced by British design education. The curriculum tended to mirror that of Britain with training conducted in technical colleges. Up until the early to mid 1800’s design (as craft) education was generally taught through a master/apprentice arrangement. However, in the 1800’s various Mechanics Institutes around Australia began to give formal classes, public lectures on design and gave designers access to books and periodicals. By the end of the century the Government was funding training programs through the Mechanics Institutes in a drive to develop a viable manufacturing industry. Design training began to expand and was taken over by the technical college sector, such as Swinburne Institute of
Throughout the early 1900’s, the Commonwealth Government was supportive of the emerging design professions. In 1958 it established and funded the Industrial Design Council of Australia (IDCA). The main functions of this organisation were promotion and education, with the aim of expanding the manufacture and export of Australian-made products. The withdrawal of Government funding after 1975 saw a waning of the initial impetus and in 1987 the IDCA was re-launched as the Australian Design Council (ADC). However, this too folded in 1990 and currently its functions are shared between the Australian Academy of Design (established 1990) and the Australian Quality Council. Attempts to revitalize the industry through these organizations have largely been unsuccessful (Bogle, 1998).

Further interest in design emerged with the onset of the Second World War. The war generated a demand for new products, such as aircraft and other wartime equipment. With the world in turmoil access to imported goods was restricted and thus there was an even greater impetus to produce products in Australia. It was during the expansion of the industrial and manufacturing sectors in the post-War period where industrial design, as a contemporary occupation, began to emerge. During this period the economy began to surge and the demand for an urban infrastructure, housing and household products resulted in an increase in the numbers of industrial designers. Industrial design as a distinct profession with its own identity emerged in this environment and “...as the occupational identity of designers and their workplace tasks were recognized, Australian institutions soon began to shape their technical school programs to service this new (yet old) profession” (Bogle, 1998). Since the 1970’s, design education has seen a shift to the university sector and courses that were once at the diploma or certificate level have become degree courses with an increasing number of students going on to post-graduate study (Davis and Broadbent, 1987).

Industrial design (or product design) has always been closely tied to the cultural, economic and socio-political activity of the time. Certainly the growth in the industrial design profession has mirrored the growth in consumerism and, in particular, mass consumerism. A recent US study undertaken by LaSalle Communications showed that consumer durables were the main revenue-generating industry for consultant and in-house designers. Also, one quarter of all...
design consultancies were concentrated in consumer durables, ahead of computer software and services, non-durable consumer products, health products and electronics and miscellaneous technology (LaSalle, 2002). As an observer, what strikes me is that design products are such a dominant part of our lives; it seems incongruous that the design professions appear to be so poorly understood.

**Fashion Design**

Clothing and fashion have been important to most societies for centuries. Whether it be the skins and feathers of primitive societies or the grunge fashions around today in many contemporary Western cultures, what we wear, how we wear it and why we wear what we do have been of pre-eminent importance to humans. Clothing can be more than just protection from the elements: it can provide a visual indicator of who we are (rich, poor, our ethnicity, introverted, extroverted, etc.), what we believe in (e.g. religious clothing, t-shirts with messages printed on them, etc.), be a tool to attract a mate or to be admired, or an indicator as to the sorts of activities we might be engaging in (e.g. sports uniforms, work uniforms, etc.).

In past centuries most people, usually the women, had to make their own clothes and it was only the wealthy that would have their clothes made for them, and so high fashion emanated from the wealthy, leisured classes. Veblen (1970) suggested that clothing is used as a means for displaying one’s wealth and power. For the wealthy, clothes are a sign of conspicuous consumption that send out the message that the wearer is able to consume something of large value and can also consume without producing. Similarly, Miller (1987) suggested that people would make judgments of both personality and place in society (social class) based on the way that person dresses. In this sense fashion not only signifies which group a person belongs to, but which group they don’t belong to.

Unfortunately, little is known of the social consequences and the choices of early fashions nor of the role of the designer in the decision process of why certain fashions were popular and why others were not, or why some styles have endured while others have faded into oblivion (Miller, 1991). It has been suggested that most history of fashion texts are pictorial descriptions of the styles of dress over a period of time and much of the analysis and interpretation of the history of fashion is highly subjective (ibid). Little reference has been given to the role of the fashion designer and their part in the fashion process. Another difficulty in the study of the
history of fashion design is that what histories there are of fashion tend to be a history of the fashion elite, particularly pre-war history. In terms of contemporary fashion design though, like the other design occupations, it was the post-Second World War period that had the greatest impact on the field. This has been attributed to the increasing affluence of Western society, smaller family sizes (more per capita income), more sophisticated and targeted advertising and marketing (McRobbie, 1998).

Fashion design is something of a paradox. On the one hand it could be regarded as one of the most widely understood of the design professions being examined in this study; but on the other, it could be regarded as the profession that is most often misunderstood. For many of us, our perceptions of fashion design are obtained from the somewhat unreal ‘Hollywood-style’ image promoted and glamorised in the media. The Milan and Paris fashion parades, complete with supermodels, are where many of us form our perceptions of the fashion industry. However, for most of the thousands of fashion designers (there were around 2700 designers in Australia according to the 1996, ABS Census of 1996) the reality of the job is much more mundane.

The term ‘fashion designer’ originated around 1770 and was first coined by a milliner named Rose Bertin although did not appear in popular usage until the 1930’s (McRobbie, 1998). Most of the early designers gained prominence through the royal courts and through dressing the wealthy. In many ways little has changed today, as many designers and fashion houses still rise to fame by having their designs worn by royalty, movie stars or others who are rich and famous. However, many fashion designers are anonymous and it is the fashion house or product brand that has become the household name, often by association with an image or lifestyle rather than with particular people. Examples of the latter are Nike, Rip Curl surf clothes, and Country Road. An important consideration that should not be overlooked is that not all fashion designers design ‘fashion’ per se (Miller, 1991).

Fashion and textiles, in the broader definition of the field, has been the most widely studied and practiced of the design professions. Prior to the advent of formal training young girls were typically taught to sew by their mothers. In terms of
more institutionalised training, its early origins in Britain were around the late nineteenth century through a government enterprise to have sewing taught to all primary age girls from working-class homes. For the more affluent working-class girls, these classes were continued through secondary schooling, or if the young girl had to leave school early, she could enrol in various part-time evening courses in locally funded trade schools (McRobbie, 1998). During this same period, middle-class girls often enrolled in art classes and it was through this route that some became involved with fashion (ibid).

The fashion industry was, and still is, one the most gendered of the design professions. The majority of fashion designers were women, as were the majority of textile workers, seamstresses, embroiderers and so on. This has contributed to problems for the fashion design educators. The art schools, where the early courses in fashion were situated, tended to be male-dominated and this, combined with the perception of fashion design as being more akin to craftwork or dressmaking, meant there was strong resistance within the art schools to incorporate fashion into the courses. One of the first specialist courses in embroidery and textiles was established at the Glasgow School of Art in the late nineteenth century, and it was through this and other initiatives in the early educational years of young girls that the idea of textiles and clothing as serious occupational and educational pursuits began to be legitimised (ibid).

In 1928 a Diploma of Fashion was established at the Royal College of Art and by 1947 a three-year course in ‘Dress Design and Fashion Drawing’ was available at St Martin’s School of Art, London. Prior to the introduction of this course most early courses were essentially dressmaking classes rather than design. However, even in the 1950’s fashion design was still not regarded as having ‘true’ academic status and when in 1967 art and design courses were moving from diploma to degree status, fashion design was initially refused the transition and it was only after a strong campaign by a small number of influential people from academia and the industry itself that the decision was overturned (ibid).

Fashion design education has always struggled with a ‘poor cousin’ image compared to the more ‘rigorous’ design courses such as industrial and graphic design. Its strong association with the low and middle-classes, women, the ethnic communities and the ‘rag-trade’ image has resulted in prejudice and discrimination, low occupational status and a tendency for educational institutions to continue to locate
fashion “further down the institutional hierarchy” (ibid: 54). Australian fashion education shares many similarities to the British model and tradition. Today it is taught at both degree and diploma level within the University and TAFE sectors. Like the other design occupations, fashion design has generally separated itself from the production and marketing phase of the product, and instead focuses on the creative elements of the process, along with the commercial aspects of the fashion design business. Fashion is no longer the sole privilege of wealth and status, but is available to the masses and is certainly the most consumer-driven of the design professions with seasonal changes in fashion styles, colours and trends an accepted and anticipated part of everyday culture. *Haute couture*, whilst still important to the fashion industry, is far outweighed by the ready-to-wear fashions that became available as a consequence of the development of mass production techniques.

Our desire for change, increased differentiation from others, improvements in technology that allows a greater choice of colours and fabrics, and greater flexibility in the manufacturing process, have resulted in a significantly increased demand for fashion designers. The rapid change in fashions is perhaps most noticeable in Western societies where a growing middle-class, access to an ever expanding retail environment, and relatively high wages, have combined to burgeon the fashion industry in recent years, and have enabled the fashion industry to grow and expand at a rate unprecedented in any other historical period.

Fashion design it is perhaps one of the most complex areas of design to study, as it is an area that is continually changing at a very fast rate. The scope of fashion is limitless; it varies widely from country to country, and between cultures, genders, the age of the wearer, the past-times and leisure pursuits of the wearer, the occupation of the wearer, and allegiance to a group. In summary, there is a different fashion for almost all of our life-stages and life pursuits. Of course this is made more likely through advertising and media promotion or the desire for certain groups to display uniqueness through dress, resulting in individuals being ‘required’ to don clothing appropriate to the situation they are likely to be encountering. The history of fashion is complex as it involves the development of a vast array of fashions and styles and this is particularly so in the past century with the introduction of mass production and greater surplus incomes allowing the masses to participate in the fashion industry.
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Interior Design

The International Interior Design Association (IIDA) defines the professional interior designer as “qualified by education, experience, and examination to enhance the function and quality of interior spaces...for the purposes of improving the quality of life, increasing productivity, and protecting the health, safety, and welfare of the public” (IIDA, 1999).

Interiors *per se* have changed considerably over the past centuries reflecting the styles, social conditions, technologies and economic conditions of the time. Interior design - or interior decoration - has been around for centuries; however, this brief history will again be limited to the history of contemporary interior design. Early interior design was like early fashion design, restricted to the wealthy and the aristocratic classes. The usual scenario for the trend in interior design was for a style to begin with a small but influential minority, often the royalty, and for this ‘fashion’ to filter down through the upper classes and then to the bourgeoisie and so on down to the working classes. Through this trickle down process it was typical for the quality to deteriorate to the point where the poorest people were limited to cheap and crude imitations of the original interiors and the furnishings within them. This trend still continues today, although with improvements in technology and overall living standards the poorest may not have to compromise quality and comfort to the same degree as they did a century or two ago. Although it is still common practice for the rich and influential to set interior design trends and for those trends to be imitated by the masses, it is now possible for some interior trends to be set from the bottom up (the 1990’s popularity for retro furnishings is one example of this).

Interestingly, unlike the other design professions for whom the Industrial Revolution and mass-production were critical components in their expansion and development, interior designers were not at all enamoured of the products that emerged from the changed industrial processes and thus they were subsequently rejected by the more prominent designer-architects of the nineteenth century (Massey, 1990). It was through the rejection of mass-produced furniture that saw the development of the arts and crafts movement of the late nineteenth century. The arts and crafts guilds that were established in the late 1800’s and early 1900’s encouraged designers to hand-make objects and to merge the design and manufacturing process into one, rather than separate them as had occurred in the mass-production process (ibid). The situation generally remained the same until
the twentieth century with the arts and crafts guilds dominating the interior decoration practice.

Interior decoration and design was typically the domain of the architect or cabinet-maker because interior design as a distinct occupation is a relatively recent occurrence (ibid). Interior decoration laid the foundations for interior design. In the early 1900’s it became fashionable for the wealthy to use the services of an interior decorator to decorate their homes, or create backdrops for lavish parties. The employment of the professional decorator was a status symbol used by the wealthy to display their power and prestige. Many of the early interior decorators were women, as it was one of the few professions deemed ‘suitable for a woman’. Unfortunately, the dominance of women in the profession and the strong association with the arts and crafts movement has not helped interior design in its quest for status and recognition. In addition, the early decorators, especially the women, lacked any formal training that again made it difficult for the occupation to gain status and prestige.

In the 1930’s the American Institute of Interior Decorators was founded and training began to become more formalised with a commercial focus. In the post–Second World War period interior designers emerged bringing with them a graduate education and much more commercial focus, although many architects seemed sceptical or affronted at the notion that interior design could or should be separated from the architectural process (ibid). By the 1970’s the public were much more aware of design in the domestic, commercial and retail domains, and interior design was regarded as a profession in its own right rather than a sub-specialty of architecture. Opportunities began to emerge for the designer in the corporate sector as companies began to see the benefits of having their office interiors designed to reflect the functions and aspirations of the company.

Interior design as an occupation is essentially a twentieth century construct. In the past architects generally fulfilled the task of designing both the building shell as well as the interior furnishings (McCorquodale, 1983). Early in the 1900’s this task was taken on by interior decorators and the training for this job was done through the technical college system. Even today you can enrol in an interior decoration course through the TAFE colleges. The emergent occupation of the early to mid twentieth century was that of ‘interior design’. This degree-based profession incorporates more than the placement of furnishings but can include such things as
The Emergence of Design in Australia

the design of exhibitions, office interiors, and building construction. The contemporary interior designer requires a degree of technical knowledge and expertise as his/her role expands to a much more holistic role within the creation and development of the commercial or private space.

Today interior design is a major profession within the aesthetic/cultural field. The interior designer is required to obtain formal qualifications and a period of supervised work experience before he/she is eligible to be licensed or registered. In some countries, including Australia, interior designers are required to be registered with the appropriate peak body and to adhere to a set of guidelines and standards. These organisations also monitor education, ongoing professional training and research, codes of ethics and professional conduct. Whether they have achieved true professional status and recognition is debatable and one of the subjects of this research project. Anecdotal evidence suggests that the interior designer is hampered by a somewhat unreal image that is often either lampooned or given a status similar to that of a movie star. Thus you often see the gay, effeminate adviser to the rich and famous portrayed in the cinema rather than the technically skilled, educated, serious professional.

In a study of consumer perceptions of interior design ((Drab, 2004), it was suggested that the use of verbs such as ‘analyses’, ‘integrates’, ‘formulates’, ‘develops’, ‘presents’, ‘prepares’, ‘evaluates’ and ‘collaborates’ to define and describe interior design by interior design peak bodies is aimed at reinforcing the public perception of the professional nature of interior design. Drab suggests that this aim unfortunately often falls short due to the predilection of the popular media to describe what interior designers do as to ‘choose’, ‘collect’, ‘shop’, find and mix things’, redo’, freshen-up or ‘transform’. So while the interior designer uses a combination of aesthetic and creative skills, combined with the ability to conceptualise, research, analyse, develop, budget, and implement specific projects, the consumer perception is reinforced that they decorate and coordinate at a relatively superficial level. Drab (2004) further argues that this consumer (mis)-conception must be communicated to [student] designers so that they can be addressed.
Furniture Design

Furniture is an important aspect in all of our lives. Our choices in furniture can reflect social, religious, economic or psychological aspects of our lives. Furniture design like the other design professions has its roots in the craft tradition; in particular cabinet making and chair making (Sparke, 1986). Architects were also early designers of furniture, as their role in the design of interiors led them to want to integrate the furniture into the overall design of the building. In the 1700’s British furniture design was generally not separated from the retail process and so the “whole activity, manufacture and retailing, took place under one roof” (Lucie-Smith, 1979). Today the contemporary furniture designer can come from a variety of educational and training backgrounds. This could be an apprenticeship, certificate or diploma courses at technical colleges or through a degree in industrial design or architecture.

The contemporary furniture industry emerged in the late nineteenth century and the early twentieth century. According to Lucie-Smith (1979), during the first half of the nineteenth century comfort and practicality replaced an eclectic choice of heavy, ornate and generally uncomfortable furniture styles, along with the application of new materials such as metal for wire springs and bed frames and the laminating of timbers. The post 1945 period was where the most significant changes occurred to contemporary furniture design. Mechanisation, electricity, mass production and consumption, and the availability of new materials such as iron and synthetics revolutionised the furniture industry. At the turn of the century the craft workshop was the most dominant form of furniture production (Sparke, 1986), but within a few decades mechanisation and mass production were beginning to emerge. Mass produced furniture was targeted at the middle class and usually imitated the hand crafted styles favoured by the wealthy. As indicated previously, the Bauhaus was influential in the development of the mass produced product and this influenced the growth and direction of industrial design. The development of innovative styles of furniture was an area that the Bauhaus excelled. One of the most commonly known innovations that emerged from the Bauhaus was the Breuer chair. This chair and other unique forms revolutionised the concept of the chair and furniture in general.

Despite the influence from institutions such as the Bauhaus, the Industrial Revolution did not have a dramatic effect on furniture making practices (Lucie-Smith, 1979). Furniture making has often involved a process of utilising the skills
of a number of craft-specialists rather than a piece being made by a single individual. For example, architects, pattern designers/makers, cabinet-makers, upholsterers, carvers/artists may have all contributed to the manufacture of a particular piece of furniture (ibid).

Furniture design is still somewhat betwixt and between as a profession. It is still strongly associated with the craftwork tradition, and indeed, even today, it is often seen as desirable to have the ‘hand crafted’ product. On the other hand much of the practice of furniture design is, as for the other design professions, essentially removed from the production process and has more to do with design and development, ergonomics, and mass production. The design of seating for public transport, cars and airplanes are good examples of this. This, combined with the fact that there are few degree courses available (other than as part of an industrial design course) in furniture design, may have resulted in furniture design not achieving the same occupational status as many of the other design professions.

**Conclusion**

It is argued that the emergence of the contemporary design occupations was tied closely with the rise of mass production and the rise of consumerism. Middle class wealth and prosperity have combined with a growing consumer culture to produce a favourable economic environment for the growth of design and the design occupations. In Australia, as in other developed (and developing) countries, design is a rapidly growing occupational sector. Its close links to new technologies, such as flexible manufacturing, computing and the internet, along with the growing demands from consumers for a never-ending supply of new and re-developed products has been pivotal in facilitating the expansion of design. One of the most defining features of society as we move into the twenty-first century is the rise of the consumer culture. The design occupations are inextricably bound in with this development through their relationships with the creative processes, the advertising and promotion of new products, and as an occupational area that sits at the interface between the production and the consumption of goods and services.

This brief chapter aimed to place the emergence of design in an historical context relevant to the development of design in Australia, particularly with regard to design education. For this reason this review has focused mostly on the influence of British and, to a lesser extent, American design on the Australian design
industry. This is not to say that the history of design in other countries in Europe or Asia is not just as important, but it is in recognition that most Australian design practices in terms of education, training and techniques have, in the most part, been modelled on the British or American models. The aim has been to show how design has developed over the years from a craft-based occupation, through to an occupation whose training and focus were mostly in the area of the fine arts and decoration, to the contemporary design occupations whose practitioners are skilled, specialised, tertiary educated professionals working at the forefront of modern technology.

Finally, the links between design and consumerism cannot be underestimated. Over the years a symbiotic relationship has developed whereby society’s desire for the accumulation of goods and services is fed and nourished by designers of all persuasions. This relationship is further supported through the economic imperatives of government that include consumer spending as an indicator of the ‘health’ of a nation.

Historically, design has developed along side changes to family structures (smaller and more self-reliant), self-identity (away from birthright to occupation or ownership of goods), government economic dependencies (from a reliance on income tax to a Goods and Services Tax), and educational arrangements (from technical college to university courses), and is now firmly established as an occupational group in its own right. Unfortunately, within the community a widespread understanding of design and an appreciation of the contribution of design to our cultural, political and economic heritage do not appear to be fully acknowledged. The next chapter will look at design and how it is perceived in terms of occupational status and prestige. This chapter will endeavour to explore the importance of occupational status and prestige at an individual, occupational and broader societal level by examining how perceptions about occupations can affect such things as remuneration, career opportunities, power, privilege and influence and the general desire to understand and support a particular occupational group.
5. **Social Identity, Occupational Identity and Prestige**

**Introduction**

Tajfel 1978: 63) argued that “social identity is a person’s ‘self-concept’ and that a person’s knowledge of this self-concept is derived from their membership of a social group. We are all members of various social groups (e.g. we might be sociology students, a mother or father, a teenager, a football team supporter, or belong to a particular occupational group). The inter-relationships amongst these social groups are significant in assisting the individual to define their place in society, (Berger and Luckman, 1967) such that groups only receive their significance when compared to other groups (Tajfel, 1978). For example, richness, status, and prestige are only achieved in relation to others. One can only be ‘rich’ if there are others that are ‘poor’ or ‘less rich’. Differences in status and prestige are only achieved through socially constructed notions of what is worthwhile or of value. Berger, (1966: 106-7) suggested that “every society contains a repertoire of identities that is the ‘objective knowledge’ of its members” and that “…the individual ‘recognizes’ himself in society in socially defined terms and these definitions become reality as he lives in society”. Similarly, Hall (1975) argued that occupation is a major linkage for the individual to society and that occupations have various statuses within the social system.

While society aids us in constructing our individual identities, we are not a society of totally disparate individuals, in that we share many ideas, notions, codes of behaviour, mannerisms, customs, etc. with others around us. We will tend to gravitate toward those that are like-minded to ourselves. While we might have a circle of friends and acquaintances with whom we interact, through our daily living, we must also interact with others who we have never met before. To do this successfully we need to be able to form judgments about people. We do this in a variety of ways and at a number of levels. Given that many of our daily contacts are face-to-face, then one of the first clues to perceiving others is in personal appearance via body language, clothes, skin colour, facial features or other bodily features. In fact, Lurie (1981, cited in Davis, 1992: 3) argued that clothing is a visual language of its own “...with its own distinctive grammar, syntax, and vocabulary”. Speech and tone of voice are other social indicators commonly used in identification, as are material possessions (e.g. car, house type and its location).
Occupation has long been regarded as a good indicator of positioning individuals within society (Daniel, 1983). Anderson and Western (1976) similarly note that it is the first ‘clue’ to each other’s natures and it is a more acceptable inquiry into a person’s character than asking about religious affiliation or criminal history. Questions such as financial status or level of income⁴, state of mental or physical health are other avenues of inquiry that may also give offence. When referring to the meanings of occupations they can be seen as consisting of a collection of concepts and images that represent the accumulated knowledge which individuals have of their occupational world (Coxon and Jones, 1979).

Research into the perception of self and others has been within the area of identity theory. Identity theory first came to the fore in the sixties and continues to be an area of significant research. Whilst it originated from within social psychology, its importance and significance to sociology cannot be underestimated. Identity theory is underpinned by the assumption that our social identities are the basic structural components of self (McCall and Simmons, 1966; Stryker, 1968; Turner, 1991).

Our occupational identity can affect our self-esteem, self-image and our personal motivation. It is also an important link to the wider social structure, and is an indicator of where we fit into society. How many times when you meet someone for the first time does the question “What do you do for a living?” feature as one of the first in a set of many questions delving into the character of the individual. Hughes (1958) argued that an individual’s work provides indications to the course of a person’s life, and to his social being and identity. In addition, he claims that one’s occupation can announce to others a person’s claims to worth. However, as important as occupation is as an indicator of social identity, it should be acknowledged that it is only one of a number of factors that influence how we perceive ourselves and how others view us within the broader social structure (Ollivier, 2000). Despite the fact that occupation cannot be regarded as a sole determinant of our social positioning, it is generally regarded as the most salient characteristic and the one that most of us use to locate people within the social

⁴ Income is problematic in that it doesn't indicate much about character. A drug dealer might have a very high income, but would be regarded as of dubious character and have low social prestige.
structure. Hence the “So what do you do?” as a common opening gambit when first meeting someone we don’t know. For this reason, the occupational status and prestige scale is a legitimate tool for analysing people’s perceptions of occupations.

**Occupational Status and Prestige**

In contemporary Western societies an important factor in our individual identities is occupational position (Caplow, 1964). As our communities become more diverse and impersonal and as we move away from social identity based on one’s birthright or ancestry, occupational identification becomes an important factor in categorizing people. Studies have shown that occupation is more influential than religious or political affiliation, personal character, or ancestry in the determination of individual prestige. A person’s character, level of intelligence, ability, and personal acceptability are regularly assumed from an occupational label (Caplow, 1964). Broom and Lancaster-Jones, (1976: 85) argued that “In industrial societies the kind of work a person does is an immediate measure of the income, prestige, and authority he (sic) receives.” Studies have shown correlations between occupation and education, as well as income, style of housing and number of cars in the household (e.g. Broom et al, 1977).

Daniel (1983) suggested that class and status are intimately linked to occupation as it can signal to others what an individual has to offer, is an indication of their economic resources, is aligned with influence and announces their credentials (and as such can confer authority). "Occupation is a highly visible fact designating a person’s relation to the productive process of the economy and indicating where authority is held and where material rewards go" (ibid: 12). Parkin (1974) claimed that occupational order is the basis of the class structure and the entire reward system of modern Western society.

Broom and Lancaster-Jones (1976) examined the relationship between class and occupation. First, they found that of the people they surveyed in their research, around 80 per cent believed in the existence of social classes. They refuted criticism of occupation as an indicator of social class by arguing that “occupation is a better indication of class in the industrial countries of the New World such as Canada, the United States, and of Australasia than in Europe, since none of these ‘new’ countries has the stratification system that evolved from a feudal past”. In this context, occupation becomes a legitimate and justifiable indicator within
studies of class and stratification in Australia. Ollivier (2000) examined the relationship between occupational prestige and a person’s location in the social structure with reference to sociological theory on status, culture and identity theory. Her studies showed that while there were some differences between her respondent groups in terms of the finer dimensions that they used to differentiate occupations, there were high levels of consensus between the groups on the relative positions of occupations within the prestige scale. Her findings also show that while there are a number of dimensions that people use to evaluate occupations, education and occupational sector (that is level of professionalism) are widely used by all respondents.

Current thinking is clear that there is no sole determinant of one’s social status, prestige and identity. Langer (1996) examined the issue of identity in relation to consumer culture. She argued that we are produced (or born) as ‘consuming subjects’ and that children today are socialized into the consumer society to the extent that it is through the purchase and consumption of goods and services that they form their sense of self. Langer further contended that we no longer form our identities through our occupation but through consumerism. Thus, she suggested that our identities are now formed through consumption rather than production. While this argument has some legitimacy, like some of the early research into occupational prestige, for example, the theory that social identity was attributable to one’s social class, it too falls into the trap of attributing the formation of social identity to a single premise.

Langer (1996) examined the importance and dominance of consumption over production to the development of a sense of self, and while it would be folly to dispute her assertion of the rise of consumption and consumerism (indeed the research to be reported here strongly supports these claims), it is the notion that work is a much less potent ‘identity hook’ (ibid) than it used to be where the differences lay. Certainly the occupational milieu is changing at an unprecedented rate, technology is transforming the workplace, there are the effects of globalization and de-regulation on the labour market, and people are consuming at a rate and manner never seen before, but the claim that occupational position is no longer effective in defining position in society is strongly disputed. Langer argued that consumerism influences the formation of personal identities through constant exposure to the ideology of mass consumption in which we are immersed. However, we are also immersed in the ideology of the occupation. Most
children experience the concept of one or both parents working outside of the home. Our years of schooling has the ultimate goal of getting a job and, as mentioned earlier, one cannot underestimate the power of the question “what do you do?” in terms of determining a person’s relationship to the society in which they live. As Anderson and Western (1976: 43) put forward, “A good deal of the community’s resources are devoted to the preparation of young people for their work roles”. While we might have visual ‘consumerist’ clues as to a person’s position in society (the clothes they wear, the car they drive, etc.), these are less certain and often less obvious than occupation. From this perspective consumerism still does not have as much influence on a person that does occupation.

A further criticism of Langer’s theory is that she opts for an either/or approach whereby we either form our identities through our occupation or through our consumption. It is argued that the two are inextricably linked to the extent that occupation is often a lifestyle choice and we are likely to be drawn to a field of work that fits with our goals and interests. In a sense, we ‘consume’ occupations. Our occupations will often reflect our interests. The person that ‘consumes’ sport and sport related consumer goods might choose work in a sport related area. Another might consume a music lifestyle (clothes, listening habits, etc.) and may choose to work in an industry that reflects those interests. Therefore, the young person with the passion for clothes, hairstyle, and makeup might choose fashion design hairdressing or modelling. Even at the unskilled level of work, someone with these interests might prefer to work in a clothing shop rather than a hardware store. Certainly these issues could be (and should be) discussed and examined to a much greater extent, but it is not within the scope of this thesis to do so. What this musing does aim to highlight is that there is potentially a strong relationship between one’s ‘consumer identity’ and one’s ‘occupational identity’ and to dismiss one in favour of the other would be a folly.

Bourdieu (1989) contended that the consumption of goods and the formation of taste are closely linked with social class, but it is argued here that occupational position or that of an individual’s parents often determines a person’s class. Taking this argument to its next logical conclusion, one can argue that consumer choices are class driven and as such closely linked with occupation. To exclude or to discount the importance of occupation in forming our identities in favour of the concept of identity formation through consumption detrimentally neglects the relationship of occupation to consumer choice.
The importance and pre-eminence of occupation in the relationships between class and social identity cannot be underestimated. The purpose of this brief discussion of the relationships between identity, class and occupation is to further emphasize the significant place of occupation as a social indicator, not only at the macro level but also at the micro level of interpersonal relationships and identity formation.

**Occupational Prestige Assessment**

Occupational prestige scales have been used since 1925 (Counts, 1925), to rank and classify occupations. Dunkerley (1975) contended that this ranking is a form of “social hierarchy” which is “dependent on the extent to which the role of the occupational member conforms to the dominant values of the society in which the occupation is carried on” (ibid: 36). The basis of occupational prestige scales is that those living in a particular society will share ‘collective representations’ with other members, and as a result there is a high level of agreement on the structure and order of that society (Daniel, 1983).

Researchers addressing the theoretical implications of using occupational prestige scores in sociological analysis, rather than their conceptual meaning, have concluded that concern for the social grading of occupations indicates an acceptance of the functionalist assumption of consistency between the factual and the normative orders (MacKinnon and Langford, 1994). However, it could also be argued that the normative order and structure found in occupational prestige scales has arisen from shared concepts (or typifications) of the way occupations are viewed within society in general. If these typifications are shared and accepted by many then they are said to have become ‘habitualised’. It is common for these ‘habitualised’ typifications to be incorporated into society's rules, regulations, and laws (Hiller, 1973). This perspective and its relevance to this study will be discussed in greater detail in chapter 6. Therefore, although prestige scales may appear to be situated within a structural-functionalist paradigm, it could well be argued that the prestige structure is a consequence of shared, habitualised typifications. Consequently, the theoretical positioning of these scales could have phenomenologically-informed principles underlying them. The case for this is particularly strong given that what we are asking respondents to identify is their perceived levels of social standing for each of the occupations.
Occupational prestige rankings are subjective judgements, created by combining and averaging individual evaluations of the standing of occupations. Studies have shown that occupations tend to be rated similarly in most societies (Treiman, 1977), although the reasons for this have not been clearly established. The relative prestige given to occupations is related to two main processes. The first is the socialization experiences of the individual which begins as a child and continues throughout our lives. The second is a cognitive evaluation whereby the perceived characteristics of the work or its rewards are compared against some standards of desirability (e.g. income or power). Through the socialisation process, prestige hierarchies are transmitted both formally and informally through mechanisms such as interpersonal contacts, the media, and familial expectations (thus forming and reinforcing the phenomenologically-informed typification). In terms of the cognitive evaluation dimension, jobs are measured against various criteria of desirability, such as income or education. Thus occupations can earn prestige by having a high level of educational prerequisites, having high income, or by the characteristics of the work, such as whether it is dirty or clean work, physical or non-physical and creative or routine.

Daniel (1983) defined prestige as having power and status within society and she argued that it has little to do with popularity. For example, an actor or rock singer may have a very high level of popularity but the occupations of actor and musician consistently rate relatively low and the performer themselves will generally have much lower status and power within the community than, say, a clergyman or doctor. High status occupations generally require lengthy periods of education and may have a high degree of social value to the community (e.g. doctor or lawyer). As was shown in previous chapters, these are the occupations that are generally perceived as the most professional.

One of the difficulties (but also one of the essential aspects) associated with occupational prestige scales are that they are typically rated by the ordinary ‘man-in-the-street’ participants. A problem with this is that not all jobs are easily defined and classified, and there are many occupations that most people would never have the need or opportunity to come into contact with. Thus whilst familiar and easily defined occupations such as doctor, salesperson, motor mechanic, policeperson, and cleaner are easily recognized and categorized, others are much more obscure (e.g. public policy manager, quantity surveyor, actuary, and electrotyper). This can result in the scales possibly being inaccurate due to a certain amount of guesswork.
that raters may have to make. That is, occupations may be ranked either higher or lower had the raters been more familiar with the occupations (Caplow, 1964).

Similarly, Daniel (1983: 6) suggested that "...recognition of the power and privilege inherent in occupations is affected in various ways by the position of the assessor. Raters tend to allow slightly higher than usual status to those occupations familiar to them". Daniel found that there was consistent agreement amongst the respondents regarding the ranking, regardless of their own occupational level. However, the raters in the middle and upper classes were found to have greater consensus in the ratings than those from the lower classes whose ratings were somewhat hazy, although the differences tended to be fairly minor (ibid).

