



SOCIAL MEDIA INFLUENCE VS PRACTICALITY: WHEN AESTHETICS FAIL FUNCTION

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ABSTRACT

Social media has become a powerful force shaping the future of interior design. Platforms like Instagram, design blogs, and lifestyle channels feature carefully staged and edited images that show a perfect version of interiors. These polished visuals heavily focus on style, symmetry, and visual appeal while often overlooking the practical needs of daily life. As a result, what is considered “good” design has changed. People are increasingly valuing looks over comfort, function, and cultural relevance. While this content can inspire creativity and bring global design trends to a wider audience, it has also created new challenges. Many individuals, influenced by these online images, opt for interiors that look perfect in photographs but are difficult to maintain, fragile, or unsuitable for everyday living. Designs like all-white rooms, open shelving, or delicate fabrics may be visually appealing online but require high upkeep and offer limited usability. Over time, these spaces risk becoming unsustainable, impersonal, and disconnected from their occupants' lifestyles. This study looks at the growing gap between online aesthetics and practical functionality. It argues for a balanced design approach that celebrates beauty while also valuing comfort, usability, sustainability, and authenticity. This ensures that interiors function well in real life as they do on screen.

Keywords: *Social media interiors; Visual culture; Practical design; Functional design failure; Trend-driven design; Aesthetic pressure; Real-life usability; Authenticity in design; Context-based interiors; Spatial efficiency; Home functionality.*

Aim:

To assess how social media-driven aesthetics affect interior design, I propose Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) to guide designers toward a balanced, user-centered approach.

Introduction:

In today's digital age, social media platforms significantly influence interior design trends. While eye-catching spaces often gain online popularity, focusing too much on looks can compromise functionality, comfort, and authenticity in real life. Designers may feel pressured to choose photogenic elements over practical ones. This can lead to interiors that look good but don't fully meet users' needs. This study takes a close look at how these trends affect modern interior design practices and suggests Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) for professionals. These SOPs aim to promote a balanced, user-centered approach. They help ensure that spaces remain functional, sustainable, and truly reflect the lifestyles of those who use them, rather than just following fleeting online trends.

While such platforms have made design inspiration more accessible and encouraged creativity, they have also brought challenges for professional designers. They must find a balance between following trends and ensuring usability.

Social media-driven aesthetics often focus on short-term visual appeal instead of long-term functionality, comfort, and sustainability. Popular trends like monochromatic colour schemes, minimal furniture arrangements, or Instagram-friendly decor may look impressive online but do not meet the everyday needs of people living in those spaces. These trend-based approaches often overlook important factors such as ergonomic comfort, effective use of space, material durability, and environmental impact. As a result, interiors can be visually striking but may lack authenticity, flexibility, and long-term value, creating a gap between how they look and how well they work.

Additionally, social media influences a culture of “trend dependency.” Designers may feel pressured to copy viral looks to gain visibility or attract clients. This pressure can cloud professional judgment, hinder innovation, and restrict the exploration of customized, user-focused design solutions. There is a growing need to evaluate how social media trends affect design choices and to create frameworks that help professionals engage with modern aesthetics without sacrificing the fundamental principles of interior design

To address these challenges, this study suggests developing Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) to offer clear, practical guidelines for balancing aesthetics with functionality, sustainability, and authenticity. These SOPs aim to provide interior designers with a systematic approach to evaluate design options, prioritize user needs, and make choices that blend visual appeal with everyday usability. By incorporating principles like ergonomic

design, material durability, environmental care, and context-sensitive design into everyday work, these SOPs strive to establish a professional standard that pushes back against the often superficial charm of social media trends.

Ultimately, the goal of these SOPs is to promote a thoughtful, human-centered approach to interior design. This approach values the experiences of users, ensures efficient use of space, and supports sustainable practices while remaining visually appealing. By offering a balanced framework, designers can navigate the quickly changing world of current design trends with confidence, creating spaces that are both attractive and functional. Therefore, this study highlights the need to critically assess the impact of social media on interior design and proposes practical strategies that lead professionals toward creating meaningful, useful, and lasting interiors.

Objective:

The objective of this research is to understand how social media affects interior design practices and to suggest clear guidelines (SOPs) that help designers balance beauty with function, comfort, and long-term value:

1. To Analyze Emerging Design Trends.
2. To Understand Client Behavior and Expectations Shaped by Social Media.
3. To Identify Challenges and Problems Faced by Interior Designers.
4. To Evaluate the Role of Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) in Design Decisions.
5. To Create Awareness Among Society About Balanced, User-Centered Interior Design with an application of SOPs proposed.

Key Issues Identified-

The main problems were found to be visual over functional: houses are made to look good in pictures rather than to be comfortable in real life.

- Loss of Personal Identity: Interiors that are generic and lack cultural or individual character are the result of copying and pasting popular Pinterest styles.
- Unrealistic Expectations: Young adults and first-time homeowners are particularly affected by the continual pressure to achieve "aesthetic" perfection that social media fosters.
- Material Waste: Following trends leads to frequent replacements and redecoration, which increases environmental waste.

- Design Myths: Although these interiors are staged and edited, viewers mistakenly think they depict daily life.
- Solutions / Alternatives-
- Contextual Design: Adapt interiors to the user's lifestyle, climate, and available space.
- Slow Interiors: Promote classic, long-lasting design decisions over fads in décor.
- Integrate comfort, usability, and storage requirements with aesthetics to create a hybrid aesthetic and function.
- Local + Cultural Influence: Use materials, craftsmanship, and design elements from the area.
- Design for Real Life: Acknowledge flaws and create environments that develop alongside their users.

Literature Review:

1. Influence of Social Media on Client Expectations-

Social media platforms like Instagram, Pinterest, and TikTok have changed how clients engage with interior design. The Interior Designers & Social Media Report states that designers often see clients come to projects with ideas developed from online content. Clients now frequently arrive with visual reference boards, colour palettes, or furniture choices influenced by trending posts. This shapes their expectations even before consultations begin. While this gives designers insight into client preferences, it can also create challenges. Designers must find a way to match aesthetic desires with practical functionality, space limitations, and sustainability. Balancing client expectations driven by social media with professional design principles is crucial in today's interior design practice.

