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## The Role of Native Colour Palates and Organic Forms to Enhance User Wellbeing; A Case Study of Ikeja City Mall

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### ABSTRACT

*The increasing urbanization of Lagos and the rapid proliferation of large commercial edifices have raised concerns over the mental, emotional, and environmental well-being of those who frequent public business areas. Contemporary shopping malls serve not just as retail venues but also as important hubs for social interaction, cultural engagement, and entertainment. They need architectural techniques that foster comfort, equilibrium, and contentment within their environment. Despite the evolution of this function, several new constructions in Lagos continue to prioritize economic and aesthetic considerations, often overlooking the more profound psychological and cultural dimensions of design. This study investigates the impact of indigenous color palettes and organic architectural forms on user welfare, using Ikeja City Mall (ICM) in Lagos as a case study. The aim is to develop evidence-based and culturally sensitive design concepts that may improve psychological comfort, emotional stability, and the general quality of environments in commercial public spaces. The findings indicate that color use and spatial arrangement substantially affect user perception, emotional reactions, and overall well-being in Ikeja City Mall. Warm, neutral, and visually coherent color palettes have been shown to enhance mood, reduce fatigue, and stabilize emotions. Users correlated these color settings with sensations of tranquility, spatial clarity, and satisfaction within the surroundings. Organic spatial configurations, such as sinuous circulation pathways, expansive atriums, and seamless spatial transitions, facilitated navigation, reduced cognitive strain, and imparted a feeling of openness and continuity of movement. These architectural elements facilitated spatial comprehension, enhanced comfort, and encouraged engagement. The research indicated that the overall wellbeing experience was influenced by the restricted use of indigenous color narratives, little biophilic features, and periods of significant spatial congestion. This indicates a need for enhanced cultural integration and improved spatial use.*

**Keywords:** *Organic Forms, Environmental Psychology, Native colour palletes, User wellbeing, Commercial public spaces, Spatial Experience, Psychological Comfort*

### INTRODUCTION

The built environment influences human behavior, emotions, and general well-being. In recent decades, discourse around architecture and interior design has shifted towards human-centered methodologies that promote mental, emotional, and physical well-being. The deliberate use of natural colors and organic shapes has emerged as an effective method to enhance well-being, particularly in public and commercial environments such as shopping malls, where individuals spend considerable time, encounter extensive sensory stimuli, and engage with others. Color is often regarded as a psychological stimulus that may alter perception, affect emotions, influence cognition, and impact emotional stability. Research in environmental psychology indicates that natural and culturally recognizable color palettes might enhance well-being, alleviate stress, and assist individuals in regulating their emotions (Kulyk, 2025). Indigenous color palettes derived from the local terrain, native resources, and cultural customs provide a sense of belonging and connection to the environment, so enhancing the user's experience and promoting wellness. Studies demonstrate that colors originating from natural settings, such as earth tones, greens,

and gentle blues, correspond with intrinsic human inclinations molded by evolutionary interactions with natural ecosystems, fostering emotional stability and cognitive rejuvenation (Forni, Darmon, & Benzaquen, 2025). In retail and commercial environments, such as shopping malls, it is essential to use local color palettes and organic shapes due to the abundance of sensory stimuli encountered by consumers.

In rapidly developing regions, such as Lagos, Nigeria, interior architecture is increasingly vital for enhancing individual well-being. Lagos is densely populated, characterized by heavy traffic, significant environmental noise, and high levels of urban activity, all contributing to increased stress among its inhabitants. Consequently, public spaces inside edifices, particularly retail malls, are optimal venues for restorative architectural modifications. The Ikeja City Mall (ICM) in Alausa, Ikeja, serves as a prominent commercial and social hub on the mainland of Lagos. ICM is among the first contemporary retail complexes on the mainland of Lagos. It serves as a significant venue for shopping, entertainment, and social interaction, with over 90 shops and attracting thousands of people daily (Actis, 2011; Wikipedia, 2025). The spatial layout, wall finishes, lighting, and overall aesthetics directly influence users' comfort, emotions, and sense of fulfillment. (Ibitoye, 2025) Empirical study on the influence of indigenous color palettes and organic forms on user welfare in Nigerian corporate settings is sparse. The majority of research conducted to far has focused on healthcare, education, or employment. Extensive study is necessary on retail and leisure architecture in African urban environments. (Ibitoye, 2025). Despite Ikeja City Mall's continued popularity as a social venue, less study has been conducted on the impact of its interior design on patrons' emotions and comfort levels. Indigenous color palettes facilitate sensory modulation and enhance physical well-being. Subdued earth tones and subdued natural hues help prevent eye fatigue, maintain circadian rhythm, and regulate emotions. Warm natural tones stimulate the parasympathetic nervous system, resulting in reduced blood pressure and enhanced relaxation (Zhang et al., 2024). Excessive artificial illumination and color saturation may induce cognitive stress, cause ocular strain, and negatively affect individuals' well-being. (Olaoye, 2025). Native palettes serve as visual mitigators in retail malls, characterized by significant visual complexity, high foot traffic, and artificial illumination. This mitigates sensory overload and fosters tranquility. This sensory moderation enhances user comfort, promotes prolonged engagement, improves well-being, and heightens environmental awareness (Wang et al., 2021).

