



Feng Shui as Chinese Cultural Heritage: Influence on Aesthetic Value in Architecture and Interior Design

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Keywords

*Feng Shui, Chinese Culture,
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Abstract

This study investigates the influence of Feng Shui, a cornerstone of Chinese cultural heritage, on the aesthetic value of spatial design in architecture and interior design. Feng Shui emphasizes the harmony of energy (qi) within a space and is considered to enhance both comfort and visual appeal. The research utilizes a qualitative methodology with a cross-study approach, including interviews with two professionals in architecture. The findings demonstrate that the application of Feng Shui principles, such as the positioning of the main entrance, natural lighting, air circulation, and the selection of colors and materials, significantly affects both the aesthetics and comfort of a space. As a cultural practice, Feng Shui contributes to visual harmony and functionality and enhances occupants' interaction with their environment. Therefore, it serves as a holistic approach to design, integrating cultural wisdom, aesthetics, functionality, and energy balance to create spaces that are harmonious and comfortable.

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INTRODUCTION

Feng Shui, a significant aspect of Chinese cultural heritage spanning thousands of years, represents more than a traditional practice. It is a philosophical system that guides harmonious living between humans and the natural environment. The term feng (风) means "wind" in Mandarin, while shui (水) means "water," symbolizing two natural elements that influence the flow of energy on Earth. The concept of Feng Shui involves principles of energy flow, or chi, which is believed to affect an individual's physical, emotional, and spiritual well-being. In this context, Feng Shui is regarded not only as a discipline for balancing energy but also as a foundational system in design that integrates aesthetics and functionality in architecture and interior spaces.

According to Hakim and Siregar (2011), Feng Shui is believed to bring positive aspects to human life by balancing surrounding energy. The application of Feng Shui in spatial planning is considered essential, not only in daily life, such as determining the timing of major events like weddings, but also in the design of homes, offices, and public spaces. Chinese society and many other Asian cultures regard Feng Shui as a cultural guide for achieving prosperity, harmony, and success through the precise arrangement of spatial elements. Therefore, the use of Feng Shui in contemporary design represents the continuation and adaptation of a living cultural tradition.

Feng Shui exerts a significant influence on spatial aesthetics. In architectural and interior design, aesthetic value encompasses visual beauty, balance, proportion, and comfort. Feng Shui principles assert that harmonious layouts, appropriate color selection, and the integration of natural elements such as water, wood, and natural light generate aesthetic appeal. Color choices are deliberately made to create specific atmospheres within a space. Earthy tones, such as beige and brown, convey stability and warmth, while blue and green foster a calming environment. Hidayat et al (2024) observe that dark brown, green, white, and beige contribute to a warm and refreshing ambiance. The application of these colors is consistent with contemporary aesthetic principles, which prioritize a balance between visual appeal and emotional response.

Natural lighting is a critical factor in enhancing aesthetic value. Architectural features such as large windows, skylights, and layouts designed to maximize sunlight penetration improve both comfort and visual appeal. According to Feng Shui, natural light introduces positive energy, which increases occupant comfort and productivity. Another fundamental Feng Shui principle addresses the placement of the main entrance and circulation flow. The main door should not be directly aligned with the back door to prevent the rapid loss of energy. Similarly, modern design avoids entrances that lead directly into interior spaces without transitional areas, such as foyers, in order to promote privacy and comfort.

Moreover, furniture arrangement plays a crucial role in interior design. Feng Shui suggests that the

placement of work desks or beds should be strategic to foster a sense of security and comfort. This aligns with ergonomic design principles, which emphasize furniture placement that does not obstruct movement and maximizes comfort and ease of use.

Natural elements such as water and plants are also commonly incorporated into Feng Shui-based spatial design to create balance and a more natural atmosphere. Small fountains or aquariums can enhance indoor freshness, while green plants serve as both aesthetic elements and air purifiers.

With principles that prioritize balance, symmetry, and the flow of positive energy, architectural and interior design can create an environment that is both enjoyable and supportive of various activities. In architecture, Feng Shui guides the orientation of buildings, the selection of materials, color schemes, and other elements that interact with the surrounding environment. According to Ezra (2002), the integration of Feng Shui and Malay architecture is evident in site selection, wind direction, building orientation, structural form, circulation, room arrangement, openings, structural elements, and overall building appearance. Similarly, in interior design, furniture arrangement, lighting, and ventilation all significantly impact occupant comfort.

