



Abstract Book

Two-Day International Conference

IMDCS | International Media & Design
Conference on Sustainability

January 6-7, 2026 (Hybrid)

Organized by

Faculty of Communication and Design

Indus University



IMDCS | International Media & Design Conference on Sustainability

Abstract Book

Compiled by
Faculty of Communication and Design
Indus University

Contact:

Ms. Sana Gul
Chairperson, DMSCS
fashion_chairperson@indus.edu.pk
Cell: 0336-2235241

Dr. Syeda Afsheen Sohail
Conference Convener
afsheen.sohail@indus.edu.pk
Cell: 0333-2056538

About IMDCS

The International Media & Design Conference on Sustainability (IMDCS) is organized by the Faculty of Communication & Design (FCD), Indus University, with the aim of fostering interdisciplinary dialogue between media, design, communication, and sustainability-focused disciplines.

Conference Objectives

Conference Objectives: The conference aims to promote interdisciplinary research and dialogue on sustainability through media and design, encourage ethical, responsible, and inclusive communication practices, bridge academia, industry, and creative sectors, provide a platform for faculty, researchers, and students to present innovative ideas and to support sustainability-oriented education and professional practices

Conference Themes

- Integrating Sustainability into Media and Design Curricula
- Environmental Storytelling through Visual Media
- Visual Culture and Our Responsibility towards the Planet
- Sustainability Communication in Advertising and Public Relations
- Sustainable Materials and Eco-Conscious Design Practices
- Psychological and Emotional Benefits of Biophilic Spaces
- Sustainable Design Philosophy: Ethics and Aesthetics
- Cinema and Film Education for Environmental Awareness

Alignment with Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

- SDG 4: Quality Education
- SDG 11: Sustainable Cities and Communities
- SDG 12: Responsible Consumption and Production
- SDG 13: Climate Action
- SDG 17: Partnerships for the Goal

List of Abstracts

S.no	Title	Author
1	Urdu Script as Visual Culture: Designing a Child-Centric Tracing Font to Sustain Linguistic Identity in Pakistan	Saba Khateeb, Dr Arham Muslim and Umer Nasim, NUST-SEECS
2	Biodiversity Credits in Pakistan: Ecological Potential, Governance Gaps, and the Role of Media	M. Oonib Azam, TU Berlin
3	Environmental Storytelling and Sustainability: Exploring the Role of Pakistani Documentaries in Mangrove Conservation and Awareness	Alvina Kamal, Dr. Fouzia Naz, Karachi University
4	The Role of Print Media in Environmental Governance: Evidence from Pollution Coverage in Pakistan	Qudsia Malik, Jinnah University for Women
5	The economics of digital environmental advocacy: measuring the impact of social media campaigns on sustainable consumer behaviour	Nabiha Khan, Areeba, NED University
6	Reel Impact: Using Cinema to Transform Environmental Consciousness in Karachi	Taimoor Ahmed Khan, Indus University
7	Framing Sustainability: Comparing the Impact of Emotional vs. Rational Message Appeals in Green Advertising	Syed Imtiaz Hussain, Indus University
8	Investigating how social media platforms are used to communicate sustainability messages and engage with audience	Tanzila Ali, AIMS
9	The Future Of Sustainability Communication: Emerging Trends & Challenges, Use Of AI, Demand For Transparency	Wardah Ali, Virtual University
10	Impact of Price, Ecological Packaging and Environmental Advertisement on Green Purchase Intention: The Mediating Role of Positive Attitude of Customers	Baneen, Indus University
11	Shades of Sustainability: Sustainable Color Trends Shaping Tomorrow's Designs	Muhammad Fawad Noori, Design & Education Consultant

List of Abstracts

S.no	Title	Author
12	Banana Fiber to Fabrication - Alternate to Conventional Material	Saba Rafique, Lahore
13	Up -cycling single used plastic waste into textile products: A Life Cycle Assessment (LCA).	Sumra Sarwar, Indus University
14	Threads that Bind: Memon Bridal Embroidery and Cultural Continuity	Faryal Ahsun, Indus Univeristy
15	Ajrak printing and craftsmanship: a case study of block-printing production at Hala, Sindh–Pakistan	Noor Hassan, Indus University
16	A study on the impact of indoor plants as visual merchandising on consumer behavior in Restaurant	Muhammad Abrar Khokhar, Indus University
17	Challenges of Implementing Biophilic Design in Repurposed Schools in Karachi	Ar. Sadia Perveen, Indus University
18	Designing a social and cultural sustainable space - A sanctuary for social orphans of Lahore	Ashar Ahmed Farooqui, Indus University
19	Enhancing physical well-being through the integration of smart technologies for monitoring, prevention, and health behavior optimization	Syed Hashir Ali, Indus University
20	Beyond Green Walls: Reintegrating Vernacular Wisdom and Natural Systems for Inclusive Sustainability in Interior Architecture	Maaz Bin Qasim, Indus University
21	Biophilic Narratives in Sustainable Architecture: The BIG House Hamburg as a Model for Environmental and Psychological Well-Being	Zuraiz Ahmed, Interior Designer