In their studies on occupational classification, Coxon and Jones (1979) examined the terms and attributes which people use to name occupational categories, the cultural boundaries between occupations and how they shift, and the extent to which characteristics of occupational classification are socially shared. They found a high degree of similarity between individuals in their assessments of occupational judgments, and their findings highlighted how structured and stereotyped these judgments are. Given that Coxon and Jones used both occupational titles and occupational job descriptions (without the title), and achieved similar results, they concluded that when judging occupations people use a range of constructs that evoke a mental picture of a particular occupation (ibid). They found that the tendency to order groups was more strongly marked when rating occupational titles rather than descriptions (ibid).

Gerstl and Cohen (1964) found that it was common for individuals to enhance their own occupation when rating occupations. This was also found to be the case in the studies by Smith (1999), Whitfield and Chung, (1998) and Whitfield, and Smith (2003). In contrast, Coxon and Jones (1979) found that the occupation of the subject is not related to their conceptions of the occupational strata. To reconcile these two positions, it is suggested that, in a more global sense, there are few differences in perceived occupational prestige ratings, but at a personal level, individual raters will tend to enhance their own position within the structure. In other words, although a rater’s occupation does not affect their conceptions in a general sense, as just stated it will affect how they rate occupations proximate to their own when completing occupational rating tasks.
The Multidimensionality of Occupational Prestige Scales

It has been argued that the theory underlying the occupational prestige scale is that individuals living in a particular society will share ‘collective representations’ (typifications) with other members of that society. Consequently, there will be a high level of agreement concerning the structure and order of that society (Daniel, 1983). Many researchers have examined the meanings of occupational prestige scales and the dimensions respondents use to differentiate amongst occupations (Coxon and Jones, 1979; Grasmick, 1976; Grusky and Van Rompaey, 1992; MacKinnon and Langford, 1994; Ollivier, 2000; Taft 1953). Occupational title, occupational familiarity, associated levels of income and education and, to a lesser extent, the rater’s social class (or social location), appear to be the most important factors used to rate occupations within the classic occupational prestige assessment.

Variations in mean prestige scores are a consequence of, and can be explained by the different characteristics being measured by the individuals completing the survey (MacKinnon and Langford, 1994). Studies have shown that respondents will generally use a number of attributes to assess and rate occupations (Coxon and Jones, 1978; Ollivier, 2000; Turner and Hodge, 1970). Often though, it has been found that there is an underlying consistency among raters when determining occupational prestige structure. Levels of education and worthiness (or importance) to society are the two most widely used variables for evaluation. Over and above these, raters will use other variables such as income, occupational sector (level of professionalism), authority and responsibility, or material advantage to further differentiate and evaluate occupations (Daniel, 1983; Duncan, 1961; MacKinnon and Langford, 1994; Taft, 1953).

MacKinnon and Langford (1994) further examined the question of what aspects of occupational identities are captured by the measure of occupational prestige. Their research methodology distinguishes between both the affective and cognitive levels of occupational identity and analyses the impact of each on occupational prestige scores. Their study found that within the affective dimension, the aspect they call potency (which is occupational attributes such as size, strength, or power, has the greatest effect on occupational prestige. The effect was one-way with the biggest, strongest and most powerful being related to the more prestigious occupations. The dimension they call evaluation (moral worthiness) was found to have little
influence on occupational prestige scores, although this was mainly so for the occupations situated at the two poles of the scale. Overall, they concluded from their study that education is the biggest determinant of occupational prestige and that *moral worthiness* was only a factor for middle-income occupations.

Recently, the research on occupational prestige scales has focused on the subjective meanings of the scales; that is, the criteria raters use to rank and classify the various occupations. Historically, these criteria were assumed to be one-dimensional, such that if a rater indicated that income was their main criterion for classifying the occupations, then this would be used for all occupations on the list. Others raters might indicate other criteria such as education, service to the community, or perceived level of authority, but it was still always assumed that only one dimension was used even though the particular dimension might not be consistent between raters. Thus, it is implicit in the structure of most prestige scales that the relationship amongst the various occupations is a hierarchy based on a single dimension.

Many researchers have been critical of this assumed uni-dimensionality (c.f. Coxon and Jones, 1979; Daniel, 1983; Forgas, 1979; Grasmick 1976; Grusky and Van Rompaey, 1992; MacKinnon and Langford, 1994; Ollivier, 2000). Grasmick (1976) tested the assumption of uni-dimensionality by using multi-dimensional scaling (MDS). He found that while occupations situated at the extreme ends of the prestige scale were rated primarily by their perceived levels of income and education, middle ranked occupations were additionally rated on a second dimension that he termed "value to society". Furthermore, this second dimension could override income and education in the rating of the occupations.

Grusky and Van Rompaey (1992) also argued that occupational prestige scales are intrinsically multi-dimensional and were critical of studies such as Duncan’s (1961) NORC study as Duncan only uses a single dimension to interpret his findings. Like MacKinnon and Langford (1994) they found that *moral worthiness* was a significant determinant of occupational prestige for those occupations situated in the middle of the scale and furthermore, it tended to be more significant than education and income. For example, the occupations of church minister, farmer, nurse, and housekeeper are some of the occupations whose positions were elevated in the prestige scale due to their perceived *moral worthiness*. The present study assumes
that there is multi-dimensionality implicit within the occupational prestige assessment and will analyse and report the results accordingly.

**Occupational Prestige and the Design Professions**

In Australian culture science commands a much more respected place than art (Daniel, 1983). Daniel argued that respondents consistently rated the occupations associated with media and entertainment (e.g. actors and musicians) in the middle of the rankings, despite them having high public profiles and being regarded as high-income earners. Thus, “popularity did not yield prestige” (Daniel, 1983: 8). High prestige occupations are those that have a social or moral component, require extensive educational training, or command political or bureaucratic power. Again, the strong links with perceived professionalism are evident. Although Daniel was referring to occupations within the cultural fields of art, media, and entertainment in her analysis, this does not necessarily preclude design from fitting within this framework. An Australian Bureau of Statistics (1997) survey showed that just over 35 per cent of the population particularised architecture and design as part of the arts (in the survey architecture and design were grouped together as one category). The survey also showed that the higher the level of education, the more likely the respondent was to include architecture and design in with the arts (35.2%), with almost 55 per cent of those with a bachelor’s degree or more making the inclusion. The ABS findings taken in association with those of Daniel, raises concerns about how the design occupations are perceived by the public, given that they are perceived as being closely associated with the arts, a field which has been shown to be undervalued in terms of status and prestige.

A Senate Employment, Education and Training References Committee (March 1998), inquiry into the status of the teaching profession indicated that there are two concepts of status - individual status and group status. As the terms suggest, individual status refers to situations where certain individuals within an occupational group achieve high levels of status within society. Group status refers to the occupational group in general. Designers have often fared well in individual status, but have failed to establish group status. For example, individual fashion designers such as Versace, Calvin Klein, Yves St Laurent have enjoyed international fame and recognition and have achieved high levels of personal or individual status within society. In contrast, fashion designer achieves only a middle ranking in Daniel’s (1983) occupational prestige scale.
As previously discussed in this chapter, there appears to be a high degree of consistency in the types of attributes people use to rate the level of social standing or prestige of occupations. The study by Ollivier (2000) suggested that highly educated people (in her study it was University professors) rated those occupations they determined as ‘professional’ the highest in all categories of occupational prestige, usefulness and admiration. Unfortunately, none of the design occupations were represented in her choice of 60 occupational groups included in her study, so it is not possible to know where any of her participant groups would have placed design within the occupational clusters. However, what is significant is the strong relationship between those occupations classified by the respondents as professional and the level of prestige ascribed to them. This and other similar studies (e.g. Daniel, 1983; Smith and Whitfield, 2005a) confirm the notion that professional status generally confers a range of benefits to people working in that field including material rewards, more power and greater prestige. Therefore it could be argued that professional status will have both intrinsic and extrinsic benefits for design and designers.

Conclusion

This chapter aimed to explore the link between occupation and self-identity, as well as occupation and the wider social structure. It was argued that occupation is still strongly associated with an individual’s position and power within society, and it is a signal to others of a person’s position. Occupation was declared an important contributor in a person’s conception of their self-identity, self-esteem, and self-image, and links that person to the wider social structure. Occupation was also strongly associated with social class and it was argued that for Australasia occupation had a more pertinent relationship to class than in some other countries (Broom and Lancaster-Jones, 1976). However, it was acknowledged that occupation is only one of many variables that people use to determine social identity and prestige. Notwithstanding this, occupation is still the most consistent factor people use to determine social standing and social identity.

Langer’s (1996), argument that consumerism was more important than occupation in establishing self-identity was questioned and it was argued that occupation figures just as prominently within our social milieu as consumerism, and that occupational choice will often reflect consumer ideals and personal lifestyle choices. Bourdieu’s (1989) analysis of the relationships between class and cultural
consumption was shown to support the argument that occupation is still more
important than consumerism in establishing our self-identities. This issue was
explored in chapter 3.

The occupational prestige scale as an assessment of occupational prestige was
examined. It was suggested that given that prestige judgements represented a
subjective assessment of the occupational structure and that this type of
assessment could be studied from a phenomenologically informed perspective. It
was argued that although it is a good reliable method for determining the perceived
social standing of occupations, the fact that it has generally been reported and
analysed as one-dimensional and inherently hierarchical is problematic. Drawing
on the work of Coxon and Jones, (1979), Grasmick, (1976), Grusky and Van
Rompaey, (1992), MacKinnon and Langford, (1994) and Ollivier (2000), it was
argued that occupational prestige assessment is multidimensional. These
researchers found that raters would apply the notion of service to the community or
moral worthiness to an occupation that might otherwise be ranked quite low if the
sole prestige judgement was based on income and education.

When specifically exploring the relationship between occupational prestige and the
design professions, Daniel’s (1983) study was drawn on to show that cultural
occupations generally receive lower levels of status than scientific occupations. As
an Australian Bureau of Statistics (1997) study clearly showed architecture and
design were very often associated within the cultural occupations, this is likely to
influence perceptions of the design occupations.

This study has been formulated on the premise that design is suffering from an
‘identity crisis’, no one knows what it is (de Forest, 1990; Evamy, 1994; McDermot,
1990). Previously though it was suggested that one of the problems for design is
that everyone thinks they know what it is. While this does sound contradictory, in
fact as I see it, it forms the essence of the key issue for design. While most people
have heard of design, there is no clear understanding of what design is. It is
argued that, given the link between occupation and the wider social context, not to
mention one’s self-identity, it is of interest to investigate how design and designers
are perceived.
6. **Theory and Aims**

**Introduction**

The study of occupations and professions has been undertaken from a variety of theoretical perspectives, although the Functionalist perspective is the most commonly used. The basis of this perspective, which evolved from the work of Emile Durkheim (1893), is the notion that social structure is external to the individual and that this structure is imposed on people. Social structure is based on the division of labour within society and this division became more pronounced through the process of industrialisation. In contrast, prior to industrialisation social divisions were generally based on birthright. Durkheim considered the professions as a means of regulating society around a new morality - occupational membership- and regarded them as a means of repressing individual self-interest for that of the common good. Further, occupational memberships would maintain harmony and order within society through the development of laws and rules and the recognition of common interest within the occupational structure. Durkheim’s theories have formed the basis for the study of the professions over a number of years and it is still the predominant paradigm today, more so to professional groups rather than to sociological academia.

Talcott Parsons (1967), building on the work of Pareto (1963) and Durkheim (1893), is regarded as the most dominant theorist in American sociology and, like Durkheim, regards the professions as part of a functional, concordant and harmonic social system. Contemporary studies around organisations and management theory tend to draw on the work of Parsons and are characterised by the tendency to define professions in terms of particular traits. This has been discussed at greater length in chapter 2 and so will not be re-examined further in this chapter.

Another common approach to the study of professions is the power approach based on the work of Marx and Weber, and described by Johnson (1972) and Larson (1977). This perspective focuses on professionalism as a strategy for gaining power positions within the broader societal structure. Within this approach professionalism is regarded as a driving force for upward mobility within the social structure. Through the mechanisms of professional closure, the power position is
maintained and indeed strengthened through monopolistic behaviours. Via this theory it could be argued that the professionalisation of design is a push to exert monopolistic power over related disciplines such as art, illustration or architecture. Indeed there is also a strong case for using this approach for the analysis of how and why specific design specialties choose to separate themselves from one another. This approach too has its limitations in that, like trait theory, it fails to acknowledge the external influences on the design professions and tends to attribute the professional status as a construction of powerful external forces.

In contrast, MacDonald (1995) examines the professions from a cultural perspective whereby the professions are studied in the context of the cultural milieu in which they exist. For design, the most significant cultural phenomenon has been the rise of consumerism. Thus, the importance of consumerism, the role of consumers and the relationship between design and consumerism are important considerations that cannot be overlooked. Consumers, through their relationship with goods and services, develop a concept and interpretation of design and designers that influences their perception of the profession:

"The enterprising customer-consumer is imagined as an empowered human being – the moral centre of the enterprising universe. Within the discourse of enterprise customers/consumers are constituted as autonomous, self-regulating and self-actualizing individual actors, seeking to maximize the worth of their experience to themselves through personalized acts of choice in a world of goods and services" (DuGay and Salaman 1992: 623).

As was shown in the previous chapters, there is a strong relationship between the rise of consumerism and the reliance by governments and organisations on consumer spending for economic sustainability. This has in turn influenced the occupational structure of design and resulted in changes to design practice and educational curricula.

**A Phenomenologically informed Interactionist Approach to the Study of Design**

Studies of occupational prestige have tended to fall into two main theoretical camps. The first is where, like studies of social class, occupations have been classified according to the particular traits and demographics (e.g. the ANU scales in McMillan and Lancaster-Jones, 2000). This approach fits squarely within the
Functionalist paradigm complete with an externally imposed social structure (at a macro level) outside the influence of individuals within society. The second approach, and that employed by this study, is one based on the assumption that individuals have internal representations of what constitutes social order (in this instance occupational prestige), and that while these may be shared between individuals, they are not imposed on the individual.

With many of the traditional perspectives there is an underlying assumption of professional unity and an occupational identity shared by similar beliefs, values and mores. The question that this thesis aims to explore is whether this is indeed the case. An alternative argument, therefore, is that in order to adequately understand the (design) professions and the individuals working in them we must examine the professions not only from the macro or societal level, but also at the level of individual meaning and experience. The perspective therefore that this study is grounded in, and one not commonly used in the study of the professions, is the humanistic or interpretivist approach that looks for the “meaning of social life” (Pearlin, 1992: 2). Pearlin (1992) suggested that researchers working within the humanistic perspectives aim to “get inside the heads and hearts of society’s participants as they interact with others and encounter different situations”. In contrast the structurally oriented researcher tends to focus on the social systems that operate within society and the problem of social order (ibid; Turner, 1987). It should be noted that the structural and humanistic approaches are not necessarily diametrically opposed, but should be regarded as complementary approaches in that they seek to understand society at different levels.

It has been argued that we cannot study human actions as we would the natural sciences because they “deal with entirely different orders of subject matter, and that sociology is (or should be) concerned with understanding action rather than observing behaviour” (Silverman, 1971). This is the fundamental basis behind the interpretivist paradigm in which the central aim is to understand the subjective world of human experience. This perspective rejects the idea that humans can be studied using a “scientific method”, as one would study the natural sciences, because, unlike things such as atoms, plants and rocks, human action is grounded in meaning. Thus, if we want to gain insights into the beliefs, understandings and attitudes of people toward the design professions then we must shift our theoretical and methodological focus away from the structural, scientific approach to a humanistic or interpretivist perspective.
Given that the main aim of this study is to examine the understanding and knowledge of the design occupations, it is believed that the most suitable theoretical approach is the interactionist paradigm. However, it must be acknowledged that the meanings held by individuals do not, on their own, determine how the design professions developed or what will happen in the future. Broader political, economic and socio-cultural factors have played, and will continue to play, a significant role in the way in which design has evolved and developed and the understandings and meanings that people have about design. Because of this, there are limitations in using an interpretivist perspective, and the assumptions that can ultimately be made. Despite these constraints, this still appears an appropriate paradigm in which to frame this research.

The works of Berger and Luckman (1967), Schutz (1962) and Silverman (1970) have been used as the basis for the theoretical assumptions that underpin this study. The “phenomenologically-informed interactionist” study of social class by Hiller has also been a significant factor in the shaping of the theoretical approach and subsequent methodology and interpretation of results. Hiller’s (1981: 56) argument in his thesis on social class was that the conventional approaches to studying class (i.e. Functionalism or Marxism) ignore or dismiss the “very real emotions, attitudes and actions of the vast bulk of members of society”. Hiller argued that the conventional approaches tell us “whether or not Australians think about social class, but do not tell us what they think about it, how significant they think it is and how their ideas relate to other aspects of their lives” (ibid: 258). If you substitute design profession for social class in the previous sentence then you have the basis for the theoretical and methodological reasoning behind this particular thesis.

The phenomenologically informed interactionist approach allows one to gain insights into individual’s beliefs, understandings and attitudes that are not possible to achieve with the structural perspectives. As Hiller stated:

“From a phenomenologically-informed interactionist perspective the social world is regarded as the outcome of the collective social interactions of people in everyday life, while the latter are themselves seen as the products of that reality, i.e. man and society are involved in a reciprocal process of construction, maintenance and change: the analysis of one implies the analysis of the other” (ibid: 56).

Within this perspective the social world is seen as real and it is a world of meaning (ibid; Silverman, 1971). However, people do not exist in isolation and so in order
for us to be able to make sense of the world around us meanings need to be shared. These subjective meanings are ‘objectified’ and are termed a ‘typification’. These typifications provide schemata through which we understand our environment. For example, in a face-to-face exchange I would employ ‘typification schemes’ that would classify the other person as ‘a man’ or ‘a woman’, maybe ‘an Australian’ who is also a ‘university lecturer’. I could ‘typify’ their behaviour towards me as ‘friendly’ or ‘hostile’ or ‘helpful’. The typifications I employ will depend on aspects such as the physical location of the interaction, what I understand as the socially and culturally appropriate behaviour for that person, past experiences and the reasons for the exchange.

When typifications are shared and reciprocated between two or more participants then they are said to have become ‘institutionalised’ (Berger and Luckman, 1967; Hiller, 1973). If these typifications are shared and accepted by many then they are said to have become ‘habitualised’. It is common for these ‘habitualised’ typifications to be incorporated into society’s rules, regulations and laws (ibid). In any given population there will be multiple, competing sets of institutionalised typifications and legitimations and it is through this competition that there will be changes in the structure of society (ibid). What a phenomenologically informed analysis entails is a comparison of the typifications within a particular society at a given point in time. If, for example, the participants in this study have substantially different typifications then we would conclude that there is no single set of typifications that apply to the understandings of the design profession. If, however, all of the participants share particular typifications or meanings then these would be said to be ‘legitimised’ (ibid). It is important to note that because the institutionalised typifications have been created by individuals, they are always subject to control by people so can be broken down just as easily as they were constructed (Berger and Luckman, 1967).
The key concepts in a phenomenologically informed interactionist approach are:

**Typifications:** The basic process by which the actor orders his/her experience of him/herself and his/her physical and social worlds.

**Institutionalisation:** Typifications that are reciprocally shared between two or more actors.

**Social Reality:** Habitualised typifications. These can also be legitimised as laws, regulations, etc. (science, religion and politics are examples of legitimised systems).

**Social Structure:** The sum total of the institutionalised legitimations.

The theoretical perspective employed in any study will guide the methodology for studying the research question. A phenomenologically informed interactionist approach suggests that the methodology be qualitative. While I would agree that qualitative methodology is generally preferred for studies based on an interactionist perspective, I would argue that the interpretation of results is equally, if not more, important. By employing a phenomenologically informed interactionist approach, the results of such tools as questionnaires should be analysed in such a manner that the aim is to determine the extent of shared typifications.

Many researchers have preferred to combine both quantitative and qualitative methodologies though (e.g. Nau, 1995). When applied to the study of social phenomena it refers to the combined use of qualitative and quantitative methodologies in a single study in order to obtain a much richer and fuller analysis of the situation than would be achieved by the use of a single methodology alone.

The basis of this thesis is how people perceive design and designers. The aim is to determine the extent to which there is a shared notion of what designers are and what the design is. It is hoped that insight will be gained into whether there are conflicting occupational ideals, aspirations or realities, and how design’s self-interest and self-reflection compares or conflicts with public opinion. Should the study find there are differing views about design, then it would be concluded that the understandings and meanings of design and designers are not yet institutionalised. On the other hand, should there be a high degree of consistency and agreement on design and designers, it would be argued that the typifications...
have become habitualised and thus occupy a particular place in the social structure. Of course, as was discussed previously, these typifications are constantly undergoing a process of negotiation between individuals in society and so can change over time. This study is therefore a snapshot of the understandings and meanings of design and designers in contemporary Australian society and at one particular point in history.

Conclusion and Research Aims

Determining how best to approach the study of the design professions required consideration of which approach would likely reveal the greatest insights into how the field is perceived. A concern with the Functionalist approach and ‘trait’ theory is that this perspective tends to rely on generic definitions of professionalism irrespective of place and time. In doing so, the professional status of design may be influenced more by the fact that the definition of ‘professionalism’ does not adequately reflect the particular characteristics of design than the fact that design is not a profession. It must be recalled that the original prototype for the list of traits was the medical profession and that the applicability of the traits to other occupational groups is not often contested.

The aim of this study is to provide an understanding of how design and designers are perceived in contemporary Australian society. To determine the extent to which these meanings are shared, participants will possess either a background in design gained from working in the field, or will have no presumed working knowledge of the field other than that gained from everyday experience (e.g. knowledge gained from the media, and personal contact with designers).

Within this sits the concept of the professional status of design and how that affects the educational, organisational and self-regulatory aspects of the field. This thesis will attempt to map people’s meanings and understandings of design and designers and will then discuss some of the possible implications of these understandings. The methodology will include a mixture of quantitative and qualitative methods to explore these perceptions. The survey results will be analysed on the basis of the interpretivist paradigm and, as such, findings will not be regarded as proof of a social structure that exists externally to the members of society, but as a shared understanding of a particular social milieu that exists at a particular point in time.
**PART 2: RESEARCH**

Part 2 of the thesis presents the findings from the three stages of research activity. The first component was a study of occupational prestige assessment. This was based on the work undertaken by Ann Daniel in Australia in 1983. However, similar surveys have been undertaken worldwide with fairly similar results. These were detailed in chapter 5. The survey tool aims to determine respondents’ subjective opinions of the level of social standing for each of the occupations listed in the scale. None of the previous surveys undertaken have included any of the design occupations in the instrument. The second stage was a small number of focus groups that aimed to obtain a more in-depth understanding of how people viewed design and designers. The findings from both of these surveys, in addition to the research literature, were then used to inform the development of a survey questionnaire. In the following three chapters each of these research stages will be discussed and analysed.

The questionnaire is the first large-scale survey that looks specifically at perceptions of design and designers either in Australia or internationally. Most claims about how design and designers are perceived have been, to date, confined to anecdotes and personal experiences. In developing the questions for the questionnaire it was considered useful to collect some further information that could feed into the process of formulating the questions. The occupational prestige survey and the focus group discussions were undertaken as part of this process.

The occupational prestige scale gave a set of results that could be compared to previous and similar surveys (e.g. Daniel), and provided an indication of perceptions of social standing and prestige in comparison to a range of other occupations. Regarding the occupational prestige survey, it was decided that the same groups of participants would not be used for the final questionnaire survey. The reasons for this are given in chapter 7.

The review of the literature raised questions regarding the lack of knowledge people have about design; also, suggested that what knowledge they do have is often distorted or inaccurate. The focus groups sought to build on the findings of the literature by exploring whether other people might hold similar views. However,
the main purpose of the focus groups was to gather information to feed into the survey questionnaire.

Given the limitations with both the occupational prestige assessment and the focus groups, it is fair to say that they can only be interpreted as a snapshot of the design industry by a small group of people at a particular point in time. Similarly, the questionnaire could also be interpreted as a snapshot survey, not necessarily designed to be generalized to the entire population, but intended to inform questions that could be pursued in more detail in the future.
7. **STAGE ONE: OCCUPATIONAL PRESTIGE SCALE**

**Introduction**

This chapter presents the first preliminary phase of the research which was aimed at examining the perceived occupational prestige of the design occupations in relation to a range of other known and previously assessed occupations. This phase was undertaken as a pilot study to be used for the formation of the detailed design questionnaire (chapter 9), in addition to providing other useful information about the design occupations. The purpose of this phase therefore, was twofold. First, a need was identified to locate the design occupations in relation to a range of other occupations using an established and validated scale. The second was to compare the participant groups on their general understanding and perception of the general occupational structure in Australia.

The tool used to measure this perceived understanding of the occupational structure was the Occupational Prestige Scale. The occupational prestige scale is one of the simplest, informative and universally applied occupational assessment scales. As previously discussed in chapter 3, the Occupational Prestige Scale is a research technique that has a tradition extending back over 75 years (Counts, 1925), and has been subject to considerable investigation and validation. Bearing in mind the theoretical perspective being used for this research, it is noted that the findings are expected to be the respondent’s perceptions of how he or she views the occupational system (this is despite asking the respondents to rate the occupations how they think others would perceive them).

Other occupational assessment scales have been developed. However, for various reasons they are not as suited to this research as the Occupational Prestige Scale. Australian researchers for example, developed the ANU status scale to assign socioeconomic status to occupations (Broom et al, 1977; McMillan and Lancaster-Jones, 2000). Since its development in 1970 this Scale has regularly been revised and updated, with the latest version being the ANU3_2. This Scale gives a score for occupations on a scale from 0 to 100. The scores are calculated based on quantitative census data (ASCO hierarchy) linked with demographic data obtained through interviews with a random sample of the population (ibid). The main
difference between this scale and that used in the current study and previous studies (e.g. Daniel, 1983; Congalton, 1969; Smith and Whitfield, 2003), is the fact that the ANU scale derives the ranking of occupations based on the socio-economic circumstances of the survey’s participants in addition to participants’ perceptions of the level of social standing of the occupations. While arguably a more comprehensive and inclusive survey, it was, for the purposes of this research, more difficult to replicate and to compare results.

It is implicit in the structure of most prestige scales that the relationship amongst the various occupations is a hierarchy based on a single dimension. However, many researchers have been critical of this assumed uni-dimensionality (Coxon and Jones, 1979; Forgas, 1979; Goldthorpe and Hope, 1974; Grasmick, 1976; Grusky and Van Rompaey, 1992; MacKinnon and Langford, 1994; Ollivier, 2000). Goldthorpe and Hope (1974), for example, argued that respondents do not rate occupations on a distinctly ‘prestige’ notion of ‘deference, acceptance and derogation’, but rather that they use a frame of reference they termed ‘general desirability’. Grasmick (1976) tested the assumption of uni-dimensionality by using multidimensional scaling (MDS). He found that while those occupations situated at the extreme ends of the prestige scale were rated primarily by their levels of income and education, those in the middle were also rated on a second dimension that he interpreted as ‘value to society’.

Furthermore, this second dimension could override income and education in the rating of the occupations. For example, occupations such as farmer, church minister and housewife were rated more highly than would be expected if income and education were the only criteria: the moral or service to the community dimension served to boost their level of social standing. MacKinnon and Langford (1994) and Coxon and Jones (1979) reported similar findings in their research. The study by Ollivier (2000) found that prestige scales have both a factual and normative component, and are multi-dimensional with one dimension representing prestige and two others that she called ‘admiration’ and ‘usefulness’. It is important to understand though, that the dimensions within the MDS are determined by the researcher (in a similar way to other statistical tools such as Factor Analysis where the ‘theme’ of the various factors are determined by the analyst), and so the dimensions are a subjective interpretation of the data. These studies clearly reveal multi-dimensionality in the occupational prestige scale and for this reason, this study will also analyse the Occupational Prestige Scale data using
both the conventional uni-dimensional approach as well as a two-dimensional analysis using MDS.

It was initially intended that the three participant groups used in this study would be used throughout the entire research process (although with much larger numbers from each source). For reasons that will be explained later, this was not the case, but as this change of direction was not due to the quality and validity of the data, the survey was considered to remain an integral component of the thesis. It should be noted at the outset though, that this research was never meant to be as extensive and comprehensive as some prior studies in this area, such as those of Daniel (1983), Congalton (1965), Goldthorpe and Hope (1974), or North and Hatt (1947). A comprehensive study in the tradition of these previous researchers would have constituted a complete thesis in itself. The intention was to use the results of the present survey, in conjunction with the results of these previous studies, to explore the perceived social standing of the design occupations.

The aim of this research phase, therefore, was to provide a point of comparison between the three participant groups in terms of their overall perceptions about one facet of the occupational structure – namely occupational prestige. In addition, given that none of the design occupations have been included in the primary data in an occupational prestige scale, it was important that this omission be tackled as a grassroots reference point for the research project. It also proved a basis for the development of the later phases of the research, particularly, in conjunction with the focus groups (see chapter 8), the design questionnaire.

**Participants and Procedure**

Three participant groups were used for this study. They comprised first year design and social science students from Swinburne University of Technology, Melbourne and members of the University of the Third Age (U3A), an organisation that runs a diverse range of courses for retired persons. While often affiliated with a University, the U3A is run as an independent organisation. The groups were selected on the basis of being convenient and accessible, as well as possibly representing a range of views and perceptions. The design students were used for the obvious reason that it was important to have a sample of persons with a knowledge and interest in design. The social science students were selected on the
basis of Daniel's (1983) research that argued that social science students were generally shown to hold views that most resembled those of the general population. The U3A members were chosen as they represented an older age group to the student samples, were located in a variety of locations around Melbourne, and offered an alternative to having a sample comprised of just university students. However, because there was no evidence that the U3A group would also hold views resembling the general population, it was decided that the two non-design groups should be evaluated separately. Because of the preliminary and exploratory nature of the study, it was considered that a wider sample would not be required for this phase of the research, particularly as there was a well established pool of research data upon which to draw comparisons.

As indicated, one group of participants were members of the U3A (n = 91). These participants were attending a range of subjects provided by the U3A and included courses such as Current Affairs, Path to Optimum Health, and Australian History. The participants were a convenience sample in that that the classes were selected on the basis of the willingness of the course coordinator to participate in the survey. The questionnaire (see the description later in this chapter for details of the questionnaire) was administered during class time, although participation was voluntary. Only a small number did not participate and this was mainly due to difficulties in understanding the requirements of the questionnaire, or problems such as visual impairment or poor writing ability. Instructions were restricted to those provided on the questionnaire and where participants asked for further explanation, the reply was limited to repeating the written instructions. A copy of the questionnaire is attached in Appendix A.

The second group was comprised of first year social science students from Swinburne University of Technology (n = 125). Like the U3A group, selection was based on the willingness of lecturers to have the questionnaire administered during their class time. Although participation was voluntary, all students completed the questionnaire. No further instructions other than those on the questionnaire were given.

The third group were first year design students from Swinburne University, National School of Design (n = 88). The questionnaire was administered during the design history classes, as all students, irrespective of their design discipline, attend these. All students participated in the survey and again were given no further instructions
other than what was contained in the questionnaire. The tables below summarises the demographic details of the participant groups.

Table 7.1 Age Group by Participant Group (%)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age</th>
<th>U3A (%)</th>
<th>Social sciences (%)</th>
<th>Design (%)</th>
<th>Total (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>under 18</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>36.8</td>
<td>39.8</td>
<td>27.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19 - 24</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>48.0</td>
<td>53.4</td>
<td>36.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25 - 34</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>11.2</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>6.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35 - 44</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>2.4</td>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>1.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>45 - 54</td>
<td>4.8</td>
<td>1.6</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>2.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>55 - 64</td>
<td>20.2</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>5.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>65 - 74</td>
<td>36.9</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>10.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>over 75</td>
<td>38.1</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>10.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 7.1 shows that most of the social science and design students were aged less than 25 years, while the majority of the U3A members were aged over 65 years.

Table 7.2 Sex of Participant by Group (%)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sex</th>
<th>U3A (%)</th>
<th>Social sciences (%)</th>
<th>Design (%)</th>
<th>Total (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>36.3</td>
<td>21.6</td>
<td>48.9</td>
<td>33.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>57.1</td>
<td>76.8</td>
<td>51.1</td>
<td>63.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not stated</td>
<td>6.6</td>
<td>1.6</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>2.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Around two-thirds of the participants were female, although this was mainly a consequence of the high numbers of females in the social science group.