This study, therefore, Aims to evaluate the effect of local color palettes and organic shapes in promoting user wellbeing, utilizing Ikeja City Mall as a case example. The project intends to evaluate evidence-based design principles capable of increasing psychological comfort, emotional balance, and overall environmental quality in commercial public spaces by analyzing the mall's spatial layout, material choices, colour schemes, and form composition. The findings are intended to help Nigeria and other developing countries construct healthier, more inclusive urban interiors, encourage culturally sensitive design, and advance sustainable architectural practices.

Similarly, this study addresses the following objectives;

1. To Identify the impact of native color palettes on users' psychological comfort and emotional balance at Ikeja City Mall, with a particular emphasis on how color schemes interact with spatial layout and material choices to shape user experience.
2. Evaluate the contribution of organic architectural forms to environmental quality and user wellbeing in Ikeja City Mall, by analyzing spatial configuration, form composition, and their impact on emotional perception and spatial satisfaction.
3. Create evidence-based design concepts to improve psychological comfort, emotional balance, and overall environmental quality in commercial public places based on empirical results from the Ikeja City Mall research.

### **Problem Statement**

Massive commercial complexes, especially shopping malls, have sprung up in megacities like Lagos as a consequence of the population boom, fast urbanization, and commercialization. These places serve as key centers for social, recreational, and economic activity. Despite these facilities' main objective of improving businesses' efficiency, space, and profitability, the mental, emotional, and sensory health of those who use them is sometimes disregarded. This is why many contemporary shopping centers use forms that are visually rigid, use color schemes that aren't naturally occurring, use too much lighting, and cause

sensory overload. Customers may experience mental fatigue, emotional distress, stress, and a decrease in the enjoyment of their physical environment as a result of these factors. This research examines the role of organic forms and natural color palettes in enhancing user wellness, using Ikeja City Mall as a case study. This study addresses a critical gap in our understanding. This research aims to shed light on the psychological and experiential effects of various design techniques. The ultimate goal is to inform culturally sensitive, biophilic, and human-centered design strategies for contemporary commercial spaces in Lagos and similar metropolitan areas.

### LITERATURE REVIEW

The correlation between architectural design and human well-being is a prominent area of current study in architecture, environmental psychology, and interior design. As urban areas become more congested and stressful, designers are developing strategies to enhance individuals' mental, emotional, and physical well-being. (Olaoye 2025) One increasingly common strategy is the use of natural color palettes and organic shapes, since they may create settings that are therapeutic, emotionally resonant, and culturally significant. Shopping malls need meticulous consideration in their design, since they serve as environments where individuals spend considerable time, encounter many sensory sensations, and face significant crowding. (Ibitoye, 2025). These settings affect customer behavior, emotional states, stress levels, spatial perception, and general well-being. Research increasingly indicates that interior design features based on biophilic principles, natural aesthetics, and cultural familiarity may substantially improve user experiences in these environments. This literature study analyzes current scholarly viewpoints on indigenous color schemes, organic shapes, biophilic design, environmental psychology, and user well-being, particularly in commercial interior settings. This positions these notions inside tropical urban environments, namely Nigeria, to provide the theoretical and empirical basis for analyzing Ikeja City Mall as a case study.



*Figure 1; Ariel View of Ikeja City Mall (I.C.M)*

### Concept of User Wellbeing in Built Environment

User well-being in the built environment pertains to individuals' physical, mental, emotional, and social comfort inside architectural settings. In contemporary architectural discourse, structures are seen not just as functional enclosures but as dynamic entities that influence individuals' health, emotions, ideas, and behaviors. The increasing urban migration and indoor habitation have become building conditions a significant determinant of total human health. (Olaoye, 2022). The well-being of individuals in the built environment has emerged as a pivotal concern in architectural and urban design discourse, particularly due to the escalating urbanization, population density, and commercial expansion that heighten psychological, emotional, and physiological stress among urban inhabitants. (Radha, 2022; Londoño, 2025; Mohammedani et al., 2026). Environmental psychology asserts that architectural settings profoundly affect emotional reactions, behavior, and psychological well-being. Experiencing environments that resemble natural settings in color, form, texture, and arrangement may immediately enhance your mood, reduce anxiety, and promote physical relaxation. Kaplan & Kaplan's Attention Restoration Theory posits that natural elements may enhance cognitive clarity and emotional stability by alleviating mental tiredness. In environments such as shopping malls, user well-being is crucial since it influences duration of stay, satisfaction with the space, frequency of return visits, and the overall quality of the experience. Malls that

include soothing visual cues, natural colors, gentle illumination, and organic forms enhance emotional well-being, reduce stress, and promote social interaction (Wang et al., 2025). These findings highlight the need for human-centered design methodologies that promote wellness and business viability. The aesthetic dimension of the constructed environment profoundly impacts human well-being, especially via the use of color, form, and materiality (Ibitoye, 2025). Architectural aesthetics affect emotional perception, behavioral reactions, and psychological comfort, making them essential components of well-being-focused design. Research indicates that organic shapes, biomorphic patterns, and culturally relevant design features may evoke feelings of comfort, familiarity, and emotional connection, all of which are crucial for mental well-being. The emotional impact of architectural environments is influenced by their complexity, material genuineness, symmetry, and interaction with nature. This supports the premise that the configuration and appearance of a place are crucial for health (Wang, Ding, & Gath-Morad, 2025; Londoño, 2025).