Therefore, analyzing the influence of Feng Shui on spatial aesthetics is an intriguing subject, particularly from the perspectives of architecture and interior design. This study will examine how Feng Shui influences the aesthetic evaluation of spaces and how its principles are translated into spatial designs that are not only visually appealing but also provide comfort and balance. The primary focus of this analysis is to understand how the application of Feng Shui can create harmonious, functional, and aesthetically pleasing spaces, as well as its impact on occupant experiences and interactions with their environment.

METHOD

This study employs a qualitative research methodology with a case study approach to gain an in-depth understanding of the influence of Feng Shui on the aesthetic value of spatial design from the perspectives of architecture and interior design. According to Sugiyono (2018), qualitative research is a research method based on a specific philosophy and used to study natural conditions (non-experimental). In this approach, the researcher serves as the main instrument, and data collection and analysis are conducted qualitatively, emphasizing meaning over numerical data. A qualitative approach is employed because it enables a comprehensive exploration of concepts, meanings, and subjective experiences related to Feng Shui in spatial design.

The case study approach was chosen as this research seeks to examine a specific phenomenon in detail. Case studies enable researchers to investigate the application of Feng Shui principles in architectural and interior design practices by gathering information from professionals in the field. The data

collection process focuses on real-world applications rather than theoretical assumptions.

The participants in this study were selected based on their relevance to the research objectives and their expertise in the field. The following individuals were interviewed as key informants:

Table 1. Participants

No	Name	Profesion	Code
1	Muhammad Farid	An architect with two years of experience in the industry.	P1
2	Andri Hariyanto	An architect and consultant, specializing in architecture and interior design.	P2

The participants in this study were selected by the researcher based on the data and information needed. They were chosen because they have the expertise to help answer the research questions.

This study was conducted over a four-week period, from Friday, January 24, to Tuesday, February 12, 2025. The research took place in two different locations:

1. First location: Jl. Markisa IX Jl. Murbai, Sukatani, Tapos District, Depok City, West Java 16454.
2. Second location: Sekolah Alam Cikeas Complex, Jl. Letda Nasir, Nagrak, Gunung Putri, Bogor Regency, West Java 16967.

These locations were selected because they provided relevant contexts for the study, enabling a deeper exploration of how Feng Shui principles are applied in various spatial settings.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

This study aims to analyze the influence of Feng Shui on the aesthetic value of spatial design from the perspective of architecture and interior design. Data was collected through interviews with two experts: an architect and an architectural consultant. The following findings were obtained based on the research questions formulated in this study.

Interviews were conducted with two professionals in the field of architecture and interior design, P1 and P2. Both participants confirmed that some of their clients specifically request the application of Feng Shui principles in architectural and interior designs. P1 stated that clients often seek the integration of Feng Shui elements, particularly in the layout and orientation of buildings.

“Beberapa sih ada klien yang pernah minta masukin unsur fengshui ini. cuma gak semua klien, cuma beberapa ada memang ada yang minta untuk masukin unsur fengshui ini dalam proyek-proyek perkantoran abis itu ada proyek rumah juga.” (P1)

Meanwhile, P2 mentioned that he offers Feng Shui calculations as part of his design consultation services.

“Biasanya, saya menawarkan perhitungan fengshui kepada klien, tetapi ada juga klien yang secara langsung memintanya. Jika klien yang meminta sendiri, mereka biasanya lebih terbuka, sehingga penerapan kaidah fengshui dapat dilakukan sejak awal perencanaan”. (P2)

According to the interviews, several Feng Shui elements are frequently requested by clients, including:

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none">-Building orientation and main entrance layout-Placement of water elements and use of natural lighting-Color selection based on Feng Shui energy principles |
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P1 highlighted that clients often request adjustments in door and window placements to align with Feng Shui principles of prosperity.