Table 7.3 Level of Education by Participant Group (%)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level of Education</th>
<th>U3A (%)</th>
<th>Social sciences (%)</th>
<th>Design (%)</th>
<th>Total (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Secondary</td>
<td>30.8</td>
<td>88.8</td>
<td>75.0</td>
<td>67.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trade/certificate</td>
<td>14.3</td>
<td>1.6</td>
<td>8.0</td>
<td>7.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Degree</td>
<td>44.0</td>
<td>9.6</td>
<td>15.9</td>
<td>21.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not stated</td>
<td>11.0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>1.1</td>
<td>3.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Almost half of the U3A members had post secondary qualifications, while the majority of the students were enrolled in their first degree (as one would expect).
Table 7.4 Country of Origin by Participant Group

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country of Origin</th>
<th>U3A (%)</th>
<th>Social sciences (%)</th>
<th>Design (%)</th>
<th>Total (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Australia</td>
<td>48.2</td>
<td>76.0</td>
<td>70.1</td>
<td>66.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>U.K &amp; Ireland</td>
<td>22.4</td>
<td>1.6</td>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>7.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asia</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>13.6</td>
<td>14.9</td>
<td>10.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Europe</td>
<td>22.4</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>9.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>USA &amp; Canada</td>
<td>1.2</td>
<td>0.8</td>
<td>1.1</td>
<td>1.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>other</td>
<td>5.9</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>8.0</td>
<td>5.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Most of the participants were Australian, particularly in the student groups. Around forty per cent of the U3A members were from a European or British background.

Questionnaire

An Occupational Rating Scale was used (Appendix A). This type of scale has been used extensively for over 75 years and has been well tested for its reliability and validity; further validation of the scale was therefore not undertaken in this study. The scale consisted of 65 occupations representing seven of the major occupational categories as defined by the Australian Bureau of Statistics. Occupations were also chosen on the basis of their inclusion in previous prestige scales. Because there has not been a scale of this type in Australia developed since Daniel’s (1983) study, and, given the wish to compare results, some of the newly established occupations have not been included (e.g. technology-based occupations). The intention was to compare the design occupations to other known and previously rated occupations. The scale also included the occupations of graphic design, industrial design, product design, interior design, fashion design and furniture design.

Participants were required to rate each individual occupation on the basis of its perceived level of social standing with a score of 1 indicating the highest level of social standing and a score of 7 indicating the lowest. The basis of this scale is that the occupations are rated individually rather than requiring participants to specifically rank occupations against each other. Although a general ranking would be implicit in the judgment, participants were not required to make the finer level judgments by having to rank one job over another. Thus it is possible for a person to give more than one occupation the same score.
Results and Discussion

The means and rankings for each of the occupations were calculated. These are presented in Table 7.5. In addition, a multidimensional scaling analysis (MDS) was performed for each of the participant groups in order to explore the multidimensionality of the occupational prestige assessment. The results of this analysis are presented in Figures 7.1-3. Included in Table 7.5 are Daniel’s (1983) results. These provide a point of comparison for the results of this study. Daniel’s study is the last significant study of this nature undertaken in Australia (having excluded those using the ANU scale due to the fundamental differences in methodology).

More recent studies by Whitfield and Chung (1998) and Smith and Whitfield (2003) compared a small set of occupations, including the design occupations, across a range of dimensions, including social standing, as part of a cross-cultural study into perceptions of the design professions. However, unlike Daniel’s survey, there were only 16 occupations included in the total set, although the set did include the design occupations. It should also be noted that, although Daniel (1983) included the design occupations in her final table of occupational prestige scores, they were not included in the original set of occupations actually rated by the participants. They were in fact an extrapolation, based on the results of the main list of occupations (of which the details of how this was done were not described in the publication). This is not to imply that they are not a good indicator of prestige, but that it was important for this research to establish the reliability of the estimates and confirm the findings.

Table 7.5 reveals clearly perceived within groups differences in overall mean occupational prestige scores. That is, participants were able to make distinctions between occupations on the basis of their perceived social standing in the community.
<table>
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<tr>
<th>Occupation</th>
<th>Social Science</th>
<th>Design</th>
<th>U3A Daniels (1983)</th>
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<tr>
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<td>Garbage Collector</td>
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<td>65</td>
<td>6.34</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

* - average of 2 scores; ** - non-specific engineer; # - average of the two rankings
ns - not stated Nb. rankings were based on estimated means based on similar occupational categories
Design n = 88; Social Science n=125; U3A n=91
The results generally concur with previous occupational prestige studies both in Australia and overseas (Daniel, 1983; Nan and Wen, 1988; Ollivier, 2000; Smith and Whitfield, 2003). Closer examination of the groups reveals that differences in mean prestige scores generally corresponded to the personal occupational interests of the respondents. As previous research has found that there is a tendency for people to enhance the standing of their own occupations (e.g. Gerstl and Cohen, 1964), the results were not unexpected. Thus the design group has given higher prestige scores to the design occupations, and the social science group, which included a high proportion of students doing business studies either as a double degree or within their Arts degree, has tended to enhance those professions associated with banking and finance.

All groups ranked judge and lawyer amongst the highest and cleaner and garbage collector amongst the lowest. Focusing on the design occupations, it can be seen that there are some differences in the overall means and rankings between the groups. The Social Science and, in particular, the U3A groups ranked them much lower than the Design group. The U3A results were quite similar to Daniel (1983), which is lower than the rankings given by the Social Science students. It may be that the prestige scales do not hold up over time, as suggested by Treiman (1977), and supported by others such as Daniel (1983). Given that the design occupations are relatively new and closely related to the consumer culture and the increased consumption of goods (see chapter 3), it may be that they are deemed more prestigious to the younger, consumer-orientated generation than to the older generations who have had less exposure and pressure to live within and to embrace the age of mass consumerism.

Even though the mean scores differ for each of the participant groups, it is interesting to note the relative positions of each of the design occupations within the ranking structure. Both student groups rank graphic designer the highest in perceived social standing and industrial designer as the next highest. In contrast the U3A rank product designer as the highest (rank = 16), and industrial designer as the next highest (rank = 20). This essentially concurs with Daniel’s ranking, although product designer was not specified in Daniel’s scale and the score used to give the ranking was that of ‘Designer – Non-specific’. The Design students rank fashion design quite high (rank = 9) compared to all other groups, with the Social Science students, the U3A and Daniel ranking it as 16, 30 and 30, respectively.
It is of note that the U3A participants ranked product designer the highest at 16, whilst the student groups ranked it amongst the lowest, only just above furniture designer. Given that it was unlikely that any of the U3A participants had ever heard of product designer before (as it is usually referred to as industrial design); it would be of interest to know what made them rate it as they did. It may have been that the title was somehow more meaningful to them than the title of industrial designer, which anecdotal evidence suggests that some people may associate industrial designer erroneously with heavy machinery and factory work. This issue will be explored in greater depth in the subsequent research phases. All groups ranked furniture designer lowest of the six occupations being studied and it is speculated that this was most likely a consequence of the perception that furniture designer is associated with the trades and craft-work rather than being professional work with tertiary qualified practitioners. Again, this assumption is based on anecdotal evidence and will be explored in the subsequent chapters.

In comparing perceived levels of social standing it can be seen that all groups ranked the proximate occupation of artist quite low compared to Designer. Whilst this is perhaps not unexpected by the non-design groups, it would have been hypothesised that the Design students would score it more highly than they did, particularly as most of the Design students would have followed an art stream at secondary school, and that many of the tertiary courses are operated within an Art and Design faculty. This is also surprising, as it appears that the Design group has elevated the scores of other proximate occupations such as architect, photographer and screen printer compared to the non-design groups. Given this anomaly, this question was raised and discussed in the next stage within the focus group discussions and will be explored in the following chapter.

Although not directly related to the perceptions of the design professions, it is also interesting to note the differences in rankings in the occupations of sportsperson,

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5 Although Swinburne University does not have an Art and Design faculty per se, one could assume that most of the students would have not only looked at and applied for entry to other tertiary institutions such as Monash University, which offer both Fine Arts and Design within the same faculty. In fact, this situation is more the norm than the Swinburne scenario of only offering Design courses (c.f. College of Fine Arts, University of New South Wales; University of Canberra).
teacher, housewife and church leader amongst the groups. In general, the younger student groups do not give as much prestige to occupations such as church leader, university lecturer and housewife compared to the U3A participants and Daniel, but give a very high prestige score to sportsperson. Primary and secondary teachers are interesting in that the Design students score them much higher than the Social Science students and the U3A, and more similar to Daniel. This may give more weight to the speculation that the relative prestige of occupations is undergoing a period of flux, and that the prominence and inclusion of the occupations is shifting with the changing values of society. This finding may contradict those of previous researchers (c.f. Daniel, 1983; MacKinnon and Langford, 1994; Treiman, 1977) who argued that the occupational prestige scale holds up over time and across cultures and social groups. As was discussed previously, time and place may influence perceptions about occupations, particularly those occupations closely associated with personal identity, such as consumerism. Although outside the scope of this research, it would interesting to undertake a more substantial study into occupational prestige that incorporates the emergent technology and service-based occupations (which would include the design occupations), in addition to the traditional occupations included in previous scales.

**Multidimensionality of the data**

It is implicit in the structure of most prestige scales that the relationship amongst the various occupations is a hierarchy based on a single dimension. However, many researchers have been critical of this assumed unidimensionality (Coxon and Jones, 1979; Forgas, 1979; Goldthorpe and Hope, 1974; Grasmick, 1976; Grusky and Van Rompaey, 1992; MacKinnon and Langford, 1994; Ollivier, 2000). Goldthorpe and Hope (1974), for example, argued that respondents do not rate occupations on a distinctly ’prestige’ notion of ‘deference, acceptance and derogation’ (1974: 6), but rather that they use a frame of reference they termed ’general desirability’ (ibid: 12). To test their hypothesis they compared respondents’ ratings of occupations using a single prestige scale and a composite of four scales. The outcome was a high correlation between a linear combination of the four composite scores and the single prestige scores. Unfortunately, given the inferential limitations of correlational analysis, the latter cannot be accounted for by the former: rather, the results are indicative, as acknowledged by the authors.
Employing a more sophisticated methodology, Grasmick (1976) tested the assumption of unidimensionality by using multidimensional scaling (MDS). He found that while those occupations situated at the extreme ends of the prestige scale were rated primarily by their levels of income and education, those in the middle were also rated on a second dimension that he interpreted as 'value to society'. Furthermore, this second dimension could override income and education in the rating of the occupations. For example, occupations such as farmer, church minister and housewife were rated more highly than would be expected if income and education were the only criteria: the 'moral' or 'service to the community' dimension served to boost their level of social standing. MacKinnon and Langford (1994) and Coxon and Jones (1979) reported similar findings in their research. These studies clearly reveal multidimensionality in the occupational prestige scale.

For the above reason, multidimensional scaling (MDS) was performed on the data. This technique represents spatially the measured similarities or differences amongst a set of objects (in this case professions). The more similar the objects, the closer together they are positioned in the space. A useful way of viewing the MDS space is like a map of, say, distances between cities, in which the orientation of the map (frame) is irrelevant to their relative distances. In the present study we are dealing with professions, and these are positioned according to how similar the subjects perceived them to be on the various measures employed. Two important advantages of this technique to the present study are that (a) complex relationships amongst a set of objects (professions) can be represented spatially, and (b) the dimensions of the space (axes) are not pre-determined; rather, the dimensions emerge from an interpretation of the locations of the objects in the space (Shiffman et al., 1981).

The horizontal axis of charts 7.1 to 7.3 can reasonably be interpreted as the perceived social standing scores (a social standing dimension), and run from low to high (and left to right respectively). These results have been discussed earlier, so they will not be elaborated on further. The vertical dimension is where an interesting pattern emerges, as this has been shown to be a qualitative dimension that can have a significant impact on the position of particular occupations within the prestige hierarchy (Coxon and Jones, 1979, MacKinnon and Langford, 1994; Ollivier, 2000). It will be recalled that previous research suggested that this vertical axis is a service to the community dimension (Coxon and Jones, 1979; Grasmick, 1976; MacKinnon and Langford, 1994; Ollivier, 2000), and it is the
interpretation used in this analysis. Caution should be exercised when labelling this qualitative dimension, as there are no definitive variable labels for this axis and it is up to the researcher to interpret the data to determine this ‘value’ (Shiffman et al. 1981).

All groups clearly differentiated on this dimension within the MDS. Although values and mores might be undergoing a shift with the younger generations, the MDS charts show that the participants use a service to the community or moral dimension when assessing level of perceived social standing. Thus, as can be seen in the charts, occupations such as ambulance officer, farmer, teacher, social worker, nurse pharmacist, police person and housewife are regarded high on this dimension. Occupations such as bank manager, sportsperson, artist, and real estate agent are rated low. There are some notable exceptions to this, though the reasons for which are not clear. For example, the design group rate housewife low on the service to the community dimension (possibly to the chagrin of their mothers!), whilst the U3A rated church leader and lawyer low on this dimension. In contrast, the Design group rated bank manager reasonably high on the moral dimension. Further exploration would be needed to tease out the reasons for these findings, as they are inconsistent with previous research (c.f. McKinnon and Langford, 1994).

As McKinnon and Langford have shown, it is only where income and education are not clear indicators of occupational prestige that raters will draw on a further dimension of service to the community. Within the MDS chart, the occupations positioned along the zero line of the vertical (or x) axis would be more likely to have been judged on income and education alone. The further away that the occupation is positioned from this axis, the stronger the likelihood that other variables have been used to rate the occupations.

If we examine the positioning of the design occupations within the MDS charts, it can be seen that all groups position them low on the service to the community dimension. The Design group positions interior design as the lowest on this dimension, the U3A group position fashion designer the lowest and the Social Science group positions both furniture design and interior design as the lowest. It is interesting that the participants perceived occupations such as the builders, hairdressers, and engineers as providing greater levels of service to the community than the design occupations.
Overall, the design occupations are positioned to the upper middle portion of the MDS chart on the perceived social standing dimension. The second, *service to the community* dimension was of varying significance depending on the participant group and the particular occupation rated, although all groups positioned the design occupations on the lower side of this axis. This suggests that they don’t regard the design occupations as providing a particularly high level of *service to the community* or that they perceive the design occupations as different to the social and paramedical occupations that typically score high on this dimension.
See Table 7.6 for explanation of abbreviations
Figure 7.2 MDS Design Group

See Table 7.6 for explanation of abbreviations
Figure 7.3 MDS Social Science Group

See Table 7.6 for explanation of abbreviations
### Table 7.6 List of Abbreviations for Figures 7.1 to 7.3.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Occupation</th>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Occupation</th>
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<td>pharm</td>
<td>Photographer</td>
<td>photo</td>
<td>Physiotherapist</td>
<td>physio</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plumber</td>
<td>plmbr</td>
<td>Police Person</td>
<td>police</td>
<td>Postal Clerk</td>
<td>posty</td>
<td>Product Designer</td>
<td>proddes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Real Estate Agent</td>
<td>realagnt</td>
<td>Receptionist</td>
<td>recept</td>
<td>Sales Assistant</td>
<td>sales</td>
<td>Screen Printer</td>
<td>scrnprnt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secondary Teacher</td>
<td>sectchr</td>
<td>Primary Teacher</td>
<td>printch</td>
<td>Security Guard</td>
<td>secgrd</td>
<td>Social Worker</td>
<td>socwkr</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sportsperson (prof.)</td>
<td>sports</td>
<td>Storeman &amp; Packer</td>
<td>storman</td>
<td>Tool Maker</td>
<td>toolmkr</td>
<td>Typist</td>
<td>typst</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University Lecturer</td>
<td>unilec</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Conclusion

The results suggest that there are differences in perceptions of occupational prestige between participant groups. The MDS analyses demonstrate that participants use more than one criterion when rating occupations; as such, 'prestige' emerges as multidimensional. For occupational prestige a second qualitative dimension must be considered if a better understanding of the meanings of the occupational grading scales is to be achieved. This is consistent with findings by Coxon and Jones (1979), Grasmick (1976) and MacKinnon and Langford (1994).

The results for the means and ranking scales essentially concur with the extrapolations made by Daniel (1983), although it is suggested that the status of the design occupations may be increasing due to the growing influence of consumerism by the younger generations. This was evident in the non-design groups which were differentiated by age. The younger, social science groups tended to rate the design occupations higher than the U3A respondents. Given that design is a relatively new profession, emerging only in the past 20 years or so as a serious occupational pursuit, it would be expected that the older respondents would have less exposure to design. This again could account for their lower ratings of design. Many born and raised prior to the economic boom period of the 1950’s have a different outlook on the acquisition of goods and services than subsequent generations. To a generation raised on survival through frugality and prudence, the idea of acquiring goods to establish a sense of place or identity may not be as relevant as it is for today’s younger generations, or for the post-World War Two ‘baby boomers’. This brings us back to the notion of design as a profession that has strong links to the political, economic and cultural milieu. Given that age may influence the perceptions of design and designers, it will be important to pursue this in the later analyses of the questionnaire.

It has been suggested that the field of design will greatly expand and that the numbers of designers will increase considerably in the future (Anonymous, Black Enterprise, 1991). An enhanced awareness of the role of design, the qualifications and educational requirements of the designer, coupled with a growing significance of the designed object, advertising and technology, may result in the elevation of the design occupations within the occupational prestige assessment.
This research examined the group differences in occupational perception and the multidimensionality of occupational judgement. The aim of this stage of the research was to compare the three participant groups on the basis of their perceptions of occupational prestige. In addition, this stage aimed to provide a basis for comparing the design professions within an established occupational assessment and to provide an informative exploration of the perceptions of the design occupations.
8. **Stage Two: Focus Groups**

**Introduction**

The previous research phase (i.e. the Occupational Prestige Study) served two purposes. First, it established the differences and similarities between the three participant groups on their perceived levels of social standing of a range of occupations including the design occupations. It was important to establish whether or not the groups shared a similar view of the occupational structure. Secondly, it was possible to compare the results obtained from this survey with other studies (Daniel, 1983; Smith and Whitfield, 2003) on the perceived level of social standing (or occupational prestige) of the design professions. Through the findings of the Occupational Prestige Assessment it was possible to locate the design professions in a structural sense in relation to a number of other occupations. However, little was known of how design and designers are perceived, as there have been no prior studies that have examined this issue. The purpose of this stage of the research was to address this concern by exploring the qualitative perceptions of design and designers in such a way that a more thorough understanding of the field was obtained. Thus the aim was to engage in discussion with participants from both a design and a non-design background in an arena where they could explore and tease out the participants’ understandings and meanings of design and designers.

The intention was that the findings would be used to inform the next research stage. A methodological tool for undertaking such a task is the focus group interview. Within this methodology, a small group of participants are brought together to discuss a particular topic. Within the social sciences, focused interviews have been used for around 60 years (Stewart and Shamadasani, 1990), and were first developed by the noted sociologist, Robert Merton. He, along with his colleagues, published a series of books and papers outlining the methodological and theoretical assumptions of this procedure (c.f. Merton, Fiske and Kendall, 1956). Since this time, focus group methodology has been further developed and modified to suit the needs of a vast array of social science, marketing, advertising, policy makers and other researchers. Krueger (1988:18) defines a focus group as “a carefully planned discussion designed to obtain perceptions on a defined area of interest in a permissive, non-threatening environment”. In this setting it is
anticipated that the participants will share their ideas and opinions, influence each other by responding to each other's ideas and comments, and thus provide insights into their meanings and understandings of the topic.

Focus groups have many advantages, particularly when researching an area where there has been little previous research from which it is possible to pursue new research directions (Alreck and Settle, 1995; Stewart and Shamadasani, 1990). They have the great potential to discover issues or concerns that were perhaps not thought of by the researcher and, as such, the topic can be explored with minimal preconceived ideas, directions and structure, in an arena that offers the respondents the opportunity to be spontaneous, honest, reflexive, reflective and open. As Stewart and Shamadasani (1990: 13) suggested, the open format of the focus group also allows the participants to "respond in their own words, using their own categorisations and perceived associations". Similarly, Judd et al (1991) contended that focus groups are useful when trying to determine how people conceptualise a particular topic, their levels of understanding of the topic, and the language or terminology they use to discuss the topic. For this study, where there was no prior research into the design occupations, the focus group was deemed to be an important methodological tool for gathering information.

The disadvantages with the focus group format are the lack of generalisability and comparability of the information obtained (Alreck and Settle, 1995; Judd et al, 1991). In addition, although the aim is to have frank and open discussion, some respondents may be less likely to give an opinion if it is contrary to the rest of the group or out of step with present day values and mores. For example, the design students may feel uncomfortable about saying anything against the staff of the School of Design or against the Faculty itself for fear of their comments being passed on. (It should be noted though, that all respondents were assured of the confidentiality of their comments and they were also asked not to discuss the session outside of the group.) Or, they could have felt the pressure to conform to the majority opinions of the group through fear of being perceived as ‘different’. It is certainly acknowledged that the focus group format has certain limitations, but, then again, so too have all research methodologies. Despite this, it was still believed to be the most appropriate methodological tool for this stage of the research process.

One of the key requirements of focus groups is that the moderator (or facilitator) has experience and understanding of the process (Alreck and Settle, 1995;
Stage Two: Focus Groups

Krueger, 1998). The moderator needs to be able to maintain the discussion on the topic so that all participants get the opportunity to express their opinions without one member of the group dominating the discussion (Alreck and Settle, 1995). It is believed that this concern was adequately addressed.

Alreck and Settle (1995) further argued that there are limitations and assumptions to focus groups that mean that you cannot generalise the findings to the broader population. For this reason the results as detailed in this chapter should be regarded as exploratory and preliminary rather than conclusive. Having emphasised the exploratory nature of the research, this by no means negates the importance, value and applicability of the data. Without this phase, the final questionnaire would have been less rich than it was due to the paucity of information from previous research in this particular area.

The aims and objectives of this stage of the research, therefore, were to gain an understanding of how design and designers are perceived. It was anticipated that by gaining insight into these perceptions, a better understanding of how the views have been formed, the influences involved in the process, the effect of these influences on the opinions of the respondents, and the consequences of these opinions and understandings, would be obtained. Thus it was hoped that the Information obtained through these forums would provide a platform for the final research stage of the study. Unfortunately, the poor response rates for the focus groups could be seen as compromising the results. Despite this, it should be reminded that the focus groups never were to be interpreted as research findings in

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It is appropriate at this point to outline previous experience that would provide reassurance that the sessions were run in an appropriate manner. I have had extensive experience in qualitative research, particularly in the area of face-to-face interviewing (often in quite demanding settings and on sensitive issues). As part of the preparation for this research phase, I attended a number of focus group sessions as a participant, read the literature on the topic and watched a video that showed the appropriate techniques, pitfalls and problems. This was, however, the first time I had actually conducted such groups. I believe that given that the thesis is intended as a tool for expanding my research skills and experience, combined with my background and experience in other closely related forms of qualitative research, that I was adequately qualified to run the sessions. I have no doubts that there are things that could have been handled better or differently, and I know that there are issues and questions that, in hindsight, I should have included (or not included). Despite this, I feel that there is a lot of good data that have emerged from the discussions making this a worthwhile and informative inclusion in the thesis.
their own right. Instead, they have been interpreted as a set of comments from people with design and non-design backgrounds that could be used to inform the survey questionnaire. Consideration was given to excluding this chapter from the thesis altogether. Its subsequent inclusion is therefore debateable and may be seen as folly. The main reason for its inclusion is the belief that it would be useful for the reader to have an understanding of where some of the ideas and themes for the questionnaire were formulated. However, caution would be needed should inferences be drawn from these results alone. For this reason, it was seen as invalid to undertake in-depth analysis and interpretation of the results. Instead, the chapter will focus on presenting the information as obtained in the focus group sessions.

**Participants**

At the same time as the occupational prestige questionnaire was administered (chapter 7), all participants were asked to fill out a form (Appendix A) indicating their willingness to participate in a focus group discussion. Although a number of the U3A members offered to participate, for reasons outlined previously they were not used in the focus group discussions. Unfortunately, the response rate for the two Swinburne University student groups was quite poor with only 13 social science students and 1 design student volunteering to participate. As there were no means of accessing further names from the pool of social science students, it was decided to just use the 13 volunteers.

Despite the low initial response rate for the design students, it was possible to obtain access to student lists. Consequently the names were obtained of all second year design students and a letter (Appendix B) was sent to every 10th person on the combined class lists inviting that student to participate. Where the student did not respond by the nominated date, a reminder letter was sent. Thirty-five persons were contacted. Twenty-seven students made an arrangement to attend a focus group session, and 19 (10 males and 9 females) actually attended one of the three sessions. Nine students attended the first session, and there were 5 students in each of the other sessions. The participants were undergraduates, ranging from the 2nd to 4th year of their degree course. Thirteen of the students were studying graphic design and the others were studying industrial design (4), Interior and Exhibition Design (1), and product design engineering (1). The high numbers of
graphic design students probably reflects the higher numbers of graphic design students within the School.

Two sessions were run with the social science students. To some dismay, the sessions were not well supported, and although 13 participants agreed to attend the discussions only 3 people actually attended each of the sessions, giving a total of 6 participants. Each discussion group contained 2 males and 1 female. Most (5) of the participants were mature aged students. Consideration was given to attempting to recruit more participants. With limited access to the student population (other than in the Design faculty) and the very low level of interest, it was doubtful that significant numbers of social science students could be recruited⁷. As previously mentioned, it was difficult to access further students, so this was not pursued even though the sample was not the most representative of University undergraduates. The social science students were offered $10.00 for their attendance as it was felt that, given the topic, there was very little personal gain or interest in attending otherwise.

**Interview Schedule**

Although the actual questions (Appendix B) for the two participant groups (design and non-design) were different, the themes were essentially the same. In fact, due to the intrinsic nature of focus groups (Judd et al, 1991; Stewart and Shamadasani, 1990), there were no two sessions where the questions were identical. The participants largely influenced the sessions and, as long as the discussion stayed with the design theme, it was allowed to continue. It was felt that this free flow of information was important due to the exploratory nature of the research.

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⁷ By this stage, the University year had finished and it would not have been possible to conduct further focus groups for at least another six months. This would have seriously impacted on the completion of the thesis. Ensuing discussions between myself, my supervisor and a consultant statistician concluded that comments from just a few more social science participants were unlikely to have a major impact on the questionnaire, and so a decision was made to use the available data, deficient as they are.
Stage Two: Focus Groups

The general themes for all groups were the concepts of design and designer, what they meant to each participant, and how they believed they were perceived by others. Discussions also focused on how the participants chose their respective career paths (is there a difference between design and social science students in this respect?), and the general relationship between work, the individual and society. Themes such as the ‘designer type’ and knowledge of what designers working in each of the individual design occupations do were also investigated.

In the case of the design students, the interviews were conducted at Swinburne University of Technology, Melbourne, Prahran campus and at the Hawthorn campus for the social science students. All sessions were video and audio taped for later analysis. Participants were aware of this and had given their consent. All of the sessions were transcribed from the tape recordings.

As the participant groups were small, it is not possible to generalize the results. What the results do though is to raise further questions, many of which will be explored later in the third stage of the study and/or others that provide a basis for further research in this area. The following results and discussion section will be analysed based on the results in hand and reflect the opinions of the participants only. However, the findings are still valuable for their insight into the design occupations and as a basis for the content of the design questionnaire used in the third stage of the research. On this basis, the limitations of the groups will not be explicitly and continually referred to in the analysis.

**Results and Discussion**

The results of the group interviews were analysed according to the themes that emerged from the discussions. Although all of the participants will have their own unique subjective experiences and understandings of the topic, it is also assumed that they will have shared experiences given that they are encountering design in

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8 The participants were not specifically asked what a furniture designer and a product designer do. It was originally thought that this would emerge within the industrial design discussion. In hindsight, these occupations should have been explicitly included.
the same location in terms of time and cultural milieu. These shared experiences are the focus of this study. During the course of the discussions, a vast amount of information was obtained. It is beyond the scope of the study to appraise and evaluate all of the themes and issues raised. The following themes are those believed to be the most relevant to the overall aims of the research and will therefore be examined in detail:

- The relationships between work, self-identity and society,
- The Designer attributes and the prototypical designer
- Design as a vocation or calling
- Design is not Art!
- What do designers actually do?

First, there was a general discussion about occupational prestige, status, stereotypes, and identity. Tied up with these discussions was the emergence of a 'designer type' or 'prototypical designer'. In examining the question of how the participants chose their respective careers, it appeared that, in some respects, design could be regarded as a vocation in that many described their choice of career as a 'calling'. The design students were interesting in that, although they acknowledged that drawing skills were a necessary prerequisite for design, they were quite adamant that there was little relationship between art and design, and were often at pains to distinguish themselves as designers from artists. The assertion that design is often misunderstood or unfamiliar to those outside the profession (de Forest, 1990; Evamy, 1994; McDermot, 1990) was reinforced with the social science participants exhibiting confusion and a general lack of awareness about the occupations. Each of these themes will be examined in detail in the following sections.

**Work, Identity and Society**

Occupation is undoubtedly an important factor in people’s lives. It is not only a source of income that affects our day-to-day standard of living and survival, but it has traditionally been regarded as an important indicator of who we are and what we are. Caplow (1964) argued that occupational identification has increasingly become an important factor in establishing our social identities and our place within society, and that it is more influential than religious or political affiliation, personal character or ancestry in the determination of individual prestige. His studies have also shown that a person’s character, level of intelligence, ability and personal acceptability are regularly assumed from an occupational label. Similarly, Hall
(1975) claimed that “The occupation...is a major linkage for the individual to the total society” and that “occupations have various statuses within the social system”. In the absence of a rigidly defined class system, occupation is commonly used as a means of locating an individual within society.

In a general discussion on occupation, identity and society, it was clear that the participants in this study shared the meanings and understandings of the cultural milieu in which they live.

“It (occupation) is a great indicator of who you are dealing with, isn’t it?” (S.S.)

“Occupations are about people defining themselves” (S.S.)

“Like there’s white collar and blue collar and you know, the executive level and all those have certain cultures and meanings and codes and symbols and what you do on the lower levels of an organisation would be totally different. You wouldn’t behave that way if you were included in executive levels”. (S.S.)

“It (occupation) can segregate people into classes as well”. (S.S.)

Further discussion within one of the social science groups centred on the relative social standing of occupations. The occupations regarded as low status were cleaners, garbage collectors, milk bar proprietors, small business workers, and factory workers. Doctors were regarded as having high status. This perception concurred with the findings of the Occupational Prestige Scale, as discussed in the previous chapter. When asked to relate the concept of status to the design professions, the consensus was that they were situated somewhere in the upper-middle, again confirming the findings of the Occupational Prestige Scale. Design was felt to be a “desirable” occupation, but that it was not as “secure” as other jobs such as engineering.

The topic of work and identity was typically raised within the Social Science forums and this is not unexpected due to the participants’ sociological background. The design students did not raise the issue explicitly, but talked about concerns that design lacks the credentials and credibility of other occupations, particular the sciences. However, they did discuss the importance of occupation and its relationship with identity and status in this revealing dialogue:
P1 – "I don’t think that [I like] the term graphic artist... When people say that to me I get aggravated. I say I am NOT a graphic artist. I don’t know why, but I don’t like being called graphic artist”.
I - “…so you like being called a graphic designer?”
P1 - "Because it [graphic Art] is sort of associated with the people that just do things that other people have thought of”
P2 - “Yeah, reproduce things”
I – “So it loses that creative element”
P1 – “It also loses the top of the heap element. I’m going to be blatantly obvious here, but graphic designer, the word, it’s much better than graphic artist”.
P2 - “That’s the point of TAFE. I mean this is a graphic design course and at TAFE it is graphic Art. So it’s definitely a status thing”. (D.S.)
(Key: P1 – participant 1; P2 – participant 2; I – Interviewer)

What this dialogue shows is that despite not having the sociological background of the Social Science student, the design students are aware and able to articulate clearly perceived understandings of the relationship between occupation, identity and society. It is reasonable to infer from the examples that the participants in this study had well defined perceptions of the importance of one’s occupation to their own self-identity and self-worth and in terms of their relationships with others in the community.

The Designer Type

Following from the previous discussion on work, identity and society, the participants were asked to describe what they believed were the important aspects of designers. The responses are set out in Table 8.1 below.
Table 8.1 Main Attributes of Designers by Participant Group.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Design Groups</th>
<th>Non-Design Groups</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Problem solvers</td>
<td>Interest in art</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Creative</td>
<td>Able to draw</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time management</td>
<td>Imaginative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drawing ability</td>
<td>Thinkers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Objective</td>
<td>Innate talent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organisation skills</td>
<td>People that can visualise</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Confident</td>
<td>Creative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aware</td>
<td>Not practical</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Analytical</td>
<td>Innovative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adaptable</td>
<td>Technical</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quick thinkers</td>
<td>Unconventional</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spontaneous</td>
<td>Individual</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Passionate</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As can be seen, there were some similarities between the two groups, but the overall focus appeared to diverge along the lines of what could be regarded as business versus creative attributes. Both groups believed that the ability to draw and creativity were important, but whilst the non-designers maintained a focus on the creative attributes (e.g. innate talent, innovative, people who can visualize, imaginative and not practical), the designers emphasized the attributes that would typically be needed to work at a high level in a business environment (e.g. quick thinking, adaptability, analytical, objectivity, organizational skills, and time management). This suggests a fundamental difference in the perceptions of designers by the two groups.

This group of non-designers had little awareness that designers need to have high levels of business acumen in order to achieve in the field, and therefore they regard the creative skills as paramount. In contrast, the designers regard the business skills as more important. However, as the following section will show, whilst there is the notion that design is commercially oriented compared to artistic and creative (at least by the design students), the designer is still regarded as somewhat alternative and less mainstream than other professional persons.