Urdu Script as Visual Culture: Designing a Child-Centric Tracing Font to Sustain Linguistic Identity in Pakistan

Saba Khateeb, Dr Arham Muslim and Umer Nasim, NUST-SEECS

This paper presents Alif Bay Jeem, a digital learning application designed specifically for regional Pakistani children to support early Urdu literacy through culturally rooted visual design. The app includes tracing exercises, phonetic stories, letter activities, and a simplified custom Urdu handwriting font developed to align with universal writing strokes. Previous studies on script-based learning highlight that culturally responsive typography enhances both recognition and retention in early literacy (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006). This design choice emerged from a core challenge: conventional digital Urdu fonts were visually complex for young learners and unsuitable for smooth tracing interactions. To address this, a new stroke-based font was created to preserve the visual essence of Urdu while improving cognitive readability and motor execution for children. Similarly, research in digital learning emphasizes that localized visual design can significantly improve engagement and identity formation among young learners. Integrating game mechanics such as progression, rewards, and interactivity in educational design not only enhances motivation but also supports sustained cognitive and motor development, particularly in early literacy contexts (Deterding et al., 2011). Finally grounded in regional relevance rather than generic global design, the app becomes more than a learning tool; it acts as a medium of visual cultural preservation, ensuring that young learners build familiarity with the authentic structure of Urdu script. The project contributes to ongoing discourse on visual culture by positioning language interfaces as cultural artifacts, emphasizing that preserving script is equally vital to preserving culture itself.

Keywords: Urdu script, Visual Culture, Digital Handwriting, Cultural Sustainability,

Biodiversity Credits in Pakistan: Ecological Potential, Governance Gaps, and the Role of Media

Muhammad Oonib Azam, Technische Universität Berlin

This study investigates Pakistan's potential to participate in the emerging global market for biodiversity credits to restore threatened ecosystems and support local communities, while examining how media can strengthen public communication about biodiversity restoration. Although Pakistan possesses diverse ecological assets, from northern pine forests to the mangroves of the Indus Delta, its engagement with the biodiversity-credit economy remains minimal despite an estimated global annual demand of up to US\$180 billion for nature-positive credits. The research aims to address three core objectives: (1) assess the ecological and socioeconomic potential of biodiversity credits for Pakistan; (2) identify legal, regulatory and market gaps that hinder the development of a high-integrity credit mechanism; and (3) propose a media-supported model for biodiversity credits that avoids common global pitfalls such as weak verification, greenwashing, and the exclusion of indigenous and local communities. A mixed-method approach will be employed, including policy and legal analysis of existing environmental frameworks; semi-structured interviews with government bodies, conservation practitioners and community groups; and comparative case studies such as Colombia's Habitat Bank model, which links ecological restoration with local employment and long-term monitoring. Preliminary findings are expected to show that although Pakistan has foundational legal provisions, its biodiversity-credit pathways are underdeveloped, and existing offset practices are overly simplistic. Risks of commodification and inequitable benefit-sharing remain significant. The study anticipates that stronger regulatory frameworks, transparent verification systems, and community-centred governance, supported by strategic media advocacy, will be essential for Pakistan to engage meaningfully in the biodiversity-credit market.