*Figure 2; interior view showing the lift inside I.C.M*

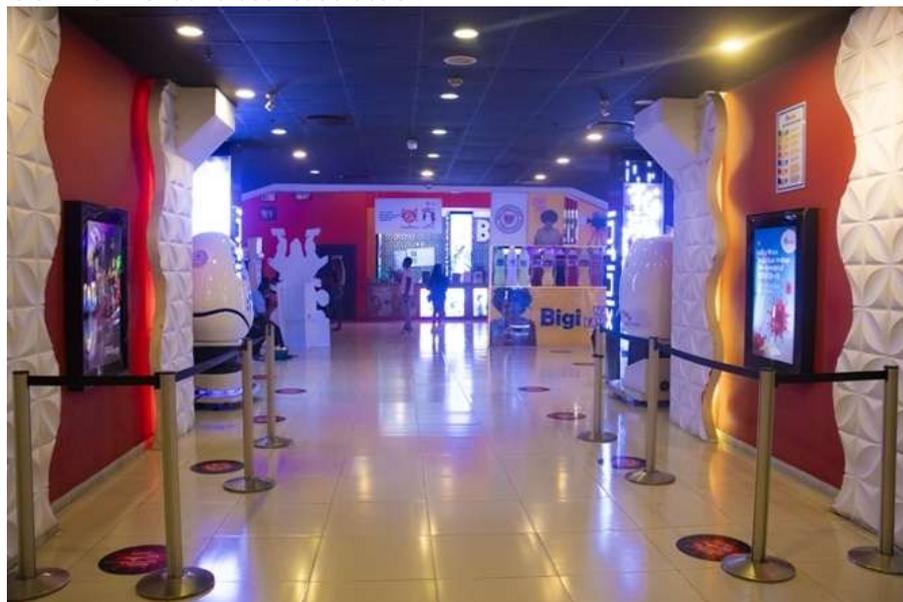
### **Native Colour Palettes in Architectural Design**

Architects are increasingly focusing on native color palettes because of their significant impact on psychological comfort, emotional equilibrium, cultural identity, and the environmental quality of constructed spaces. As architecture progressively transitions to human-centered and evidence-based design approaches, color has emerged as a crucial medium for affecting emotional reactions, behavioral patterns, and sensory experiences (Olaoye, 2025). Indigenous color palettes, originating from local landscapes, climatic circumstances, native materials, and cultural traditions, facilitate the incorporation of environmental authenticity and cultural continuity into architectural contexts. These palettes, mirroring the visual language of their environment, foster emotional familiarity, spatial coherence, and psychological comfort, rendering them particularly pertinent in commercial public spaces like shopping malls, where extended occupancy and heightened sensory stimulation require meticulously balanced environmental conditions (Kellert et al., 2021; Kulyk, 2025). Native color palettes are color schemes shaped by local natural environments, indigenous materials, cultural significance, and traditional artistic expressions. These palettes are influenced by the region's topography, climate, flora, soil composition, and cultural heritage. Their hues are aesthetically pleasant to both the intellect and the emotions (Adeyemi & Salami, 2023). Natural color palettes in tropical regions such as Nigeria often include earth browns, terracotta reds, sand beiges, palm greens, sky blues, charcoal blacks, and wood neutrals. These colors resemble those seen in nature and in the architectural traditions of indigenous populations. This fosters a deeper connection to one's culture and feelings. Environmental psychology and neuroarchitecture have extensively studied the impact of color on individuals' cognition within architectural contexts. Colors may influence individuals' emotions, cognition, behavior, and emotional regulation. This influences their perception and engagement with locations. Natural and commonly recognized colors have been shown to facilitate relaxation, reduce anxiety, and stabilize emotions. Kulyk (2025) demonstrates that biophilic color schemes, particularly those derived from natural environments, significantly enhance heart rate variability and emotional well-being.

This results in reduced stress and enhanced mental balance. Individuals' preferences for colors closely resemble the statistical characteristics of natural environments. This indicates that our inherent tendencies prefer color combinations prevalent in our environment. The findings demonstrate the significance of local color palettes as therapeutic design instruments for enhancing mental health and emotional resilience in densely populated urban areas.

Indigenous color palettes are crucial for enhancing cultural identity and allegiance to a location, as well as their psychological effects. Architectural environments that use colors reflective of local traditions, materials, and natural landscapes foster a sense of connection, belonging, and orientation among individuals. (Olaoye, 2025). Indigenous color expressions in Nigerian architecture often derive from laterite soils, clay, timber, palm palms, indigo-dyed textiles, and artisanal materials. The colors mostly consist of warm earth tones, muted greens, soft blues, and organic neutrals. Adeyemi and Salami (2023) contend that indigenous color traditions serve as visual channels of cultural memory, meaning, and social importance. Adeyemi and Salami (2023) contend that the integration of varied color palettes in contemporary commercial spaces harmonizes current architectural expression with cultural continuity, enhancing customers' sense of identity and emotional well-being (Ogunsemi, 2024).