The Prototypical Designer

One of the consistent aspects of person perception is that it involves categorisation. Once we perceive a person as belonging to a particular social group we tend to apply all of our accumulated knowledge about that group in order to construct a knowledge structure or schemata (Cantor and Mischel, 1979; Schutz, 1970, cited in Forgas, 1983). Cantor and Mischel (1979) argued that just as there are categories
for objects (e.g. cars, chairs, etc), it is possible to have person categories and that
a person who is most representative of a particular group can be defined as a
prototype: the more characteristics that a person has pertaining to that group, the
more prototypical they are.

Prototypes are therefore a way of simplifying our social world. By categorising
objects and people we have far fewer concepts to store in our memories. Studies
on implicit theories of personality have shown that a person’s pre-existing
knowledge generates expectations about how others should appear or behave when
in their particular cultural setting (Forgas, 1985). Further to this, these
expectations are often shared within the broader social group and are based on
categorical assumptions about what the ‘typical’ person of a particular type should
be like. This concept arose in a general discussion regarding occupations.

“Well perhaps there are certain stereotypes associated with certain
occupations, so maybe some people...with that stereotype comes the view
that people in certain occupations will have a certain personality, will have
certain interests, will have certain political allegiance...” (S.S.)

This next line of questioning was aimed at exploring the perceptions of what
constitutes the ‘prototypic designer’ (assuming that it exists). Table 8.2 below
summarises the main responses from each of the two groups.
Table 8.2 The Prototypical Designer by Participant Group

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Design Students</th>
<th>Non-Design Students</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Wears black</td>
<td>Male with a beard</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minimalist, simple</td>
<td>Fashionable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Almost priestly</td>
<td>Doesn’t wear a suit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dress alternatively</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trendy</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender a mixed response</td>
<td>Gender seen as discipline related.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Industrial designer – definitely male</td>
<td>Fashion designer – female or gay men</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interior designer – more female</td>
<td>Interior designer – same as for Fashion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Engineering designers (sic) - male</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“People think we are like a punk or something – coloured hair”</td>
<td>“Different. Colourful or a bit wacky or something.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unconventional</td>
<td>Non-conformist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Whenever I think of design or designers, I tend to think of fashion, clothes, that sort of thing. That’s the main image that comes to my head.”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The design profession is male dominated in key power positions</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Well-dressed yuppies that live in South Yarra”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Both sets of participants had similar perceptions of what they believed constituted the prototypical designer. Despite the impressions that designers are professional, business savvy people, there is still the notion that they are unconventional in their manner and lifestyles. At one stage of the discussion concerning whether design should be more regulated, two of the design students had this revealing dialogue:

P1 "We’d be all the same”.
P2 "All doctors are the same, they do similar things”.
P1 "Whereas we’re all individuals and unique...” (D.S.)

The notion of being different and unique was something that was held in high regard by the design students and was regarded as a defining characteristic of the designer. This notion of uniqueness was not confined to the design students though.

P1 “…so I think individuality counts a lot”.
P2 "They need to be new, fresh and innovative...“. (S.S.)
The fashion designer seemed to be the most prototypical of the design professions and tended to colour the perceptions accordingly.

"Whenever I think of design or designers, I tend to think of fashion, clothes, that sort of thing. That's the main image that comes into my head". (S.S.)

This could account for the focus on the Designer’s dress styles, and the off-beat image suggested by the participants. Although there was some debate on the subject, there also seemed to be gender divisions within the field. Overall the feeling was that design was a male-dominated profession, except for interior and fashion design, where the males were still in the positions of power, but there were more females working in the fields overall. Industrial design was believed to be the most male-dominated of the occupations being studied.

Design as a Vocation

One of the themes that emerged was that many of the design students seemed to ‘know’ from an early age that they wanted to be a designer. In this sense design was a calling in the same way as others might describe their desire to aspire to a job in the medical professions, religion or the performing arts. Often a teacher was instrumental in encouraging and nurturing the creative talents of the student and subsequently suggesting a design or artistic career. In other instances it was a family member who fostered the interests and abilities.

"Well, um, I wanted something that was like a calling. In grade 6 one of my teachers said I was good at drawing and I should try design…" (D.S.)

"Well I knew that I kind of wanted to do some kind of design, probably from when I was in year seven..." (D.S.)

In contrast, the Social Science students seemed to ‘fall’ into their careers and course choices at a much later age, and often on a ‘trial and error’ process. With these students the decision was often made late into their secondary schooling, perhaps with the attraction that a general arts degree leaves the options open a bit longer for career choices. For the participants in the focus group, the social science degree was directed at enhancing and expanding basic skills and experience, often enabling promotion and career progression possibilities.
Moore (1997) raised concerns that there has been little research into the origins of the artistic career. He drew on an analogy between the religious vocations and art as a career by highlighting the similarities of the spiritual experiences of the theologian and the ideological (or spiritual) experiences of the artist. He further suggested that “individuals find their way into an artistic career in a manner that is akin to a religious conversion or ‘calling’.” There may be similarities between the artist and the designer in this regard. In the case of the design students, the tensions between pursuing their artistic or creative interests and the need to have a career where there is regular employment and income, as well as a greater level of prestige and credibility, may be some of the reasons for choosing design over art.

Eckhard (1997) argued that sociologists have often ignored the artist because the “nature of their work also presents problems since creativity is an elusive quality which resists sociological reduction”. Moore questioned whether artistic or creative ability is an innate skill. He emphasised the perception that artists are “born with a gift” and have “special qualities”. Although he suggested that at one time this was the most common perception of the artist, he contended that in more recent years artists are ‘made’ through art schools, and art has begun to be legitimised as an occupation through credentialing, academic training and a bureaucratisation of the art field. Larson (1977) agrees with this thesis and postulated that educational credentials are the means to establishing the legitimacy of the artistic profession. Although these discussions focus on the field of art, it can be argued that design also fits this pattern, particularly given its shared origins.

One of the hurdles to legitimising and professionalising the creative occupations, such as design, is the perception that the art and design stream was a ‘soft option’ within the educational curriculum and, as such, not taken as seriously as the academic subjects, particularly the sciences. Daniel (1983: 8) argued that “In an Australian culture, science commands a much more respected place than art”. She found that the ‘artistic’ occupations were generally regarded as middle-ranked in terms of prestige and social standing. She also found that popularity, renown, and notoriety did not influence the prestige ratings of certain occupations. Thus the professional sportsperson, the famous actor or artist, or the famous and renowned fashion designer will not enjoy increased occupational status despite the popularity, income levels, acclaim or honours that they might achieve. This perception can
make it difficult for the student who achieves highly in both the science and arts areas, as there can be a pressure for that person to favour the more ‘prestigious’ scientific careers.

"It was hard for me though, because I went to a very academic school and they don’t really push you that way [toward the arts]” (D.S.).

“If you get good marks in maths, then your marks are way up, but if you get good marks in art, then you are still down. They are not worth as much.” (D.S.)

“…I did do a science and a maths subject because I was advised to have something to fall back on… and I can remember my maths lecturer sort of not being very supportive of the fact that one of his students was into the arts area…” (D.S.)

The discussion groups served to confirm what others (c.f. Moore, 1997; Larson, 1977) have postulated that design can be a calling or vocation that often attracts the individual from quite a young age. The desire to pursue a career in the field is often despite the lack of status compared to work in the sciences or other ‘hard’ occupations and despite opposition when an individual also excels in the academic subjects. Design is perhaps seen as a legitimate field of creative employment which satisfies the artistic ‘calling’ of the individual and the commercial realities of having to earn an income (an area that is often quite a challenge for the artist). As was seen from the Occupational Prestige Scale in the previous chapter, the Designer achieves much greater levels of social standing than the artist and is perhaps regarded as a ‘less soft’ option in terms of career direction.

The Senate Employment, Education and Training References Committee (March 1998) inquiry into the status of the teaching profession found that despite the apparent negative views of the general public toward teaching, students tended to value teachers very highly. It is notable that the respondents in the present study often cited teachers as being the ones who influenced them and encouraged them to take on design as a career. Clearly the views and opinions of the teachers are held in high regard.
Design is Not Art!

One of the underlying themes of the previous section is the relationship between creative ability and the career choice of the participants. The vast majority of the design students indicated that they were good at drawing and that it was this ability that was the impetus for their teachers, friends and family to encourage a design career. What was fascinating with these discussions was that the participants were adamant that design is not art, and that they were often at pains to distance themselves from the artist. When asked to list any design occupations that they could think of, the proximate occupations of architect, Photographer and Illustrator were mentioned, but not artist. Design was regarded as purposeful and tied by the boundaries of a client’s brief. Drawing and creative ability were placed second to commercial and business skills.

"Art is more pure expression where graphic or industrial design has a purpose...” (D.S.)

"Art and craft doesn’t seem to have a parameter. It is sort of freer – not answering a brief. That’s how I see it.” (D.S.)

"Design is for the mass market. Art is typically a one off or limited production.” (D.S.)

"It is more to do with the scale in which it is going to be produced. In terms of the number of units...” (D.S.)

"Graphic design is more corporate than art” (D.S.)

"Design is seen as a job – as a profession, whereas art is perceived as a hobby...” (D.S.)

The social science students also discussed the relationship between art and design. When asked to name some design occupations, artist was not specifically mentioned, but artistic Designer and Painters and Sculptors were.

Referring back to the previous analysis of the Occupational Prestige Scale, it can be recalled that the design students distanced artist further from the design occupations than did the other two non-design groups, but elevated the other proximate occupations of photographer, screen printer and architect. The non-
design participants positioned artist much closer to the design occupations, although this was achieved by lower prestige scores for the design occupations rather than elevated the score for artist. Despite the small numbers of participants in the focus groups, the results indicate that those with a design background regard themselves more differently to an artist than do people without a design background.

The limitation with this assumption (at least at this stage) is that all of the perceptions to date have been from Swinburne University students and it may be a peculiarity of this set of students, rather than a more generalised perception. Bearing this in mind, this will be explored in the next stage of the research utilising a much more diverse participant group.

**What Do They Do?**

It is often lamented from within the design profession that design suffers from an identity crisis - no one knows what it is (de Forest, 1990; Evamy, 1994; McDermot, 1990). It has been asserted that there is not only confusion within the general public about what design is, but also that there is ambiguity and confusion within academic institutions and within the design profession itself. Misha Black contended that "If designers couldn't tell you what they did, why could - or should - anyone else" (Evamy, 1994). Similarly, Swearer and Margolin (cited in de Forest, 1990) postulated that there is a need for a clear definition of what design is, or it will forever be "doomed to remain on the fringes of academic discourse". They also argued for a clearer understanding of the boundaries of the design discipline, just as there are for other academic disciplines.

The participants were asked to describe what they believed to be the main spheres of activity for each of the design occupations being examined in this study. The purpose of this line of questioning was to tease out and compare the degree of knowledge the two groups of participants had of the individual occupations. The results suggest that the previous comments may well be justified.

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9 This is particularly so for graphic design and industrial design. Fashion design and interior design tended to have much clearer public profiles.
“I think the general public get confused. They know what design is, but they don’t really know the areas...They don’t understand there are a lot of sub-categories of design.” (D.S.)

“I think the word ‘design’ covers such a broad area...I just don’t think people understand the structure and labyrinth of design.” (D.S.)

The ramifications of a lack of knowledge and understanding can be significant. In terms of occupational prestige, it has been reported that if respondents are unsure about a job, they will tend to downgrade it (Daniel, 1983). There are also concerns that prospective students could be attracted to or dissuaded from entering the professions based on an erroneous understanding of what they are undertaking. This in turn could affect performance ratings, drop-out rates and could result in students who might have found the courses much to their abilities and liking being channelled elsewhere (e.g. to other more well known, but proximate, occupations). A general lack of understanding of the design occupations, in addition to the perception that the artistic or creative occupations are a ‘soft’ option within the academic structure (both within the secondary and tertiary systems), have the potential to create serious ramifications for the field.

An important part of this research thesis was to explore what people from both a design and a non-design background thought designers did. Within the focus groups, the social science students were questioned specifically on each of the design occupations. The design students were assumed to have a reasonable understanding of the field and, although the line of questioning was not as directed and specific, the topic was covered in a general way within the session. The key points to emerge from the focus groups are as follows:

**Graphic Designers**

The social science students were asked what they thought graphic designers did. The following quotes are indicative of the responses given.

“They are image makers. It might be the image for your company that represents your company.” (S.S.)
“...they use heaps and heaps of Texta and medium; airbrushes and things like that.” (S.S.)

“Visual pictures” (S.S.)

“Images” (S.S.)

"Logos. They do logos for letterheads and that sort of stuff“ (S.S.)


"They work with computers all of the time“ (S.S.)

"Colours. They know about colours. They can put colours together so that they can work” (S.S.)

The results suggested that most of these non-design respondents had a reasonable understanding of graphic design. They tended to emphasise the artistic or creative aspects of the occupation, but, in general, were able to hone in, in a broad way, on the key aspects of the field. They were aware of the pervasiveness of graphic design in terms of its applicability to a broad range of industry sectors from advertising, to corporate, to publishing. Whether this is peculiar to this set of participants or indicative of the wider population will be explored in the next stage of the research.

**Fashion Designers**

Of all of the design occupations, fashion design is arguably the one that is most often part of popular media discourse. Within the print and television media, fashion is regularly discussed. Events such as the Australian and European Fashion Awards are given airtime in the news and current affairs, many of the popular newspapers and magazines have regular fashion sections, and many fashion designers have achieved high levels of fame and notoriety, often similar to that of movie stars and other celebrities. A study by Whitfield and Chung (1998) also examined the perceptions of design by design and non-design participants in Australia and Korea. They specifically asked their respondents to name a designer from each of the design occupations included in their study. (These were the same as for the current study.) Of the non-design respondents, they found that both the
Korean and the Australian groups were more able to name a fashion designer than any other type of designer.

Of course, as was argued in the section on the history of fashion design (see chapter 4), the somewhat surreal or unreal side of fashion design that is often highlighted in the media may serve to skew the perceptions of what the realities of fashion design actually are. People’s perceptions of the fashion designer may also be caught up with their perceptions of other related occupations such as fashion model or actor. Media portrayals of fashion designers in television shows such as *Absolutely Fabulous* can also serve to stereotype and caricaturise fashion designers, thus drawing attention away from the realities of the profession. When asked to discuss what they thought fashion designers do and what sort of people they are, the social science students gave the following responses:

"Impractical" (S.S.)

"Going to lots of parties. Socialising" (S.S.)

"Absolutely Fabulous" (S.S.)

"Highly strung" (S.S.)

"Skinny" (S.S.)

"Be controversial" (S.S.)

As can be seen from the responses, many were more related to the designer rather than the tasks of the occupation. More so than any of the other design occupations, the fashion designer stereotype was more likely to be discussed than the job tasks. When pressed to describe what fashion designers do, the respondents suggested the following:

"Fashion designers get to travel because they go overseas to look at overseas trends to come back and reinterpret for Australia" (S.S.)

"Drawing clothes" (S.S.)

"Create" (S.S.)

"Collect samples of material" (S.S.)
“Try and pick trends” (S.S.)
“And also start trends sometimes” (S.S.)

The respondents in one of the sessions also discussed how fashion design is closely linked to society and its norms and values. They discussed the complementary or reciprocal nature between society and fashion in the creative process. The implicit consensus was that fashion designers both innovate and reflect certain fashions, and in doing so fashion tends to become a two-way process between the designer and the public.

"From that side of it I’d see that as the innovative concept. To bounce off more concrete ideas and new fashion designs. But at the middle to lower end they’re just reflecting perhaps what society is looking for...So I think there is a bit of both (innovation and reflection) depending on which end of the market you’re at.” (S.S.)

Despite a lively discussion, the respondents had some difficulties describing what a fashion designer actually does. It would be expected that if you were to simply ask the question “do you believe you know what a fashion designer does”, the respondents would have replied positively. However, when pushed to give a detailed description of what they do, the suggestions were often vague and indecisive. There appeared to be a wide gap between perceived level of knowledge and actual knowledge.

**Interior Design**

As with fashion design, the respondents perceived themselves to have a greater understanding about interior design than they actually did have. Again, the explanation could be that interior design, like fashion design, is widely and regularly examined in the popular media. Television shows such as *Better Homes and Gardens*, and *Our House*, along with popular magazine such as *Home Beautiful*, *Vogue Living*, and *House and Garden*, have given high exposure to the interior design occupation. What does appear to be an area of confusion though, both within the media and amongst the respondents in this study, is the distinction between interior design and interior decoration. Anecdotal evidence suggests that the media uses the two occupational titles interchangeably, often using the term ‘designer’ to enhance the perceived status of what they are presenting. This only
serves to fuel the problem of ambiguity of the design professions. When asked to describe what an interior designer does, some of the responses were:

"Furniture" (S.S.)

"A look. A client's look” (S.S.)

"They look at fabric, colour, lighting, artwork” (S.S.)

"Stuff the average person can’t afford.” (S.S.)

Participants didn’t like the idea of an ‘interior designed’ home, and they felt it was too artificial and cold.

"Like a display” (S.S.)

"Always looks a little too good to be true” (S.S.)

One of the participants did raise the question of the corporate side of interior design and that they were responsible for the office fit out, but this participant was somewhat vague and unsure of the specifics of the job.

“...an architect will design the shell and the interior designer will do whatever else there is after that. So ceilings, all the furnishings, where the doors are going to go, the windows...” (S.S.)

In one of the sessions there was a discussion about the relationship between interior designer and interior decorator.

“...a lot of people confuse interior decorators with interior designers and I think a lot of interior decorators have called themselves interior designers and all of a sudden- whoops- they’ve appropriated skills that they don’t really have” (S.S.)

What ensued was a brief discussion of the difference, and the other two participants agreed that there was a distinction but were really not sure what it was.

“I can’t say I’m knowledgeable in the area, but I can see a definite distinction there” (S.S.)
The participants had a general idea of what an interior designer does, but this was muddied by their perceptions of interior decorator. The tendency by the media to use the two titles interchangeably is probably a contributing factor to the confusion. The participants appeared to regard interior design as elitist when used in the domestic setting, as they believed that it was only the wealthy that use their services. They associated it more with commercial businesses, which is not an unreasonable perception. They also had the view that an interior designed look was artificial, and they were most likely envisaging the minimalist, sleek, and spartan designs often featured in the media. The underlying impression was the impersonal feel of the interior designed space.

Overall, of the design occupations discussed, the participants were the least enthusiastic towards interior design. Unlike all of the other occupations being studied, they seemed to find little relevance to their own lives and were quite vague and uninterested in this field of design. Of course, these perceptions could be peculiar to this particular group of people, and it would be interesting to explore this notion further in the next stage of the research.

**Industrial Design**

The design occupation that is probably the most misunderstood of the specialities is industrial design. It was in relation to industrial design that Sparke (1986) commented that “no one knows what it is”. The respondents in this study were no exception, with few of them knowing what it is that industrial designers do. Some of the propositions were:

"My perception is that industrial designers are designing machinery. They probably don’t, but that’s what I think” (S.S.)

"...or a factory layout” (S.S.)

"Cars. Components” (S.S.)

"Conveyer belts...” (S.S.)

"They design procedures” (S.S.)
"Design bridges” (S.S.)

“I thought maybe – straight away I thought of structural things like infrastructure kind of things” (S.S.)

“I think of it more in terms of machinery design and that sort of thing” (S.S.)

“I think of it more in engineering terms. Railways and bridges and all that sort of stuff” (S.S.)

One respondent did know what industrial design is due to having friends studying in the field.

“… industrial design is more like products, like tables and chairs or products to help disabled people. New products that people actually use in day-to-day working. It can be closely linked to furniture and things like that” (S.S.)

What ensued from this description was a discussion on how this related to the term ‘industrial’.

“But how is it industrial?” (S.S.)

“Yeah, I don’t know why it’s called industrial design, but I know someone (who is one)” (S.S.)

What was evident from this part of the discussion was that all but one of the respondents (who knew an industrial designer) had very little idea what it was that industrial designers do. The term ‘Industrial’ in the title appeared to cause some confusion and served to distract the respondents from the actualities of the occupation. The resultant confusion invariably meant that the respondents were more likely to think of industrial design in terms of an engineering concept closely linked to large machinery and factory environments.
Conclusion

The focus group was an effective methodological tool for examining the perceptions of design and designers. Themes such as design as vocation or calling, the distancing and differences between art and design, the meanings and understandings of the 'typical' designer, and the specifics of what designers actually do were all discussed. There was also a general discussion of the relationships between work, identity and society.

While the small numbers of participants in the focus groups severely limit the degree to which the results can be relied upon, it should again be emphasised that the focus groups were always meant to be an adjunct to the evidence gathered through the literature review, personal communications and, to a lesser degree, the occupational prestige assessment. The main conclusion to be drawn from the analysis of the comments made in the focus groups is that the views and opinions voiced by the participants were very similar to the issues and concerns raised in the literature. For example, the small group of social science students did struggle to describe what designers do and the design students did hold similar views to many of the design commentators on issues such as certification, professional standing and the relationship of design to society.

The results showed that non-designers see a much closer link between art and design than do the designers. This, however, could be a peculiarity of this particular set of students and will be explored further in the questionnaire. It was certainly interesting that the majority of the students knew from quite an early stage in their lives that they wanted to be a designer. It was referred to as a 'calling' by a number of the students and, as such, design could be seen in the same vocational context as art or religion (Larson, 1977; Moore, 1997).

When describing the attributes of the designer, the design students focussed heavily upon the business qualities needed by designers. In contrast, the non-designers placed a greater emphasis on the creative/artistic attributes of the designer. When describing the typical designer though, there was a high level of consensus between the two groups. The sense was that the designer is a somewhat unconventional, non-conforming, alternative type of person. The perception was that the fashion designer was the prototypical construct of the designer.
The non-designers were asked to describe what they believed each of the design professions being studied do. There seemed to be a reasonable degree of understanding of graphic design, a lesser understanding of interior design and fashion design, and a poorer understanding of industrial design. However, even when the participants believed they knew what the occupations were (such as for interior designer), their perceptions were, in reality, fairly vague and superficial. The findings served to reinforce the statements made earlier that there is confusion about what design is (de Forest, 1990; Evamy, 1994; McDermot, 1990).

In hindsight, furniture design and product design should have been included in the questioning. At the time they were excluded due to their close links with industrial design and this was seen as a way of saving some time in the sessions. However, the confusion over the nature of industrial design would have warranted their inclusion. It perhaps would have been better to allow a longer period of time for the sessions, or to limit discussions in other areas to make time for the examination of these occupations.

This phase of the research achieved the desired aim in that many areas for further investigation were raised. Clearly, there were some aspects of the interviewing process that could have been handled better and there were questions that, in hindsight, should have been asked, but weren’t. Greater consistency in the line of questioning between the design and non-design groups is one example of where the process could be improved. The question of the small participant numbers has already been discussed and so caution should be used in interpreting the results in their own right. Despite the limitations and the problems, the main aim of the research phase was achieved and the responses will provide a valuable source of information for the development of the research questionnaire to be used in the next stage of the research.
9. **Stage Three: Design Questionnaire**

**Introduction**

The final phase of the research was a self-report questionnaire (Appendix C). The aim was to construct a questionnaire to further explore some of the themes and issues raised during the focus groups, in the literature and in discussions with individuals working and teaching in the design field. The questionnaire was designed in such a way that questions moved from a focus on the inter-relationships between work, society and the individual, to more specific questions about design and designers, and concluding with a section specific to the respondent.

In order to obtain an Australia-wide response to the survey, it was decided that a mail survey would be the most expedient survey methodology. In making this decision, there was always the inherent risk that the response rates to the survey would be low. This risk was increased by the fact that the survey was long and that the benefits of respondents completing the survey were not high. Further issues that had the potential to affect response rates were:

- Design does not have a strong culture of academic research. The research may therefore be perceived, by both designers and academic educators, as peripheral to the ‘real’ work of design, thus diminishing the importance of participating in this type of work.
- Designers generally work for themselves or for small organisations. Finding time to complete a survey may be difficult for some, given competing work demands.
- Some designers and academic educators may not see that determining perceptions of design or designers as important to the field of work.
- Non-designers may have regarded the survey as irrelevant or believed that they were not in a knowledgeable enough position to complete the survey (hence the financial inducement to complete the survey).

Mail-out questionnaires generally suffer from having a worse response rate to any other survey technique. From this perspective, it was not the ideal methodology to choose for the study (particularly given the complexity of the questionnaire itself). Unfortunately, undertaking research on a limited level of resources (manpower,
budget and time), with restricted access to potential respondents was seen as likely to negatively affect the outcomes.

Response rates for mail questionnaires are generally expected to be between 10 and 15 per cent, but may be as low as 1 to 2 per cent (DSS Research, 2004; Nuciflora, 2002). It was hoped that a 25 percent response rate would be achieved for this study, however, this did not prove to be the case.

It should be noted that, the mail-outs by the Design Institute of Australia and the Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation were undertaken by their respective organisations. The total numbers of questionnaires mailed out to the members were estimates only and may well have been less than stated (thus increasing the response rate). Information received from the two organisations indicated that it was unlikely that more questionnaires were posted than was estimated (the number of questionnaires supplied to the organisations was limited). There were no checks for duplications (e.g. if the same people received the questionnaire at more than one address, and there was no feedback on the numbers of questionnaires returned unopened, i.e. due to change of address or incorrect information in the database). With this in mind, it was likely that the actual response rates were several percentage points higher than stated in the study, however, without having more accurate information to verify this, I have chosen to err on the side of caution and report the details as given at the time.

For this reason, the results of the study should be viewed with some caution. It would be presumptuous and folly to assume that the findings could be extrapolated to infer that most designers, educators or the general public hold the views of these particular respondents. Despite this, the combined number of respondents was sizeable (753 returns) and so the study does still provide an extremely useful insight into the perceptions of design and designers, and raises issues and questions that could be explored more closely in future studies.

Like the previous two research stages, this stage concentrated on six particular design occupations. These were graphic design, industrial design, interior design, fashion design, furniture design and product design. The original intention was to administer the questionnaire to the student groups previously surveyed in stages one and two of the study, including the U3A members. This intention was reconsidered during the course of the research and it was determined that a more broad-based sample was needed. It was decided that the research would be much
more valuable if the boundaries of the population were extended to include all of Australia rather than confining the sample to Melbourne. In addition, it would be preferable to target those working and teaching in the design field rather than students, as these groups would be expected to have a better understanding and experience of design than would the students. The challenge was to locate a public group that would participate in the research and whose members were situated Australia-wide, with no occupational affiliation. This was achieved by drawing on the assistance of a community fundraising and research organisation.

Three participant groups were finally selected. These were design educators from both TAFE and university colleges around Australia, members of the Design Institute of Australia (DIA), and members of the Juvenile Diabetes Foundation of Australia (JDF): the latter were the general public group. The DIA was selected because the membership of this peak organisation is diverse and encompasses designers from all areas of Australia and from most of the design disciplines. Design educators were considered to be an important respondent group due to their level of influence and the direction they can have on the training and career path of designers. Members of the Juvenile Diabetes Foundation of Australia (JDF) were used as representatives of the general public for reasons outlined below.

**Pilot Study**

This questionnaire was piloted with the pilot survey being administered to eight participants, five from a non-design background, and three design educators from Swinburne University of Technology, Melbourne. This questionnaire was deemed too long and quite demanding and, as such, was extensively overhauled, although the main intentions of the questions were retained. A second pilot survey was administered to fifteen people. Seven were students enrolled in a Bachelor of Arts course and eight were design students from Swinburne University. This version of the questionnaire was felt to be much more meaningful and less cumbersome than the first version and only minor changes were made to the final version. As will be noted, the pilot study participant groups changed from educators in the first study to students in the second. The reason for this was the limited availability of staff members to complete the questionnaire the second time round. In hindsight it may have been better to use a combination of educators and students for both pilot studies.
Participants

Educators

The Educators were staff (permanent or sessional) employed by seventy-two universities and colleges of Technical and Further Education (TAFE) around Australia. The usual procedure was to contact the Head of School to obtain permission to send an appropriate number of questionnaires to the staff of the department. Almost all of the universities offering design courses were approached and a large number of TAFE colleges. In New South Wales and Victoria where there are large numbers of TAFE colleges, institutions were selected on the basis of location with a view to obtaining representation from both rural and urban areas, and preference was given to colleges offering more than one field of design.

On ascertaining the number of teaching staff, an appropriate number of questionnaires were posted to a nominated individual at each institution. A stamped self-addressed envelope was included with each questionnaire. In all, 1097 questionnaires were mailed out. It was not possible to know how many questionnaires were actually distributed within each organisation and the actual number may have been lower than the total amount mailed out, thus affecting the determination of the response rate. One hundred and fifty-nine questionnaires were returned representing a 14.5 per cent return rate.

Designers

The Designers group comprised the members of the Design Institute of Australia (DIA). Membership of the DIA is open to anyone working in the design field and is interdisciplinary. Members are distributed through all states and territories of Australia and in both urban and rural areas. The questionnaire and a self-addressed envelope were included in a regular mail-out to members by the DIA. In all, approximately 1400 questionnaires were sent out and 195 (14%) were returned.

Public

The Public group comprised members of the Juvenile Diabetes Foundation of Australia (JDF). JDF is a not-for-profit organisation whose aim is to raise awareness of juvenile diabetes and to raise money toward researching a cure for the disease. Juvenile diabetes is not related to particular socio-economic factors.
such as race, sex, place of residence, income or education level. As such, the members of this organization and their families represent a clearly defined general public group.

In order to encourage the JDF members to complete the questionnaire it was decided to offer a $5 donation to JDF for each completed questionnaire. Despite the risk of respondent bias due to a desire to please the researcher (who is paying them for their participation), it was felt the risk was outweighed by the need to co-opt the members to the survey. The introductory information attached to the questionnaire indicated that any friend or family member over the age of 18 could complete the questionnaire. Approximately 1800 questionnaires were mailed out and 399 (22%) were returned.

**Participant Demographics**

Figures 9.1 to 9.4 below detail the demographics for each of the participant groups. As can be seen from the figures, there were significantly more females than males in the Public Group, while the Educators and Design groups were roughly the same (although slightly more female designers than males). This bias was likely to affect the outcomes of the results. For this reason, sex was used as a variable in most of the analyses. The majority of the participants in all groups were between 30 and 49 years. The results of the occupational prestige scale suggested that age might be a factor when rating occupations on perceived social standing. It was postulated that this might be more pronounced for those occupations that have only emerged within the past 20 to 30 years, such as the design professions. For this reason age was used as a covariate in all analyses. Australia was the most commonly nominated country of origin for all participant groups. Most participants resided in either New South Wales or Victoria.
Questionnaire

All participants were sent the same questionnaire, although the covering letter on the first page was adapted for the specific respondent group (see Appendix C). The questionnaires were not individually numbered and the only identifying number was that associated with each of the three groups. The questionnaire was designed on ‘Teleform’ so that it could be read by computer scanning. A data entry operator entered any data that the computer could not read.
A large quantity of data was obtained from the participants. To fully examine all of the information collected and the infinite number of permutations on how the data could be analysed is a task that is beyond the scope of this thesis. Accordingly, not all questions will be analysed so as to contain the thesis to a manageable size. No doubt, by analysing the data, many more questions will be raised. Hopefully, this thesis will provide the basis for further research in this area. The questionnaire consisted of a number of research questions. The following is a brief synopsis of each of the questions in the survey questionnaire.

**Survey Questions**

Question 1 dealt with the respondents’ attitudes toward occupations and the relationship between work and society with a focus on issues such as occupation and social standing, work and education, and the relationship between individuals and their occupation. Respondents were asked to agree or disagree to a series of nine statements on this question.

Question 2 aimed to tease out what people think they know about particular occupations. It was divided into three sections asking people to answer ‘yes’ or ‘no’ as to:

- Whether they have heard of a particular occupation,
- Whether they believe they could describe what the main tasks of the job are, in reasonable detail, to another person, and
- If they know someone who is employed in that particular occupation.

Twenty-five occupations were selected on the basis that this was a selection of occupations spanning occupational categories as proposed by the Australian Bureau of Statistics, and that the design occupations were included in the list. Occupations were also selected on the basis that they still exist, and that they varied in the level of familiarity that might be expected.

Question 3 was a word association task whereby respondents were asked to note any words or phrases that come to mind when they hear the terms ‘design’ or ‘designer’. This was a written adaptation of what was also asked in the focus group discussions. This question will not be analysed as part of this thesis.
Stage Three Design Questionnaire

Question 4 required respondents to categorize each of the six design occupations being examined in this study in terms of their level of professionalism. The seven occupational categories used were the same as those used by the Australian Bureau of Statistics. Categories were Professional, Semi-Professional, Managerial, Skilled Worker, Semi-Skilled Worker, Unskilled Worker, and Manual. The categories were assumed to be ordinal in nature, as previous studies have shown that it is more likely that professional occupations would be perceived as highest in measures such as level of income, level of education and level of social standing. It has also been found that these parameters would decrease through the various occupational categories with manual occupations being perceived as having the lowest scores (c.f. Daniel, 1983; MacKinnon and Langford, 1994; Smith and Whitfield, 2003).

Question 5 consisted of twenty-four statements relating to the design occupations. The questions were derived from comments made in the focus groups, discussions with designers, peak bodies and from the literature. The respondents were asked to rate each of the statements on a five-point Likert scale ranging from strongly agree to strongly disagree. Over the years there has been considerable debate over the types of measurement to use when developing a scale to assess attitudes and the number of choices to include. It is generally agreed that the optimum number of choices in a Likert scale is between three and nine (Cohen, 1983; Bass, Cascio and O’Connor, 1974 cited in NCS research notes, 1996). A five point scale was considered to be optimum for this survey.