(Source: Interior Design Institute (2022). Leveraging Social Media: Building Your Brand and Attracting Clients Online. The Interior Design Institute. Retrieved from <https://www.theinteriordesigninstitute.edu.au/blog-leveraging-social-media-building-your-brand-and-attracting-clients-online>)

2. Role of Influencers in Shaping Design Preferences-

Influencers significantly affect the design choices of clients, especially among younger generations. Research by MyHFA shows that nearly 60% of consumers consider influencer content when deciding on furniture or décor. Millennials and Gen Z respond particularly well to authentic, relatable content that showcases practical uses and aesthetics. This influence

goes beyond products to overall interior design ideas, where clients ask for features and layouts inspired by influencers' curated spaces. While influencers can inspire creativity, they can also pressure designers to copy trends that may not fit the functionality, context, or long-term use of a client's space. This pushes designers to balance originality with client satisfaction.

(Source: Architectural Digest (2023). Designing Gen Z: Why Aesthetics Outrank Authenticity in the Homes of Zoomers. Architectural Digest. Retrieved from <https://www.architecturaldigest.com/story/gen-z-interior-design-aesthetics>)

3. Social Media as a Tool for Client Engagement-

Interior designers are using social media platforms more to connect with clients and showcase their work. According to Foyr Neo, sharing completed projects, design tips, and behind-the-scenes processes on Instagram and Pinterest increases visibility and builds trust. These platforms help clients understand styles, materials, and spatial planning options. However, this exposure also shapes what clients expect, as they often want to recreate content they find visually appealing online. Designers need to educate clients on practical limits, material restrictions, and functional needs, ensuring that inspirations are adjusted to fit the client's lifestyle and the realities of their home or office space.

(Source: Interior Design Institute (2022). Leveraging Social Media: Building Your Brand and Attracting Clients Online. The Interior Design Institute. Retrieved from <https://www.theinteriordesigninstitute.edu.au/blog-leveraging-social-media-building-your-brand-and-attracting-clients-online>)

4. Impact on Design Similarity and Standardization-

The widespread sharing of design content has led to more uniform client expectations. Research on ResearchGate suggests that exposure to repetitive online trends can limit originality. Clients often request interiors that look like popular posts. This trend has caused homes to have similar visuals, which reduces diversity in design culture. While trends can provide inspiration and keep designs relevant, designers must personalize spaces to meet client expectations shaped by social media. It is important to have organized design processes and to discuss the practical and contextual aspects of trends with clients. This helps maintain a balance between creativity, functionality, and visual appeal.

(Source: Alawadhi, H. (2016). Social Media Interaction in Interior Design. ResearchGate.

Retrieved from https://www.researchgate.net/publication/311912330_Social_Media_Interaction_in_Interior_Design)

5. Influence on Client Decision-Making Processes-

Social media plays a big role in client decision-making. It shapes how clients view style, quality, and functionality. Research from IARJSET shows that clients who see design content online tend to start projects with specific expectations, such as certain furniture brands, colour schemes, or layouts. This can speed up communication between designers and clients but may also lead to conflicts if the requested trends don't fit ergonomic, budget, or space requirements. Designers need to handle these influences carefully. They should educate clients about practical solutions and make sure that visual preferences are included without sacrificing usability or the long-term sustainability of the space.

(Source: Aksu, A., et al. (2021). Social Media as a Means of Increasing Non-Designers' Insight into Interior Design. *Journal of Design Research*. Taylor & Francis. Retrieved from <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/14606925.2021.1912904>)

6. Demand for Personalized and Functional Spaces-

Recent studies show that clients increasingly want personalized and functional interiors. Exposure to social media has led clients to blend styles, try out patterns, and include unique spaces like podcast rooms or multifunctional kitchens. Designers report that clients tend to focus more on aesthetics influenced by social media, often ignoring functional aspects. This highlights the need for structured design consultations and standard operating procedures to inform clients about ergonomics, material strength, and practical layouts. A thoughtful approach ensures that inspiration from trends does not compromise long-term usability or comfort. This allows designers to create spaces that are both attractive and highly functional.

(Source: Architectural Digest (2023). Designing Gen Z: Why Aesthetics Outrank Authenticity in the Homes of Zoomers. Retrieved from <https://www.architecturaldigest.com/story/gen-z-interior-design-aesthetics>)

7. Gen Z Preferences and Social Media Impact-

Gen Z clients, who grew up with digital technology, are heavily influenced by social media trends in interior design. Iconic furniture and décor items quickly gain popularity online, leading to a demand for affordable replicas or “dupes.” While this accessibility broadens high-end design aesthetics, it also challenges designers to keep quality, originality, and functionality intact. Studies show that Gen Z often values aesthetics more than authenticity or traditional design principles, frequently curating their homes to match current online trends. Therefore, designers must balance visual attraction with functional and sustainable choices. They need to guide clients to make informed decisions while encouraging creativity.

(Source: Architectural Digest (2023). Designing Gen Z: Why Aesthetics Outrank Authenticity in the Homes of Zoomers. Retrieved from <https://www.architecturaldigest.com/story/gen-z-interior-design-aesthetics>)

8. Social Media's Influence on Design Offices and Professional Practices-

The use of social media significantly impacts design offices. It influences workflow, marketing, and client interaction. Research reveals that designers are increasingly sharing project concepts and portfolios online to engage clients and improve communication. Platforms like Instagram act as visual tools, helping clients understand possible design outcomes. However, these platforms can lead to unrealistic expectations, as clients may want their interiors to perfectly mirror curated online images. Designers need to develop structured methods to manage client expectations. This ensures that inspiration from social media fits functional, budget, and contextual needs without sacrificing professional design standards.

(Sources: Danziger, P. (2018). Social Media Is Failing Too Many Interior Designers. Forbes. Retrieved from <https://www.forbes.com/sites/pamdanziger/2018/07/18/social-media-is-failing-too-many-interior-designers/> WIFI Talents (2021). Marketing in the Interior Design Industry: Statistics. Retrieved from <https://wifitalents.com/marketing-in-the-interior-design-industry-statistics/> Gitnux (2022). Customer Experience in the Interior Design Industry Statistics. Retrieved from <https://gitnux.org/customer-experience-in-the-interior-design-industry-statistics/>)

9. Effects on Contemporary Residential Design-

The rise of social media, especially Instagram, has shaped contemporary residential design choices. Clients often ask for layouts, materials, and finishes based on online trends, impacting how architects and designers work. Although this focus on modern and attractive solutions is beneficial, it also puts pressure on designers to meet social media-influenced client expectations instead of functional requirements. Studies indicate that using standard operating procedures and structured consultations can help alleviate these pressures. This approach guides designers in merging trend-inspired aesthetics with human-centered, sustainable, and context-sensitive design solutions.