Keywords: Biodiversity Credits, Ecology, Governance Gaps, Role of Media

Environmental Storytelling and Sustainability: Exploring the Role of Pakistani Documentaries in Mangrove Conservation and Awareness

Alvina Kamal, Prof. Dr. Fouzia Naz, University of Karachi

Environmental documentaries play a key role in creating public understanding about nature and sustainability, especially highlighting environmental systems such as Mangroves that protects coast lines and support climate balance. Mangroves are very important for coastal protection, biodiversity and climate resilience, yet their image in Pakistani media is not explored that much. The study identifies how mangrove protection in Pakistani documentary films, addresses this question: Which dominant themes and frames emerge in these documentary films, and how do they form environmental awareness? Using Qualitative Thematic content Analysis, eight documentaries were selected by a Boolean Search, “Mangrove AND Pakistan AND Documentary”. Analysis identified three key themes: Climate resilience and environmental heritage, local communities and stake holder exhibition, and hopeful educational narratives. Results showed that Mangrove is defined as an environmental protector and a national asset, which has been strictly emphasized on local communities and NGO efforts, although the government’s limited visibility. According to the results of the study, these documentaries are essential to encourage responsibility for environmental awareness and coast of Pakistan. Overall, this study supports understanding that sustainable environment communication through documentary films support Pakistan’s commitments with UN sustainable development goals, especially SDG 13 (climate action) and SDG 14 (water life below).

Keywords: Mangroves, Environmental Communications, Sustainability, SDG 13, SDG 14, YouTube Documentary Films, Thematic Content Analysis, Climate Resilience

The Role of Print Media in Environmental Governance: Evidence from Pollution Coverage in Pakistan

Qudsia Malik, Jinnah University for Women

Pollution has become a pressing environmental challenge in Pakistan, contributing to declining public health and deteriorating living conditions. As mass media remain central to shaping public understanding of national issues, analyzing newspaper coverage is essential for assessing how effectively environmental concerns are communicated to citizens. This study examines the extent and nature of pollution-related reporting in three major Pakistani newspapers published in Karachi. Using quantitative content analysis, the research evaluated news stories over a selected time period to measure the frequency, prominence, and thematic focus of pollution coverage. Each newspaper was coded for the number of pollution-related stories, placement on pages, associated visuals, and the types of pollution—such as air, water, noise, or industrial—that received attention. This methodology allowed for a comparative assessment of how these leading newspapers prioritize environmental issues within their daily agendas. The findings reveal that despite the severity of Pakistan's pollution problem, coverage in all three newspapers remains limited, infrequent, and often lacking depth. Pollution stories are generally placed in less prominent sections, receive minimal follow-up reporting, and rarely discuss long-term implications or policy accountability. Most coverage is event-driven rather than analytical, with little investigative focus on environmental governance or public awareness efforts. Overall, the study includes that mainstream newspapers in Pakistan are not providing adequate or sustained attention to pollution, potentially hindering public understanding and engagement with this critical national issue.

Keywords: Pollution, News, Coverage, Environmental Storytelling, Content Analysis

The economics of digital environmental advocacy: measuring the impact of social media campaigns on sustainable consumer behaviour

Nabiha Khan, Areeba, NED University

Social media has become an increasingly influential space for environmental advocacy in Pakistan, especially among urban, digitally connected populations. Yet little is known about whether digital environmental campaigns translate into actual sustainable consumer behaviour in metropolitan contexts such as Karachi. Understanding this relationship is essential for local policymakers, NGOs, and businesses promoting green consumption. This study employs a quantitative, survey-based research design focused exclusively on Karachi. A structured questionnaire was administered to 384 respondents aged 18–45 across five major districts of the city, using purposive sampling of active social media users. The survey measured exposure to digital environmental campaigns, perceived credibility of online messages, and self-reported sustainable purchasing choices. Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics and multiple regression to quantify the relationship between campaign exposure and consumer behavior. The findings indicate that respondents with frequent exposure to environmental content on platforms such as Instagram, Facebook, and TikTok were 19–27% more likely to purchase eco-friendly products than those with low exposure. Message credibility significantly strengthened behavioral responses, while affordability-focused campaigns had the highest reported impact. Limited trust in influencer-driven content reduced effectiveness in lower-income groups. Digital environmental advocacy in Karachi has a measurable, positive economic effect on sustainable consumer behaviour. Localised, credible, and affordability-focused messaging can substantially enhance the impact of environmental campaigns in urban Pakistan.

Keywords: Digital environmental advocacy; Sustainable consumer behavior; Social media influence; Green economy.