Question 6 further examined the issue raised in both the literature and in the focus groups, that no one knows what designers do (c.f. Sparke, 1986). It was apparent among the non-designer focus group participants that, in general, they knew little about what designers did and where they might work. This question therefore asked respondents to indicate industries where they think designers from each of the design occupations being studied might work. This question was not analysed as part of this thesis.

Question 7 was divided into two parts. Part A consists of seventeen statements intended to explore how designers are perceived. The respondents were asked to rate each of the six design occupations according to a five-point Likert scale ranging from Always to Never. As with Question 5, the statements were derived from the literature, the focus groups and from discussions with designers themselves. Part A was not analysed in this thesis (for reasons that will be given in greater detail later in this chapter). Part B was similar, except that the 5-point scale is rated from
Strongly Agree to Strongly Disagree and there were eight questions in the set. Question 8 was invited respondents to make any further comments and was not analysed.

Part two of the questionnaire was directed toward the respondents and their personal demographics and working/studying experiences. The aim of the questions was to obtain an insight into how and why the respondents chose the career path that they had taken. Again, this stemmed from the focus group discussions that revealed that the design students often said that they “knew” from an early age that they wanted to work in the ‘creative arts’ area. In contrast, the social science students were more likely to have “fallen” into their studies, taking a general Arts degree because they were unsure what else to do, or they were mature age students looking for a change in career. Although these questions will not be analysed and discussed in detail, there will be a general overview of some of the key findings. The final set of questions were demographic information such as age, sex, income, ethnicity, and place of residence.

Results

Question 1 Work, Identity and Society

Question 1 examined respondents’ perceptions of the relationships between work, self-identity society, and education. The purpose of the questions was to determine if there were between-group differences in the perceptions of occupations and identity. Respondents were required to rate each of the nine questions using a 5-point scale of strongly agree to strongly disagree. The questions are detailed in the Questionnaire in Appendix C. The questions reflected the key issues raised in chapter 5 on occupational prestige. Underlying the questions was the notion that work is closely linked to a person’s identity and level of social standing. It was argued that income and education are the main factors used by respondents to determine occupational prestige. A number of the questions sought to determine perceptions of the importance of education, as it has been shown that jobs with higher levels of education are generally rated as higher in occupational prestige and level of professionalism.
The scale may have benefited from more questions that address the moral dimensions of the occupational prestige scale. Question 1.07 (‘some jobs are more important to society than others’) could be seen in part as fitting with the qualitative dimension. Future research that specifically investigates how people perceive the design professions on this ‘service to the community’ dimension within the occupational prestige scale could reveal useful insights.

Prior to analysis, the scores of questions 1.03 and 1.06 were reversed, as they were expressed negative questions in contrast to the others which were expressed positively. A Cronbach’s test of reliability indicated that the questions appeared to be measuring the same underlying construct (Alpha = .62). However, question 1.06 did not fit well with the other questions in the set as the alpha score improved with its removal. This question was therefore not included in the final analysis. A score was calculated for each participant by determining the average of the eight questions. As the statements within this question focused on the relationship of occupation and society, this construct was deemed to be a measure of socio-occupational identity. The mean socio-occupational identity scores for the Educators, Designers and Public were 2.54, 2.51 and 2.50 respectively. An Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) found no significant difference between the scores for this construct (p = .84). It is concluded that on the broader, more general issues relating to the relationships between occupation, social identity and class, there was no difference between participant groups.

Table 9.1 Means and Standard Deviations for Question 1 by Participant Group

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Educators</th>
<th></th>
<th>Designers</th>
<th></th>
<th>Public</th>
<th></th>
<th>Total</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
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<td>Std. Dev</td>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>N</td>
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<td>195</td>
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<td>2.52</td>
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</tr>
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<td>1.30</td>
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<td>195</td>
<td>1.21</td>
<td>2.93</td>
<td>397</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

150
Further examination of the mean scores for each of the questions by participant group (Table 9.1) found that the respondents generally agreed that occupation was important to one’s self-identity, and is an important indicator of level of social standing and social class within the community. These findings support others such as Caplow, (1964), Daniel (1983) and Dunkerley (1975), who all agree that occupation is a good indicator of status, class and power and that it is one of the most influential indicators used to establish perceived prestige within society. The high level of agreement between the three participant groups on these questions, suggested that, on a broad level, they hold similar views to perceptions about work and the relationships between work and society. It was therefore postulated that differences between the three groups in how they perceive design and designers, particularly with regards to relationships between work, education and occupational status and prestige, would be as a result of their specific knowledge and understanding of design and designers, rather than differences in their broader perceptions of work and society. The next question therefore explores the level of knowledge the participants have on design.

**Question 2 Knowledge of Occupations**

This question aimed to explore the differences in awareness and knowledge of the design occupations between the three respondent groups. Respondents were asked three questions in relation to twenty-five occupations, including the six design occupations that were the focus of this research. Each question was designed to determine the level of familiarity with the occupation. First, respondents were asked if they had heard of the occupation. Second, if they knew what the main tasks of the job were (and were able to describe, in reasonable detail, what people working in this job do). And finally, they were asked if they knew someone with this occupation. It was assumed that there would be varying levels of familiarity for each of the occupations related to the respondent’s experience and exposure.

In order to determine if there were differences in the level of familiarity between each of the three study groups, the scores for each of the questions were combined to give a single score for each respondent. Prior to the calculation of the ‘familiarity’ score, each of the questions was weighted to more fully represent the degree of familiarity required to answer a positive response to the question. Thus:

- question 1, 'Have you heard of the occupation?’ was deemed to have a weighted score of one;
question 2, 'Do you know what the main tasks of the job are?' was believed to require the highest level of familiarity and so given a weighted score of 3;
question 3, 'Do you know someone with this job?' was given a weighted score of 2;
a 'no' response to any of the questions was given a score of zero.

By weighting the positive response scores in this manner, it was possible for an individual respondent to have a score of:
- 0: not at all familiar with the occupation
- 1: has heard of the occupation, but knows very little about it
- 3: has heard of the occupation and knows someone with that job
- 4: has heard of the occupation and know what the main tasks of the job are
- 6: has heard of the occupation, knows someone with the job, and knows what the main tasks of the job are (highest level of familiarity)

It was assumed a score of 2 which could only be gained by knowing someone with the job, but never having heard of the job, or a score of 5, again knowing someone with the job, being able to describe the job in detail, but having not heard of the job, were not logically possible.

A mean score for each of the occupations and for each of the respondent groups was obtained, ranked and is detailed in Table 9.2. The results show that, as expected, the Designers and the Educators perceived themselves as most familiar with the design occupations along with the proximate occupations of architecture, artist and cabinetmaker. In contrast, the Public group identified the design occupations as the ones that they were least familiar with, and all of the design occupations, with the exception of interior designer (rank 10), were ranked in the bottom third of the scale. The Public group was most familiar with the job of Pharmacist which, given that the respondents in this group were family members or friends of children with juvenile diabetes, this is not a surprising result.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Profession</th>
<th>Public rank</th>
<th>Public mean</th>
<th>Designers rank</th>
<th>Designers mean</th>
<th>Educators rank</th>
<th>Educators mean</th>
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<td>11</td>
<td>4.96</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>5.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>5.11</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>5.42</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5.38</td>
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<tr>
<td>Computer Programmer</td>
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<td>5.08</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>5.18</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>5.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cabinet Maker</td>
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<td>5.07</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5.56</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>5.32</td>
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<td>16</td>
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<td>5.08</td>
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<tr>
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<td>1</td>
<td>5.82</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5.7</td>
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<tr>
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<td>12</td>
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<td>4.92</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>5.78</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5.46</td>
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<td>17</td>
<td>4.65</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>5.14</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
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<td>3.83</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>4.82</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>4.46</td>
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<tr>
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<td>3.82</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>3.91</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>3.91</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fitter and Turner</td>
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<td>3.75</td>
<td>21</td>
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<td>4.03</td>
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<tr>
<td>Electrical Engineer</td>
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<td>3.66</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>4.65</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>4.3</td>
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<tr>
<td>Graphic Designer</td>
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<td>3.66</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5.68</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5.46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>18</td>
<td>3.58</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5.54</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>5.12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fashion Designer</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>3.56</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>5.27</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>5.14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mechanical Engineer</td>
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<td>19</td>
<td>4.42</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>3.98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>3.16</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>3.48</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>3.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clerk of Courts</td>
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<td>2.74</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>2.72</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>2.98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sociologist</td>
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<td>2.28</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>2.52</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>3.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Product Designer</td>
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<td>1.96</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>4.61</td>
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<tr>
<td>Industrial Designer</td>
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<td>1.73</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>5.22</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>4.52</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A Multidimensional Scaling Analysis (MDS) was also performed on the data. The theory behind the MDS is that it plots each of the variables in terms of their linear relationship to all of the other variables in the set. The output is essentially a ‘map’ of the perceived similarities for each of the occupations. The closer the occupations are to each other on the chart, the more similar the respondents perceive them to be. For the purpose of interpretation, the MDS chart is further analysed by examining it for clusters of closely related items. These clusters are intuitive groupings based on the researcher’s knowledge of the subject matter and a visual interpretation of the chart and therefore can be subject to minor interpretative differences.

Given that the questions asked were all related to the degree of knowledge the respondent believed that they had about each of the occupations, it is assumed that the occupations would be grouped on the MDS chart in terms of the overall level of knowledge for each of the three participant groups. The charts (Figures 9.5
to 9.7) show clear differences in perceived level of knowledge between each of the three groups.

Table 9.3 Abbreviations for MDS Figures

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Occupation</th>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Occupation</th>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Architect</td>
<td>architec</td>
<td>Furniture Designer</td>
<td>furndes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Artist</td>
<td>artist</td>
<td>Graphic Designer</td>
<td>graphdes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Barrister</td>
<td>barrist</td>
<td>Industrial Designer</td>
<td>industrdes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cabinet Maker</td>
<td>cabmak</td>
<td>Interior Designer</td>
<td>inides</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Civil Engineer</td>
<td>civleng</td>
<td>Lawyer</td>
<td>lawyer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clerk of Courts</td>
<td>clerkcrt</td>
<td>Machine Operator</td>
<td>machinop</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Computer Programmer</td>
<td>compprog</td>
<td>Mechanical Engineer</td>
<td>mecheng</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Debt Collector</td>
<td>deptcol</td>
<td>Optometrist</td>
<td>optomet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Economist</td>
<td>econom</td>
<td>Pharmacist</td>
<td>pharm</td>
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<tr>
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<td>editor</td>
<td>Product Designer</td>
<td>proddes</td>
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<td>Social Worker</td>
<td>socwork</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>Sociologist</td>
<td>sociol</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fitter and Turner</td>
<td>fitturn</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In Figure 9.5 the Educator group have three clear clusters with clerk of courts as an outlier. The Educators perceive similar levels of familiarity between product design and industrial design (cluster 3) with all of the other design occupations being situated in cluster 1 with the other occupations that are perceived as having high levels of familiarity.

Figure 9.5. MDS Level of Familiarity with Occupations - Educator Group
Four clusters were identified for the Designer group (Figure 9.6) although these were not well defined between clusters 2 and 4. The design occupations are all perceived as having high levels of familiarity, which is to be expected from this participant group. Product design and industrial design were clustered along with the more mechanical occupations, particularly the engineering occupations. Fashion design, graphic design, interior design and furniture design were tightly clustered with other highly familiar occupations such as architect, lawyer and doctor.
The Public group has four clear clusters, with economist as an outlier (Figure 9.7). There is a distinct clustering of occupational groups with the participants tending to cluster the engineering professions together (cluster 4). Industrial design and product design are also clustered closely together (cluster 1) and are associated with other less commonly known occupations of sociologist and clerk of courts. Fashion design and graphic design were regarded as similar in terms of perceived knowledge of the occupations (cluster 2) with furniture design and interior design being clustered with the large group of reasonably well known occupations (cluster 3).

It is clear that product design and industrial design are regarded as the most similar, particularly by the Educators and the Public, and are generally perceived as having a similar level of familiarity. The Designers tend to associate industrial design much more closely with electrical engineering and civil engineering in addition to being closer to the other design occupations. Product design is more associated with mechanical engineering and this pattern is most likely a reflection of the more detailed knowledge of industrial design by the Designers.

Each of the MDS charts is clearly two-dimensional and it is speculated that the second, qualitative (vertical axis) dimension may have slightly different
characteristics for each participant group. For the Public, the occupations at the top of the chart are fashion design and graphic design, whilst the ones at the bottom are fitter and turner, civil engineer, electrical engineer, and mechanical engineer. This suggests that the participants may have made a creative/mechanical distinction when rating the occupations, in addition to level of familiarity. Similarly, the chart for the Designers has the more ‘mechanical’ occupations at the top of the chart with those occupations that have a strong people focus (social worker, pharmacist and barrister) at the bottom of the chart. The vertical axis for the Educators is more perplexing. Clearly there is a qualitative difference between the upper and lower occupational clusters. Given that the ‘mechanical’ occupations are located at the top of the chart and that the bottom cluster is industrial design and product design (the two design occupations most likely to be associated with the more mechanical or the engineering occupations), then the underlying distinction is not as easy to determine. It maybe that it is a design/non-design distinction, whereby the level of knowledge is different between occupational groups, especially the design occupations, in cluster 1.

The results of Question 2 show that there is a significant difference in knowledge and familiarity of the design occupations. Whilst this result is not in itself surprising, it does have ramifications for those working and teaching in the design area. If the findings are compared with the engineering cluster in the survey (electrical, mechanical and civil engineering), then it appears that engineering is more familiar to the Public than design.

The importance of familiarity for an occupation must not be overlooked or glossed over. The decision to follow a particular occupational path is, as Broom and Lancaster-Jones (1976: 86) state, “interconnected with other social institutions such as the family and kinship, and formal education”. Whilst Broom and Lancaster-Jones may have been writing about the ability to access appropriate educational institutions, family background, in terms of parental support (both financial and emotional), stability and ideologies, people's perceptions of particular occupations, and whether these perceptions are based on real or assumed knowledge, will be used to steer individuals toward or away from certain occupational choices. For example, a parent's perception that industrial designers work in factory environments or that industrial design is about building cars or bridges, may result in pressure being applied to a daughter to look to another (more ‘female’) occupation.
Similarly, the perception that interior design is the same as interior decoration, and, as such, involves furniture selection and placement or the selection of soft furnishings, along with the (media reinforced) idea that interior designers are either effeminate males or effusive and loquacious females, could deter individuals from entering that particular occupation, or cause others to attempt to deter friends, family or students from entering that occupation. Of course, a perception can be erroneously positive. The perception that fashion designers are all wealthy and lead a glamorous lifestyle may attract individuals to that occupation only to find that isn't necessarily the case.

Molotch (2003) argues that the lack of knowledge about (product) design makes it much more difficult for young people to firstly, see design as a career goal and second, set themselves on the path to achieving that goal. He also argues that, what perceptions there are about design, discourage women due to the images of what a designer does (designing cars, for example). The question of whether males and females therefore have different perceptions about design is an interesting one. The later analyses include sex as a variable in order to investigate this question.

The level of familiarity of an occupation can also affect that occupation's position on the broader social structure. Daniel (1983) suggested that when people are asked to rate the level of social standing or occupational prestige of groups of occupations, raters will generally rate the familiar occupation higher than the less familiar. This familiarity can be obtained by personal exposure or experience, or by the occupation being readily observable in everyday life. In addition, other studies (Coxon and Jones, 1979; Grasmick, 1976; MacKinnon and Langford, 1994; Smith and Whitfield, 2003) have found that the perception that a particular occupation has a high level of service to the community will also boost occupational prestige ratings. To differentiate on this variable, raters would need some degree of familiarity with the occupation.

Thus the overall salience of a particular occupation has significant ramifications for that occupation and those working in that field. At the micro or individual level, the occupational perception and knowledge can ultimately influence the occupational direction and choices of those we are in contact with. At the macro level, occupational perception can influence things such as remuneration or rewards, social participation and power, occupational prestige, and position in the social strata.
Question 4 Level of Professionalism

For this question the respondents were asked to indicate into which occupational category they believed each of the design occupations fitted. The categories employed in the survey were those used by the Australian Bureau of Statistics (professional, semi-professional, managerial, skilled worker, semi-skilled worker, unskilled worker, and manual), as it was believed that these would be the most meaningful to the respondents. In general, the categories were regarded as ordinal in relation to the indicators of level of education, level of income and occupational prestige with professional having the highest levels of income and prestige and manual the lowest. The purpose of this question was to compare the three groups in terms of the perceived level of professionalism of each of the design occupations.

Table 9.4. Level of Professionalism by Occupational Group by Participant Group, MANOVA

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
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<tr>
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<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
The data were analysed using Multivariate Analysis of Variance (MANOVA), testing for the main effects of group and sex. The analysis revealed between-groups differences for all six of the design occupations in this study (Table 9.4). The sex of the respondent was also found to be a significant factor for all of the occupational groups. Cross tabulations for each of the occupational groups by level of professionalism by participant group were also performed (Table 9.5).

### Table 9.5 Level of Professionalism by Occupational Group by Participant Group (%)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Graphic Design (%)</th>
<th>Industrial Design (%)</th>
<th>Product Design (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Professional</td>
<td>64.0 80.0 43.5</td>
<td>72.0 89.0 55.0</td>
<td>61.5 77.5 34.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Semi-Prof</td>
<td>24.0 17.0 39.0</td>
<td>18.5 10.5 32.5</td>
<td>27.5 19.5 42.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manager</td>
<td>10.5 2.5 16.5</td>
<td>2.0 2.0 2.0</td>
<td>2.5 0.5 6.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skilled</td>
<td>0.5 0.5 0.5</td>
<td>7.0 0.5 10.0</td>
<td>1.5 1.0 1.0</td>
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<tr>
<td>Semi-Skilled</td>
<td>0.5 0.5 1.0</td>
<td>1.0 0.5 0.5</td>
<td>0.5 0.5 0.5</td>
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<tr>
<td>Unskilled</td>
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<td>0.5 0.5 0.5</td>
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<td>Manual</td>
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<td>0.5 0.5 0.5</td>
<td>0.5 0.5 0.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Looking at Table 9.5, it can be seen that the Designers and Educators were most likely to classify graphic design as professional (80% and 64% respectively). In contrast, the Public was almost as equally split for graphic designers as between semi-professional and professional (39% and 43.5%, respectively) and in 16.5 per cent of cases they perceived them as skilled workers. In terms of industrial designer, again the Design group was most likely to perceive them as professional compared to the Educators and the Public (89%, 72% and 55%, respectively). Thirty-two percent of the Public perceived industrial designers as semi-professional and 10 per cent as skilled workers.

Bearing in mind that product design is, for all intents and purposes, the same as industrial design; it is noteworthy that the Public was most likely to perceive product designers as semi-professionals (42%) rather than professionals. The respondents, for some reason, regard industrial design as more professional than
product design. The reason for this is unclear, particularly as the previous question found that both occupations had the lowest levels of familiarity of all the occupations in the set. It is conjectured that the name of the occupation might be a factor in determining the occupational categories of the occupations, particularly where the occupation is unfamiliar.

In contrast the Designers and the Educators clearly see product designers as professionals (78% and 61%, respectively). Only 35 per cent of the Public believed them to be professionals and, again, a significant proportion (18%) believed them to be skilled workers. In terms of perceived level of professionalism, industrial design was perceived to be highest by all three participant groups and this may be something to bear in mind, particularly by educational institutions and peak bodies in terms of naming the occupation.

Wide variations were found for interior designers in terms of perceived level of professionalism. The Designers were far more likely to see themselves as more professional than either Educators or the Public (86%, 61% and 31%, respectively). The Public was much more likely to perceive interior designers as semi-professionals (45%) or as skilled workers (18%).

Of the six occupational groups, furniture design scored the lowest on the professionalism scale by all of the participant groups. However, the two design groups were still most likely to perceive it as essentially professional (Designers, 64%; Educators, 57%). The Public had a much different view about furniture designers though and the results indicate that they were more likely to perceive them as skilled workers (38%), or as semi-professionals (37%), than as professionals (22%). There is a clear difference in perception about the level of professionalism of the furniture designer and this should be of some concern to those working in that field.

Finally, in the analysis of the perceived level of professionalism of the interior designer, the overall trend is again similar to the other design occupations. The Designers are more likely to perceive them as professionals than the Educators or the Public groups (72%, 60% and 29%, respectively). The Public perceived interior designers as semi-professionals and, as in the previous analyses, a large percentage (25%) perceived them as skilled workers.
Overall significant between-groups differences were found in the perception of level of professionalism. The two design groups and the Designers in particular, perceived all of the design occupations as generally professional. The Educators also perceived them as professional, but more of the Educators categorised the design occupations as semi-professional indicating that they were less likely to regard design as highly professional. The Public participants were more likely to perceive the design occupations as semi-professional or as skilled workers and it was only graphic and industrial designers that were perceived by the Public as professional.

Consistent across all groups were the categories that the designers clearly were not perceived as belonging to. Only a handful of respondents regarded designers as unskilled or manual workers and it was only some of the Public respondents who categorised them as managerial. Clearly, even though a large number of designers work in private practice or as freelance, the managerial role within the organisation is seen as incidental. The implications for the widely differing views in level of professionalism between the designers and the public are many and are undoubtedly a reflection of the overall lack of knowledge that the public has about design. This will be discussed further at the conclusion of this chapter.

**Question 5 Perceptions of Design**

Question 5 consisted of twenty-four statements that aimed to determine differences between the three participant groups on a range of themes relating to design and designers. Each question was analysed individually using a univariate analysis of variance (ANOVA), with group and sex as fixed factors. As stated in question 4, some researchers (e.g. Clegg & Mayfield, 1999; de Forest, 1988; Molotch, 2003) raise concerns that gender is either negatively influenced towards design as an occupational choice or that the design occupations are viewed as less desirable due to the perceptions by others that they are ‘female’ occupations. Studies have shown that occupations perceived as ‘female’ are generally seen as less prestigious, less professional and have less status and prestige (e.g. Crino et al, 1983; Daniel, 1983; Wiley and Crittendon, 1992).

For each question the ANOVA table and a bar chart of the level of agreement by participant group is detailed and where a significant sex difference was found, the appropriate chart is also presented. It was initially thought appropriate to include age as a covariate in the analysis. However, preliminary analysis revealed that age
was generally not a significant factor in respondent perceptions and was therefore not included in the final analysis.

The statements were divided into two main groups. Thirteen statements explored the perceptions of design as a general occupational category and eleven statements explored the specific design occupations that form the focus of this research. The themes and issues that form the basis of the statements provided a snapshot of the perceptions of the design occupations. As such, it was not intended that this would be a comprehensive data analysis; instead, the statements were aimed at honing in on a small number of specific issues or themes that were identified in the previous stages of this research and from a review of the literature. The questions should be viewed in the context of the broader study and, as such, they are only one small component of a bigger picture.

In this chapter the twenty-four statements will be analysed and discussed. A number of questions were framed as negative statements and the data from these statements have been reversed so that all results are presented as positive statements for purposes of analysis. The discussion in chapter 10 will consolidate and discuss the overall conclusions and findings from all of the research stages and questions, thus providing a forum for drawing together the various threads and patterns to create an overview of the perceptions of design and designers.

**Design In General**

1. **Designers are Naturally Creative.**

One of the themes that emerged through the focus group discussions was a perception that designers need to have a natural or in-born creative ability. Although both the design and non-design participants mentioned creativity as a key attribute, the designers tended to use business focused descriptives in their perceptions of the attributes of designers, whilst the non-designers focused much more on creativity and artistic ability. This difference was further tested via this statement.
The results of the ANOVA show group, and sex differences for this statement. All respondents agreed with the statement, but it was the extent of the agreement wherein the differences occurred. The Public agreed more strongly than the Designers and the Educators the least strongly. This result concurs with the finding in the focus group discussions that non-designers are more likely to emphasise the importance of natural creativity for designers. The finding that the Educators consider that designers are not necessarily naturally creative is not unexpected, as they may feel that although the design student had some level of natural ability much of their skills would be learnt through training and education. It was notable that the Educators, particularly the males, had a large number of neutral responses compared to the other two groups. If the Educators are to concede that Designers are naturally creative, then tensions may occur in justifying the educational aspects of Design. These tensions could be expressed as indecision in answering this statement. Further analysis showed that females were more likely to agree with the statement than males.
2. Design is a Learnt Skill

Many occupations are perceived to require some level of natural ability. For example, a person who has an interest and natural ability with mechanical devices or engines and as a youngster tinkers with bikes or cars, might, as an adult, obtain qualifications as a mechanic or engineer. Another person who grows up with a passion for animals might become a veterinary surgeon, and so on. In this sense, Design might be regarded as building on an interest in art and drawing. Education is seen as an important tool for building a career out of an interest or skill. This statement looks at whether Design is perceived as something that is taught, albeit maybe as a way of turning an interest into a career. It would be expected that the Educators would agree most strongly to this statement and the Public the least.

Table 9.7. Design is a Learnt Skill. ANOVA

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Source</th>
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<th>Mean Square</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Group</td>
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<td>6.173</td>
<td>4.878</td>
<td>0.008</td>
</tr>
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<td>Sex</td>
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<td>4.499</td>
<td>3.555</td>
<td>0.060</td>
</tr>
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<td>Group * Sex</td>
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<td>720</td>
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<tr>
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<td>725</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 9.10. Design is a Learnt Skill. Level of Agreement by Participant Group.

This statement examines the question of whether design is perceived as a skill that can be taught or is regarded as an innate skill that is not necessarily enhanced by formal training. Group differences were found, and although all groups agreed with the statement, again it was in the strength of the agreement that the differences lay. Sex was found to be not significant.
As expected, the Educators agreed most strongly with the statement, while the Designers and the Public groups agreed less. It is of note that the Designers and the Public respondents both had much higher percentages of neutral responses than did the Educators. It was also evident that the Designers were least likely to view design as a learnt skill, as indicated by the highest proportion of strongly disagree responses.

3. Designers Have To Be Good At Drawing

This statement retains the theme of natural versus in-born creative or artistic ability. Again this was an attribute that the non-design participants in the focus groups were more likely to associate with designers than were the design participants. However, computer-aided design is a significant component of today’s design courses and design practice. With this move toward computers and increasing sophistication of software, are good drawing skills necessary for today’s Designers? This statement examines the perceived necessity of good drawing skills.

Table 9.8 Designers Have to be Good at Drawing. ANOVA

<table>
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<tr>
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<th>Sig.</th>
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<td>7.598</td>
<td>5.153</td>
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<tr>
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<td>1</td>
<td>2.325</td>
<td>1.577</td>
<td>0.210</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>1.777</td>
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<td>0.300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<tr>
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</tbody>
</table>

Figure 9.11. Designers Have to be Good at Drawing. Level of Agreement by Participant Group.

This statement examined perceptions of the perceived importance of natural abilities, in this instance good drawing skills for designers. The ANOVA revealed a significant between-groups difference (p< .01). As can been seen from Figure...
9.11, the Public are least likely to agree to this statement and, they are also most likely to give either a neutral response or to disagree with the statement. This is in contrast to the focus groups where the non-design participants felt that drawing skills were necessary for a designer; and it is therefore an unexpected result. The Designers agreed the strongest to the statement indicating that they see drawing skills as important, and this may be a reflection of the level of knowledge about design, although why the Educators are less likely to agree to the statement than the Designers is something of an anomaly. Speculation might suggest that the increasing reliance on computer-aided-design is diminishing the need perceived for drawing skills. Statement 10 asks the respondents to indicate if they perceive that computers are important tools for designers, and the results from this may shed some further light on this finding.

4. Designers Are Practical People
Again this statement arose from the focus group findings. The non-designers considered that designers were not practical people in that they do not understand the ‘real world’. The perception was that they create wants of fancy, things that people don’t really need and, as such, they are regarded as working in an environment that is something of a fantasy. The sense was that the industry in which they work is similar to the entertainment industry and akin to the art, advertising, or entertainment industries, and that designers are out of touch with the person on the street.

Table 9.9. Designers are Practical People. ANOVA

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
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<th>Mean Square</th>
<th>F</th>
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<td>17.575</td>
<td>15.930</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sex</td>
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<td>1</td>
<td>5.136</td>
<td>4.656</td>
<td>0.031</td>
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<tr>
<td>Group * Sex</td>
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<td>0.395</td>
<td>0.358</td>
<td>0.699</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Error</td>
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<td>722</td>
<td>1.103</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corrected Total</td>
<td>837.912</td>
<td>727</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Figure 9.12. Designers are Practical People. Level of Agreement by Participant Group.

This statement aimed to explore the question of whether designers are perceived as logical, down-to-earth, sensible, business-like, and pragmatic. The term practical was considered to encompass these descriptives. The ANOVA reveals a significant between-groups difference ($p < .001$) for this statement. Figure 9.12 indicates that 36 per cent of the Public gave a neutral response to this statement. The Educators and the Designers also had high numbers of neutral responses. This could be due to three things. First, it could be that the statement was somewhat vague and ambiguous about what the term ‘practical’ means in the context of this statement. Second, it could be a consequence of the groups knowing very little about designers and what they do, and third, it could be that they neither agree nor disagree with the statement (or a combination of the three). The results are therefore analysed with some caution due to the concern that the meaning of the statement may have been unclear.

The results show that there are significant between-groups differences in the ANOVA (Table 9.9). The Designer and the Educators tended to agree with this statement (53% and 54% respectively, either strongly or mildly agreeing). Only 32 per cent of the Public agreed with the statement and 32 per cent disagreed. Sex was not significant for any of the groups. The spread of responses and the very high number of neutral responses may, as suggested previously, lead to the assumption that the meaning of this statement was not made clear enough and the results are somewhat spurious. However, it could be that the respondents simply did not know what to respond to the statement and further investigation and information might provide a useful insight.
5. Designers Are Experts on Colour

This statement was included at the request of one of the stakeholder organisations concerned that designers are not perceived as being particularly knowledgeable about colour. The assertion was that colour knowledge is an important skill that designers possess, but clients are not taking advantage of the designer’s expertise. In addition, there was concern that designers themselves do not pay as much attention to the importance of colour in the design process as perhaps they should. This statement aimed to explore this concern by examining whether the respondents believe that colour knowledge is important for the designer.

Table 9.10. Designers are Experts on Colour. ANOVA

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Type III Sum of Squares</th>
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<th>Mean Square</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
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</thead>
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<tr>
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<td>3.073</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sex</td>
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<td>14.007</td>
<td>11.873</td>
<td>0.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group * Sex</td>
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<td>2.028</td>
<td>1.719</td>
<td>0.180</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Error</td>
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<tr>
<td>Corrected Total</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The ANOVA showed no between-groups or age differences to this statement. Sex was found to be significant (p < .001) with females more likely to agree to the statement than males. It is interesting to note the very high proportion of neutral responses from the male Designers (40%). Fifty percent of the Public males disagreed to some extent with the statement compared with 36 per cent of the Educator males and 40 per cent of the Designer males. In contrast, 50 per cent of the Designer females agreed with the statement, as did 38 per cent of the female
Educators and 31 per cent of the female Public. With the high number of neutral responses and the spread of responses across the agree/disagree dimension, it would be reasonable to suggest that most of the respondents were quite unsure about this statement. This in itself reveals a lot about the perception that designers are experts on colour. Clearly, this is not an area that is regarded as a core aspect of design by the respondents and where there is little knowledge and understanding.

6. You Do Need Tertiary Qualifications To Be A Designer.

If there is the perception that design is a natural ability rather than a skill obtained through further study, then this raises questions about the importance of tertiary education. If people believe that design is a natural ability, or that skills are obtained through on-the-job training or apprenticeships, then tertiary qualifications may not be viewed a necessity.

For an occupation that is trying to establish its professional status, tertiary qualifications are essential. Referring to the chapter on the Professional Status of Design, Esland (1980: 219) argued that long periods of education and training are one of the core aspects of a profession, along with others such as professional autonomy, defined ethical standards, exclusive membership (which is often based on educational qualifications), and specialist knowledge. In studies on the determinants of occupational prestige, level of education along with income were found to be the strongest predictors in the judgement of occupational prestige (MacKinnon and Langford, 1994). In general, those occupations that are perceived as having high levels of education and income are ascribed higher levels of status and prestige. This question further explores the perceived necessity of tertiary education for design training.

Table 9.11 You do Need Tertiary Qualifications to be a Designer. ANOVA

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Type III Sum of Squares</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Mean Square</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Group</td>
<td>0.094</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0.047</td>
<td>0.028</td>
<td>0.973</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sex</td>
<td>3.208</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3.208</td>
<td>1.892</td>
<td>0.169</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group * Sex</td>
<td>4.060</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2.030</td>
<td>1.197</td>
<td>0.303</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Error</td>
<td>1226.016</td>
<td>723</td>
<td>1.696</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corrected Total</td>
<td>1237.320</td>
<td>728</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The results were reversed for this statement with the original statement in the questionnaire reading "You do not need tertiary qualifications to be a designer". The findings show that there were no between-groups, sex or age differences in response to this statement. Interestingly, if we examine the frequency bar chart, there are an almost equal number of respondents agreeing to this statement as there are respondents disagreeing. Inspection of the two disagree responses and the two agree responses, shows that it was the Educators who disagreed the most with this statement, suggesting that many of them believe that you don’t need tertiary qualifications to be a designer. The DIA were the next most likely to believe that you do need tertiary qualifications and the Public the most.