(Source: Khan, A., et al. (2022). Social Media Affect on Contemporary Design for Architect and Client via Instagram Sites. ResearchGate. Retrieved from https://www.researchgate.net/publication/363340502_Social_Media_Affect_on_Contemporary_Design_for_Architect_and_Client_via_Instagram_Sites)

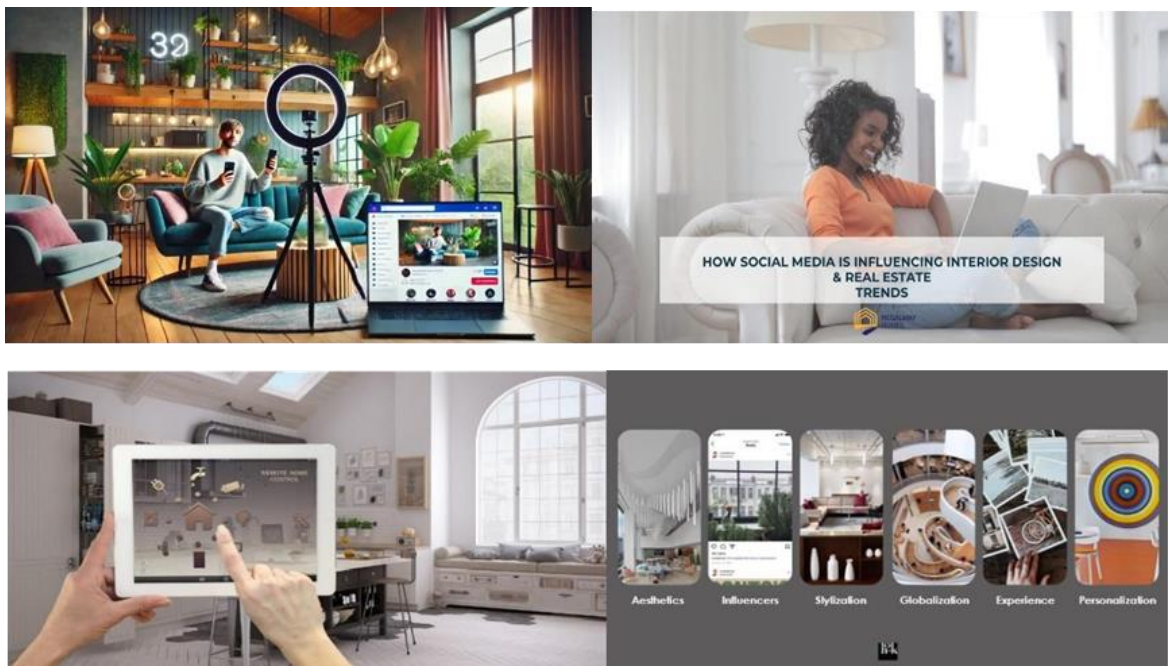
10. Challenges of Social Media Interaction in Interior Design-

Interacting on social media can harm design culture by fostering superficial or misinformed expectations. Research shows that frequent exposure to online trends might distort spatial perception, cultural significance, and functional planning. Clients may insist on features they've seen online without grasping practical limitations, which can lead to conflicts with designers. To tackle these issues, designers must educate clients about the importance of functionality, comfort, and context-fit design. Employing structured standard operating procedures ensures that social media acts as inspiration while preserving originality, quality, and usability. This approach allows designers to create spaces that are both visually appealing and functionally sound.

(Source: Toubiana, S., et al. (2025). Your House Looks Like That Show: Media-Inspired Design in Residential Interiors. *Frontiers in Computer Science*. Retrieved from <https://www.frontiersin.org/articles/10.3389/fcomp.2025.1610053/full>)

Conclusion:

The review of existing literature shows that social media has become a powerful force in shaping interior design practices by making design ideas widely accessible and visually appealing. However, it also creates challenges such as unrealistic client expectations, trend dependency, and neglect of functionality and sustainability. While studies highlight the democratization of design knowledge, there is limited research on the long-term consequences of trend-driven decisions and their effect on user well-being. This gap underlines the need for establishing professional guidelines (SOPs) that balance aesthetics with durability, comfort, and contextual relevance in order to achieve holistic and user-centered interior design outcomes



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<https://www.pexels.com/search/interior.com>

Gap in Existing Literature:

Although existing studies highlight how social media affects interior design trends and client preferences, several gaps remain. Most research focuses on aesthetics and trend adoption, while functional, ergonomic, and sustainable aspects of design receive limited attention. There is also a lack of structured frameworks or standard operating procedures to help designers manage client expectations influenced by social media. Additionally, few studies provide quantitative analysis of social media's impact across various demographics, platforms, and design types. Finally, the societal and ethical implications of trend-driven design, including homogenization and superficial choices, are largely unexplored. These gaps underscore the need for research that combines client behaviour, practical functionality, and professional guidelines to create balanced, user-centered interiors.

Methodology:

1. Research Design -

This research uses a mixed-methods approach, combining qualitative and quantitative methods, to assess the impact of social media-driven aesthetics on interior design practices. The study aims to understand how social media shapes client expectations, how designers respond to these demands, and how functionality, sustainability, and authenticity are valued alongside visual appeal. Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) are proposed as a framework to tackle the identified issues.

2. Target Population and Sample -

The target population includes interior designers aged 22 to 40 years, representing early-career and mid-career professionals who are most exposed to clients influenced by social media. A purposive sampling technique selected participants who actively work with clients and engage in both residential and commercial projects.

Sample Size: 5 interior designers.

Experience Range: 0 to 2 years, 3 to 5 years, 6 to 10 years, and over 10 years.

Work Domains: Residential, Commercial, Hospitality, and Mixed-use projects.

3. Data Collection Methods-

a. Content Analysis-

We conducted a content analysis of popular social media platforms like Instagram, Pinterest, and Houzz to identify the trending aesthetics that clients often reference. This included styles such as minimalism, boho-chic, industrial, and Scandinavian interiors.

b. Surveys of Users (Google Form)-

A structured questionnaire was created to collect insights from interior designers. The survey included both closed-ended and open-ended questions to gather measurable data and qualitative responses.

□ Survey/Interview Questions:

- Years of professional experience.
- Primary work domain (Residential, Commercial, Hospitality, Mixed).
- Frequency of clients bringing social media references (Always, Often, Sometimes, Never).
- Whether the designer had to modify or reject client ideas influenced by social media.
- Factors prioritized over aesthetics (Functionality, Budget, Sustainability, All of the Above).
- Level of agreement on implementing SOPs (Strongly Agree, Agree, Neutral, Disagree).

c. Comprehensive Interviews-

We conducted in-depth interviews with each designer to supplement the survey responses. This allowed participants to discuss challenges, such as conflicts with clients over impractical trends, issues with material durability, and pressure to prioritize "Instagrammable" designs over functionality.