Reel Impact: Using Cinema to Transform Environmental Consciousness in Karachi

Taimoor Ahmed Khan, Indus University

Karachi faces critical environmental challenges including pollution, waste mismanagement, and climate vulnerability. Public awareness and behavioral change are essential to address these issues sustainably. This study employs qualitative research through in-depth semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions with diverse Karachi residents, filmmakers, environmental activists, and educators. Using purposive sampling, the research explores perceptions, narratives, and the cultural significance of cinema as a medium for environmental education and mobilization. Thematic analysis reveals that cinema serves as a powerful storytelling platform to contextualize environmental issues, evoke emotional engagement, and foster community dialogue. Participants highlight the role of locally-relevant films in raising awareness, challenging apathy, and inspiring grassroots environmental action. Challenges identified include limited accessibility and the need for stronger collaboration between filmmakers and environmental organizations. The findings demonstrate cinema's potential as a culturally resonant tool for environmental advocacy in Karachi. The study calls for strategic integration of film in public awareness campaigns and policy initiatives to harness narrative power and foster citizen participation in environmental stewardship. This qualitative approach emphasizes rich, contextual insights into how cinema influences environmental awareness and social behavior in Karachi, going beyond numeric impact measures to explore meanings, experiences, and cultural dynamics.

Keywords: Environmental awareness; Cinema for environmental education; Sustainable behavior change; Karachi environmental issues & Digital media and sustainability

Framing Sustainability: Comparing the Impact of Emotional vs. Rational Message Appeals in Green Advertising

Syed Imtiaz Hussain, Indus University

Sustainability is becoming a key focus for brands as consumers increasingly prefer environmentally friendly products and services. Green advertising, which promotes eco-friendly products and social responsibility, plays an essential role in encouraging sustainable behavior. The effectiveness of these advertisements often depends on how the message is framed using emotional appeals to evoke empathy, hope, or concern, or rational appeals that provide logical arguments and facts. This study examines the effects of emotional and rational appeals in green advertising within the Karachi, Pakistani context. A simple qualitative approach is used, where participants view two versions of an ad: one with an emotional appeal and one with a rational appeal. Participants' reactions are measured based on their attitudes, the credibility of the message, and their intentions to support or buy from the brand. The study expects emotional appeals to foster stronger engagement and a positive emotional connection with the brand, while rational appeals are anticipated to build greater trust and credibility in the brand's sustainability claims. The research also explores whether responses vary by age, gender, and education. The results will provide valuable insights for marketers in creating effective, honest, and persuasive green advertisements that encourage environmentally responsible choices and build long-term trust in the brand.

Keywords: sustainability advertising, green marketing, emotional appeal, rational appeal, consumer attitudes, behavioral intentions

Investigating how social media platforms are used to communicate sustainability messages and engage with audience

Tanzila Ali Jangda, Aawaz Institute of Media and Management Sciences

In the digital era, social media platforms have become influential channels for communicating sustainability-related messages and shaping public perceptions of environmental and social issues. Despite the growth of such content, audience engagement with sustainability communication remains inconsistent, and limited empirical research explains which message formats, content styles or media types generate higher engagement. This study investigates how different forms of sustainability communication on social media influence audience interactions, including likes, shares, comments and behavioural intentions. Using a quantitative methodology, the research analyses user responses to various message formats (text, video, infographics, reels, influencer posts and organisational announcements). A sample of 104 participants completed an online questionnaire measuring demographics, social-media usage, exposure to sustainability content, engagement behaviours (likes, comments, shares, saves), and behavioural intentions (e.g., adopting sustainable habits, sharing content, seeking information). The study also examines how credibility, emotional appeal and visual design contribute to audience engagement. A systematic literature review highlights key theories such as the Elaboration Likelihood Model (ELM), Social Influence Theory and the Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB) to explain how users process sustainability messages. The findings aim to provide practical guidance for organisations, marketers and sustainability advocates to enhance communication strategies and foster more meaningful public engagement. Ultimately, the research contributes to a deeper understanding of how social media can support sustainability awareness and behaviour change at both individual and societal levels.