“Biasanya itu kalo unsur fengshui yang klien minta misalnya kayak penempatan pintu utama, karena bisa menarik energi positif abis itu ada orientasi arah bangunan yang bisa sesuai dengan arah keberuntungan pemilik, abis itu ada yang minta kayak mengurangi sudut-sudut tajam lorong yang Panjang, soalnya dianggap sebagai energi negatif dan gak proporsional bentukannya. Abis itu kayak rumah yang depannya itu langsung kayak jalan gitu, kaya tusuk sate itu dihindari juga. Abis itu permintaan elemen air di dalam itu, ada kolam sama air mancur untuk kelancaran rezeki.” (P1)

And further emphasized the importance of detailed calculations before applying these principles in design.

“Kalo diminta gitu kita harus hitung dulu sih dari tanggal lahir klien... Dalam fengshui, tanggal kelahiran seseorang dapat menentukan arah terbaik bagi bangunan, termasuk posisi ruang tamu, dapur, kamar tidur, hingga arah kepala saat tidur. Semua ini diperhitungkan agar energi dalam rumah tetap harmonis. nah dari situ baru kita mulai bikin desainnya dan kalo misal posisi tanahnya kurang oke secara fengshui, kita juga harus ngasih katalisatornya.” (P1)

P1 also added that in building design based on Feng Shui principles, natural elements play a crucial role.

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none">-The use of vertical plants, such as hanging or climbing plants from top to bottom, can help regulate the energy entering the house.-A secondary skin, such as a layer of plants placed at the front of the house exposed to sunlight, can help reduce negative environmental impacts.-Maintaining spatial balance is also essential, such as avoiding the placement of a toilet in the center of the house, to prevent disruptions in the harmony of energy flow.-Additionally, the selection of colors and materials that align with Feng Shui elements is important while still preserving a modern aesthetic. |
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“Yang pertama itu kita tuh menggunakan elemen natural gitu, seperti tanaman tanaman vertikal misalkan, di bagian rumah itu ada tanaman yang ngerambat dari atas ke bawah gitu. bisa menggunakan tanaman vertikal atau juga menggunakan secondary skin misalkan bagian depan rumah

itu kena panas matahari jadi kita lapisan lagi pakai bagian tanaman. bisa juga itu buat secondary skin itu. jadi mudahnya itu untuk mengontrol energi yang masuk yang disesuaikan kepercayaan tadi. abis itu juga kita bisa mengkombinasikan tata letak ruang yang lebih efisien dengan prinsip keseimbangan tadi misalkan, rumahnya itu tuh tata letak ruangnya itu jangan terlalu nggak seimbang. dalam arti misalkan kita baru masuk, tiba-tiba langsung ada toilet gitu. menurut kepercayaan Fengshui bagusnya dihindari toilet di tengah-tengah rumah gitu. jadinya jangan sampai ada ruang-ruang yang nggak seimbang sama ruang lainnya, harus proposional. abis itu yang terakhir tadi ada penggunaan warna dan material sesuai elemen fengshui tadi tapi juga tetap mempertahankan estetika yang moderen sesuai dengan desain desain yang modern juga.” (P1)

Meanwhile, P2 explained that in the application of Feng Shui, calculations are often based on the client's birth date. This is done to determine the optimal orientation for the building, including the placement of the living room, kitchen, bedroom, and even the direction of the sleeping areas.

If the land position is less than ideal, a catalyst is usually introduced to balance the energy within the building. According to P2, his team often explores creative solutions to adjust the design while ensuring it aligns with Feng Shui principles and meets the client's needs. If a client requests a catalyst or protective element to ward off negative energy, it will be incorporated into the design as per their preferences.

“Kalo itu sih tergantung yaa...Kadang saya sama tim yang nyari ide lagi gimana bagusya... dan kalau katalisator atau "penolak bala"-nya mau dimasukin juga tinggal di tambahin aja” (P2)

In this research process, P1 and P2 shared several design examples they have worked on, demonstrating the application of Feng Shui principles in architectural and interior design. These examples provide valuable insights into how Feng Shui can be effectively integrated to create harmonious, comfortable, and aesthetically pleasing spaces. Through their documentation, it becomes evident that Feng Shui not only influences spatial layout and energy flow but also plays a significant role in enhancing visual appeal and overall functionality in a built environment.