4. Data Analysis-

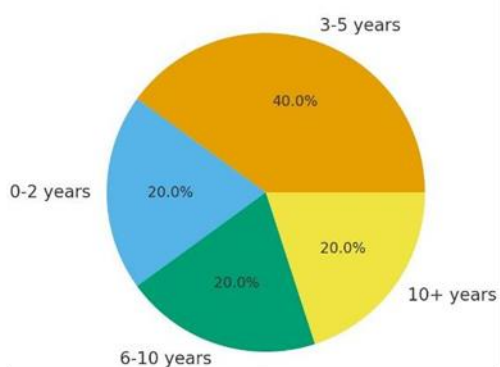
The collected data was analyzed using descriptive statistics and thematic analysis. Quantitative Analysis: Frequency counts and percentages determined how often clients reference social media, how many designers reject or modify ideas, and the level of SOP acceptance.

I. Qualitative Analysis: Thematic coding was applied to interview responses to identify recurring issues such as trend dependency, client pressure, material misuse, and sustainability concerns.

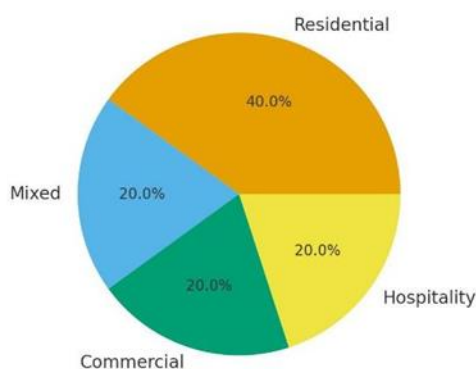
The findings revealed a clear pattern. While aesthetics from social media strongly influence client expectations, designers often prioritize functionality, budget, and sustainability. There was also unanimous support for developing SOPs to balance creativity with practicality.

Designer	Experience	Work Type	Client Social Media Ref	Modified/Rejected Idea	Priority Over Aesthetics	SOP Agreement
Arjun Mehta	0-2 years	Residential	Always	Yes	Functionality	Strongly Agree
Sanya Kapoor	3-5 years	Mixed	Often	Sometimes	All of the Above	Agree
Rohit Deshmukh	6-10 years	Commercial	Sometimes	Yes	Client's Budget	Strongly Agree
Neha Bansal	10+ years	Hospitality	Often	No	Sustainability	Agree
Karan Malhotra	3-5 years	Residential	Always	Yes	All of the Above	Strongly Agree

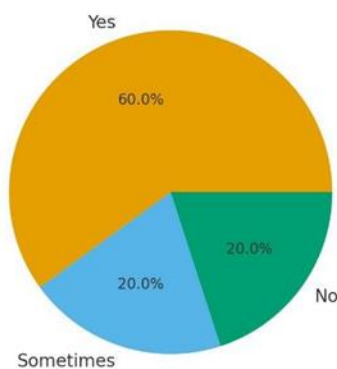
Years of Experience



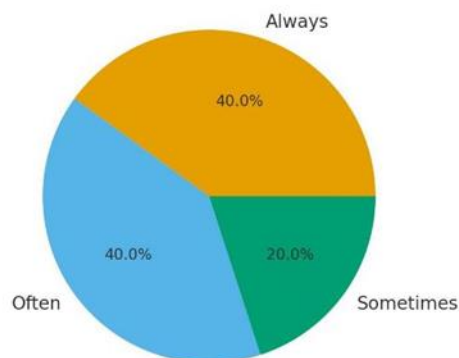
Type of Work



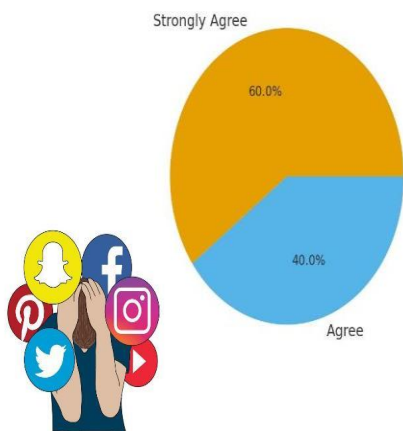
Have you had to modify/reject social media ideas?



How often clients show social media references



Do you think SOPs can balance aesthetics with practicality?



Factors Prioritized Over Aesthetics

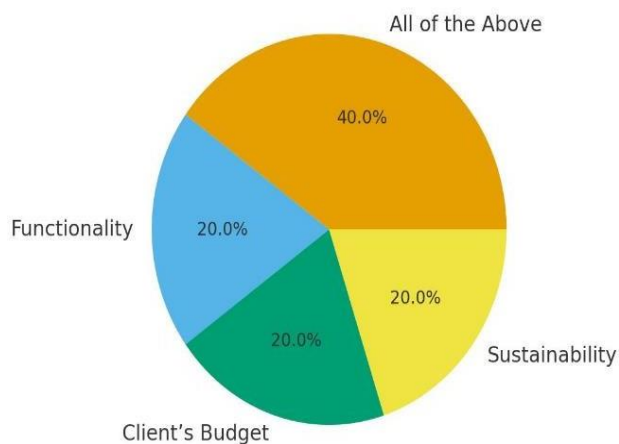


Table 1: Years of Experience of Designers

Experience Range	Number of Designers	Percentage
0-2 years	1	20%
3-5 years	2	40%
6-10 years	1	20%
10+ years	1	20%

Table 4: Modification/Rejection of Social Media-Inspired Ideas

Response	Number of Designers	Percentage
Yes	3	60%
Sometimes	1	20%
No	1	20%

Table 2: Type of Work

Work Type	Number of Designers	Percentage
Residential	2	40%
Mixed	1	20%
Commercial	1	20%
Hospitality	1	20%

Table 5: Factors Prioritized Over Aesthetics

Factor	Number of Designers	Percentage
Functionality	1	20%
Comfort	0	0%
Sustainability	1	20%
Client's Budget	1	20%
All of the Above	2	40%

Table 3: Frequency of Clients Showing Social Media References

Frequency	Number of Designers	Percentage
Always	2	40%
Often	2	40%
Sometimes	1	20%
Rarely	0	0%

Table 6: SOPs Balancing Aesthetics & Practicality

Response	Number of Designers	Percentage
Strongly Agree	3	60%
Agree	2	40%
Neutral	0	0%
Disagree	0	0%
Strongly Disagree	0	0%

II. Qualitative Analysis: Client Survey:

The client responses reveal recurring themes and issues when social media heavily influences interior design choices.