Keywords: Sustainability Communication, Social Media Engagement, Quantitative Content Analysis, Theory of Planned Behavior

The Future Of Sustainability Communication: Emerging Trends & Challenges, Use Of AI, Demand For Transparency

Wardah Ali, Virtual University

AI plays an important role in all of this. It can examine a large number of data in much less time than humans who will take much more time to analyse, keep record of supply chain, and support organisations to filter out to whom they should be communicating. But still it's not accurate. The major concerns are about whether the AI is clear enough or whether the organisation promises are actually trustworthy, and how to make individuals rely on them again when they are already doubtful about it. The major concern of this research is how these clear or trustworthy, AI-based sustainability messages effect in real time or not, whether the consumers trust an organisation and what they choose to purchase. We're using online surveys for collection of data and understanding how trustworthy and AI verified declarations change the way of thinking and acting of individuals. The sample size should be one hundred for online surveys. Demographic data like gender, age, and qualification will also be collected. The trust building model and source credibility theory occurs as its foundation. However, we are experimenting to find out how transparency, AI verification and what actually consumers believe all work together. Our aim is to give organisations some real time, practical advice on how they can use these transparent AI tools to connect with other people in a much better way and maybe encourage them towards making better environmental choices. The results should be one hundred data points analyzed to provide this advice.

Keywords: Sustainability Communication, Artificial Intelligence (AI), Transparency, Greenwashing, Consumer Trust, ESG, Source Credibility, Quantitative Research, Purchase Intent, Data Verification.

Impact of Price, Ecological Packaging and Environmental Advertisement on Green Purchase Intention: The Mediating Role of Positive Attitude of Customers

Baneen, Indus University

Environmental disasters that are caused by environmental damages are recently a huge question of human survival. The terms eco- friendly, ozone-friendly, and environmentally friendly have started receiving important attention from the world communities. Communities all over the world have started realizing that preventing the environment by adopting green awareness is the best option left for humans as well as other creatures' survival. In recent years the damages that have been caused cannot be avoided but all around the world, humans as consumers, are determined to carry out ozone-friendly and sustainable activities with the start by using such products and strategies that can help lesser damage to the environment, then together the world can be saved for human survival. Green marketing is one of the popular marketing strategies that can also be adopted by several renowned companies to spread awareness to save the environment. The purpose of this study is to analyze the attitude or behavior of different consumers and their willingness to pay for such products that are safe for the environment. Socio-demographic variables, environmental advertising, cost, and eco-friendly packaging are the factors being taken into consideration. The impact of the independent variables (Price, Ecological packaging and Environmental Advertisement) on the dependent variable (Green Purchase Intention) is the primary focus of this study by keeping a positive attitude of customers as mediators A questionnaire was made for the data collection and shared through links among people of different age groups (24 years to 40 years plus) within the region of Pakistan. The results are analyzed on the basis of this data collection. The results were taken after putting the responses on Smart PLS.

Keywords: Green products, eco-labelling, price, green marketing, consumer purchase intention, positive attitude of customers.

Shades of Sustainability: Sustainable Color Trends Shaping Tomorrow's Designs**Muhammad Fawad Noori, Design & Education Consultant**

With globalization increasing in the world and growing environmental awareness, the design sector, encompassing fields such as fashion design, interior design, graphic design, and product design, is also compelled to adopt a sustainable paradigm. Although the role of materials and manufacturing in the design sector cannot be ignore in the search of sustainability, the role of colors in the design sector, because of the need for sustainability, needs to be uncovered. The major aim of conducting the research shall be to examine the influence of sustainable color trends in the context of design aesthetics, sustainability, and cultural responsiveness. The method of conducting the research shall involve a qualitative approach using a secondary data perspective, in the form of reports of color trends, case studies in the industry, or studies in the realm of sustainable fashion and design-based organizations. Conventional methods of dyeing and the latest advancements in the realm of color shall be discuss in the context of sustainable frameworks in the realm of modern-design aesthetics. New Color Directions Thanks to the development of the sustainable color movement, today's colorists are able to expand the range of colors by creating more natural, earthy, and subdued shades. Such colors are much more appealing as they are closer to what we see in nature. Recycled materials such as textile waste, plastic bottles, or discarded industrial byproducts are now used in coloring textiles and other forms of design. Because of this, the production of waste that would otherwise end up in landfills is reduce, as is the supply of colors used, while new and unusual tones are added.