The importance of color in commercial public places, particularly shopping malls, is enhanced by the intensified sensory experience and prolonged human connection these environments promote. (Ibitoye, 2025). Shopping malls serve not just as retail venues but also as social spaces for leisure and entertainment. The emotions of individuals and their duration of stay at a mall may significantly influence their shopping behavior. (Olaoye & Ibitoye, 2025). Natural color palettes in shopping mall interiors foster greater comfort, enhance mood, improve environmental contentment, and elevate perceived quality compared to surroundings with artificial, high-contrast color schemes. Wang, Ding, and Gath-Morad (2025) contend that natural hues and color harmony significantly improve affective perception, spatial clarity, and emotional engagement in large public spaces, thereby promoting superior environmental quality and user well-being. The materials used in ICM, including as floor finishes, wall treatments, ceiling systems, and furniture, interact with color to influence the comfort and emotional attractiveness of a room. The amalgamation of natural materials such as wood, stone, textured ceramics, and fabric finishes with culturally significant color schemes results in rich sensory environments that foster a sense of connection and warmth. This amalgamation of hues and materials reinforces biophilic design principles, which contribute to mental and emotional well-being. Conversely, the extensive use of reflective surfaces, synthetic finishes, and artificial color schemes, particularly in crowded environments, may result in visual glare, cognitive fatigue, and emotional distress. Consequently, examining the interplay of many materials and colors in ICM provides a solid foundation for evaluating design concepts that are evidence-based and may enhance the environment and user satisfaction.



*Figure 3; interior view showing the cinema lobby*

## **Psychological Effects of Colour in Interior and Architectural Spaces**

Color is a critical component of interior design and architecture, as it has the potential to alter human perceptions, emotions, cognitive abilities, and overall mental well-being. In architectural contexts, color serves more than just aesthetic purposes; it can also influence productivity, mood, behavior, and the way individuals perceive the space. Recent research in environmental psychology and evidence-based design has demonstrated that the strategic use of color can contribute to an increased sense of stability, comfort, and mental health, particularly in commercial and public settings (Kwallek et al., 2021; Chen et al., 2022). Colors can elicit a variety of physical and emotional responses due to their interaction with the functioning of our senses. Warm colors, including red, orange, and yellow, are frequently linked to increased alertness, enthusiasm, and social interaction, while cold colors, including blue, green, and violet, are associated with cognitive clarity, relaxation, and tranquility (Cheng & Yang, 2021; Pile, 2020). Emotional states, task performance, spatial delight, and perceived environmental quality are all influenced by these psychological reactions. Research has demonstrated that color schemes that are meticulously designed in public and commercial spaces, including retail centers, hospitals, and workplaces, can foster healthy behavior, reduce stress levels, and increase emotional engagement (Asojo & Hazazi, 2025). Most interior settings, including therapeutic and restorative spaces, have shown that color significantly influences individuals' feelings of comfort and well-being. Brightness, hue saturation, and chromatic contrast are the defining characteristics of the spatial environment. These factors may influence individuals' feelings of security and well-being. Color palettes that are natural, muted, and rooted in the earth can assist individuals in regulating their emotions, restoring their minds, and relaxing when incorporated into biophilic or organic design concepts. Londoño (2025) and Kim et al. (2024).

These findings demonstrate the critical role of color in the development of supportive environments that enhance sensory satisfaction and mental health. Additionally, the perception of color is significantly influenced by cultural, social, and environmental factors, rendering it a valuable instrument for architectural expression. In African and indigenous settings, the emotions and minds of individuals are significantly influenced by native color palettes that are derived from natural pigments, cultural symbols, and environmental references. (Ibitoye, 2025). These colors, which are frequently inspired by the colors found in nature, such as earth tones, vegetation, water, and the sky, evoke a sense of belonging, cultural connection, and comfort in the environment (A.I., 2024; Elantary, 2024). Commercial spaces such as Ikeja City Mall may be rendered more alluring to the public and more tranquil by incorporating color schemes that are appropriate for the culture. How individuals interpret architecture is significantly influenced by their perception of color and spatial placement. Chen et al. (2017) and Braham (2002) have observed that lighter colors create an illusion of increased space, brightness, and openness, while darker colors create an emotional depth, closed-off feeling, and private atmosphere. The ability of individuals to navigate, orient themselves, and read in intricate public settings is influenced by these perceptual characteristics. Research indicates that the utilization of appropriate colors in professional environments facilitates navigation, diminishes mental fatigue, and enhances user satisfaction (Cheng & Yang, 2019; Kim et al., 2024). This is the reason why color is employed not only to enhance the appearance of objects, but also to improve the organization of practical areas.

Modern discussions underscore the correlation between color and the regulation of circadian rhythms. Research suggests that chromatic characteristics have a significant impact on the biological responses and perception of illumination, particularly in indoor environments. Cool-toned color schemes can be calming to the mind; however, if they are improperly implemented in locations that are utilized at night, they may exacerbate melanopic light reflection, which can disrupt circadian cycles (Zhang et al., 2025). The significance of architects and interior designers striking an equilibrium between visual comfort and health impacts in the design of workstations is demonstrated by this. Color has a significant psychological impact on public spaces such as Ikeja City Mall due to the high volume of users. This is due to the fact that it is utilized by a large number of individuals, who are exposed to it for an extended period of time, and who originate from a variety of social and cultural backgrounds. The implementation of natural color palettes that are influenced by indigenous aesthetics and organic forms in a deliberate manner may have a positive impact on the environment, improve the well-being of individuals, and enhance the overall retail experience. The integration of these concepts is consistent with the contemporary principles of sustainable and biophilic design, which prioritize environmental harmony and human-centered architecture (Asojo & Hazazi, 2025; Londoño, 2025).