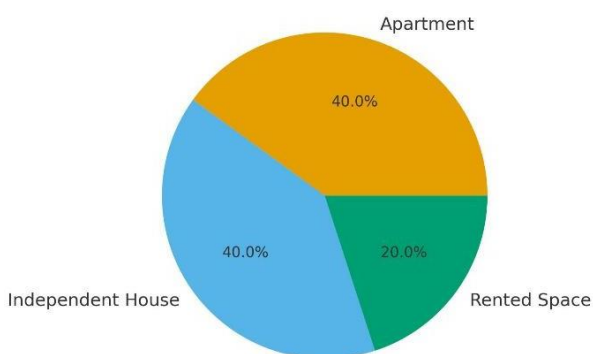
□ Client Survey – Key Questions:

1. What type of space do you live in? (Apartment / Independent House / Rented Space)

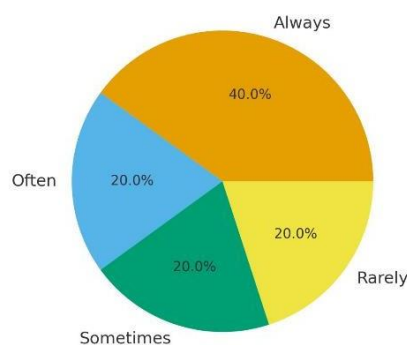
2. How often do you use social media for interior design ideas? (Always / Often / Sometimes / Rarely / Never)
3. Have you faced any problems after following social media design trends? (Yes / No / Sometimes)
4. If yes, what type of problems? (High Cost / Maintenance Issues / Not Suitable for Space Size / All of the Above)
5. Do you think a balance between aesthetics and functionality is important? (Strongly Agree / Agree / Neutral / Disagree)

Person	Space Type	Social Media Use	Faced Problems?	Type of Problems	Balance Opinion
Aditi Sharma	Apartment	Always	Yes	Maintenance Issues	Strongly Agree
Ramesh Patel	Independent House	Often	Sometimes	High Cost	Agree
Sara Khan	Rented Space	Sometimes	Yes	Not Suitable for Space Size	Strongly Agree
Vikram Joshi	Apartment	Always	Yes	All of the Above	Strongly Agree
Priya Nair	Independent House	Rarely	No	-	Agree

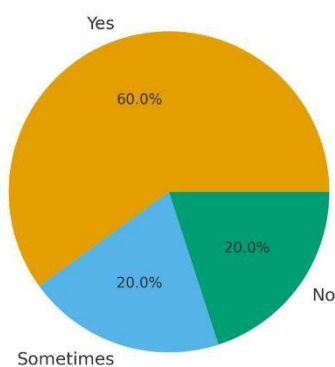
Space Type of Respondents



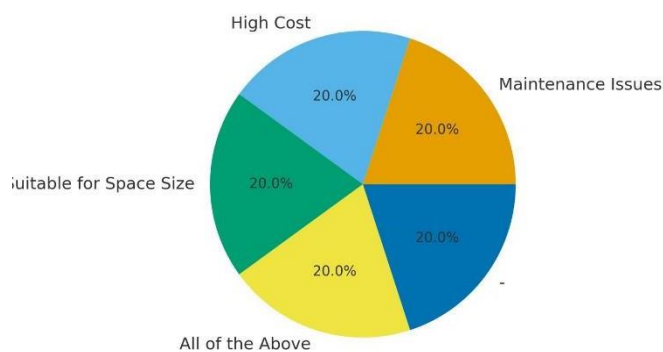
How often do people use social media for design ideas?

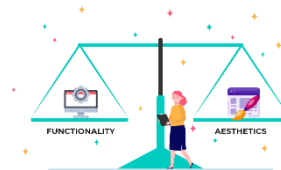
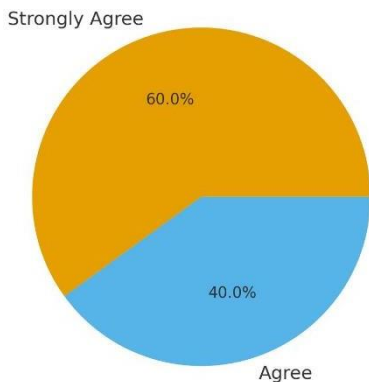


Have you faced problems copying designs from social media?

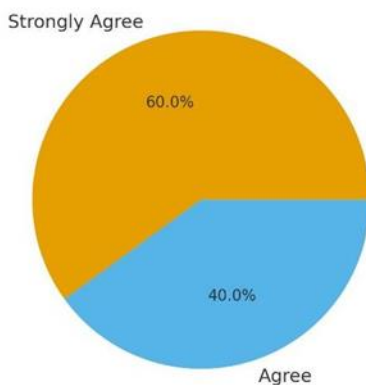


What kind of problems do people face with copied designs?





Do people prefer balancing aesthetics with functionality?



5. Ethical Considerations-

Participation was voluntary, and consent was obtained from all respondents. Anonymity was maintained by using pseudonyms or first names only in reports.

The data collected was for academic purposes only and will not be shared beyond research requirements.

Case Study / Site Analysis:

Introduction to the Case Study Approach

Case studies were selected for this study in order to demonstrate how social media-driven design trends are reflected in actual interior spaces. The goal is to compare the promise of visual appeal with the reality of use by examining a few sites that have been influenced by popular online aesthetics. Two important examples are highlighted in this section: Adoption of a Residential Trend: A tiny urban apartment decorated with "minimalist boho" interiors influenced by Instagram.

2. Case Study 1: Residential Apartment – Minimalist Boho Style

Location & Context• City: Pune, Maharashtra, India

- Area: 600 sq.ft., 1BHK apartment
- Owner Profile: 29-year-old marketing professional, heavily influenced by Instagram home décor accounts.
- Budget: ₹6.5 lakhs (focused largely on visual elements rather than hidden functional upgrades).



Design Concept

- Open shelves instead of closed cabinetry for a visually light look.
- Wicker and cane furniture paired with white-washed walls.
- Large potted plants for biophilic touch.
- Decorative rugs layered for texture.

Observed Strengths

- Strong visual coherence, matches popular “airy” Instagram interior style.
- Natural textures create a calming, inviting atmosphere.
- Highly photogenic corners increase social media engagement.

Observed Weaknesses

- Maintenance Issues: Cane furniture prone to wear in humid climate.

- Storage Deficit: Lack of closed cabinetry leads to visual clutter over time.
- Practicality Gap: Rugs difficult to clean; open shelves attract dust.
- Post-Occupancy Feedback: Owner admitted spending more time on upkeep than expected.