Clearly there is no consensus on this issue. For those advocating certification and the professional status of design there appears to be a lot of work to be done to define the role of education in the development of the occupations.

7. Design is an Occupation for the Very Intelligent

For some occupations the perception exists that a person needs a high level of intelligence to work in the field (e.g. law and medicine). This perception is fuelled by a number of factors, including the tertiary entrance scores needed to obtain a place in the relevant university course, the perceived degree of difficulty of the course, and the potential position within society that the course of study can lead to. Unlike these occupations, acceptance into university for the designer is generally based on an interview and presentation of a portfolio of creative works - tertiary entrance scores are not critical to acceptance. Selection could be regarded as being based on a process that is subjective and ambiguous rather than explicit. This, combined with the fact that the arts and humanities subjects are not
perceived as being as difficult as the sciences (Daniel, 1983), may well affect the perception of the level of intelligence needed to be a designer.

Table 9.12. Design is an Occupation for the Very Intelligent. ANOVA

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Type III Sum of Squares</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Mean Square</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Group</td>
<td>28.793</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>14.397</td>
<td>13.127</td>
<td>0.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sex</td>
<td>1.127</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.127</td>
<td>1.027</td>
<td>0.311</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group * Sex</td>
<td>5.154</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2.577</td>
<td>2.350</td>
<td>0.096</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Error</td>
<td>794.038</td>
<td>724</td>
<td>1.097</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corrected Total</td>
<td>824.303</td>
<td>729</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The ANOVA indicates that there was a between-groups difference for this statement, though most of the respondents tend to disagree with it. It should be noted, though, that there was a high level of neutral responses for all groups (25 to 27%). The Public was most likely to disagree, with 43 per cent saying they mildly disagreed and 20 per cent indicating that they strongly disagreed. Very few of the respondents agreed strongly with the statement and only 21 per cent of Designers and 24 per cent of the Educators mildly agreed. No sex differences were found. Intelligence is clearly not regarded as a core attribute of the designer.


This statement asks the respondents the degree to which they believe designers are image conscious. In retrospect, this statement may have been interpreted in a number of different ways and so the findings could be somewhat spurious. For example, the statement could be seen as asking for an indication of whether designers are aware of images around them (i.e. in the media, the environment, etc), or it could be their awareness of the images they create, or it could be
perceived as asking how much they are aware of their own personal image (which was the original intention). This should be kept in mind when interpreting the results.

Table 9.13. Designers are Image Conscious. ANOVA

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Type III Sum of Squares</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Mean Square</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Group</td>
<td>8.704</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4.352</td>
<td>5.742</td>
<td>0.003</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sex</td>
<td>0.220</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.220</td>
<td>0.290</td>
<td>0.590</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group * Sex</td>
<td>1.360</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0.680</td>
<td>0.897</td>
<td>0.408</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Error</td>
<td>547.215</td>
<td>722</td>
<td>0.758</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corrected Total</td>
<td>556.603</td>
<td>727</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 9.17. Designers are Image Conscious. Level of Agreement by Participant Group.

Group and age differences were found for this statement. Again, it was in the strength of the agreement where the differences were found. The Public agreed more strongly with the statement than did the two design groups. Despite the concern that this statement might have been ambiguous, the respondents appeared to have little difficulty responding to the statement. The rate of neutral responses was low, and few participants disagreed with the statement. Whatever the understanding of the term ‘Image Conscious’, the results indicated that the respondents were definite that the term fits their understanding of the designer.

9. The Design Industry Is Important to Australia’s Economy.

The export of products is normally an important factor in the economic well being of a country. In Australia, the manufacturing sector has been diminishing over the past decades; however, manufactured products are still regarded as important to the economy. There is a strong relationship between design and manufacturing and it would be reasonable to suggest that the design occupations input in some
way into the manufacturing sector through the development of products, packaging, clothing, and textiles. The design occupations also have an important role in other industry sectors, such as the service sector and the electronics and information technology sectors. The statement was included to gauge how important the respondents believe the design occupations are to the Australian economy.

Table 9.14. The Design Industry is Important to Australia's Economy. ANOVA

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Type III Sum of Squares</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Mean Square</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Group</td>
<td>10.698</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5.349</td>
<td>9.341</td>
<td>0.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sex</td>
<td>0.328</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.328</td>
<td>0.573</td>
<td>0.449</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group * Sex</td>
<td>2.732</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1.366</td>
<td>2.385</td>
<td>0.093</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Error</td>
<td>412.882</td>
<td>721</td>
<td>0.573</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corrected Total</td>
<td>427.598</td>
<td>726</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 9.18. The Design Industry is Important to Australia’s Economy. Level of Agreement by Participant Group.

The ANOVA found significant between-groups and age differences. All groups indicated that design was indeed important to Australia’s economy, but again there were group differences in regards to the strength of the agreement. The Educators and the Designers strongly agreed to the statement (70% and 76%, respectively), whilst the Public were more tentative with only 50 per cent strongly agreeing. Thirty-nine percent of the public mildly agreed and 9 per cent were neutral. Overall, the vast majority of respondents agreed that design is important to Australia’s economy.
Stage Three Design Questionnaire

Age was found to be statistically significant (p < .05). A Pearson’s r (-0.094) showed a weak negative association with age, with the younger participants more likely to agree to the statement than the older participants.


It was apparent from the focus groups and the literature that design is often perceived as akin to art and that good drawing skills are fundamental. Previously in sub-statement 3 the perception of the importance of drawing skills was examined, with the results indicating that drawing skills were indeed perceived as highly important. This statement examines whether the respondents regard computers as integral to the work of the Designer. Computers are generally regarded as a core tool in most business environments today and would be regarded as an essential tool for engineering and Science based occupations for high level and complex computer modelling.

It could be speculated that people may not regard computers as essential for artists, illustrators, photographers and other 'creative' occupations. The Occupational Prestige study showed that the design occupations were perceived as proximate to art and photography rather than engineering, with the exception of industrial design. As stated previously, the technology-based occupations such as the science orientated occupations are generally perceived as more prestigious than the arts and humanities (Daniel, 1983). A question of whether computers are regarded as essential or important tools for designers again relates to the perceived understanding of what designers do and how they do it.

Table 9.15. Computers are Important Tools for Designers. ANOVA

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Type III Sum of Squares</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Mean Square</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Group</td>
<td>4.604</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2.302</td>
<td>4.333</td>
<td>0.013</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sex</td>
<td>4.468</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4.468</td>
<td>8.409</td>
<td>0.004</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group * Sex</td>
<td>0.397</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0.198</td>
<td>0.373</td>
<td>0.688</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Error</td>
<td>383.639</td>
<td>722</td>
<td>0.531</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corrected Total</td>
<td>391.933</td>
<td>727</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The results show that the majority of respondents acknowledge the importance of the computer, but the ANOVA suggests that there is a significant between-groups and sex differences in the level of agreement (p< .05, p< .01, respectively). The Educators were less likely to agree to the statement than the Designers or the Public. The Public group agreed the strongest. In addition, the females were less likely to agree that computers were important to designers than the males, particularly the female designers.

11. Designers Are Professionals.

The perception of the level of professionalism of the designer is one of the main themes of this research. This statement aimed to further substantiate the findings of statement 4 that examined the perceived level of professionalism for each of the Design occupations that form the focus of this study.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Type III Sum of Squares</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Mean Square</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Group</td>
<td>79.332</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>39.666</td>
<td>42.051</td>
<td>0.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sex</td>
<td>1.621</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.621</td>
<td>1.718</td>
<td>0.190</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group * Sex</td>
<td>0.951</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0.475</td>
<td>0.504</td>
<td>0.604</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Error</td>
<td>682.941</td>
<td>724</td>
<td>0.943</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corrected Total</td>
<td>769.766</td>
<td>729</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The results for this statement were reversed prior to analysis. The results showed a significant between-groups difference in the perception of the level of professionalism. The majority of Designers (81%) strongly agreed with the statement, in contrast to only 31 per cent of the Public. However, 43 per cent of the Public were in mild agreement with the statement, suggesting that most of the non-design respondents do regard designers as professionals to some extent. Significantly though, 14 per cent of the Public remained neutral, compared to only 2 per cent of the Designers, suggesting a greater level of uncertainty on this question. The Educators, whilst believing that designers are professionals, were not as definite in their overall responses as the Designers were.

12. Designers Generally Work For Themselves.

Some occupations lend themselves to freelance or sole trader/small business work (e.g. Photographer, artist, architecture, etc.). In this type of work the client base can be inconsistent and variable and the work is often on a short-term contract basis. In an environment where many small businesses fail to survive their first year of operation, working as a sole trader or small business can be considered to be less stable than working for a large organisation. Since its inception, design has been structured in this manner with a high proportion of designers either working for themselves or working in small design studios (see chapters 2 and 4). The purpose of this statement was to see if people perceived that design was the type of occupation where you would work on your own, perhaps out of home or as a small business, or if they thought they were more likely to work within a larger organisation.
Table 9.17. Designers Generally Work for Themselves. ANOVA

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Type III Sum of Squares</th>
<th>df</th>
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<th>F</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Group</td>
<td>13.975</td>
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<td>6.988</td>
<td>7.248</td>
<td>0.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sex</td>
<td>0.002</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.002</td>
<td>0.002</td>
<td>0.964</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group * Sex</td>
<td>0.460</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0.230</td>
<td>0.238</td>
<td>0.788</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Error</td>
<td>698.988</td>
<td>725</td>
<td>0.964</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corrected Total</td>
<td>718.331</td>
<td>730</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 9.22. Designers Generally Work for Themselves. Level of Agreement by Participant Group.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Educators</th>
<th>Designers</th>
<th>Public</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Agree</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mildly Agree</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mildly Disagree</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Disagree</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The ANOVA showed a between-groups difference for this statement with all groups tending to disagree with it. There was a high level of neutral responses, particularly by the Public (38%). Almost one half of all respondents disagreed to the statement, indicating that the respondents generally believe that designers work for a company of some sort rather than as a sole proprietor.


Are art and design synonymous? The two occupations are often referred to jointly, and this statement aims to determine the extent to which they are perceived as distinct from each other. The focus groups indicated quite distinct perceptions about the two occupations, with the Design students seeking to distance themselves from artists. In contrast, the Social Science students were less concerned with this issue and generally saw many similarities. The Occupational Prestige Survey in chapter 7 showed that artist was perceived by the two student participants groups as having a lower level of social standing than the design occupations. Whereas, the members of the University of the Third Age (U3A) group, ranked artist slightly higher than the design occupations. This might have been due to their lack of knowledge of the design occupations or that they have a high regard for artists.

The relationship between art and design has, in the past, been very close with many of the design courses strongly associated with Schools of Fine Arts. Even
today many academic institutions locate the Schools of Design with the Fine Arts (c.f. College of Fine Arts, University of New South Wales, Sydney). Others such as Swinburne University of Technology (until recently) located their School of Design within the Science and Engineering Faculty. The aim of this statement was to see whether the participants differentiate between art and design.

Table 9.18. Art and Design are Two Distinct Occupations. ANOVA

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Type III Sum of Squares</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Mean Square</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Group</td>
<td>30.208</td>
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<td>15.104</td>
<td>10.924</td>
<td>0.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sex</td>
<td>4.106</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4.106</td>
<td>2.969</td>
<td>0.085</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group * Sex</td>
<td>0.846</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0.423</td>
<td>0.306</td>
<td>0.737</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Error</td>
<td>991.384</td>
<td>717</td>
<td>1.383</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corrected Total</td>
<td>1032.227</td>
<td>722</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 9.23. Art and Design are Two Distinct Occupations. Level of Agreement by Participant Group.

The ANOVA showed a significant between-groups difference for this statement. The two groups of designers strongly considered that art and design were quite different, thus concurring with the opinions expressed by the design students in the focus groups. The Public seemed to have greater difficulties answering this statement, with almost twice as many neutral responses than the design groups (10% and 19% respectively). Around 18 per cent of the Public and the Educators mildly disagreed with the statement, suggesting that these respondents regard the two occupations as the same or at least quite similar. Less than 13 per cent of the Designers disagreed with the statement, indicating that there is a small proportion of Designers who perceive the two occupations as similar.
**General Questions - Discussion**

This set of statements aimed to reveal how the three respondent groups perceive Design and Designers. The themes of the statements were derived from stages 1 and 2 of this research project, as well as the literature review and anecdotal information. The statements focused on issues of skills, academic credentials, and professionalism. The results showed that, in the majority of instances, there were differences between the three participant groups in terms of perceived understandings of design and designers. There was, however, general agreement on the way that each statement was answered. That is, all groups generally either agreed or disagreed with each statement. There were no instances where one group differed in terms of polarity.

From the findings it was found that creativity and drawing skills are perceived as essentially innate and are core attributes of the designer. The Public was most likely to perceive that designers had a higher level of innate, natural ability than did the Designers or the Educators. Presumably the Educators have a vested interest in the value of design education and, as such, believe that design is something that is taught and not as much an in-born skill. It is interesting that the responses from the Designers were more closely aligned with the Public than to the Educators on this issue. In this regard they tended towards regarding natural ability as more significant than learnt skills. Overall the results suggest that most people believe that the designer has to possess some level of natural creative ability. Although all groups agreed that designers are naturally creative, and that they have to be good at drawing, they did not regard them as experts on colour.

The question regarding colour expertise is interesting in that many would regard the ability to choose, coordinate, and apply colour as a core skill for a designer. Although no differences were found between the participant groups, sex differences were apparent, with the females more likely to consider that colour is important to design than the males. The males were more likely to give a neutral response to the statement. It would be of interest to ask the same question about each of the specific design occupations as it might be hypothesised that this trend might hold for industrial design and maybe graphic design and furniture design, but one would think that a good understanding of colour would be very important for a fashion designer or interior designer.
No significant between-groups differences were found in relation to the question on the necessity of tertiary qualifications. It is noteworthy though that the Educators were the most likely to agree to the statement and the Public the least likely. Referring back to the focus group discussions with the design students, they were somewhat ambivalent about qualifications and believed that if a person had the ability to do the work then they should not be penalised by a lack of formal qualifications. Work experience and the portfolio were believed to be more important than qualifications.

Participants were asked to respond to the statement that designers are professionals. All groups agreed with the statement, particularly the Designers. Referring back to the results for statement 4 on perceived levels of professionalism for the various design occupations, the results are consistent between the two surveys. What is somewhat confusing is why over half the respondents either did not consider that tertiary qualifications are necessary, particularly as it is generally considered that tertiary education is closely linked with professional status. Further to this, if we examine the demographic details of the participants, 97 per cent of Educators and 92 per cent of Designers had some form of post-secondary qualifications, compared to the Public group with 71 per cent. Clearly the Designers regard further education for themselves as important; they certainly regard design as having professional status, but for some reason do not regard tertiary qualifications as essential. Why this is the case would need further investigation, but could reveal an interesting insight to the practice of design.

Results were similar on the question of Design as an occupation for the very intelligent. In this instance over 80 per cent of the respondents either disagreed with the statement or gave a neutral response. This may reflect a possible view that high levels of intelligence (and occupational prestige) are more likely to be associated with the law and science based occupations rather than the arts or humanities (Daniel, 1983).

In summary, all participants perceived designers as naturally creative, they regarded drawing skills as important, and essentially regarded designers as fairly practical people. Designers were not regarded as having a high level of expertise when it comes to colour by any of the groups. Although almost of the participants agreed that designers have a natural creative ability, they also agreed that design is a learnt skill. This would suggest that there is a perception that to succeed as a designer, it is important to have a high degree of natural ability that can be enhanced by education and training.
Specific Design Occupations


It has been argued in the literature that people don't know what designers, particularly industrial designers, do (de Forest, 1990; Evamy, 1994; McDermot, 1990). Similarly the non-design participants in the focus groups clearly did not have an understanding of industrial design. Providing they were able to posit some notion of industrial design at all, they perceived industrial designers as designing big things like bridges, buildings, and machinery. Clearly, if a participant believes that industrial designers are designing bridges and machinery, they are not associating them with the design of household goods and consumer products. This statement aimed to examine the degree to which the respondents know what industrial designers do.

Table 9.19. Industrial Designers Design Everyday Items for Ordinary People. ANOVA

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Type III Sum of Squares</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Mean Square</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Group</td>
<td>60.303</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>30.152</td>
<td>24.108</td>
<td>0.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sex</td>
<td>5.472</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5.472</td>
<td>4.375</td>
<td>0.037</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group * Sex</td>
<td>2.866</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1.433</td>
<td>1.146</td>
<td>0.319</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Error</td>
<td>899.252</td>
<td>719</td>
<td>1.251</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corrected Total</td>
<td>1002.088</td>
<td>724</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 9.24. Industrial Designers Design Everyday Items for Ordinary People. Level of Agreement by Participant Group.

Figure 9.25. Industrial Designers Design Everyday Items for Ordinary People. Mean Scores for Sex by Participant Group.
The results show that there is a significant group difference (p< .001) for this statement. As to be expected the two design groups agreed the strongest with this statement, suggesting that they were more knowledgeable about industrial design than the Public. The Public showed a very high neutral response (almost 40%), probably suggesting that many of the respondents had little idea what industrial designers do. The Public were also more likely to disagree with the statement than were the design groups. A significant (p < .05) sex difference was also found with males more likely to agree with the statement than females. The results concur with previous findings that many people do not know what industrial designers do and the following question further explores this issue by examining where the respondents believe industrial designers might work.

15. Industrial Designers Work Mostly In Factory Environments.
This statement aimed to explore the perceptions of the type of work environment in which an industrial designer would be found. In the focus group discussions, the non-design participants postulated that industrial designers work in factories producing heavy machinery or large structures, or actually designing the factory itself. This notion was generally born from the term ‘industrial’ which the respondents closely associated with manufacturing and heavy machinery.

**Table 9.20. Industrial Designers Work Mostly in Factory Environments. ANOVA**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Type III Sum of Squares</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Mean Square</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Group</td>
<td>82.330</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>41.165</td>
<td>34.025</td>
<td>0.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sex</td>
<td>0.361</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.361</td>
<td>0.298</td>
<td>0.585</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group * Sex</td>
<td>2.022</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1.011</td>
<td>0.836</td>
<td>0.434</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Error</td>
<td>868.663</td>
<td>718</td>
<td>1.210</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corrected Total</td>
<td>970.890</td>
<td>723</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Again group differences were found ($p < .01$), with the Public more likely to agree with the statement. A very high neutral response (30%) was again found, although interestingly, around 35 per cent of the Public disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement. A similar proportion of the Public also agreed or strongly agreed with the statement. In contrast, the majority of the Educators and the Designers either disagreed or strongly disagreed (58% and 70%) respectively with the statement. This finding is consistent with the comments made in the focus groups and it is reasonable to argue that outside of the design industry there is little understanding of industrial design and the role it plays within our society.


Previous research has shown that industrial design is perceived as a male dominated occupation (Whitfield and Chung, 1998). Research has shown that the perceived ‘gender’ of an occupation can affect areas such as level of income and social standing, and that ‘male’ occupations will generally receive higher incomes than ‘female’ occupations (Daniel, 1983). The perceived gender of an occupation may influence the inclination of women willing to take up that occupation, and also the structure and content of the various tertiary courses. Crino et al (1983) and Fox and Susschnigg (1989) contended that women’s traditional occupations are paid less and achieve lower status and prestige than men’s traditional occupations. As was evidenced in chapter 7 and in the literature (c.f. Whitfield and Chung, 1998; Smith and Whitfield, 2003), industrial design is perceived as having the highest level of social standing among the other design occupations and is regarded as having the highest proportion of males in the profession.
In terms of the factual data, the Australian Bureau of Statistics data show that only around 17 per cent of industrial designers are female, and that it has the highest proportion of males than all of the design occupations (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 1998). In discussions with the field, there was a feeling that females may be deterred from entering the occupation due to the connotations that are evoked with the word ‘industrial’. It was for this reason that this research also included the occupation of ‘product design’ to try to determine if this is a more neutral and meaningful term for what industrial designers do – that is they [typically] design ‘products’ (although this notion is clearly not being investigated within this part of the questionnaire).

**Table 9.21 Industrial Design is a Male Dominated Occupation. ANOVA**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Type III Sum of Squares</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Mean Square</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Group</td>
<td>28.960</td>
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<td>14.480</td>
<td>12.252</td>
<td>0.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sex</td>
<td>3.183</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3.183</td>
<td>2.693</td>
<td>0.101</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group * Sex</td>
<td>1.930</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0.965</td>
<td>0.816</td>
<td>0.442</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Error</td>
<td>854.471</td>
<td>723</td>
<td>1.182</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corrected Total</td>
<td>888.691</td>
<td>728</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Figure 9.27. Industrial Design is a Male Dominated Occupation. Level of Agreement by Participant Group.**

The results showed a significant group difference for this statement (p< .001). Again, it was the Public group differing from the two design groups where the main differences occurred. The two design groups generally agreed with the statement, with over half of the respondents in each group giving a positive response. For the Public group there was a very high number of neutral responses to the statement (46%), suggesting a high degree of uncertainty. However, the Design and Educators groups had a proportionately high numbers of neutral responses (although much less than the Public group), with 24 per cent and 30 per cent.
respectively taking a neutral position. One of the biggest difficulties for respondents answering this statement is that if they don’t know what industrial design is (some respondents may not even have heard of the term before), then it is very difficult to provide more detailed knowledge of the occupation. Clearly there is uncertainty surrounding this statement and it may need further investigation before drawing definitive conclusions.

17. I Do Own Things Designed by an Industrial Designer.
This statement is related to the earlier question of what it is that industrial designers do. It stands to reason that if you believe that industrial designers design objects such as bridges and machinery, then you are not likely to believe that you own much that has been designed by them. Again, this would also be a difficult statement to answer if you have little idea what an industrial designer does.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Type III Sum of Squares</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Mean Square</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Group</td>
<td>118.772</td>
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<td>59.386</td>
<td>53.436</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sex</td>
<td>1.483</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.483</td>
<td>1.334</td>
<td>0.248</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group * Sex</td>
<td>2.466</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1.233</td>
<td>1.109</td>
<td>0.330</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Error</td>
<td>803.508</td>
<td>723</td>
<td>1.111</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corrected Total</td>
<td>973.542</td>
<td>728</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The results for this statement have been reversed, with the original statement being ‘I do not own things designed by an industrial designer’. The results show a significant group difference (p< .001) between the Public and the two design groups. Although all groups mostly agreed with the statement, it was again the strength of this agreement where the difference lay. Significantly, the Public
showed a very high neutral response to the statement (33%), again suggesting a high level of uncertainty as to what industrial designers do. In terms of the ‘strongly agree’ response, there was a large difference between the three groups, with 77 per cent of Educators, 85 per cent of Designers and only 35 per cent of the Public indicating that they strongly agree.

18. Product Designers Are Responsible For Designing Most Objects We Use. Coxon and Jones (1979) argued that the meanings of occupations are seen as consisting of a collection of concepts and images which represents the accumulated knowledge that individuals have of their occupational world. The occupational title often provides a ‘clue’ to what the occupation is and may influence the perception of understanding that a person has about an occupation (though it may not necessarily influence their actual level of understanding). This statement aims to explore the respondents’ perceived level of knowledge of what product designers do. Is the title ‘product designer’ more meaningful to the respondents? If the Public is demonstrating a high level of uncertainty about industrial design, will they show the same level of uncertainty to ‘product design’?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Type III Sum of Squares</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Mean Square</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Group</td>
<td>0.039</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0.020</td>
<td>0.021</td>
<td>0.979</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sex</td>
<td>5.942</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5.942</td>
<td>6.321</td>
<td>0.012</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group * Sex</td>
<td>3.410</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1.705</td>
<td>1.814</td>
<td>0.164</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Error</td>
<td>674.969</td>
<td>718</td>
<td>0.940</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corrected Total</td>
<td>682.722</td>
<td>723</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Figure 9.29. Product Designers are Responsible for Designing Most Objects we Use. Level of Agreement by Participant Group.

Figure 9.30. Product Designers are Responsible for Designing Most Objects we Use. Mean Scores for Sex by Participant Group.

The ANOVA showed no between-groups or age differences, although sex was found to be a significant factor (p<.02). This difference was particularly noticeable for the Educators where the females were more likely to disagree with the statement than the males; however, overall levels of disagreement were relatively low. The change in job title does seem to have made some difference to the perceived level of understanding about this occupation, with fewer respondents disagreeing with the statement than did for the similar statement for industrial designers (statement 14). Despite this, there were still a high number of neutral responses, suggesting that a high level of uncertainty still surround this occupational title.

19. Product Design Is Different To Industrial Design.

Product design and industrial design are essentially the same occupation; however, in discussions with the designers, design educators and design students, it was apparent that here were two distinct factions – those that believed that the occupational title of industrial design should be retained and others who believed that the title of product design was a more meaningful name as it more accurately describes what industrial designer do; that is, design ‘products’. For this reason there is a belief by some that it should replace industrial design as an occupational title. There was also concern that the term ‘industrial’ is misleading in that it has connotations associated with heavy machinery and engineering. As mentioned previously, this was clearly the case for the non-design participants in the focus group discussions and the Public respondents of this questionnaire. At present it is not uncommon for both titles to be used and it was for this reason that both occupational titles were included in the study. Given this, it is sufficient to say that both occupational titles describe the same job and are interchangeable.
Presumably anyone who has a reasonable level of knowledge about the occupation would know this.

### Table 9.24. Product Design is Different to Industrial Design. ANOVA

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Type III Sum of Squares</th>
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<th>F</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
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<td>32.866</td>
<td>29.649</td>
<td>0.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sex</td>
<td>16.593</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>16.593</td>
<td>14.969</td>
<td>0.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group * Sex</td>
<td>15.922</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>7.961</td>
<td>7.182</td>
<td>0.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Error</td>
<td>802.560</td>
<td>724</td>
<td>1.109</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corrected Total</td>
<td>897.344</td>
<td>729</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Figure 9.31. Product Design is Different to Industrial Design. Level of Agreement by Participant Group.

The results of the ANOVA show between-groups, sex and group by sex differences for this statement. There was a very high level of neutral responses, particularly from the Public respondents (39%). The Educators seemed also to have difficulty with this statement with 32 per cent giving a neutral response. Over half of the Public thought that the two occupations were different, as did 42 per cent of the Educators and 37 per cent of the Designers. In terms of the sex differences, females were more likely to disagree to the statement than were the males, particularly the female Designers as indicated by the group/sex interaction. The difference between the male and female Public respondents was minimal. It appears that the respondents generally regard industrial design and product design as different occupations (or they don't know at all, hence the neutral responses).
20. Ordinary People Do Wear Clothes Designed By a Fashion Designer

Fashion designers are often portrayed in the media in a similar way to movie stars. We often hear about the rich and famous being dressed by various notable fashion designers, Fashion Week is a glitzy affair attended by celebrities, the media and the elite, and we have come to expect the flamboyant, the outrageous and the extreme from the fashion industry. Whilst this type of exposure dominates fashion design, will it be perceived as out of reach of the average man or woman. This perception was the case for the non-design focus group participants in this study.

Often too, the term ‘designer’ is used by advertisers as a method of selling clothes by creating a sense of exclusivity and distinctiveness. By doing this it is possible to charge premium prices and is therefore seen as targeting the wealthier end of the market. The question is then; do ‘ordinary people’ wear clothes designed by a fashion designer? In reality, we most probably do because even the mass-produced clothes sold through chain stores have generally been designed by a fashion designer. The difference is the lack of acknowledgement. The company label sells the product, not the name of the designer, the clothes are sold as mass produced (it is normal to see racks of the same design, rather than just a few of each size) and we expect them to be far cheaper than the designer labels. It could be expected that there may be a perception that only the wealthy wear designed clothes, the ordinary person wears off the rack, store labels (which are not associated with fashion design).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Type III Sum of Squares</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Mean Square</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Group</td>
<td>19.720</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>9.860</td>
<td>5.586</td>
<td>0.004</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sex</td>
<td>13.287</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>13.287</td>
<td>7.527</td>
<td>0.006</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group * Sex</td>
<td>6.030</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3.015</td>
<td>1.708</td>
<td>0.182</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Error</td>
<td>1276.214</td>
<td>723</td>
<td>1.765</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corrected Total</td>
<td>1318.000</td>
<td>728</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The results for this statement were reversed, as the original statement in the questionnaire was “Ordinary people do not wear clothes designed by a fashion designer”. The results indicate a somewhat mixed response to this statement. A significant group difference ($p < .001$) was found, with the main difference in opinion occurring between the Public and the two Design groups. Most respondents agreed with the statement, particularly the Designers. The Public was more likely to disagree with the statement, with around one-third either strongly or mildly disagreeing. Neutral responses were relatively low for this statement, particularly by the Public (7%), and, interestingly, it was the Educators who gave the highest proportion of neutral responses (14%). A sex difference ($p < .05$) was also noted, with females more likely to believe that ordinary people do wear clothes designed by a fashion designer than males. On the whole, the women were generally much more definite in their responses than the males, who had a greater proportion of neutral responses, particularly from the two Designer groups.

21. Fashion Designers Are Mostly Female.

This statement examines gender role perceptions of fashion design. As discussed in relation to industrial design, this perception can have great significance on the status of the occupation and that of the designers themselves. Australian Bureau of Statistics data show that fewer than 20 per cent of fashion designers are male, and that of the Design occupations, it is the most female dominated (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 1998). Research has shown that jobs which are perceived as predominately ‘female’ tend to have lower occupational prestige and status, lower
incomes and can be more difficult to gain recognition and accreditation (McRobbie, 1998).

Table 9.26. Fashion Designers are Mostly Female. ANOVA

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
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<th>df</th>
<th>Mean Square</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Group</td>
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<td>0.895</td>
<td>0.728</td>
<td>0.483</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sex</td>
<td>15.798</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>15.798</td>
<td>12.841</td>
<td>0.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group * Sex</td>
<td>2.215</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1.107</td>
<td>0.900</td>
<td>0.407</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Error</td>
<td>888.211</td>
<td>722</td>
<td>1.230</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corrected Total</td>
<td>910.076</td>
<td>727</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 9.35. Fashion Designers are Mostly Female. Level of Agreement by Participant Group.

Figure 9.36. Fashion Designers are Mostly Female. Mean Scores for Sex by Participant Group.

The ANOVA showed that there was no between-groups difference in the perception that fashion designers are mostly female, with most of the respondents tending to disagree with the statement. All three groups had a moderately high proportion of neutral responses suggesting that there may be some degree of uncertainty. The study by Smith and Whitfield (2003) indicated that both the Australian and Korean participants in the study perceived fashion design as ‘female’, and the focus group participants in this research concurred with this perception. It is of note that the participants in this study were more likely to disagree with the statement, indicating that they believed it to not be a ‘female’ occupation. This could be driven by the seemingly high number of prominent fashion designers who are male (Versace, Yves St Laurent, etc.). The ANOVA also showed a sex difference in the perception of women in fashion design, with males more likely to agree with the statement than females, especially the males in the Public group. The discussion and ramifications of this finding will be discussed later.
22. Graphic Designers Are Creative People.

One of the perceptions that emerged from the literature and the focus group discussions was that graphic designers were regarded as highly creative. Within the workplace they are often referred to as the ‘creatives’ in the same way as accountants are the ‘number crunchers’, lawyers are the ‘legals’, or doctors are the ‘medicos’. Although graphic design is one of the more recognised design occupations, there still appears to be differences in the knowledge and perceptions of what they do. The non-design focus group participants tended to regard creativity, drawing skills and natural ability as important skills for the designer. In contrast, the design students emphasised the need for sound business acumen. The purpose of this statement is to see if there are differences in the extent to which the participants in each of the three groups associated creativity with graphic design.

Table 9.27. Graphic Designers are Creative People. ANOVA

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Type III Sum of Squares</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Mean Square</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Group</td>
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<td>1.982</td>
<td>3.458</td>
<td>0.032</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sex</td>
<td>0.812</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.812</td>
<td>1.417</td>
<td>0.234</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group * Sex</td>
<td>1.450</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0.725</td>
<td>1.266</td>
<td>0.283</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Error</td>
<td>414.891</td>
<td>724</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corrected Total</td>
<td>421.748</td>
<td>729</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 9.37. Graphic Designers are Creative People. Level of Agreement by Participant Group.

The ANOVA showed between-groups differences for this statement (p< .05) and, as Figure 9.37 shows, most respondents agreed with this statement suggesting that creativity is strongly associated with the graphic designer. This result is not unexpected and concurs with the focus group findings and the responses to other similar statements within this questionnaire. The questions raised from this result
is how does this perception influence perceived professionalism, the role of graphic design in society and the sorts of people attracted to the profession?

23. Graphic Design Is Different To Interior Design.

This statement again explores the respondent’s understanding and knowledge of the individual design occupations. Graphic design and interior design are quite different, but does the fact that they share the same expression ‘design’ result in the respondents perceiving fewer differences than there actually are?