Picture 1. Building Facade

This building design adopts Feng Shui principles by combining natural elements with modern architecture to create a balanced energy flow and a comfortable environment for its occupants. The incorporation of climbing green plants on the façade and balconies represents the Wood element in Feng Shui, symbolizing growth, balance, and harmony with nature. Beyond its aesthetic function, this

vegetation also helps improve air quality and provides a refreshing and calming atmosphere.

In addition to greenery, the use of brown tones on the walls and various architectural elements introduces the Earth element, which, according to Feng Shui, is believed to promote stability and a sense of security for the inhabitants. Furthermore, the natural materials such as wood and stone enhance the connection between humans and their surroundings, creating a warm and inviting ambiance.



Picture 2. Interior Design Emphasizing Natural Light

The interior design documented in this study prioritizes the optimization of natural lighting by incorporating large openings, such as wide windows and glass doors. This strategy allows maximum sunlight penetration, creating a brighter and more refreshing atmosphere. In Feng Shui principles, natural lighting plays a crucial role in eliminating negative energy (Sha Qi) and replacing it with positive energy (Chi), which enhances balance and comfort within a space. According to Nugraha (2014), increasing positive energy in daily life contributes to well-being, happiness, and harmony. Positive energy within a home can be influenced by location, shape, materials, and colors used in its design.



Picture 3. Living Space

The color selection in this design also plays a key role in creating energy balance and a comfortable ambiance. Shades of brown, cream, and white dominate the interior, creating a warm, tranquil, and

fresh ambiance. Brown, representing the Earth element, provides stability and a sense of calm, while cream and white evoke cleanliness, spaciousness, and brightness. This combination not only enhances the aesthetic appeal of the space but also supports the psychological well-being of its occupants.



Picture 4. Bedroom with Large Windows

Additionally, the large windows improve air circulation and establish a harmonious connection between indoor and outdoor spaces. The natural light that enters creates a visually expansive effect, making the rooms feel more open and air. This design approach is particularly evident in bedrooms and workspaces, where large windows are strategically positioned to ensure optimal exposure to morning and afternoon sunlight.

Both experts agreed that Feng Shui not only relates to spiritual or symbolic beliefs but also significantly influences the aesthetics of a space. Several key impacts observed include:

- Improved visual comfort and spatial balance
- Optimization of natural lighting
- Enhanced air circulation
- Harmonization of interior elements such as wood, metal, and water

While P1 acknowledged that Feng Shui principles introduce specific design parameters, he highlighted that these parameters often serve as a catalyst for creativity. Designers are encouraged to explore innovative and unique solutions that optimize spatial layout, ensuring the design remains both aesthetically pleasing and functionally effective while aligning with Feng Shui principles.

“Yang pertama itu nyambung sih ada, kita kan kalau bangun rumah tinggal itu pasti membutuhkan sinar matahari yang banyak gitu. kita bisa memaksimalkan unsur-unsur pencahayaan alami kayak misalkan sinar matahari yang masuk ke kita tuh bisa meminimalkan energi negatif. jadi kayak kita menggunakan pencarian alami itu bisa meminimalkan energi negatif yang masuk, habis itu juga bisa menambah sirkulasi udara yang baik, habis itu juga orientasi bangunan yang efisien terhadap lingkungan sekitar juga. Untuk desain juga bisa berhubungan dengan fengshui ini, bisa juga kita tentuin, kayak misalkan dia fasad rumahnya apa, bentuk wajah rumahnya mau kayak gimana. itu juga bisa ditentukan nanti.” (P1)

Meanwhile, P2 emphasizes that as long as the concept is thoroughly discussed with the client, the application of Feng Shui will not act as a limitation that restricts creativity in design. Instead, it can

serve as a guiding framework that enhances both functionality and aesthetics while meeting the client's needs and preferences.

“Tentunya jadi lebih menarik, fengsui itu sebenarnya kalo di rasionalkan di zaman sekarang kan bikin hal hal baik ya, misal sirkulasinya jadi lebih baik, , pencahayaan alami yang cukup bikin ruangan terasa lebih hidup, nggak pengap. Pintu dan jalur sirkulasi yang nggak terlalu lurus bikin rumah lebih nyaman, nggak kayak lorong panjang yang bikin suasana kaku. Terus, elemen alam seperti tanaman, air, atau kayu bisa bikin suasana jadi lebih adem dan asri.” (P2)

Feng Shui influences not only the functional aspects of a building but also enhances its aesthetic value. According to Kuncono (2024), Confucianism is inseparable from its influence on and interaction with Feng Shui, which has evolved rapidly into a modern discipline. Today, Feng Shui is not only applied in spatial planning, aesthetics, and interior design but also serves as a philosophy of harmony, happiness, and success for those who study and practice it.