Key Insights from Site Analysis:

Aesthetic Appeal = Practical Achievement: Due to their aesthetic appeal, both websites initially flourished, but over time, their functional flaws reduced user satisfaction. Maintenance Burden as a Hidden Cost: Photogenic design decisions frequently necessitate more maintenance, which was understated in both situations. Trend Lifespan Is Short: Because social media trends change so quickly, interior design that is solely based on current trends becomes dated in as little as one to two years. Design Balance Is Essential: Longevity and usability may be guaranteed by combining classic functional features with beautiful design elements.

Design Practice Implications:

The significance of function-led aesthetics as opposed to aesthetic-led function is emphasized by the analysis. Designers ought to:

Measure performance in the real world by conducting post-occupancy evaluations. Inform customers about useful factors that go beyond social media appeal.



<https://baciastupido.com/minimal-boho-living-room/>

Element	Design Choice	Purpose / Effect
Walls & Finishes	White-washed walls	Creates airy, light-filled ambience; enhances natural textures
Furniture	Wicker and cane pieces	Adds bohemian, earthy touch with natural materials

Element	Design Choice	Purpose / Effect
Storage	Open shelves instead of closed cabinetry	Gives visual lightness but reduces hidden storage
Textiles	Layered decorative rugs	Adds warmth, comfort, and textural depth
Plants	Large indoor potted plants	Introduces biophilia, freshens space, adds greenery
Color Palette	Neutrals (white, beige) with earthy accents (terracotta, green)	Evokes calmness while highlighting natural elements
Lighting	Natural light + woven pendant lights	Enhances softness and photogenic corners



• **Aesthetics with Functional Design Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) Table**

SOP Category	Procedure Guideline	Action Steps	Expected Outcome
1. Material Selection	Prioritize durability, maintenance, and climate suitability over trend-driven materials.	Compare material life cycle; choose engineered/sustainable finishes; document sourcing.	Long-lasting interiors with reduced maintenance cost.
2. Client Expectation	Align client's social media inspirations with real lifestyle needs.	Conduct pre-design workshops; show "Expectation vs Reality" comparisons; guide clients with mock-ups.	Informed clients with realistic design choices.
3. Space Planning	Functionality zoning before adding aesthetic layers.	Reserve minimum 30% of area for storage; optimize circulation; balance decorative and functional zones.	Balanced layouts ensuring usability + visual appeal.

4.Sustainability	Use eco-friendly, modular, and locally sourced materials.	Ensure at least 40% materials are sustainable/local; encourage re-use and modular furniture.	Environmentally conscious designs with reduced carbon footprint.
5.Post-Occupancy Review	Evaluate design performance after 6 months of use.	Collect client feedback; record 3+ improvement suggestions; adjust future SOPs accordingly.	Continuous improvement of design practices, higher client satisfaction.

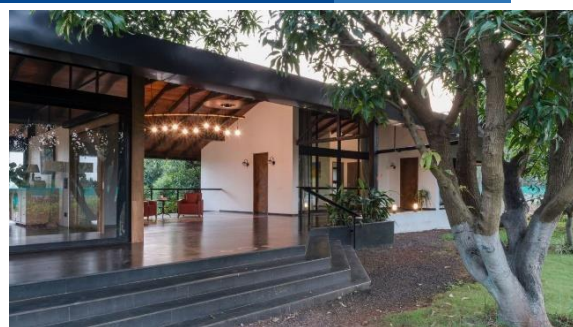


<https://baciainstupidido.com/minimal-boho-living-room/>

➤ **Case Study 2: Under the Mango Tree Holiday Home, Karjat, India**

- **Design Firm:** Studio Nishita Kamdar
- **Location:** Karjat, Maharashtra
- **Built Area:** Approximately 5,500 sq ft (bungalow only)
- **Site Area:** Around 2 acres of lush agricultural landscape

<https://amazingarchitecture.com/houses/under-the-mango-tree-house-in-karjat-india-by-studio-nishita-kamdar>



□ Design Concept:

Ar. SAMRUDDHI CHITNIS

JAMILA KUTUBJIWALA

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A peaceful retreat that blends smoothly into its green surroundings, inspired by the large mango tree under which the house is located.

Design Highlights & Spatial Layout

The structure is a 100-ft long linear form, embracing views in both directions and using large, pivoting glass walls for clear sightlines. This creates a smooth connection between indoors and outdoors.

The architectural style consists of three main elements: a continuous pitched roof made of steel and teak, wide glass wall panels, and a granite base with a leather finish that flows outward.

☐ Materials, Comfort, & Sustainability:

Roof: Lightweight steel rafters with teak wood slats, layered for insulation, providing a cooler indoor climate (up to 5°C less than outside).

Flooring & Plinth: Uniform granite flooring with subtle grey stone inlays and handmade cement tiles, visually extending the interior to the exterior.

Walls: Mostly glass framed in steel, offering clear views and smooth transitions between indoor and outdoor spaces.



User Experience & Emotional Qualities:

The home creates a calm and reflective retreat, featuring connections to nature through natural light, breezes, and peaceful views of the surrounding farmland.

Inside, the design features minimalist furnishings and muted colours, keeping the landscape as the main focus. The scale and layout are designed for people and respond to the context.



❖ **Impact on SOP Development:**

This case study serves as a solid basis for creating SOPs that blend aesthetics with user needs through these principles:

Principle	Suggested SOP Guideline
Contextual & Nature-driven	Develop designs that respond to the landscape and emotional needs of users.
Visual Transparency	Use open layouts and large glazing to enhance continuity with surroundings.
Material Simplicity & Longevity	Select durable materials that age well and support sustainability.
Sensory Comfort	Prioritize thermal comfort through design elements like insulation and ventilation.
Timeless Design Language	Favor authenticity over trends for lasting relevance and usability.

Summary-

The “Under the Mango Tree” home in Karjat showcases design that is firmly rooted in context, material honesty, and human well-being. It does not rely on digital aesthetics or temporary trends. Its focus on sensory experience, sustainability, and smart spatial planning makes it a great model for SOPs looking to balance functionality with visual and emotional appeal.