## **Colours Cultural Significance and Sense of Place**

Color has a crucial role in architecture and interior design because to its profound cultural, symbolic, and emotional significance, which influences individuals' perceptions and utilization of space. Colors serve as important means of self-representation within the constructed world. They may reveal your identity, experiences, and cultural narratives, and they may also influence others' emotions and their sense of belonging. The cultural interpretation of color is neither uniform nor static; it is influenced by historical, social, geographical, and religious circumstances that change the perception and value of colors across different cultures (Elliot & Maier, 2019; Hekkert & Leder, 2020). The concept of sense of place refers to the emotional, cognitive, and symbolic connections people have with certain locations. It includes attachment, identification, belonging, and significance generated from spatial experiences (Relph, 1976; Tuan, 1977). A recent research indicated that color significantly contributes to individuals' ability to connect with their environment and acknowledge their culture (Najafi & Shariff, 2019; Lewicka, 2020). Color palettes derived from local cultural narratives provide a sense of belonging and connection to one's environment. Conversely, using colors that are incongruent with the culture may induce feelings of alienation, confusion, and psychological discomfort, particularly in public business environments with diverse groups present (Zhang, Xue, & Li, 2021). Indigenous color palettes are crucial for delineating cultural identity and geographical affiliation.

Ogunsemi (2024) asserts that culturally derived colors enhance individuals' sense of belonging to a locale, facilitate identification with a location, and foster communal unity. Color symbolism is intricately woven into the cultural traditions, rituals, and material practices of Nigerian architecture, augmenting collective memory and emotional significance. The integration of indigenous color schemes in contemporary mall design harmonizes global commercial aesthetics with local cultural expression, resulting in spaces that are both modern and culturally relevant. Utilizing culturally significant color palettes in retail malls and public spaces is essential for influencing perceptions, emotions, and spatial identification. Recent study supports the use of color techniques that align with the aesthetics and characteristics of indigenous peoples' environments. This is because modern malls often use globalized design languages that are based on neutral tones, polished finishes, and standardized color schemes (Klingmann, 2018; Salama, 2021). This kind of integration enhances individual satisfaction, encourages return visits, and fosters greater mental comfort. It fosters cultural continuity, enhances experiential depth, and makes environments more authentic. Color is a crucial element of placemaking strategies since it enhances social bonds, fosters identification, and reinforces spatial memory. The use of culturally significant color schemes creates unique environments that promote community engagement, cohesion, and collective memory (Project for Public Spaces, 2018; Montgomery, 2020). Strategic color zoning in malls, inspired by cultural symbols, may facilitate navigation, enhance thematic coherence, and provide diversity to the experience, so elevating the quality of the environment and user satisfaction (Olaoye, 2025).

From the standpoint of evidence-based design, culturally sensitive color schemes may enhance mental health, emotional equilibrium, and cognitive well-being. Studies in environmental psychology indicate that culturally appropriate colors improve perceived environmental control, reduce stress, and promote pleasant emotions (Elliot & Maier, 2019; Küller, Ballal, Laike, Mikellides, & Tonello, 2021). In culturally varied locations such as Lagos, Nigeria, including local color attributes in mall design may foster inclusivity, strengthen identity, and enhance emotional connections, so making public spaces more significant and beneficial. Despite an increasing awareness of the significance of cultural color, several new economic ventures in rapidly urbanizing regions prioritize global aesthetics above regional particularities. This renders the environment uniform across all locations (Relph, 1976; Salama & Gharib, 2020). This design methodology sometimes overlooks local narratives, traditions, and sociocultural dynamics, resulting in less emotional engagement and a sense of belonging among individuals. To improve environmental quality and spatial authenticity in public commercial areas, researchers recommend design frameworks that use indigenous color schemes, cultural symbolism, and contextual sensitivity (Lawal & Adeyemi, 2021; Olatunji & Fadamiro, 2022).

## **Influence of Organic Forms in Commercial Spaces**

In architecture and interior design, organic forms refer to shapes, geometries, and spatial arrangements derived from natural patterns and structures. Examples include curves, flowing lines,

asymmetry, and biomorphic combinations. Organic forms in commercial design emphasize flexible, fluid environments that prioritize human experience above linear, inflexible structures. Organic forms in public places such as shopping malls significantly influence individuals' perceptions, emotions, navigation, and the overall quality of the environment (Kellert, Heerwagen, & Mador, 2021). Architectural scholarship, environmental psychology, and evidence-based design research acknowledge the impact of organic forms on human health, including factors such as comfort, engagement, and psychological repair. Research indicates that natural curves and non-linear forms might induce feelings of calmness, relaxation, and mental comfort in individuals. Neural responses to organic patterns significantly differ from those triggered by sharp geometric shapes (Zhang et al., 2024). Organic shapes affect aesthetic perception and sensory richness in ways that go beyond circulation and spatial dynamics. Rooms with natural curves, sculptural features, and flowing patterns are often seen as more vibrant, inviting, and emotionally resonant than those that are rigid and linear (Mallgrave, 2015).

This aesthetic attribute is particularly important in malls, where user engagement and visual intricacy are essential for enhancing visitor satisfaction. Users reported feeling more at ease, content, and fulfilled in spaces using curved design elements compared to those characterized by straight lines and sharp angles (Wang, Ding, & Gath-Morad, 2025). The integration of organic forms in architectural settings is intimately associated with the biophilic design framework, which asserts that humans have an innate attraction to natural shapes, patterns, and processes stemming from their ancestral relationship with nature (Ryan, Browning, & Clancy, 2014). This viewpoint asserts that designs derived from or influenced by natural systems, such as spiral geometries, asymmetrical curves, and fluid surfaces, promote human well-being by stimulating brain circuits linked to comfort and familiarity. Research in neuroarchitecture supports this notion, showing that organic spatial experiences generate emotional responses that promote relaxation, diminish physiological stress markers like heart rate, and increase overall perceptual engagement (Kim, Lee, & Park, 2024). In environments such as shopping malls, where the density of people and the volume of visual stimuli may induce mental fatigue, incorporating organic shapes may alleviate sensory overload and enhance comfort levels.