This study found that Feng Shui contributes to creating more proportional, harmonious, and comfortable spaces. Its principles help optimize spatial flow, prevent unbalanced designs, and arrange layouts to create a sense of openness rather than isolation. Additionally, natural elements such as plants, lighting, and water features contribute to a visually pleasing and balanced atmosphere.

According to Muhammadsya (2024), a well-designed landscape allows homes to integrate seamlessly with nature, creating a harmonious and refreshing ambiance. Interview findings further highlight that the most impactful Feng Shui elements in spatial design include:

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none">-The entrance is the main energy channel-Natural lighting to reduce negative energy and enhance environmental quality-Proper ventilation and air circulation, supported by water elements for improved comfort |
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Based on the interviews, several key Feng Shui elements significantly influence spatial design, including the main entrance as the primary pathway for energy flow, natural lighting, which helps reduce negative energy and enhances environmental quality, and proper air circulation achieved through ventilation arrangements and the incorporation of water elements to improve occupant comfort. Ashadi and Anisa (2017) noted that water is a crucial element in temperature regulation within a space. Balanced spatial arrangements also play a vital role, ensuring that each function is placed proportionally to prevent energy imbalance, which can affect both comfort and aesthetics.

The findings suggest that the application of Feng Shui in spatial design is not solely based on traditional beliefs, but is also closely tied to functional and aesthetic aspects. Many of its principles have been widely adopted in modern architecture and interior design due to their ability to enhance comfort and add visual appeal. Ginting and Harahap (2024) noted that Feng Shui and interior design are often integrated into spatial planning strategies.

This study found that building orientation, natural lighting, air circulation, and material and color selection are the key factors in maintaining a balance between aesthetics and functionality. Therefore,

Feng Shui can be regarded as a holistic approach that integrates cultural values, beliefs, and design principles to create spaces that are not only visually appealing but also comfortable and energetically balanced.

CONCLUSION

The incorporation of Feng Shui elements in architectural and interior design has been shown to significantly enhance the aesthetic value of spaces. Expert interviews indicate that key Feng Shui aspects, including building orientation, main entrance layout, natural lighting, water features, and color selection, are essential for achieving visual harmony, spatial balance, and occupant comfort.

Feng Shui functions as a bridge between ancient Chinese cultural wisdom and contemporary architectural practice, extending beyond a mere set of design rules. The integration of Feng Shui principles results in buildings that are both functionally comfortable and aesthetically appealing. Balanced layouts, optimized lighting, and the deliberate selection of materials and colors enhance the visual attractiveness of spaces. Emphasizing natural elements, energy flow, and symbolic meanings reflects a cultural pursuit of harmony among humanity, the built environment, and nature, which is a central value in Chinese philosophical thought. According to Utomo (2023), aesthetics involves the selection of visual elements such as color, texture, and patterns, all of which contribute to the atmosphere and visual appeal of a space.

The findings of this study indicate that Feng Shui is not solely a belief system but also an effective design methodology for enhancing spatial aesthetics. By combining aesthetic principles with considerations of energy balance, Feng Shui contributes significant value to architectural and interior design, resulting in spaces that are visually appealing, comfortable, and aligned with principles of beauty and harmony. Wiguna (2015) notes that collaboration between architects, who address the tangible aspects of a building, and Feng Shui practitioners, who focus on intangible elements, offers clients added value by integrating technical expertise with spatial harmony.

In conclusion, this study affirms that Feng Shui should be recognized not only as a metaphysical belief but also as a valuable aspect of cultural heritage that provides enduring design insights. Its integration into architecture and interior design represents a holistic approach that harmonizes aesthetic sensibility, functional requirements, and cultural significance, thereby contributing to environments that are visually appealing, emotionally comforting, and culturally meaningful.

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