<https://amazingarchitecture.com/houses/under-the-mango-tree-house-in-karjat-india-by-studio->



<https://amazingarchitecture.com/houses/under-the-mango-tree-house-in-karjat-india-by-studio-> - nishita-kamdar

Analysis & Conclusion:

Criteria	Case Study 1: Minimalist Boho Apartment, Pune	Case Study 2: Under the Mango Tree Holiday Home, Karjat
Location & Scale	Urban, 600 sq.ft. 1BHK apartment	Rural, ~5,500 sq.ft. bungalow on 2-acre site
Design Influence	Strongly influenced by Instagram/social media trends	Rooted in site context, client needs, and nature-centric philosophy
Materials	Cane, wicker, rugs, white-wash walls (trendy but fragile)	Steel rafters, teak battens, granite, pivoting glass (durable, climate-responsive)
Spatial Layout	Compact, focused on aesthetic corners	Long linear plan, integrated indoor-outdoor spaces
Functionality	Storage issues, high maintenance, short trend lifespan	Efficient, climate-adaptive, low-maintenance, timeless
Aesthetic Value	Photogenic, highly shareable on social media	Elegant but subtle, not designed for social media appeal
User Experience	Initial excitement → later dissatisfaction due to upkeep	Consistent comfort, immersive nature experience, sustainable living

Sustainability	Neglected, trend-led choices not eco-friendly	Passive cooling, local materials, reduced energy needs
Longevity	Design feels dated in 1–2 years	Timeless, adaptable design lasting decades
Key Lesson	Aesthetic-led function → compromises usability	Function-led aesthetics → balanced, sustainable outcome

Summary:

- The Pune Apartment highlights the risks of social media–driven aesthetics (short-lived, impractical).
- The Karjat Holiday Home shows the value of SOP-guided, user-centered design (functional, sustainable, timeless).

Criteria	Social Media–Driven Aesthetics	SOP-Based Balanced Approach
Design Priority	Focus on visuals, photogenic corners, trend replication.	Functionality, comfort, sustainability first; aesthetics as support.
Material Use	Trendy, fragile, climate-incompatible (e.g., cane, open shelves).	Durable, low-maintenance, climate-appropriate, sustainable materials.
Client Behavior	Influenced by Instagram/Pinterest; unrealistic expectations.	Educated through workshops, mock-ups, and post-occupancy reviews.
Functionality	Often compromised for looks (e.g., less storage, dust-prone surfaces).	Proper zoning, efficient storage, circulation, and usability prioritized.
Sustainability	Low priority; focus on imported/trendy finishes.	Emphasis on eco-friendly, local, and modular design solutions.
Maintenance	High effort required (dust, wear, cleaning issues).	Reduced maintenance through smart material selection and practical layouts.
Design Lifespan	Short-lived (1–2 years before trend fades).	Long-lasting, adaptable designs with timeless appeal.
Professional Challenges	Designers pressured to “copy” trends for social media validation.	Designers work with evidence-based SOPs ensuring quality and client satisfaction.
End User Satisfaction	Declines over time due to impractical choices.	Remains high as spaces serve real-life needs alongside aesthetics.

The study comparing the Minimalist Boho Apartment in Pune and the Under the Mango Tree Holiday Home in Karjat shows the different results of aesthetics driven by social media versus designs focused on practicality and context.

The Pune Apartment highlights the dangers of relying too much on trends. Instagram-inspired aesthetics can create attractive spaces but may not consider long-term usability. Features like open shelving, layered rugs, and cane furniture looked good but were not practical for city living. This led to high maintenance, limited storage, and eventual disappointment. It illustrates how decisions based on aesthetics can hurt comfort, sustainability, and authenticity.

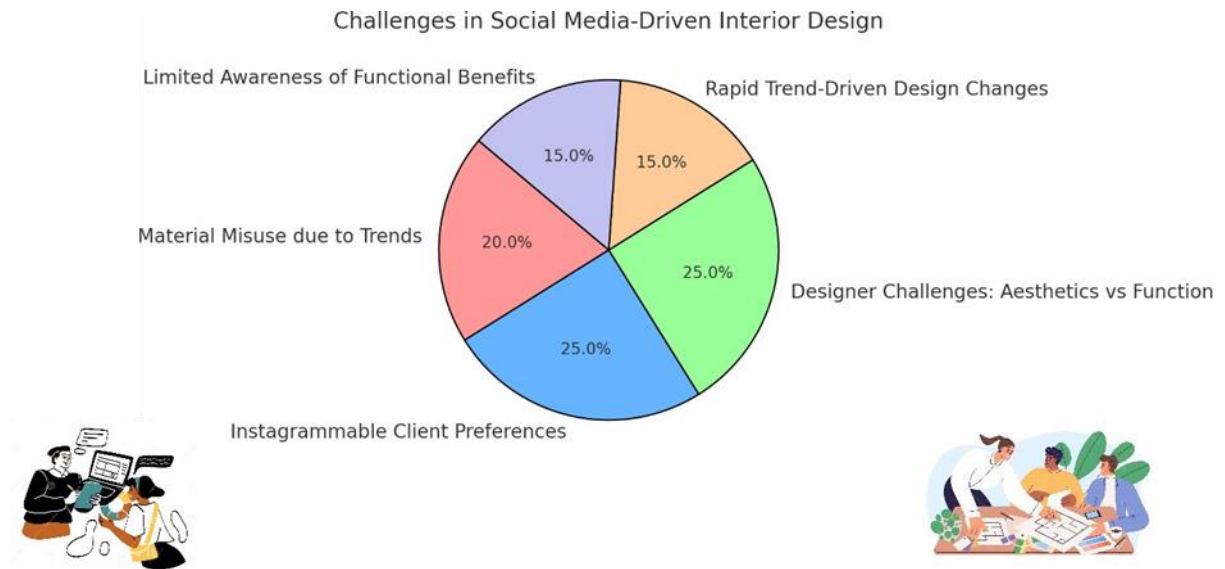
In contrast, the Karjat Holiday Home follows a design approach based on the site, durable materials, and planning for users. The use of teak battens, granite, and steel rafters offers both strength and beauty. The layout connects indoor and outdoor spaces seamlessly. Unlike the Pune apartment, this design focuses on durability, natural cooling, and lasting looks rather than temporary visual trends. As a result, it creates a space that not only supports user comfort but also adapts well to its environment.

Conclusion:

This research examined how social media-driven aesthetics affect interior design practices and looked at how Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) can help professionals create a balanced, user-centered approach. Through literature reviews, designer interviews, surveys, and case studies, it became clear that social media has made design ideas more accessible and increased aesthetic awareness among clients. However, it has also created unrealistic expectations, increased dependence on trends, and focused too much on visual appeal at the expense of functionality, sustainability, and comfort. The findings highlight five main challenges: material misuse due to online trends, changing client preferences for “Instagrammable” spaces, difficulties designers face in balancing aesthetics with practicality, rapid changes in design demands driven by trends, and limited public understanding of the long-term benefits of functional design. The case study of a Pune apartment showed the downsides of social media-influenced interiors, while the Karjat holiday home illustrated the success of function-led, contextually aware design. The research stresses the need to adopt SOPs that prioritize performance, durability, and user well-being along with aesthetics. Designers must inform clients about maintenance costs, the short lifespan of trends, and the long-term benefits of sustainable choices. Additionally, the study found a significant gap in current literature, especially regarding post-occupancy evaluations and the direct link between social media-influenced design choices and their practical effects.