Furthermore, organic shapes may convey narratives on the environment and the construction methods used in various regions globally. In several indigenous and vernacular architectural traditions, designs are derived from the local environment and available natural materials. This creates locations that exhibit a connection to place, identity, and cultural continuity (Rapoport, 2016). In Nigeria, where architectural expression is significantly influenced by cultural and environmental variables, incorporating organic forms into commercial places such as Ikeja City Mall may enhance individuals' sense of cultural connection and belonging. Utilizing organic forms in commercial architecture is challenging. Architects may have difficulties in effectively using organic design concepts due to challenges related to construction costs, structural intricacy, and spatial efficiency. Advancements in digital design technology, parametric modeling, and computational manufacturing now enable the use of fluid spatial expressions without compromising functionality or economic feasibility. This indicates that intricate organic geometries may be used in business environments (Pallasmaa, 2012; Ching, 2014). Organic spatial designs promote natural movement, stimulate many senses, and foster emotional connections, so enhancing the business environment. (Ibitoye, 2025).

## RESEARCH METHOD

This study's theoretical approach combines concepts from environmental psychology, color psychology, biophilic design theory, and sense of place theory to investigate the influence of organic shapes and indigenous color palettes on individual well-being in commercial public spaces. Environmental psychology offers an in-depth perspective on the dynamic interplay between individuals and their constructed surroundings, as well as the influence of spatial arrangements, sensory inputs, and cultural signals on physiological, cognitive, and emotional reactions (Ryan & Deci, 2021). In this regard, color serves as a crucial design element that may affect stress levels, mood, arousal, and cognitive recuperation. Color psychology posits that hues, saturation, and luminosity may influence individuals' emotions and behaviors in many manners. Discordant or excessively artificial color schemes may increase stress and cognitive fatigue, while natural and culturally relevant palettes might promote psychological comfort, emotional stability, and relaxation (Elliot & Maier, 2019; Küller et al., 2021). Data analysis employs a thematic approach to discern recurring patterns and salient themes concerning color perception, cultural

significance, organic form experience, and sense of place, systematically coding observation notes, interview transcripts, and visual records (Braun & Clarke, 2021). The topics from the study are further examined in relation to contemporary research and theoretical frameworks, such as sense of place theory, color psychology, and biophilic design theory. This aids in comprehending how design modifications might enhance emotional stability, mental comfort, and the overall environmental quality.

The case study technique examines Ikeja City Mall (ICM), a prominent retail center located on the Lagos mainland. The case study method effectively examines intricate interactions between architectural design elements and human experiences in real-world contexts, enabling a thorough analysis of spatial arrangement, material selection, color palettes, and form composition in relation to user wellbeing (Yin, 2018). The study used a case study technique to examine Ikeja City Mall as an integrated system defined by unique physical, cultural, and social characteristics. The case study technique enables an in-depth analysis of spatial configuration, color palettes, material selections, and organic shapes concerning users' subjective well-being, therefore producing contextually relevant evidence-based design principles (Yin, 2018). The qualitative research aims to connect architectural modifications to the overarching themes of environmental and psychological well-being by examining the lived experiences, emotional reactions, and cultural perceptions of mall patrons. Field notes, observational surveys, and semi-structured interviews are used to gather data for the qualitative component. A purposively chosen sample of mall patrons, facility managers, and interior designers participates in semi-structured interviews to express their feelings and experiences on the influence of color schemes and organic shapes on their comfort, mood, and spatial perception. Semi-structured interviews are flexible, allowing the researcher to identify subtle cultural interpretations of local colors, go further into theme creation, and comprehend people's emotional and cognitive reactions to the mall's design elements (Braun & Clarke, 2021). The research aims to provide contextually rich, culturally informed insights on the effects of local color palettes and organic forms on user well-being using qualitative technique. This method encompasses the emotional, cognitive, and cultural dimensions of user experience while providing empirical evidence for design techniques intended to enhance the quality of commercial spaces and the environment for individuals.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS**

The assessment at Ikeja City Mall (ICM) in Lagos revealed substantial evidence that spatial aesthetics, particularly the application of color and the incorporation of organic forms, significantly influenced users' comfort, emotional responses, and perceptions of environmental quality. User comments and observations indicate that the mall's overall design provides a feeling of comfort, ease of navigation, and general satisfaction. This aligns with a broader study on the influence of the built environment on individuals' experiences. Many individuals remark that ICM's interior design evokes a sense of tranquility and peace. Numerous individuals assert that this is owing to the public spaces using warm, muted, and locally suitable colors. Research across many retail environments indicates that warm hues, elevated brightness, and neutral color palettes might enhance individuals' mood and aesthetic perception. Positive emotions may influence both the duration of individuals' stays and their likelihood of returning. Research indicates that warm and neutral color palettes for mall façades enhance happiness and visual appeal. This not only enhances individuals' well-being but also increases their propensity to interact with the environment. This indicates that ICM's existing color scheme may enhance individuals' well-being; yet, there is potential for refinement by developing palettes that align more closely with the cultural and environmental contexts of each locale.