Key Words: Trends, Colors, Digital, Sustainable Fashion, Sustainable Textiles

Banana Fiber to Fabrication - Alternate to Conventional Material**Saba Rafique**

Banana fiber (Musa fiber) is emerging as one of the world's strongest and most sustainable natural fibers, offering a viable alternative to conventional materials like cotton and silk. Extracted from the stem of the banana plant, the fiber is fully biodegradable, durable, and naturally lustrous — often compared to silk for its sheen and texture. In the context of Pakistan's textile industry, which contributes nearly 60% of the country's total exports (Alam & Khan, 2010), exploring sustainable alternatives has become increasingly vital amidst growing global demand for eco-friendly materials. This study analyzes the structural and mechanical properties of natural banana fiber and compares them with cotton and silk reinforced composites, assessing their environmental and economic implications for the Pakistani textile sector. The research aims to evaluate banana fiber's potential as a sustainable substitute, examining factors such as cultivation feasibility, processing technology, cost efficiency, and market adaptability. With global textile markets shifting toward carbon-neutral production, banana fiber presents a promising opportunity to diversify Pakistan's textile base while reducing environmental impact. Furthermore, the study considers whether innovations in banana fiber production could compete with the cheaper yet environmentally unsustainable cotton industry. As natural resources become increasingly strained, transitioning toward fibers like Musa may not only be a sustainable choice but an inevitable evolution for future textile manufacturing. This research thus contributes to the broader discourse on sustainability, circular economy, and material innovation within South Asia's textile ecosystem.

Keywords: Banana, Fabrication, Musa fiber, Sustainability, Unconventional materials

Up -cycling single used plastic waste into textile products: A Life Cycle Assessment (LCA).

Sumra Sarwar, Indus University

Single-use plastic waste, particularly multilayered snack wrappers, has become a major environmental concern in Pakistan due to its high consumption rate, non-biodegradable nature, and limited recycling pathways. To address this gap, the present study develops and assesses an innovative wrapper-to-textile process that demonstrates how post-consumer plastic wrappers can be transformed into functional household textile products. The study employs an experimental, material-focused approach. Post-consumer wrappers were collected from local dumpsters and waste sites, washed with water and detergent, dried, and manually cut into uniform strips. These prepared strips were then used as weft material in a hand-weaving process to generate textile-like surfaces in various weave patterns. The resulting woven structures were designed and crafted into multipurpose household products—specifically a storage box and an ottoman—to evaluate their structural performance, practicality, and aesthetic appeal. The results indicate that single-use plastic waste can be effectively up cycled into structurally robust and visually appealing textile composites suitable for home décor and utility purposes. This study contributes to the literature on sustainable design and plastic waste management by proposing a contextually relevant, low-cost up cycling strategy for Pakistan. The implications include improved waste management practices, reduced environmental burden, skill-based employment opportunities, and enhanced awareness of sustainable material innovation. The study concludes that converting snack wrappers into usable fabric is a feasible and scalable technique for integrating waste into value chains within Pakistan's textile-driven economy.

Keywords: Single Used Plastic, Upcycling, Life Cycle Assessment, Plastic Waste

Threads that Bind: Memon Bridal Embroidery and Cultural Continuity**Faryal Ahsun, Indus Univeristy**

The paper explores the intricate embroidery traditions of the Memon community's bridal attire as vital expressions of cultural identity and social continuity. Rooted in the Sindh and Kutch regions, Memon embroidery employs rich artisanal techniques such as zari (gold thread), zeek (metal thread), talli knitting, mirror work, and appliqué, practiced predominantly by women within family and community settings. These embroidered textiles are not merely decorative but serve as tangible markers of heritage, social status, and gender roles, woven into rituals from pre-wedding ceremonies to the wedding day itself. This paper examines how Memon embroidery sustains cultural memory, connecting generations through shared motifs and handcrafted skills passed down in kinship-based settings. The embroidery is closely tied to the community's Muslim mercantile identity, combining local textile traditions with Islamic modesty and ritual symbolism. Despite the beauty and significance of these practices, contemporary pressures from modernization, mechanization, and changing diaspora fashion trends threaten their survival. The study advocates for preserving these embroidery traditions through documentation, artisan empowerment, and community engagement, emphasizing their role in sustaining cultural continuity and identity. By weaving together ethnographic and historical insights, this research underscores the power of embroidered textiles as threads that bind the Memon community's past, present, and future, affirming their importance as living heritage and cultural sustainability.

Keywords: Threads, Memon Bridal Embroidery, Cultural Continuity, Cultural Sustainability

Ajrak printing and craftsmanship: a case study of block-printing production at Hala, Sindh–Pakistan

Noor Hassan, Indus University

Ajrak, a traditional block-printed textile, holds profound cultural and historical significance in the Sindh region of Pakistan. With origins tracing back over 4,000 years to the Indus Valley Civilization, Ajrak has evolved into an enduring symbol of Sindhi identity. The term “Ajrak,” derived from the Arabic word for “blue,” reflects the dominance of indigo in its intricate designs.