Overall, the study concludes that social media should serve as a source of inspiration rather than as a model for imitation. Genuine design success comes from merging lasting

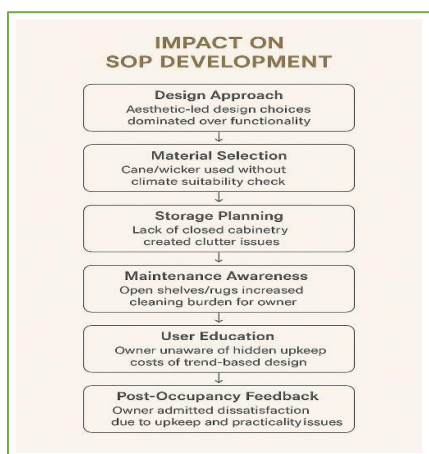
functionality with creative aesthetics, rooted in a deep understanding of the context. By implementing SOPs, the interior design field can go beyond the surface of visual culture and create spaces that are not only attractive but also enduring, authentic, and supportive of real-life needs.



Proposed SOPs Table:

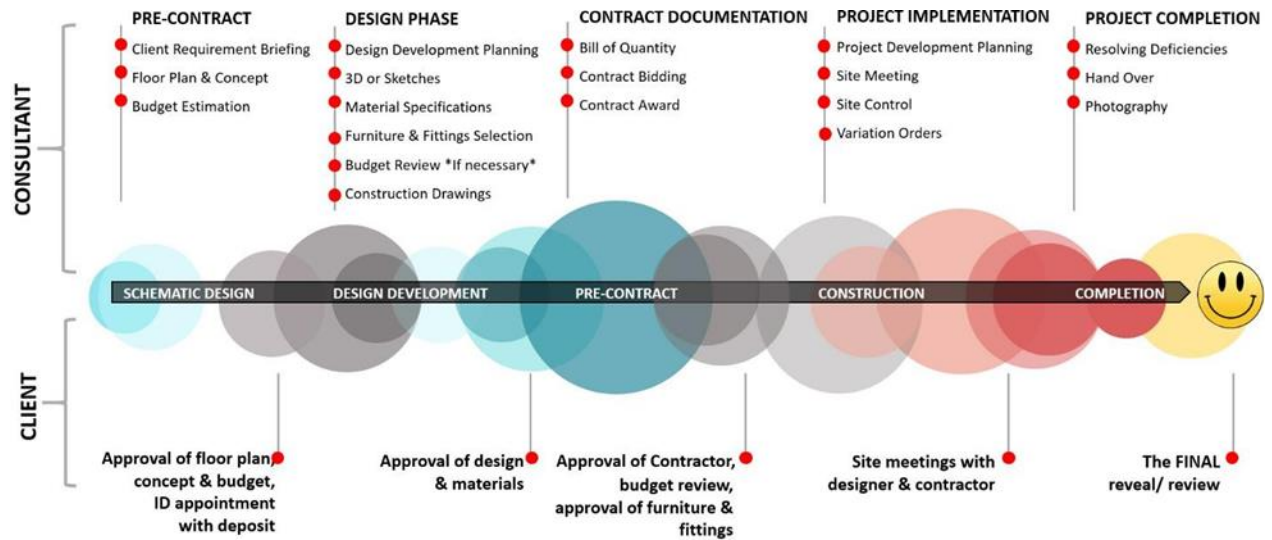
SOP Name	Step / Action	Purpose	Example / Application
Client Orientation SOP	Begin project with orientation; compare “inspiration vs reality.”	Align client’s social media ideas with practical feasibility.	Show Instagram trend vs actual material sample in client’s budget & climate.
Functional Priority SOP	Use functionality checklist (storage, ergonomics, circulation, maintenance).	Ensure usability before aesthetics.	Reject delicate open shelving if client has dust-prone environment.
Material & Sustainability SOP	Approve durable, low-maintenance, and climate-suitable materials.	Prevent hidden maintenance costs; promote sustainability.	Replace imported cane with locally sourced bamboo.

Contextual Adaptation SOP	Modify social media trends to fit site conditions and scale.	Avoid copy-paste designs.	Scale down oversized Boho furniture for 600 sq.ft. apartment.
Budget Alignment SOP	Compare each trend-inspired request against budget tiers (premium/mid/affordable).	Balance aspiration with affordability.	Suggest IKEA alternative for costly Instagram-famous sofa.
Communication SOP	Use renders, mood boards, and mock-ups to explain design.	Manage expectations and avoid misunderstandings.	Show client how a trending pastel palette looks in their actual living room lighting.
Post-Occupancy SOP	Collect feedback 3–6 months after completion.	Measure real-world success and usability.	Client survey on maintenance issues with selected finishes.
Awareness & Education SOP	Share brochures, posts, or workshops highlighting balanced design.	Educate society on functional, sustainable interiors.	Instagram post showing “Aesthetic-only” vs “Balanced Design” before/after.



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 Link(ResearchGate) https://www.researchgate.net/publication/359662176_Aesthetic_Evaluation_of_Interior_Design_Based_on_Visual_Features
- Integrating Aesthetics and Efficiency in Interior Design (AI-Driven Models)**
 Focus on balancing beauty and utility in interior spaces using AI tools.
 Link (Nature Scientific Reports) <https://www.nature.com/articles/s41598-2024-02418-3>
- The Design through the Screens: Interior Design Adaptations for Social Media**
 Discusses how designs are altered for screen appeal, affecting real-life usability.
 Link (ResearchGate) https://www.researchgate.net/publication/358156227_The_Design_through_the_screens_the_adaptations_of_Interior_Design_elaborated_for_Social_Media Analyzes how platforms affect design workflow, client choices, and creativity.
- The Impact of Social Media Use on Design Offices** 024-53318-3
 Link (DergiPark Journal) <https://dergipark.org.tr/en/download/article-file/4267051>
- Psychological and Neural Responses to Architectural Interiors**

Examines how aesthetic interiors influence the brain and emotional response.

Link (University of Pennsylvania - PDF)
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