Interviewed mall visitors said that the use of color in interior finishes, signage, and materials enhances visual consistency and fosters a sense of comfort inside a place. A multitude of users expressed feelings of "welcome" and "comfort" in areas characterized by tranquil, harmonious hues that are less visually jarring, particularly in recreational environments such as seating plazas and communal halls. These responses align with several research indicating that harmonious color schemes appropriate to the context might enhance individuals' sense of balance and reduce stress in constructed settings. The layout of ICM and the use of organic form-influenced design features foster a sense of ease and facilitate movement inside the mall, aligning with perceptions of color. User feedback and observational data indicate that consumers often described the extensive circulation corridors, distinct zoning of shop and leisure spaces, and coherent spatial movement as "easy to navigate." Previous study on retail spatial design in Lagos (Douglas et al., 2025) indicates that distinct zoning, an intuitive layout, and facilitation of mobility are

essential for mall satisfaction and behavioral comfort. These architectural attributes, when combined with aesthetically pleasing color palettes, may create environments that are more pleasurable and less stressful for prolonged usage. Users said that transparency, natural illumination, and genuine warmth may enhance mental and emotional well-being. Numerous individuals said that rooms adorned with soft hues and abundant light were more tranquil than spaces that were starkly partitioned and somber. Research conducted on sustainably created spaces (Owoseni & Ekundayo, 2023) indicates that natural light, lighter interior finishes, and thoughtfully selected color schemes significantly improve individuals' perceptions of their surroundings. This thus reduces stress and enhances overall wellness. Brighter finishes and open-plan corridors seem to elicit beneficial perceptual effects noted in previous studies, despite ICM's interior lacking comprehensive biophilic plants or natural materials. Extensive study on biophilic design indicates that incorporating natural components, such as organic geometry or colors inspired by nature, enhances emotional connection and increases perceived loyalty and value. Studies on biophilic retail spaces indicate that such settings positively influence consumers' hedonic and utilitarian experiences, enhancing their emotional well-being and increasing their affinity for the shop (MDPI Sustainability, 2024). These findings suggest that ICM's design may enhance comfort and promote return visits. Incorporating hues derived from Nigeria's natural terrains or cultural artifacts might be beneficial.

ICM users, however, identified factors that diminish these advantages, particularly in densely populated settings. Participants often linked peak hours and busy areas with reduced comfort, visual fatigue, and, at times, difficult navigation, particularly near entertainment venues and the food court. The identified limits align with broader studies indicating that sensory overload and congestion may reduce psychological satisfaction in even optimally planned environments. Studies on spatial organization indicate that excessive crowding, even in aesthetically pleasing environments, may induce discomfort and hinder cognitive processes. A comprehensive assessment of environmental quality and wellbeing must include both spatial performance metrics (such as mobility and sign clarity) and visual design components (including color and shape). Notwithstanding these problems, consumers often like ICM, associating its architectural features with good experiences such as comfort, ease, and leisure. The mall's combination of bustling retail areas and recreational spaces promotes extended visits and heightened social interaction, both of which are essential indicators of environmental satisfaction and overall well-being. In contrast to other shopping malls without intuitive layouts or coherent designs, ICM's spatial organization significantly enhances the atmospheric quality and user comfort.

The results confirm the critical significance of design techniques based on empirical research and user-centered assessment within the context of evidence-based design. Employing natural color palettes and organic shapes may enhance mental well-being, emotional regulation, and the general environmental quality in quantifiable manners. The research indicates that design modifications informed by environmental psychology, cultural sensitivity, and perceptual factors may significantly enhance individuals' health and well-being. This strongly advocates for the use of evidence-based principles in interior and architectural design, particularly in public commercial environments. This study enhances the conversation on human-centered commercial design in dynamic urban environments by providing insights applicable both locally and globally. This study bolsters global research promoting biophilic, culturally relevant, and psychologically advantageous design paradigms by incorporating local empirical findings from Ikeja City Mall. The results highlight the need for Nigerian commercial firms to adopt context-specific design techniques that include local identity, environmental factors, and social values to surpass traditional global aesthetics.

The findings from Ikeja City Mall corroborate existing research indicating that the use of organic design principles and indigenous color palettes in form composition, material selection, and spatial arrangement may significantly enhance user well-being in public commercial environments. Warm, harmonious color palettes evoke positive emotions and enhance individuals' perception of their environment. Intuitive spatial designs and layouts facilitate navigation, reduce cognitive strain, and enhance overall satisfaction. The current design foundations of the mall underscore the significance of using architectural concepts that prioritize human experience and well-being. Nonetheless, there exists continual possibility for enhancement, particularly with the regulation of crowd density and the incorporation of culturally relevant design elements.

## CONCLUSION

This study used Ikeja City Mall (ICM), Lagos, as a case study to examine the possible improvement of user welfare in commercial public spaces via the application of indigenous color palettes and organic architectural designs. The research investigated the combined effects of spatial arrangement, color usage, material choice, and form design on psychological comfort, emotional stability, and overall environmental quality, utilizing a comprehensive theoretical framework based on environmental psychology, biophilic design, color psychology, sense of place theory, and evidence-based design principles. The study's results demonstrate that choices in architecture and interior design significantly affect consumers' emotional experiences, cognitive comfort, and behavioral engagement in commercial settings. The research revealed that color significantly influences individuals' emotions and behaviors at shopping malls. Researchers discovered that the use of warm, neutral, and harmonious color schemes at Ikeja City Mall enhanced individuals' satisfaction with the environment, reduced stress levels, and increased visual comfort. Users often linked these color applications to sensations of comfort, familiarity, and tranquility. These results correspond with established concepts of color psychology, which maintain that warm, calming, and culturally relevant colors promote psychological well-being, emotional stability, and favorable mood states. The findings indicate that using local color palettes influenced by the region's environment and culture may significantly enhance individuals' perceptions of a site and reinforce their sense of place, identity, and belonging in public commercial spaces. The study indicated that organic shapes and spatial arrangements significantly influenced user comfort, mobility, and overall experience quality.