Table 9.28. Graphic Design is Different to Interior Design. ANOVA

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
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<th>Mean Square</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
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<td>Group</td>
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<td>14.367</td>
<td>18.951</td>
<td>0.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sex</td>
<td>0.104</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.104</td>
<td>0.137</td>
<td>0.711</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group * Sex</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>0.573</td>
<td>0.756</td>
<td>0.470</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Error</td>
<td>546.593</td>
<td>721</td>
<td>0.758</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corrected Total</td>
<td>580.553</td>
<td>726</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 9.38. Graphic Design is Different to Interior Design. Level of Agreement by Participant Group.

The ANOVA shows that the respondents agreed that the two occupations are different. However, there is again a between-groups difference due to the Public being a lot less likely to strongly agree to the statement than the design groups (50% compared to 86% of Designers and 75% of Educators). No significant sex differences were evident. The results suggest that most of the respondents did distinguish between the two occupations, and the low number of neutral responses might suggest a high degree of certainty in the responses.
24. Interior Designers Only Work For Wealthy People.

Along with fashion design, interior design is another design profession often discussed and profiled in the media. There often appears to be some confusion about the difference between interior design and interior decoration, and this was evidenced throughout this study in the focus groups discussions and anecdotal information. Magazines such as Vogue Living, House and Garden, or Monument; lifestyle programs such as Better Homes and Gardens or Our House actively promote interior design and interior decoration. In addition, the popular daily press and many ‘women’s’ magazines such as The Women’s Weekly, Women’s Day, Family Circle, and New Idea often have articles and features based around interior design or interior decoration. A common theme with most of these media is the tendency to feature homes and buildings at the upper end of the housing market. The homes of the wealthy elite, movie stars and other celebrities are more likely to be reviewed than the basic suburban home.

Whilst this is perhaps not unreasonable, the voyeur and the dreamer in us all would like to aspire to these images, it may contribute to an unreal perception of what interior designers do. The non-design participants in the focus groups, for example, tended to equate interior design with little more than furniture placement, selecting cushions, floor rugs, ornaments, etc. and colour selection. Even when describing what an interior designer might do when fitting out a commercial interior there was misunderstanding and uncertainty by the focus group participants and they struggled to agree on the role of the interior designer. What the participants did agree on was that interior design is a service only accessible to the wealthy elite.

Table 9.29. Interior Designers Only Work for Wealthy People. ANOVA

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Type III Sum of Squares</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Mean Square</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Group</td>
<td>31.221</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>15.610</td>
<td>10.747</td>
<td>0.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sex</td>
<td>6.956</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6.956</td>
<td>4.789</td>
<td>0.029</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group * Sex</td>
<td>9.614</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4.807</td>
<td>3.309</td>
<td>0.037</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Error</td>
<td>1051.653</td>
<td>724</td>
<td>1.453</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corrected Total</td>
<td>1109.348</td>
<td>729</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The ANOVA showed a between-groups difference (p< .001) for this statement. Generally, the trend was to disagree with the statement, but it was the strength of the disagreement where the responses differed. The Public was most likely of all of the groups to agree with the statement (36%, compared to 29% of Educators and 22% of Designers), and the Designers were most likely to disagree (68%, compared to 54% of Educators and 53% of the Public). Interestingly, the Educators gave the highest proportion of neutral responses (17%).

Sex was found to be significant (p< .05), with females disagreeing more strongly than the males, particularly the females Designers. Although the difference between males and females was relatively minor for the Public, the males were slightly more likely to disagree to the statement than the Public females.

**Specific Questions - Discussion**

This section examined the perceptions of the three participant groups on statements that were specific to the design occupations in this research. Like the previous section, the statements stemmed from the focus group discussions and the literature. Obviously, in 11 statements it is not possible to raise all of the issues that could be or should be discussed. These statements therefore provide a small insight into what is a large and complex area.
Through the information gathered in the focus groups and the literature it was apparent that of all the design occupations, industrial design was the most misunderstood. For this reason more statements were included for this occupation. The results showed that this notion was supported by this research. As expected, the Public were least knowledgeable on industrial design and would often defer to the neutral position suggesting that they had little confidence in answering the statements definitively one way or another. Like the focus group participants, the Public was more likely to consider that industrial designers worked in factories and that they themselves didn’t own anything designed by an industrial designer. Although the Public still showed a high number of neutral responses for the statement that product designers are responsible for designing most objects we use, more respondents associated product design with household goods than industrial design.

Early in constructing this research, the decision was made not to have gender as a major focus of the study. This was not because it was deemed unimportant, but that it was deemed a very important topic that was possibly more deserving of its own research. It was considered that gender issues could very easily overwhelm the rest of the research and would change the project plan from the general to a thesis based more on feminist theory looking at issues such as access to education, inequalities, the glass-ceiling, sexual discrimination and so on. Whilst it would have been very informative and insightful to explore these issues in much greater depth, these will be left for further investigation more deserving of what could be adequately covered in this thesis.

Having said this there are some brief observations that can be made from the findings that can be drawn from the statements around gender and industrial design and fashion design. The reason for targeting these two occupations was that Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) data showed that these are the most gendered of the design occupations (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 1998). Also, previous research that has examined the perceptions of design has produced results that concur with the ABS data (Whitfield and Chung, 1998; Smith and Whitfield, 2003). The results of this research are consistent with previous findings and show that there is a tendency for the participants to perceive fashion design as a ‘female’ occupation and industrial design as a ‘male’ occupation.
The high number of neutral responses from all groups is somewhat surprising, as previous research (Smith and Whitfield, 2003) would suggest that people are usually prepared to commit to identifying the perceived gender of occupations. However, it should be noted that the study by Smith and Whitfield (2003) used a six-point Likert scale, and so it was not possible for respondents to select a neutral response. Despite this, it would have been expected therefore that this might have been one area where the respondents might have felt some degree of confidence when answering the statement. Although this research did not examine the gender perceptions of the other design professions, the study by Whitfield and Chung (1998) found that interior design and graphic design appear to be perceived as ‘female’ occupations, whilst furniture design is regarded as ‘male’. The final section in this chapter will explore the actual gender differences in income and employment of the participants, particularly the design groups.

Another issue or theme that was explored was the perception of elitism or exclusivity around design. As discussed in a number of instances throughout this thesis, we are encouraged to view design as something that is an expression of exclusivity, quality, chic, privilege, fashionable and so on. There is a strong association between design and industries such as film and television, print media, advertising and it is often seen as the domain of the rich and famous. Perhaps because of this, there is a sense that design is not for the ‘everyday person’ and this is perhaps most the case for interior design and fashion design. While the middle-class might shop at up-market chain store fashion houses such as Country Road, Table Eight, etc., and obtain interior design advice from magazines and lifestyle shows, there is the sense that most of the population are excluded from the world of elite fashion and design.

The results showed that most of the respondents disagreed with the above perception, although there were differences between each of the participant groups. Designers didn’t perceive design as being exclusively for the wealthy and the elite. The educators were a lot less homogeneous, particularly for the statement on interior design being only for the wealthy, where they had significant numbers both agreeing and disagreeing with the statement (although with a leaning toward disagreeing).

This group of statements briefly raised issues around the participant’s knowledge of the individual design occupation, with a particular focus on industrial design, gender, and elitism. The results are only a small part of a bigger picture of the
perceptions of design and designers and have merely served to highlight a few of the issues that have emerged from previous research and the literature. The following discussion will briefly tie together some of the findings from the general and the specific design statements.

A major theme to emerge is the perception that design is closely associated with creativity. The statements around designers and creativity indicated that this was regarded as a core attribute of the designer, and the participants almost unanimously agreed with all statements on this topic. Despite this, the importance of education was also generally recognised, although the participants were quite divided on the need for tertiary qualifications. It was notable that the Educators did not put greater emphasis on the importance of tertiary education for design than either of the other groups.

A number of statements aimed to determine whether participants drew distinctions between particular occupations. Specifically participants were asked to indicate if they perceived differences between art and design, industrial design and product design, and graphic design and interior design. Overall, the respondents were confident in distinguishing between graphic design and interior design and, to a slightly lesser extent, art and design. But there was a lot less certainty about industrial design and product design. As previously mentioned, the two occupations are essentially the same, so if the respondents had a good understanding of what these jobs were then it would be expected that they would have disagreed with the statements used in the questionnaire. Instead there were a high number of neutral responses and most respondents agreed with the statement. For all three statements though, the Public demonstrated less of an understanding of design than did the Designers and the Educators. Although this is not surprising for industrial design, it is interesting that a significant number of the Public and the Educators regarded Art and Design as the same.

Overall, the findings show that there were significant differences between each of the three participant groups for most of the statements, though, the differences were generally not so much ones of polar opposites, but they lay in the strength of the agreement or disagreement. Generally, the Public was more likely to give a neutral response to the statements, suggesting that they were less sure about the specificity of the Design occupations than the other two groups (as one would expect).
The next question looks at a further set of statements about Design and Designers. It is anticipated that they will provide further information and confirmation on many of the themes that have emerged in the research to date.

**Question 7 Occupational Standing of Design**

Question 7 consisted of 25 statements about each of the six design occupations being examined in this thesis - graphic designer, industrial designer, furniture designer, interior designer, product designer and fashion designer. Participants were required to choose a response that best fit their perceptions about each of the occupational groups. The question was divided into two sections – Part A and Part B. Part A consisted of 17 statements related to the key attributes needed to perform work for each design occupation. The response scale was a 5-point Likert scale with possible responses ranging from Always to Never. Due to some concerns about the reliability of the scale used in the Part A of this question, the decision was made to exclude this set of questions from the analysis. Part B consisted of 8 statements for which participants were required to respond on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from Strongly Agree to Strongly Disagree. The statements were:

7.18 They are professionals.
7.19 They are an important part of Australia’s economic well being.
7.20 Anyone with average intelligence could do this job for which they are paid.
7.21 They have a high level of social standing in the community.
7.22 They work in a very specialised field.
7.23 Society could not exist without them.
7.24 They have a boring, repetitive job.
7.25 They are important to Australia’s trade and export with other countries.

The statements relate to the themes of importance to the community, occupational status, occupational prestige, and level of professionalism. For the purposes of the analysis, the scores for statements 7.20 and 7.24 were reversed so that a high score would always correspond to the most positive statement about designers. The scores for each of the eight statements by each of the six design occupational groups were added to obtain an index that represented an ‘Occupational Standing Score’ for each occupation. This index was evaluated using a Cronbach’s Alpha. Cronbach's alpha measures how well a set of items (or variables) measures a single unidimensional latent construct. It is a coefficient of reliability (or consistency) associated with the true score of the underlying variable being measured (Santos, 1999). Table 9.30 below shows the results. As can be seen, all results indicated a
high level of reliability for each of the indices as a reliability score of 0.70 is generally regarded as acceptable for this measure (Nunnally, 1978).

Table 9.30. Cronbach’s Alpha for Index Reliability by Design Occupation.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Occupational Group</th>
<th>Cronbach’s Alpha</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Graphic Design Occupational Standing Score</td>
<td>0.78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Industrial Design Occupational Standing Score</td>
<td>0.76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Furniture Design Occupational Standing Score</td>
<td>0.80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interior Design Occupational Standing Score</td>
<td>0.79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Product Design Occupational Standing Score</td>
<td>0.78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fashion Design Occupational Standing Score</td>
<td>0.77</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The mean Occupational Standing Score for each occupational group was calculated and shown in Figure 9.41 below. The higher the score, the less professional the occupations are perceived to be. The graph shows that the Public consistently rate the design occupations as lower on this scale than do the two design groups. The Educators rated all six occupations the highest on this scale.

Figure 9.41. Mean Occupational Standing Score by Participant Group.
The mean Occupational Standing score was analysed by a Multivariate Analysis of Variance (MANOVA) for each occupation testing for both between-groups and sex differences. The results are detailed in Table 9.31. The MANOVA showed a significant between-groups difference between the mean Occupational Standing scores. Sex was also found to be significant, except for industrial design. A group by sex interaction was found for graphic design, industrial design and product design indicating that within the participant groups, sex differences also occurred.

Table 9.31. Comparisons of Professionalism Scores by Group and Sex. MANOVA

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Dependent Variable</th>
<th>Type III Sum of Squares</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Mean Square</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Group</td>
<td>Graphic Design</td>
<td>8.492</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4.246</td>
<td>8.954</td>
<td>0.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Industrial Design</td>
<td>5.050</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2.525</td>
<td>6.377</td>
<td>0.002</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Furniture Design</td>
<td>14.267</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>7.134</td>
<td>15.077</td>
<td>0.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Interior Design</td>
<td>16.914</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>8.457</td>
<td>17.217</td>
<td>0.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Product Design</td>
<td>5.345</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2.673</td>
<td>6.256</td>
<td>0.002</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Fashion Design</td>
<td>8.871</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4.435</td>
<td>9.905</td>
<td>0.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sex</td>
<td>Graphic Design</td>
<td>4.299</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4.299</td>
<td>9.066</td>
<td>0.003</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Industrial Design</td>
<td>1.448</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.448</td>
<td>3.657</td>
<td>0.056</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Furniture Design</td>
<td>5.515</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5.515</td>
<td>11.655</td>
<td>0.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Interior Design</td>
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<td>1</td>
<td>3.749</td>
<td>7.632</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Product Design</td>
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<td>2.999</td>
<td>7.021</td>
<td>0.008</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Fashion Design</td>
<td>2.840</td>
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<td>2.840</td>
<td>6.342</td>
<td>0.012</td>
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<tr>
<td>Group*Sex</td>
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<td>1.955</td>
<td>4.122</td>
<td>0.017</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Industrial Design</td>
<td>3.096</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1.548</td>
<td>3.910</td>
<td>0.020</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Furniture Design</td>
<td>2.207</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1.103</td>
<td>2.332</td>
<td>0.098</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Interior Design</td>
<td>2.521</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1.261</td>
<td>2.566</td>
<td>0.078</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Product Design</td>
<td>3.108</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1.554</td>
<td>3.637</td>
<td>0.027</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Fashion Design</td>
<td>1.998</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0.999</td>
<td>2.231</td>
<td>0.108</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Error</td>
<td>Graphic Design</td>
<td>345.224</td>
<td>728</td>
<td>0.474</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
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<td>288.224</td>
<td>728</td>
<td>0.396</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Furniture Design</td>
<td>344.454</td>
<td>728</td>
<td>0.473</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Interior Design</td>
<td>357.581</td>
<td>728</td>
<td>0.491</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Product Design</td>
<td>311.002</td>
<td>728</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Fashion Design</td>
<td>326.005</td>
<td>728</td>
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</tr>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Industrial Design</td>
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<td>733</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Furniture Design</td>
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<td>733</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Interior Design</td>
<td>379.563</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Product Design</td>
<td>321.019</td>
<td>733</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Fashion Design</td>
<td>338.255</td>
<td>733</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Figure 9.42. Graphic Design Mean Professionalism Score by Group by Sex.

Figure 9.43. Industrial Design Mean Professionalism Score by Group by Sex.

Figure 9.44. Furniture Design Mean Professionalism Score by Group by Sex.

Figure 9.45. Interior Design Mean Professionalism Score by Group by Sex.

Figure 9.46. Product Design Mean Professionalism Score by Group by Sex.

Figure 9.47. Fashion Design Mean Professionalism Score by Group by Sex.
Question 7 comprised a set of eight statements whose scores were combined to produce a new variable that was deemed to be a ‘Level of Professionalism’ score. This score is a composite score based on the individual results for questions 7.18 to 7.25 of the design questionnaire. This score was deemed to represent a composite perception of professionalism, importance to Australia’s economy, social standing and occupational specialty. In recalling the results of Question 5, the Public were also less likely to regard designers as professionals (statement 5.11), regard design as important to Australia’s economy (statement 5.09), or perceive design as an occupation for the very intelligent (5.07). Thus the participants show a high degree of consistency between the various statements. Throughout this study it has been apparent that non-designers rate design lower in all aspects of social standing and professionalism and regard design as less importance to Australia economic well being.

**Supplementary Questions.**

Part two of the questionnaire consisted of a range of questions focusing on participants’ demographics and their work experiences. Participant demographics were described at the beginning of this chapter and will not be repeated here. Although all three participant groups completed this section, the focus of the analysis was on the two design groups. The following is a selection of questions from this section that give some insights on design and designers. The questions concentrate on the way designers make their career choices, their education levels, the types of organisations they work in and the amount they are paid. Although it is possible to perform a vast array of statistical analysis on these questions, particularly in conjunction with some of the questions in Part one of the questionnaire, analysis and comment will be kept to a minimum. It would be worth undertaking further advanced analyses in future studies.

The participants were asked to nominate who had the most influence on their choice of career. Figure 9.48 shows that, for all participant groups, family is most influential, with teachers the second. Within the ‘other’ category the most common responses were either ‘life interest’ or ‘general interest’. The ANOVA (Table 9.32) showed no significant between-groups or sex differences, although it is interesting (but perhaps not so surprising) to note that the Educators were far more likely to nominate a teacher as most influential in their career choice.
Figure 9.48. Person with the Most Influence in the Participant’s Choice of Career.

Table 9.32. Person with Most Influence on participant’s Choice of Career.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Type III Sum of Squares</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Mean Square</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Group</td>
<td>35.141</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>5.857</td>
<td>0.943</td>
<td>0.464</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sex</td>
<td>20.410</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>20.410</td>
<td>3.286</td>
<td>0.070</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group * Sex</td>
<td>22.159</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>11.080</td>
<td>1.784</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Error</td>
<td>3279.352</td>
<td>528</td>
<td>6.211</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corrected Total</td>
<td>3314.493</td>
<td>534</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 9.33 and Figure 9.49 indicate the differences in levels of post-secondary education between the participant groups. It may be recalled that for Question 5.03, the participants were quite divided or unsure on the need for tertiary education for designers. Figure 9.49 shows the proportion of participants with some level of post-secondary education. An ANOVA shows a significant difference (p< 0.01) between the three groups. Further analysis indicated that the two design groups were more likely to have post-secondary qualifications than the Public and, as expected, the Educators were most likely to have a higher degree (defined as Master or PhD). Some caution should be taken here though when comparing the three groups. Although the Public group is believed to be reasonably representative of the general population, it should be noted that around three quarters of the respondents are women and most work part-time (this is not surprising as the demands of a child with diabetes). However, whilst there are some concerns about the Public group on this parameter, Australian census figures show that only around 17 per cent of the general population have a Bachelors
degree or above and 33 per cent of males and 25 per cent of females had some sort of advanced certificate or diploma (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2002, cat co. 4230.0).

Table 9.33. Proportion of participants with Post-Secondary Schooling

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Qualification</th>
<th>Educators</th>
<th>No Post-Secondary Qualifications (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Educators</td>
<td>97</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Designers</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 9.49. Post-Secondary Qualifications by Participant Group.

The following tables relate to the employment of the participants. The participants were asked to describe their position within the company they work for. What stood out most prominently is that nearly two-thirds of the Designers work for themselves, and that in the majority of cases (90%), these companies have fewer than 10 employees. Three quarters of the design owners reported earning less than $80,000 per year. Thus, it might be concluded that designers often work as a small business owner, with fewer than 5 employees, on a middle income. As a manager, half the Designers earned $40,000 to $60,000, and as a senior employee nearly 80 per cent earned under $60,000.

The following tables are included for further information and will not be commented on further. They may provide some useful background for further research or investigation. The information raised in the tables raises some interesting
questions about gender issues, the design’s place within business and organisations, and the skills, particularly the business skills, needed by Designers to successfully survive and compete in a competitive market.

Table 9.34. Position in Company by Sex by Participant Group.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Educators (%)</th>
<th>Designers (%)</th>
<th>Public (%)</th>
<th>Total (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Owner</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manager</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Senior Employee</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Junior Employee</td>
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Table 9.35. Number of Employees in Place of Work by Participant Group.

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Table 9.36. Position in Company by Company Size by Participant Group.

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Table 9.37. Number employees in Company by Sex by Participant Group.

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Table 9.38. Position in Company by Income by Participant Group.

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Conclusion

This chapter presented the results obtained from a mail-out questionnaire which aimed to explore the differences in perceptions of design and designers between respondents from both design and non-design backgrounds. From the results obtained in Question 1, it was determined that the respondents generally shared similar understandings of the relationships between occupations and society. From this finding, it is postulated that any differences found between the three groups may relate to the respondents’ understanding and knowledge of design and designers. However, this would be influenced by each participant’s exposure to
design. Question 2 therefore explored the respondents’ level of knowledge of a set of 25 occupations, including design. The results showed that the Public group had very little knowledge of design, ranking all but interior design in the ten least known occupations. It would be expected that this low level of exposure to design would affect their responses to the remainder of the questionnaire.

With the Public demonstrating a low level of knowledge about what designers do, it is not surprising that they rated them lower on their perceived level of professionalism than the two design participant groups. In general the Public tended to perceive the design occupations as semi-professional. This result is to be expected, particularly if the results of the occupational prestige questionnaire from chapter 7 are recalled. In that survey, the design occupations were ranked in the middle of the scale proximate to other occupations that are generally perceived as semi-professional such as photographer, real estate agent, teachers, and police person. The Design group tended to rank the design occupations much higher, and proximate to lawyer, pilot, physiotherapist and architect, occupations that are more likely to be perceived as professional with recognised attributes of professionalism (e.g. restricted membership, specialised body of knowledge, codes of ethics and practice, etc.).

It has been argued that the concept of professionalism is a construct that is determined by each individual. From this point of view, it is therefore not regarded as problematic for an occupation to be perceived as professional (or any other occupational category), but not meet the generally prescribed criteria of professionalism. The extent to which the broader community regards an occupation as professional is a reflection of the extent to which the members of that community share the construct. If design is perceived as professional, then that is what it is. What is problematic (for the design industry) is that the Designers are the only group to perceive design as professional. Even the Educators are not as united in the perceived level of professionalism as are the Designers. What the results indicate is that there is no shared perception of the level of professionalism of the design occupations. Question 5 consisted of a series of statements about design and designers. A number of these also looked at the question of perceived professionalism and related subjects such as education and intelligence. Although the results were divided, more respondents perceived that a high level of intelligence is not necessary for designers, particularly the Public group, and that designers don’t necessarily require tertiary qualifications. The results of the statement on whether designer are professionals showed a high
degree of consistency with previous results, with the Design groups perceiving designers as more ‘professional’ than the Public group. For design to achieve the rewards that go with professional status – increased income, occupational prestige, etc., there would need to be much greater consensus on the level of professionalism, similar to that achieved by occupational groups such as law, medicine and architecture.

Question 7 Part B also looked at the issue of perceived professionalism and occupational standing. Like Question 5, this question consisted of a series of statements that the respondents were asked to score according to an agree/disagree scale. Unlike Question 5 though, the questions were found to have a high degree of index reliability (Cronbach’s Alpha) when combined to give a single ‘occupational standing’ score. The results from this question also found that the Public group was more likely to perceive designers as having lower perceived occupational standing than did the Designers and the Educators. It is also notable that females generally perceived the design occupations as having higher perceived occupational standing than the males as evidenced from the results from this question.

Also included in the questionnaire was a set of questions examining each respondent’s path to their chosen career, details about their occupational and educational situation and general demographic information. It is interesting to note that family has the biggest influence on career choice, with teachers the next most influential. For many occupations this is not an issue as there is a general understanding by members of society what the job is and what is involved (e.g. teaching, medicine, law, architecture, cleaner, plumber, etc.). It could be postulated that people would be far more comfortable steering someone towards an occupation that they are themselves familiar with. What the results of the questionnaire have shown is that there are differences in perceptions of what design is. This may affect the propensity of family members to steer a young person to that career. Of course this can happen with many careers, and undoubtedly does. However, it must be in the best interest of design to improve the general level of knowledge and understanding of the occupation by the community with the goal of improving its perceived status. This may, in turn, improve the rewards for those working and teaching in the field and assist in attracting the best candidates for future designers.
Some interesting anomalies were found with the results of the questionnaire. In Question 5 respondents were asked if they believed that tertiary education was necessary for designers (5.6). Most of the respondents indicated that this wasn’t necessary. When looking at the educational qualifications of the respondents, notably the Designers and the Educators, the majority had a degree or a diploma and fewer than ten per cent had no qualifications. So although they don’t regard tertiary qualifications as entirely necessary, they themselves have them.

With such a large proportion of designers working in small businesses, it could be argued that this situation only serves to maintain design’s position on the edge or periphery of core business activity. If large organisations are not employing designers as part of their permanent staff, then the occupation will be perceived simply as a service to be brought into the organisation when needed. The ramifications for designers might be another area for further investigation.

Gender differences were found in level of income, position in company and ownership of business. The study found that female designers were less likely to own their own business and more likely to work in small owner operated organisations than were the males. It was also found that the income levels of the female designers were much lower than males. Clearly there are a number of gender inequalities to still be addressed within the design field and this might be a fruitful area for further study. As previously mentioned, a deliberate decision was made not to include gender as a major topic for examination in this thesis. Not because it is not worthy of study, but because it was felt that it was an area that could justifiably be a complete topic for a research thesis of its own. The level of income of the Public group is no doubt skewed by the fact that the questionnaire was generally completed by a female carer (mother) of a diabetic child. Anecdotal evidence suggests that these respondents choose to work part-time or to not work so as to be available to their child.

Overall the results of the questionnaire revealed that there are differences in the way Design is perceived between those working in the field, the Designers, those teaching in the field, the Educators, and the Public. A number of the questions asked the respondents to describe the type of company they worked for and their position within that company. The results suggest that designers are not generally employed within large businesses, but more likely to be in small consultancy style businesses. It was notable that the majority of designers who participated in this study owned their own business and that the business was most likely to have
fewer than five employees. Gender appears to be influential on two main, but highly related, fronts. First, there is a relationship between gender and the perceptions of what design is and designers do. This in turn influences the stream of design individuals work in, with females more likely to work as fashion designers or interior designers, while males are more likely to work as industrial/product designers or furniture designers. Graphic design is the only occupation where gender is spread evenly between the two sexes (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 1998).

Overall there were significant differences found in the way design and designers were perceived by each of the participant groups. From the phenomenologically informed perspective driving this study it could be concluded that while there are shared typifications within groups, in a broader sense the typifications are not fully habitualised within society. It should be noted though that most of the differences in perceptions were not diametrically opposed, rather it was usually that one group agreed to a greater or lesser extent than the others. As the questionnaire was only a snapshot of a particular point in history it might be useful to undertake a similar study in the future to provide a sense of whether perceptions are static or changing.

As stated at the outset, the study was intended to provide a general picture of the perceptions of design and designers and it was thought that the results were likely to raise more questions than would be answered. The questionnaire was a tool for investigating the perceptions of the different participant groups and it is hoped that the results will provide direction for further investigation into design and designers. The next chapter will discuss the implications from the research findings and the concluding chapter will attempt to reconcile and consolidate the findings and provide some suggestions for future investigation.
10. **DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION**

**Introduction**

The emergence of contemporary design occupations traditionally has been credited to the industrialisation of society and the increase in demand for consumer goods (Pacey, 1992). Within the profession there is concern that design is poorly understood (de Forest, 1990; Evamy, 1994; McDermot, 1990, Molotch, 2003)\(^{10}\), and that this lack of understanding is not confined to the general public, but also that there is ambiguity and confusion within academic institutions and within the design profession itself. Swearer and Margolin (cited in de Forest, 1990) argued that there is a need for a clear definition of what design is, or it will forever be “doomed to remain on the fringes of academic discourse”, and that there needs to be clearer understandings of the boundaries of the design discipline just as there are in other academic disciplines. Broadly speaking, the aim of this research was to address this issue and determine if there is a lack of understanding of design, and, if so, to attempt to discover how design and designers are understood.

One of the most defining aspects of design is that it is everywhere. It pervades our life - whether we are at work, school, home, or at leisure, design touches everything we do. It is surprising then to discover that there appears to be such a poor understanding of what design is and what designers do. It has been suggested that there is a general perception that design is either not necessary or it is a luxury (Gendron, in Lawrence, 2000b). Miles (1998) argued that design has played a major role in the development of capitalism and the rise of the consumer culture. He suggested that design is used to create “the illusion that there are differentiations in design between products”, when in fact, differences are often quite minor and inconsequential (ibid: 42). Miles also postulated that design is used as a tool to convince consumers to buy what they do not need, in the belief that they do in fact need the product. By constantly changing product design,

\(^{10}\) This is particularly so for graphic and industrial design. Fashion and interior design seem to have much clearer public profiles.
building in planned obsolescence and clever marketing, design will continue to play a pivotal role in a consumerist culture.

This thesis explored how people perceived design and designers by attempting to understand what it is that both those working in the design field and the public think designers do and what their perceptions of designers are. The underlying tenet of the study was that design is a fundamental driver in the growth and maintenance of a consumer society, and that capitalism depends on design to provide a constant source of goods and services. Given the significance of design to the economy and capitalist enterprise, it is surprising that it has received such little attention either from the sociological domain or from within design academia itself.

This research was conducted in three stages. First, was a study of the perceived occupational prestige of the design professions. Secondly, a number of focus groups were conducted that explored how design and designers are perceived by both design and non-design student populations. The third and final stage was a questionnaire that was used as an instrument to further investigate the perceptions of design and designers. A phenomenologically informed interactionist perspective provided a theoretical basis from which to study social perceptions. Within this perspective the social world is seen as one of meanings and, in order to make sense of the world, these meanings are shared (Schutz, 1971; Silverman, 1971). These shared meanings are then 'objectified' to become a 'typification' and provide us with schemata through which we understand our social environment. A phenomenologically informed analysis of the design occupations involves comparing typifications in order to establish if these are shared. In the interpretation of the results the aim has been to seek what people understand and know about design and designers, and the meanings that they ascribe to this knowledge.

**Perceptions of Design and Designers**

The perceptions of design and designers were explored using a variety of methodologies, including an occupational prestige survey, a series of focus groups discussions with participants from both design and non-design backgrounds, and a mail-out questionnaire.
The study commenced with an occupational prestige survey to determine how the design occupations are perceived in relation to a selection of other occupations. This is the only study that has specifically included the design professions in an occupational status and prestige assessment, despite the fact that this type of survey has existed for over 70 years and been used extensively in the study of occupational prestige\textsuperscript{11}. In addition, unlike most of the previous surveys, occupational prestige was analysed using multidimensional scaling, resulting in a two-dimensional mapping of occupational prestige as opposed to the more conventional one dimensional ranking. This novel approach to the analysis of occupational prestige clearly showed that the design professions were clustered together at an intermediate level within the two dimensional space, suggesting that participants found it difficult to differentiate between the individual design occupations. However, they did see design as distinct from art and architecture.

The results also suggested some degree of uncertainty about the design professions and that ‘guesswork’ was often used to rate them within the prestige structure. The findings generally concurred with previous findings (c.f. Daniel, 1983; Smith and Whitfield, 2003), although there were variations between the participant groups in how the design occupations were ranked. As expected the design group rated them higher than did the other two participant groups, but in all cases they were ranked lower than other recognised professionals such as doctor, lawyer and judge. The second, qualitative dimension of the occupational prestige survey MDSs indicated that the respondents tended to differentiate the middle-ranked occupations on the basis of a service to the community distinction. The design professions were generally located in the MDS space at the opposite side of the scale to those occupations that are generally perceived as providing high levels of community service such as nursing, police and teachers. Design was more likely to be co-located with occupations such as journalist, sportsperson or photographer, occupations that might be regarded as less important to community well-being than those that look after our health and safety. The research therefore indicates that

\textsuperscript{11} The survey by Daniel (1983) gave occupational prestige scores for the design occupations, but these were derived scores and the design occupations were not included in the list of occupations rated by the participants in that study. The survey by Smith and Whitfield (2003), only included 16 occupations in the prestige scale (five of which were design occupations) as against 65 in the current survey and so was of narrower scope.
design was not regarded as essential to the community as occupations such as teaching and nursing, nor regarded as prestigious as occupations such as law, medicine, architecture and engineering.

Other studies into occupational prestige using similar assessment tools have found that there is generally a strong correlation between perceived levels of professionalism and occupational prestige (c.f. Ollivier, 2000). The findings of this study generally concur. The respondents from the mail-out questionnaire rated the design occupations as between skilled-workers and professionals. There was certainly no agreement among the participant groups about level of professionalism, although the general trend was strikingly similar (all participant groups rated industrial design as more professional and furniture design as least professional). Although the perceived level of professionalism for other occupational groups was not tested in this study, it is likely that the participants would agree that occupations such as medicine and law are professions. It can be assumed that there is correlation between the results of the occupational prestige rankings and the perceived levels of professionalism; however, further investigation would be needed to verify this.

Previous occupational prestige studies have also shown that perceived moral worthiness is often used to rate occupations (Daniel, 1983; Duncan, 1961; MacKinnon and Langford, 1994; Ollivier, 2000; Taft, 1953). The results of this study indicated that participants did not consider that design rated highly on this dimension. For eminent design theorists such as Tony Fry or Victor Margolin (and no doubt numerous others), this would be of significant concern. These design theorists have been strong advocates of design as a socially responsible profession, particularly in sustainability. It could reasonably be argued that were design to be regarded as the driving force of environmental sustainability and an occupation with a social conscience, rather than a frivolous caricature of waste and mindless consumerism (as Fry, 2005 described the media depiction of design), it would be reasonable to suggest that design could eventually be seen as possessing a level of service to the community or moral worthiness. At this point in time, it appears that design is a long way from achieving this status.