This study employs a descriptive research method, relying primarily on secondary sources such as journals, books, government reports, and digital archives, complemented by primary insights from Ajrak producers in Hala, Sindh.

Hala city was selected as the study universe, with five major Ajrak production units identified as the population. Using expert purposive sampling, five Ajrak-making specialists and ten industry participants were interviewed. A SWOT analysis was applied to assess the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats within the Ajrak industry, offering strategic insights to support sustainable growth and informed decision-making.

Keywords: Ajrak, Printing, Craftmanship, Blok Printing, Hala, Sindh Culture.

A study on the impact of indoor plants as visual merchandising on consumer behavior in Restaurant

Muhammad Abrar Khokhar, Indus University

Indoor plants are increasingly being utilized as a visual merchandising tool in restaurants to enhance ambiance, improve aesthetics, and elevate overall customer experiences. With growing competition in the food service industry, restaurant owners are placing greater emphasis on interior design elements that influence consumer behavior and shape brand perception. Among these, the integration of greenery has emerged as a significant factor that contributes to creating a pleasant environment, evoking positive emotions, and encouraging longer customer engagement and repeat visits.

This study explores how indoor plants, when strategically used for visual merchandising, affect consumer purchase decisions through ambiance creation, stress reduction, aesthetic appeal, and emotional connection. It examines four key constructs Indoor Plants as Visual Merchandising, Ambiance, Stress Reduction, and Aesthetic Sense within the theoretical frameworks of Environmental Psychology, Biophilic Design Theory, and the Services cape Model. These frameworks collectively explain how natural elements influence human behavior, emotional wellbeing, and environmental perception in commercial spaces. The research aims to provide valuable insights for restaurant owners, interior designers, and policymakers by highlighting the potential of nature inspired design strategies in enhancing the dining experience. By integrating indoor plants as part of visual merchandising, restaurants can create spaces that are not only aesthetically appealing but also psychologically restorative and environmentally sustainable. Such design interventions ultimately strengthen customer satisfaction, loyalty, and overall business performance in the competitive hospitality industry.

Keywords: Indoor plants, Visual merchandising, Consumer behavior, Restaurant

Challenges of Implementing Biophilic Design in Repurposed Schools in Karachi
Ar. Sadia Perveen,

The study aims to explore the incorporation of biophilic design principles into repurposed schools' infrastructure in Karachi by analyzing current infrastructure challenges. It also focuses on stakeholders' perception about the biophilic design, including students, teachers, designers, and other relevant people, through survey. The findings indicate improved indoor air quality, foster a sense of connection with the environment, and create a more inspiring educational space. It also provides insight for future improvement in educational infrastructure by identifying major challenges. A mixed-method approach of combining qualitative and quantitative data provides a comprehensive framework to systematically study the effects and implementation of biophilic design in the educational environment.

Structured questionnaires with closed-ended questions are used to collect quantitative data from 100 participants, while field notes are taken during interviews to record contextual details and immediate reflections.

Keywords: Biophilic, Infrastructure, Stakeholders, Repurposed, Environment

Designing a social and cultural sustainable space - A sanctuary for social orphans of Lahore

Ashar Ahmed Farooqui, Indus University

This research paper presents a social and cultural sustainability project LA'AL, which is a community-driven initiative rooted in Lahore's historic Red-Light District, dedicated to empowering a group of extraordinary children while preserving the area's rich yet overlooked cultural heritage. The project integrates art, education, and cultural expression as pathways for social transformation, using creative practice to nurture self-worth, opportunity, and belonging within a marginalized community. Through the collaboration of researchers, performers, artists, NGOs, and residents, LA'AL documents and revitalizes the cultural identity of the district. It explores how art can serve as a sustainable tool for empowerment, strengthening local capacity, supporting intergenerational learning, and fostering long-term community resilience. Workshops in visual arts, theatre, and music provide inclusive platforms where children and adults alike reclaim their narratives and engage in collective creative production. By archiving oral histories, performances, and traditional crafts, LA'AL contributes to cultural preservation while promoting environmental and social sustainability through the reuse of local materials, ethical production practices, and shared community stewardship. The project demonstrates that sustainability extends beyond ecology to include the survival of culture, knowledge, and human connection. Ultimately, LA'AL stands as a living dialogue between art, education, and community, presenting an evolving model of sustainable cultural development that honors Lahore's heritage while empowering its future generations.