The expansive atriums, sinuous circulation routes, and seamless transitions inside the Ikeja City Mall facilitated spatial comprehension, reduced cognitive strain, and enhanced navigation. Users often characterized these attributes as intuitive, soothing, and easy to navigate, which positively influenced their emotional state and encouraged virtuous behavior. These results support biophilic design theory, which asserts that organic shapes and spatial arrangements improve emotional well-being, reduce stress, and promote cognitive restoration. The results suggest that businesses might provide comprehensive sensory experiences that go beyond just economic usefulness using biomorphic spatial techniques, providing urban clientele with emotionally and therapeutically advantageous surroundings.

The poll emphasizes the importance of consumers feeling a sense of belonging and cultural representation to provide a positive experience. The results suggest that a more thorough integration of indigenous color narratives, local material textures, and culturally relevant forms might improve environmental authenticity and emotional resonance, notwithstanding Ikeja City Mall's modern architectural identity. In densely populated urban areas like Lagos, where commercial malls increasingly serve as social, recreational, and communal hubs, the study demonstrates that places reflecting cultural familiarity promote psychological comfort, emotional stability, and a sense of spatial belonging. This supports the assertion that buildings have to possess not just functional use but also emotional and cultural significance.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

The study's outcomes show how essential natural architectural shapes and local color schemes are for people's health in public places like shopping malls, notably in Lagos' Ikeja City Mall. The study found that the way colors are used, the shape of the space, the choice of materials, and the organization of the layout all affect how comfortable, mentally stable, and aware people are of their surroundings. The study also demonstrates that environments that utilize organic spatial expressions, culturally appropriate colors, and biophilic design principles make people feel better, lower their stress levels, and make them like being in those areas more. Based on these results, architects, interior designers, mall developers, and urban planners are given the following advice on how to use native color palettes and organic shapes to make commercial public spaces more comfortable for the mind, body, and environment. After the conclusion, these are some suggestions for recommendations that are based on the study. They are not limited to but include

1. To make mall interiors more emotionally comfortable and culturally relevant, designers should employ color palettes that are inspired by Nigeria's natural landscapes, soil tones, plants, and cultural themes.
2. Earthy hues like terracotta, clay brown, warm beige, muted greens, and soft yellows should be used sparingly in busy spaces to provide a sense of calm and visual harmony.

3. To make the area feel less stiff and more flexible, you should blend organic elements like curved circulation patterns, flowing ceiling designs, and biomorphic walls.
4. Mall atriums might be made into key gathering locations that are comforting to the mind by using organic spatial compositions and natural lighting systems.
5. To make things feel good and look good, utilize natural materials like wood, stone, clay tiles, and textured finishes.
6. To make it easier to find your way around, color zoning solutions should be employed to improve spatial identity, user orientation, and navigational clarity across several functional zones.
7. To make people feel more connected to their community and area, designers might add cultural patterns and symbolic themes to color and material palettes.
8. To improve emotional health and lower stress, biophilic design elements like plants inside, water features, and natural textures should be included.
9. Lighting design should complement color schemes by employing warm, diffused, and daylight-responsive lighting systems. This will make your eyes feel better.
10. Retail facade designs should use color palettes that go well together to get rid of visual clutter and make the area more cohesive.
11. To lower tension during busy times, locations with a lot of people, including food courts and entertainment areas, should be redesigned with calming colors and natural patterns.
12. Seating areas should have soft, natural hues and furniture that curves to make people feel more at ease and want to stay there for a long time.
13. Designers should do post-occupancy evaluations (POE) on a regular basis to find out how happy users are and how they feel about design changes.
14. To make sure that indigenous color traditions are shown correctly, cultural experts should be consulted in the design process.
15. Mall management should plan regular renovations to change the interior finishes in response to shifting cultural trends and consumer preferences.
16. To make it easier to read and find your way around, signage systems should utilize color schemes that are strong in contrast and appropriate to the culture.
17. Designers should put evidence-based design principles first. This means choosing colors and shapes based on scientific research on mental health.
18. To cut down on traffic and make it easier for people to go about, spatial patterns should be modified, especially in busy regions.
19. To encourage social interaction, flexible spatial modules should be used to make room for seasonal events and cultural exhibitions.
20. To help the environment and the air quality inside, choose eco-friendly paint treatments and materials that last a long time.
21. To reduce noise stress in crowded locations, designers should mix acoustic solutions with natural forms.
22. Mall developers should put up ways for customers to give feedback so they may get regular information about how comfortable and emotionally satisfying the space is.
23. Future mall buildings in Lagos should focus on design frameworks that take into account the local culture and the way people live in cities.
24. Urban planning officials should give businesses rules to follow that will push them to employ design concepts that are sensitive to other cultures and promote health and well-being.

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