However, it is difficult to fully appreciate how design is perceived from just undertaking an occupational prestige assessment. To this end, more in-depth investigations were used to explore the issues raised. The first was a series of focus groups with participants from both a design and a non-design background,
and the second was a survey questionnaire again targeting designers and non-designers.

The focus groups aimed to identify in more detail how design might be perceived. The sessions highlighted a range of issues, including the fact that the participants generally knew very little about the design occupations. For example, few knew what industrial design was and suggestions for what type of work industrial designers do ranged from building factories, bridges or a railway to making broom handles. Although most had a better understanding of the other design occupations, media depictions and stereotypes of designers often skewed their ideas and perceptions. Even the design participants often seemed unclear on the design professions, often having no or little more knowledge than the non-design group outside of their own field. The design participants clearly had a different perception of design than did the non-design participants, who saw design as more business driven rather than simply drawing and creating.

One interesting observation that emerged was that for many of the design students, design as a career choice, was something that the students ‘knew’ they wanted to pursue often from a quite early age. This ‘vocational’ aspect of career choice did not emerge for the social science students for whom an Arts degree was mostly chosen as an option through not knowing what else to do. Thus it was the generalist nature of the degree that attracted the latter students. In this sense design shares many similarities with other vocationally inspired careers such as theology, medicine, veterinary science, or teaching. Moore (1997) argued that many artistic careers are born from a spiritualistic experience similar to that of a religious conversion, while Larson (1977) suggested that education is a means for those who are artistically minded to achieve legitimacy (as well as an income) in a society that puts a high regard on education, certification and monetary reward. The focus groups found that despite the credentialing of design, it was still regarded as a ‘soft’ choice with many of the respondents indicating that teachers would attempt to dissuade those students who were good at the ‘hard’ sciences from pursuing a career in design. It was notable that the design participants were very keen to distance themselves from art and were keen to articulate the business aspects of design, while playing down the creative element. In contrast, the non-design participants highlighted the creative aspects of design, with little reference to the need for business skills. The results from both the occupational prestige survey and the focus groups were presented at an Art and Design conference, and the results, whilst somewhat controversial, generated significant discussion and
interest in this project. There is no doubt that there is enormous potential for research and investigation in this area.

The final research stage of the study was the development of a comprehensive survey questionnaire. Seven hundred and fifty-three questionnaires were received from design educators, members of the Design Institute of Australia and members of the Juvenile Diabetes Foundation (JDF) (who were the non-design or public group). The questionnaire further explored the findings and issues raised in the occupational prestige survey and the focus groups, as well as other matters raised in the literature. The main themes that the research focused on were education, occupational prestige and professionalism, and design as an agent of consumerism. In addition, issues emerged from the results of the questionnaire in relation to career choice, gender and working practices. These will be further discussed in the following sections.

Education, Occupational Prestige and Professionalism

As discussed at the start of this thesis, contemporary design emerged through the coming together of a number of technological advances, most specifically the Industrial Revolution, techniques of mass production, and flexible manufacturing. The changes in social conditions that arose from the Industrial Revolution such as a move from an agrarian based economy to a manufacturing based economy, the movement of people from rural to city living, and increased disposable income within the working classes meant that the demand for goods and services increased. The post second world war reconstruction period was significant for contemporary design in Australia, with unprecedented demand for goods and services by the now well-off middle class. Design’s origins therefore were closely linked with the manufacturing sector and this was evident in the structure of early design education. In Australia, design education was closely aligned with schools of art often in technical colleges, and the shift to university based degree courses has only occurred since the 1970’s. However, this shift has only been partial with many design courses still being taught within technical colleges (TAFE) in Australia today.

When examining how design is perceived, the results reflect this educational mix of technical and tertiary education, with the participants having varying views of where design fits into the educational structure. It might be recalled that the Designers and the Educators regarded the design occupations as ‘professional’,
whereas the Public were more likely to perceive them as semi-professional or skilled workers. This difference in perception may be a consequence of difficulties in placing design clearly within the occupational structure. Occupations like medicine, engineering, law and architecture are much more clearly placed in terms of educational requirements.

The occupational prestige assessment was used as a starting point for the examination of the design occupations. The aim was to employ a widely used, validated scale for the purposes of comparing the perceptions of three participant groups – design students, social science students and members of the University of the Third Age. The original intention was for these three groups to be used throughout the study, although this changed as it became clearer that the issues could be investigated more thoroughly by using a much broader set of participants. Hence the three groups that were used for the design questionnaire (Designers, Educators and Public). Despite this, the occupational prestige survey revealed some interesting findings. The study showed that the design occupations were generally perceived as middle ranking and proximate to other occupations such as artist, photographer, social worker and teacher on an occupational prestige assessment.

Caplow (1964) suggested that occupation is often used to judge a person’s character, level of intelligence, ability and personal acceptance. Daniel (1983) also argued that class and status are linked to occupation. The questionnaire respondents indicated that they perceived that designers did not need high levels of intelligence, that tertiary qualifications were not essential and that they are not necessarily professionals. Although the participant groups differed for the occupational prestige survey and the questionnaire, it appears that the perceptions are probably not too dissimilar.

The results also appear to reflect the lack of knowledge of the design occupations by the respondents. Given that the two main predictors of occupational prestige are education and income, it is not surprising that design is ranked commensurate with other occupations where university qualifications are not compulsory (e.g. police person, photographer, artist, etc.). Although there are some proximate occupations where university qualifications are mandatory such as teaching, nursing, and social worker, there are most likely other factors at play besides education and income that impact on their perceived social standing. The high proportion of women in these occupations and the type of work (i.e. tending the
sick and working with children, which are traditionally seen as ‘women’s work’) tend to factor negatively on their perceived social standing (Chang, 1998; Daniel, 1983, de Forest, 1988). As shown in this study, as well as others (Whitfield and Chung, 1998; Smith and Whitfield, 2003) design is not seen as strongly ‘female’, with the exception of fashion design and interior design. Industrial design and product design were perceived as predominantly ‘male’ occupations and it is of interest to note that it was these two occupations that were perceived as the ‘most professional’ by the respondents in the questionnaire survey and as having the highest levels of perceived occupational prestige (of the design occupations), despite them being the least known and understood. This finding though is more likely due to the perceived relationship with engineering, a profession that is generally rated highly in occupational prestige scales (Daniel, 1983).

Anderson and Western (1976) argued that the process of “professional socialisation” is fundamental to the professions and that foundations of professional identity are generally laid during the period of formal education. For those professions where there is a clear and structured educational foundation, this would provide a solid basis for moving into the workforce with clear expectations and understandings of what the job is and how it fits within the occupational structure and the broader social structure. This appears to be lacking with design, and the career path of the designer is not as clear as it is for many occupations that are perceived as professional, such as law, medicine, and engineering. This is further exacerbated by the employment structure of designers, as they are predominately employed in very small businesses or as freelance operators. Relatively few designers are employed in large organisations, other than those in the education sector. It was argued that there are particular characteristics of the design profession that may negatively influence perceptions of design and designers including:

- The feminization of the profession.
- Low salaries.
- Inadequate career structure.
- The casualisation of the profession.
- Inadequate recruitment, training and induction processes.
- Lack of control over the profession and over their work.
- Lack of support and understanding by the general community.

The perception that design is closely associated with art (except by designers who tend to distance themselves from this field), an occupation that is perceived to be
based on an innate skill and is generally regarded as a hobby whereby only a few are fortunate and skilled enough to make a living from their field, belies the economic and business aspects of design practice. While design has been recognised as an occupation \textit{per se} (unlike art where the occupational status is much more nebulous), the creative aspects of design practice have generally received far greater attention than the business and economic aspects of the field. There does, however, appear to be a shift within the educational sector though, with a greater recognition of the business skills that young designers need to successfully compete in the work force. This trend is an important shift for design, as it will facilitate a change in perception of the value of design to the community and a move from being perceived as art and decoration to an occupation that is highly skilled with practitioners having both creative and intellectual skills.

\section*{Design as an Agent of Consumerism}

In contrast to this traditional view of the importance of occupation in defining one’s place in society is the emergent paradigm that consumerism is replacing the more traditional sources of personal identity such as occupation, birthright, religion, etc. (Langer, 1996). The design occupations sit at the very heart of the ‘consumer revolution’ and it might be thought that design will gain prestige and status through its close ties with consumer goods and services. Of course, it is a problem for design that there is this general lack of understanding and knowledge about what design is and what designers do as confirmed by the results of the focus groups and questionnaire. So, while consumerism and the consumption of products continue to gain in significance, the general population does not regard design as the agent or facilitator of products and services. Fry (1999) argued that design has yet to attain the status of being a serious object of study, despite the fact that it has a significant impact on the world in which we live. Du Gay (1997) contended that designers are cultural intermediaries who work at the interface between production and consumption. He also suggested that design differs from art in that it has to embody the culture of the time and instil meaning outside of the object itself. The participants of this study often overlooked this aspect of design and instead only gave recognition to the artistic side of the occupation, often seeming to blur the distinction between art and design.

The design professions, particularly stakeholder groups such as the design institutes, teaching faculties and designers themselves, need to develop a greater
presence that is not based on fantasy and elitism, but is embedded in the everyday milieu of the general population. Medicine is the prime example of where this has occurred in that it has successfully located its practitioners at the local level (general practitioners), within institutions (hospitals) and has highly skilled practitioners (the specialists). All members of the profession are still perceived as having high levels of occupational prestige, are regarded as professionals and are seen as valued contributors to society. Design needs to emphasise its contribution to society and gain recognition for its achievements not only at the specialist level, but also at the local level. Design might not save lives per se, but like many medical interventions it makes our daily lives more satisfying and comfortable and impacts on our environment at the local, national and global levels. Unfortunately, many of design’s achievements go unnoticed and unrecognised.

**Career, Gender and Work Practices**

In the self-report section of the design questionnaire, questions were asked about the respondents’ income, education levels and work practices. Gender differences were found between the participants, showing that female designers in this survey generally reported earning less than their male counterparts, were less likely to own their own business and were more likely to work in very small organisations with fewer than five employees. This study and others have found that the design occupations that are perceived as the most ‘female’ are also those that are perceived as having the lowest occupational prestige (Smith and Whitfield, 2003). The exception to this was furniture design that, although perceived as predominantly ‘male’, was also perceived as the least professional and most likely to be regarded as a skilled trade. The gender inequalities that exist within the design profession in Australia would be an area for further research as they were not explored in any detail in this study, but the research did flag a number of issues, particularly for female designers and the future of design itself.

In the focus groups it emerged that for many of the design participants, design was a vocational career choice with many deciding at a very early age that design was a career path they wished to pursue. A number of the participants commented that their teachers often had a significant influence on their choice of career. The questionnaire respondents showed a similar pattern, with the two design groups being more likely to indicate that a teacher or someone outside of the family (careers counsellor, a friend, or the media) had the most influence on their choice
of career. The Public were far more likely to nominate a family member as the most influential person.

The survey found that over half of the designers worked in a company with one to five employees and 85 per cent worked in a company with fewer than 50 employees. Sixty-two percent of male designers and 52 percent of female designers own their own business. While this arrangement might give designers a high degree of control and ownership of their work, there appears to be little scope for promotion and occupational advancement. While this is not necessarily a problem in itself (most doctors work as a small business for example), it has the potential to become a problem in times of economic uncertainty or recession as, unlike the doctor, the designer is not generally regarded as essential to core business activity. This perception of design, which has its roots in the lack of understanding of what design is and what designers do, can affect long-term business security, viability and income levels. For those design practitioners who would prefer to work for someone rather than own their own business, there seems to be limited opportunities in large organisations other than in the educational sector.

The reasons why designers predominately work in small studio-based organisations is unclear. It may be that it was simply the way the profession evolved and that this mode of working is regarded as the norm, or it could be that companies want to be able to 'shop around' for a designer when they feel they need their services and so prefer to outsource the design team. The reasons behind the employment structure of design and the effects of this type of work arrangement on designers, their careers and their lifestyles would be an interesting area for further study.

**Conclusion**

This research is unique in that it is the first large-scale sociological investigation specifically into the design professions. As such, the study is a broadly focused exploration into the field and at every stage sits at the forefront of academic research in this area. It is the only study that has specifically included the design professions in an occupational status and prestige assessment, despite the fact that this type of survey is a well-recognised and well-used tool. In addition, unlike most of these surveys, occupational prestige was analysed using Multidimensional Scaling, resulting in a two-dimensional mapping of the occupations as opposed to
the more conventional one-dimensional ranking. This novel approach to the analysis of occupational prestige clearly showed the design professions were clustered together at an intermediate level within the two-dimensional space. Analysis showed that the participants discriminated the design occupations from the other occupations in the set along the qualitative dimension generally favouring a differentiation based on perceived service to the community.

Consistently, throughout the three research phases there were differences between how those working in the design field perceived design and the views of non-designers (Public). Although this would be expected, it was also apparent that there were differences in perceptions between designers themselves. This lack of homogeneity indicates that the design profession has yet to consolidate its position within the broader community. The perceived status of design, the levels of knowledge about what designers do, the perceived level of professionalism of the various design disciplines, the relationship between design and consumerism, all vary considerably.

The results showed that while design is not generally perceived as highly ranked in terms of occupational prestige, it is seen by most respondents as being important to Australia’s economy and there was recognition that design had a role to play in many of the products that we use on a day-to-day basis. However, opinions about the professional status of design varied. This could be a reflection of the differing opinions on the educational requirements of designers. Interestingly, tertiary qualifications were not regarded as highly as creative ability and yet 92 per cent of the design respondents in the questionnaire had post-secondary qualifications.

The designers also were more likely to stress the importance of the non-creative components of design practice and yet showed concern that any moves to regulate the industry (through professional certification that would involve compulsory post-secondary qualifications, on-going professional development and the development of codes of practice) were not supported by the design participants in this study. This issue is a matter of ongoing debate in the literature (c.f. Anderson, 1993; Gunnar, 1995; Shapiro, 1993).

While it is apparent that contemporary design is still an emergent occupation, it is a field that has an enormous potential for growth. In Australia, however, it is still somewhat underdeveloped and lacks the history, both professionally and educationally, of America and Europe. Academically, Australia is reliant on overseas texts, theories and research that ultimately affect what and how design is
taught and practiced. The relationship between design and the economy, particularly consumerism and consumer culture, is one that warrants further sociological exploration due to the significance on society, the economy, cultural development and individual lifestyles. The results from this research suggest that there is little recognition of the relationships that exist between design and the broader cultural milieu. Design academia in Australia has a limited and blinkered approach to the study of design that focuses very much on the relationship between the practitioner and the object. While this may extend to the relationship of the object and the prospective user, there does not appear to be as much thought beyond this to the broader societal implications.

Design will no doubt continue to suffer from lowered professional status while it straddles the academic divide between technical/vocational training and tertiary education. Even within the university sector, the emphasis on establishing a universal and unambiguous theory of design appears to be less important than describing the structural characteristics of the profession. It is strongly argued that a unified body of knowledge and a universally accepted theory of design are sorely needed. It is postulated that this would clearly articulate the theoretical boundaries between design and other disciplines (e.g. architecture, art, sociology, psychology), and provide a theoretical relationship between design and the economic, political and cultural milieu that is necessary for any profession. Finally, a distinct terminology that clearly articulates the contextual and analytical framework for theoretical assumptions and considerations will facilitate high-level academic discourse and debate.

Design has had, and will continue to have, a significant influence on our daily lives, personal relationships, work, and our leisure activities. As new products are developed, their impact and ultimate consequences on our daily lives can often go beyond that which was the original purpose (this can also be said of artifacts created by other professionals such as engineers or architects). The designers of the ducted heating system may not have thought that one of the effects of this system was to polarise the family, as the need to cluster in what was generally the one warm room of the house (i.e. the lounge room) was removed and family members could comfortably separate out into different rooms of the house, thus reducing interpersonal contact between family members. The Sony Walkman was another product that had the effect of insulating the user from the outside world, over and above the original aim of the product – to provide portable music to the
individual. When we think of the impact of other products and services such as cars, household goods and the clothes we wear, it is apparent that the sociology of design is an important field of study that deserves far greater examination than it currently receives. Recognition of the importance of design in relation to our economy and consumer spending, along with a push by key stakeholders to raise the professional image (or perceptions) of design and attain a greater academic focus on research and theory, should serve to raise the profile of design within the community resulting in greater homogeneity in how design and designers are perceived.

While there needs to be a sociology of design, design itself needs to be more introspective and there needs to be far greater leadership from the various peak bodies in terms of clarifying what design is and where it is going. The design respondents in this study clearly perceived design as a professional occupation, but did not place high importance on academic qualifications, certification and ongoing professional development. There was a distinct impression from this study that the designers did not have a clear idea of how the occupation could or should be structured to provide the greatest benefits to those working in the field, to their clients and to consumers in general. Professional bodies that provide greater levels of leadership and input into the recruitment, education and ongoing support of designers may achieve a more focused and clearer understanding of what design is and does.

It may be that the lack of clarity within the field of design around issues such as credentialing, educational pre-requisites, protection of title and the role of professional bodies, contributes to the levels of uncertainty and disparity from and between the participant groups involved in this study about the importance of design to society’s economic, political, and cultural imperatives. In addition, it is difficult to see how a collective understanding of design could reasonably be expected from the general public when there seems to be a lack of understanding and shared meanings within the design profession itself.

The research highlighted a number of areas that do warrant further investigation, particularly the issues relating to gender, employment and income. A further issue of concern to emerge from the study was the perception that art and design are not regarded as ‘sensible’ or ‘legitimate’ choices of career for those individuals who have the potential to succeed in the science or business areas. The fact that many of the design participants who were skilled in maths/ sciences and in art and design
had teachers or friends and family who tried to dissuade them from entering the field, as they believed it was a poor choice in relation to other options available should be a concern to the design field.

As discussed in the introduction, this study was a broad-based investigation into design, with a focus on a small number of specific design disciplines. Further to this, the aim was to present the reader with a range of findings that might be a basis for further research in this area. The lack of academic discourse in design in some ways made this research both difficult and easy. It was easy in the sense that the field was ripe for investigation, the choice and scope of subject matter was wide and only limited by imagination and resources, and the research was always destined to add to a very limited body of knowledge. On the other hand, the research was difficult in that there were no other studies from which to build a more in-depth understanding of design, and there was very little in the way of informative and relevant literature in terms of critical discourse of the design occupations. To begin a study from a virtual blank canvas is a somewhat daunting task and while in hindsight there are many aspects of the research that could have been done better or differently, it is believed that the overall aim of the study has been achieved. The baton must now be passed to others to continue the research, to further investigate the findings and to develop a culture of critical reflection and discourse that is sorely needed in this most important profession.

Design needs to remain relevant to the broader social agenda in order to increase its position as a profession. It will need to promote the fact that it does have something to contribute to the political, economic, social and environmental agenda within our society. In this way it will be seen as a professional group that has power and influence in shaping our society and the lives of individuals.

Finally a comment by David Robertson who argues that:

"It is essential that the design community moves on from the notion that 'no one understands what they do' and that the 'community needs to be educated about design' to a position of understanding the gains that have been made in design awareness and targeting those specific actions that will have direct outcomes for the profession" (Robertson, 2004).
BIBLIOGRAPHY


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79. Graduate Careers Council of Australia, (2003), *Graduate Starting Salaries Remain Strong*. Media Release, 8 July, 


Bibliography


Letter to University of the Third Age

Ms Jean Giese, Chairman
U3A Committee, Hawthorn Centre
24 Wakefield Street
Hawthorn, 3122

Dear Ms Giese,
My name is Gill Smith. I am a PhD student at Swinburne University of Technology and I am studying various aspects related to the public perceptions of occupations. I am particularly interested in recruiting potential participants for my study from within the U3A network. To this end I am requesting your committee’s permission to recruit participants from the Hawthorn centre.

Briefly, the study consists of two stages. The initial stage would involve the members completing an Occupational Rating Task which should only take around 10 to 15 minutes. The second and main phase of the study, would involve the members participating in a focus group whereby 6 to 8 persons would discuss various aspects of occupations. At this stage I am interested in administering the rating task and envisage that the focus groups would be held at a later date, probably around the middle of the year. As the two stages of the study are quite separate, the participants do not have to commit to both parts of the study and I would envisage that a greater number of people would perhaps complete the questionnaire than would participate in the focus groups.

I am quite flexible in terms of times, dates and venues for the distribution of questionnaires and would be happy to organise a mutually agreeable arrangement with either Judy Elsworth or any other nominated person.

Should you have any further queries please do not hesitate to contact me at either the University on 9214 6960, or my home number, 9560 9261, at any time.

Yours Sincerely

Ms Gill Smith (BAHons)
Swinburne University of Technology
Occupational Rating Task

Studies have shown that the general community gives some occupations more status than others. Your task is to rate the following occupations according to their level of social standing in the general community. The occupations can be rated by giving each one a score of either 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, or 7, where 1 is the highest level of social standing and 7 is the lowest.

eg. the prestige ratings of motor vehicles would probably run something like this -
Rolls Royce 1
Volvo Sedan 3
Battered Holden 7
(Source: Daniel, 1983)

Please rate every occupation. Do not leave any blank spaces. If you are unsure about a particular occupation put a question mark (?) in the space.

Accountant ___ Cook ___
Aircraft Pilot ___ Crane Operator ___
Ambulance Officer ___ Data Processing Operator ___
Architect ___ Debt Collector ___
Artist ___ Doctor (G.P.) ___
Bank Manager ___ Economist ___
Bank Teller ___ Electrical Engineer ___
Barperson ___ Electrician ___
Bricklayer ___ (own business) ___
Builder ___ Farmer (own farm) ___
Bus Driver ___ Fashion Designer ___
Cabinet Maker ___ Fitter and Turner ___
Church Leader ___ Forklift Operator ___
(eg. Bishop, chief rabbi) ___ Furniture Designer ___
Cleaner (office) ___ Garbage Collector ___
Construction Labourer ___ Geologist ___
Graphic Designer ___ Postal Clerk ___
Greenkeeper ___ Product Designer ___
Hairdresser ___ Real Estate Agent ___
Housewife ___ Receptionist ___
Industrial Designer ___ Sales Assistant ___
Insurance Agent ___ Screen Printer ___
Interior Designer ___ School Teacher ___
Journalist ___ (Secondary) ___
Judge ___ School Teacher ___
Lawyer ___ (Primary) ___
Librarian ___ Security Guard ___
Machine Operator ___ Social Worker ___
Mechanical Engineer ___ Sportsperson ___
Motor Mechanic ___ (professional) ___
Nurse (registered) ___ Storeman and Packer ___
Pharmacist ___ Toolmaker ___
Photographer ___ Typist ___
Physiotherapist ___ University Lecturer ___
Plumber ___
Policeperson ___

Thank-you for completing this rating task. If you could please complete the following page as well, as it is an important part of the questionnaire.
Participant Information

It is important that we know a little about the people completing these questionnaires. It would be very useful if you could answer the following questions about yourself.

What course are you currently enrolled in?

______________________________

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age Group</th>
<th>18 or under</th>
<th>45 - 54</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
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<td>55 - 64</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25 - 34</td>
<td>65 - 74</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35 - 44</td>
<td>75 or over</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sex

Male     Female

Your country of origin: ________________________________

Highest level of education completed
(e.g. grade/year level; tertiary diploma or degree; certificate or trades qualifications; etc.

______________________________

Country in which you completed your education ____________________________

Your last paid occupation

(Please be specific; i.e., if you are/were an engineer, specify your particular area. This might be civil, mechanical, electrical, etc. If you are/were a teacher, specify secondary, primary, tertiary, etc.

______________________________

Thank you very much for your time and attention in completing this questionnaire.

Gill Smith
Swinburne University of Technology
APPENDIX B – FOCUS GROUP RECRUITMENT LETTERS AND INTERVIEW SCHEDULE
Design Discussion Groups

Dear

You have been selected to participate in a group discussion focusing on the design professions. The panel will consist of yourself and 6 or 7 other design students. This is your opportunity to have your thoughts and opinions about design as an occupation heard. To date there has been very little research that has closely examined the design professions and these discussions are part of a broader project aimed at addressing this issue.

Below is a list of session times. Could you please indicate which times you would be available and return the form to the box at the reception desk by Wednesday 18th March. (Your timetable has been consulted so there should be times when you will be available, but if you have any difficulties please contact Gill Smith on the number below).

The discussion should be around 1 hours duration and will be video and audio taped for subsequent analysis. All comments will remain strictly confidential and will only be made public once all identifying details have been removed. Light refreshments will be served during the discussion. If you have any further questions please contact either Ms Gill Smith on 9214 6960 or Professor Allan Whitfield on 9214 6882 (if phone unattended please leave your name and number).

We look forward to seeing you in the near future.

Ms Gill Smith
Researcher

Prof. Allan Whitfield
Director of Research

Name _______________________________ Phone No. _______________________
Course ______________________________ Year ___________________________
Please indicate all of the sessions you will be available for. (You may indicate an order of preference). You will be advised as soon as possible which one you will be required to attend.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Session 1</th>
<th>Tuesday 24th March</th>
<th>1.15pm to 2.15pm</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Session 2</td>
<td>Tuesday 24th March</td>
<td>3.00pm to 4.00pm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Session 3</td>
<td>Tuesday 24th March</td>
<td>4.30pm to 5.30pm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Session 4</td>
<td>Wednesday 25th March</td>
<td>5.00pm to 6.00pm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Session 5</td>
<td>Thursday 26th March</td>
<td>12.00pm to 1.00pm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Session 6</td>
<td>Thursday 26th March</td>
<td>5.00pm to 6.00pm</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Design Discussion Groups

Dear

Thank you for making yourself available for the design discussion group. The session will be held in the print room office on the 5th floor. You do not need to bring anything other than yourself.

Your session time is ________________________________.

If possible could you please arrive around 10 minutes prior to this so that the session can start on time. We look forward to seeing you there.

Gill Smith
Social Science Letter

I am writing to request your assistance in my research project. My name is Gill Smith and I am a PhD student in sociology. My research area is occupations and professions. I need volunteers to participate in group discussions relating to this topic. The discussions will consist of groups of around 6 to 8 people (all 2nd or 3rd year social science students) and will be of around 1 hours duration.

The format will be quite open and informal and you will not be required to do anything else either before or after the discussion session. The sessions will take place at the Hawthorn campus of Swinburne. All sessions will be video and audio taped, however they will be confidential and at no stage will any identifying information be released.

I know your time is valuable and as such all participants will receive $10.00 as payment for the 1 hours participation. As one of the most difficult tasks is scheduling a time when most people are available, I have detailed a number of options below. If you are willing to participate then could you please indicate all sessions you may be able to attend in order of preference. Due to the difficulty of not knowing each person’s study and personal commitments, I am aware that these times may not necessarily be the most suitable, however, other times can be arranged if needed. So, if none of the times indicated suit but you are still willing to participate please let me know either on this form or by phone. If you have any questions please contact either Gill Smith on 9214 6960 or Prof. Tanya Castleman on 9214 8466

I look forward to meeting you in the near future.

Yours Sincerely

Gill Smith

Name ________________________________ Phone No. ______________________
Course ______________________________________ Year ____________________
Please indicate **all** of the sessions you will be available for. (You may indicate an order of preference). You will be advised as soon as possible which one you will be required to attend.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Session</th>
<th>Date/Time</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Session 1</td>
<td>Tuesday 9th June 10.00am to 11.00am</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Session 2</td>
<td>Wednesday 10th June 6.00pm to 7.00pm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Session 3</td>
<td>Monday 22nd June 11.00am to 12.00pm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Session 4</td>
<td>Wednesday 24th June 4.00pm to 5.00pm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Session 5</td>
<td>Monday 20th July 11.00am to 12.00pm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Session 6</td>
<td>Wednesday 22nd July 5.00pm to 6.00pm</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Other Specify ___________________________________________

Appendix B
Appendix B

Non-Design Groups Questions

- Can you name any design occupations?
- What sort of work do you think they do?
- Can you describe a 'typical' designer? (might specify the design occupations here)
- Do you think design is a learnt occupation or that people have a 'natural' flair for designing?
- Do you believe that the design occupations are professional jobs or more in the realm of craftwork?
- Do you think designers are for the 'ordinary' people or just for the wealthy?
- Do you think that those that design things should be acknowledged for their work?
- Magazines
- Choose pictures that best represents what design or designers means to you

Design Groups Questions

- Describe what design or being a designer means to you - brainstorming exercise - use white board.
- Can you describe a 'typical' designer? (might specify the design occupations here)
- What influenced you to study design?
- How do believe that those of the general public see the design occupations?
- Do you believe that a person’s occupation can influence one’s self identity?
- Do you see design as a professional occupation perhaps in the same way as architecture or accounting, or would you say the design occupations are somewhat semi-professional?
- Do you think design is a learnt occupation or that people have a 'natural' flair for designing?
- Do you think that those that design things should be acknowledged for their work?
- Magazines
- Choose pictures that best represents what design or designers means to you
APPENDIX C – DESIGN QUESTIONNAIRE
The purpose of this survey is find out what people know about design. The national committee of the Design Institute of Australia has given their endorsement and support to this research and encourages all of their members to complete and return the questionnaire. As there have been no other comprehensive studies of this nature done on design in Australia to date, it is anticipated that the information obtained will be of considerable benefit to all of those involved with design, and through it a better understanding of the role and place of design in Australia today will be obtained. This survey is the major part of a PhD study by Gill Smith into design and designers in Australia, and so your participation would be greatly appreciated.

The questionnaire is in two parts. The first part deals with design and designers in general, whilst the second part focuses on you and your work. Each part should take around 15 minutes and 10 minutes respectively to complete. The questionnaire has been distributed to both designers and non-designers. Because of the differences in the two groups, some people may a few of the questions quite unnecessary or obvious, whilst others may find them somewhat difficult to answer. It is important that you answer all of the questions so that we can compare the responses of the different groups of people for each of the questions. Please try to answer the questions in the order that they are presented in the questionnaire. I am interested in your opinion and so it would be appreciated if you did not discuss your responses with anyone else. If you do not know something, then that is of just as much interest to me as knowing the answers. In fact there are no right or wrong responses, only your responses.

Throughout the questionnaire there are spaces for your comments. Please use them as your comments are of particular interest to me and I would encourage you to write them down. All information in the questionnaire will remain completely anonymous and confidential and at no time will any identifying information be made available to anyone other than myself (Gill Smith).
If you have any questions or concerns you may contact Gill Smith either by phone on 03 9214 6960 or by email at gsmith@swin.edu.au A reply paid envelope has been included for your convenience. I thank you for your co-operation and look forward to receiving your questionnaire in the near future.

Ms Gill Smith (BAHons)          Prof. Allan Whitfield (PhD)
DIA Cover Sheet

Design and Designers

Swinburne University of Technology

The purpose of this survey is find out what people know about design. The national committee of the Design Institute of Australia has given their endorsement and support to this research and encourages all of their members to complete and return the questionnaire. As there have been no other comprehensive studies of this nature done on design in Australia to date, it is anticipated that the information obtained will be of considerable benefit to all of those involved with design, and through it a better understanding of the role and place of design in Australia today will be obtained. This survey is the major part of a PhD study by Gill Smith into design and designers in Australia, and so your participation would be greatly appreciated.

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Throughout the questionnaire there are spaces for your comments. Please use them as your comments are of particular interest to me and I would encourage you to write them down. All information in the questionnaire will remain completely anonymous and confidential and at no time will any identifying information be made available to anyone other than myself (Gill Smith).
If you have any questions or concerns you may contact Gill Smith either by phone on 03 9214 6960 or by email at gismith@swin.edu.au. A reply paid envelope has been included for your convenience. I thank you for your co-operation and look forward to receiving your questionnaire in the near future.

Ms Gill Smith (BAHons)                      Prof. Allan Whitfield (PhD)
Design Educators Cover Sheet

Design and Designers

Swinburne University of Technology

The purpose of this survey is to find out what people know about the design occupations. The questionnaire is in two parts. The first part deals with the design occupations in general, whilst the second part focuses on you and your work. Each part should take around 15 minutes and 10 minutes respectively to complete. The questionnaire has been distributed to both designers and non-designers. Because of the differences in the two groups, some people may find a few of the questions quite unnecessary or obvious, whilst others may find them somewhat difficult to answer. For the purposes of the study it is important that you answer all of the questions so that we can compare the responses of the different groups of people for each of the questions. Please try to answer all of the questions in the order that they are presented in the questionnaire. We are interested in your opinion and so it would be appreciated if you did not discuss your responses with anyone else. If you do not know something, then that is of just as much interest to us as knowing the answers. In fact there are no right or wrong responses, only your responses.

Throughout the questionnaire there are spaces for your comments. Please use them or write any extra comments on the blank sides of the questionnaire. Your comments are of particular interest to us and we would encourage you to write them down.

All information in the questionnaire will remain completely anonymous and confidential and at no time will any identifying information be made available to anyone other than the study co-coordinator (Gill Smith).

If you have any questions or concerns you may contact Gill Smith either by phone on 03 9214 6960 or by email on gismith@swin.edu.au
A reply paid envelope has been included for your convenience. Thank you for your co-operation and we look forward to receiving your questionnaire in the near future.

Ms Gill Smith (BAHons)                          Prof. Allan Whitfield (PhD)
APPENDIX D – LIST OF REFEREED PUBLICATIONS