Keywords: Social Sustainability, Cultural Sustainability, Sanctuary, Social Orpahs, Empowerment, Architecture

Enhancing physical well-being through the integration of smart technologies for monitoring, prevention, and health behavior optimization

Syed Hashir Ali, Indus University

This research explores the integration of smart technology and interior design to address the decline in physical activity caused by increasingly tech-driven and sedentary lifestyles. It proposes a technologically enhanced Experience Center that encourages physical movement through interactive and engaging spatial design rather than conventional exercise-focused environments. The design promotes engagement, play, and overall wellness by using activity-based spatial planning, where circulation and spatial organization naturally motivate movement. Smart systems and interactive elements are seamlessly incorporated to respond to user behavior, enhancing participation and adaptability. The Experience Center combines fitness, relaxation, and social interaction within a cohesive framework, recognizing physical well-being as a holistic concept. Ultimately, the project demonstrates how interior design, when integrated with intelligent technology, can actively influence behavior and offer a new approach to creating dynamic environments that motivate physical movement and support active well-being.

Keywords: Smart Technology, Mental Wellbeing, Fitness, experience center, Lifestyle

Beyond Green Walls: Reintegrating Vernacular Wisdom and Natural Systems for Inclusive Sustainability in Interior Architecture

Maaz Bin Qasim

In contemporary interior architecture, sustainability is often reduced to aesthetic gestures—green walls, indoor plants, or recycled materials—rather than deeply embedded ecological systems. This paper advocates for a paradigm shift toward inclusive sustainability, where natural integration functions as both an environmental and social framework. It explores how vernacular wisdom—exemplified in climate-responsive strategies such as courtyards, wind catchers, jaalis, and local materials—can be reinterpreted within modern interiors through principles of biophilic design and adaptive ecological technology. By merging traditional environmental intelligence with contemporary smart systems, the research proposes an approach in which interiors operate as dynamic ecosystems, harmonizing human wellbeing, environmental performance, and cultural continuity. Selected case studies illustrate how hybrid natural systems—daylight modulation, natural ventilation, water cycles, and vegetation—enhance indoor comfort while reducing energy dependency. The paper further emphasizes social inclusion as a key dimension of sustainability, arguing that the integration of nature must address diverse sensory, physical, and psychological needs. The outcome is a conceptual framework for Inclusive Ecological Interiors, rooted in contextual design, material authenticity, and adaptive performance. By bridging vernacular tradition with modern innovation, this study redefines sustainable interiors as living environments—responsive, inclusive, and ecologically attuned to both people and place.

Keywords: Vernacular Architecture, Biophilic Design, Natural Systems, Inclusive Sustainability, Material Authenticity, Interior Ecology

Biophilic Narratives in Sustainable Architecture: The BIG House Hamburg as a Model for Environmental and Psychological Well-Being

Zuraiz Ahmed, Interior Designer

In contemporary design practice, sustainability must encompass not only ecological performance but also human well-being. This study explores how biophilic design principles within commercial and mixed-use architecture can foster mental health, enhance productivity, and cultivate environmental awareness. Using the BIG House Hamburg by Bjarke Ingels Group (BIG) as a central case study—supplemented by comparative analysis of two other sustainable commercial interiors—this paper investigates how architecture can act as both a medium of environmental storytelling and a catalyst for psychological restoration. The objective of this research is to reveal how the integration of natural systems, daylight, and material tactility within commercial interiors contributes to occupants' mental health and emotional balance while supporting broader environmental goals. The methodology is qualitative, using three case studies to generate rich, context-specific data that illuminate the relationship between spatial design, user experience, and ecological consciousness. The BIG House exemplifies circular thinking and biophilic integration through its adaptive reuse strategies, daylight-optimized interiors, and visible energy systems that transform sustainability into an experiential narrative. By examining this project through the dual lenses of biophilic design and environmental communication, this study argues that architecture can function simultaneously as a restorative environment and an advocacy tool—shaping both human behavior and environmental ethics. Ultimately, the paper proposes that embedding biophilic principles within sustainable architecture offers a pathway toward design that is ecologically responsible, psychologically supportive, and culturally communicative.

Keywords: Biophilic Narratives, Sustainable Architecture, Psychological Well-Being

IMDCS | International Media & Design Conference on Sustainability

January 6-7, 2026 (Hybrid)

Organized by
Faculty of Communication and Design
Indus University



Print and Publication Partner

