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Conscious Design: Integrating Nature and Emotion for the Preservation of the Built Environment

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Abstract

Creative sustainability encompasses not only the preservation of untouched nature but also the enhancement of the built environment, which plays a fundamental role in human well-being. This study introduces Conscious Emotional Design as an approach that integrates ecological principles, sensory perception, and user participation into the design process. The research applies the EMOHTIONS method, an innovative, human-centered framework that combines an experiential workshop—involving individual awareness activities, collective co-design, and multisensory material selection—with nature-inspired strategies such as biophilia and biomimicry. This mixed qualitative approach allows for the identification of users' conscious and unconscious needs, which are then translated into tailored design solutions. The method was tested across healthcare, workplace, residential, and educational contexts. Key findings indicate that spaces designed with the EMOHTIONS method significantly enhance psychological comfort, sense of belonging, and user satisfaction, while also contributing to stress reduction and improved functionality. Results further demonstrate the method's adaptability to diverse environments, with positive impacts observed not only for primary users but also for support communities (e.g., healthcare staff, educators, families). These outcomes confirm the potential of Conscious Emotional Design as a scalable, sustainable, and human-centered design strategy, capable of promoting both individual well-being and ecological responsibility.

Keywords

Creative sustainability; Emotional Design; Ecology; Well-being; Conscious design; EMOHTIONS Method

1. Introduction

The evolution of architecture and design has historically prioritized aesthetics and functionality, often neglecting the emotional impact of spaces on the individual. Today, *Conscious Emotional Design* emerges as an innovative paradigm that places the person at the center, emphasizing the interaction between the built environment, emotions, and well-being.

This paper explores the integration of ecological, sensory, and participatory principles in the design process. Starting from the definition of Emotional Design, the EMOHTIONS method is presented, an approach that, through an experiential workshop, allows for a deep analysis of the needs and values of individuals. These elements are then translated into design solutions that draw from personal experiences and values, stimulating sensory perception and connection with one's nature. The goal is to demonstrate how this approach transforms design into an immersive and shared process, capable of creating spaces that enhance the quality of life.

2. Methodology: Theoretical Foundations of Emotional Design

2.1. Emotional Design

In the context of contemporary design, emotional design emerges as a paradigm that goes beyond mere aesthetics, transforming environments into multisensory experiences capable of evoking positive emotions. This approach aims to generate a sense of well-being and a meaningful inner connection. The study in question applies this paradigm to the spaces we inhabit, creating environments that are not only aesthetic and functional but also capable of inspiring, welcoming, and caring for the well-being of those who live in them.

One of the most significant contributions to the concept of emotional design was made by Don Norman (Norman, 2004), who identified three levels of emotional processing in interaction with a product: visceral, behavioral, and reflective.

Visceral level: relates to the immediate and unconscious response to an object, based on aesthetics and sensory perception. It is the first emotional impact that a product evokes.

Behavioral level: refers to user satisfaction, ease of interaction, and the functionality of the design. A well-designed product must be intuitive and effectively meet the user's needs.

Reflective level: is the conscious evaluation a person makes of the object after using it, connecting it to deeper meanings, memories, and personal identity.

According to Norman (2004), "everything has a personality: everything sends an emotional signal," emphasizing the importance of designing products that generate positive experiences through these three levels (Figure 1(Interaction Design Foundation (IxDF), 2016).

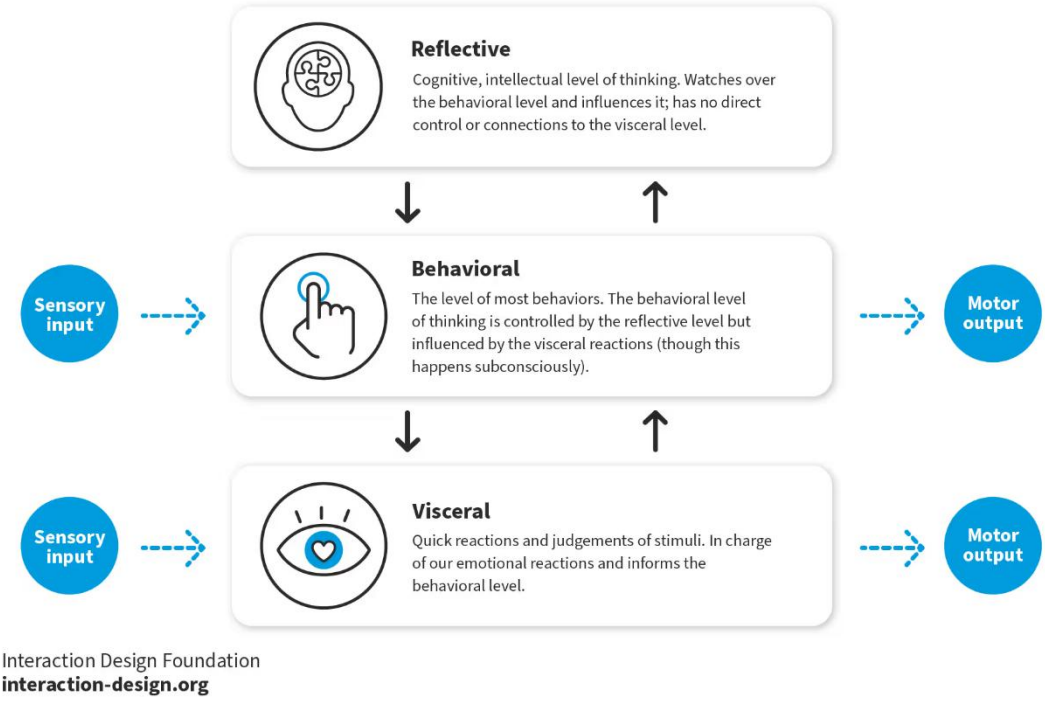

Figure 1: Three levels of design (IxDF, 2016)

2.2. The Person and Their Needs

Emotional design places the individual and their specific needs at the center, recognizing the uniqueness of each person in the context in which they live. Rather than addressing a generic concept of "humanity," it values individual diversity, advocating that everyone should be able to inhabit a space aligned with their own experiences, values, and aspirations. In this approach, emotional design does not simply offer a predefined style but interprets individual needs to translate them into unique and personalized design solutions.

2.3. The Role of Sensory Perception

The perception of spaces is a multisensory phenomenon. Every environment communicates through sight, hearing, smell, touch, and, in some cases, taste. Studies in environmental psychology (Gifford, 2007) highlight how sensory stimulation can significantly influence mood, concentration, and stress levels. Emotional Design also leverages these channels to create immersive experiences, where every element, from the choice of materials, colors, scents, and sounds, to the proposed configurations and the creation of specific space-time (i.e., creating spaces to enhance time), is designed to evoke positive emotions.

2.4. The Importance of Experience and Storytelling

Emotional design, in addition to the planning and realization of the work, aims to offer an immersive experience to the client. This approach is designed to ensure that the client feels an integral part of the design process, being listened to, supported, and understood during the complex phases of defining a space. The goal is to lighten the entire design process, making it easier to interpret desires and integrating the technical and creative components, which are typically outside the client's expertise. In this context, the creation of a tailored emotional design style not only facilitates the decision-making process, but storytelling emerges as a fundamental element, giving the project a distinctive value and meaning for the users, as the environment is shaped to reflect and support their needs. Furthermore, the emotional design process guides users in understanding and identifying the solutions most suited to their specific needs, facilitating their choice in a context where numerous options, though aesthetically appealing, make it difficult to discern what is truly right for them.

2.5. Emotions, Well-Being, and Motivational Models

Emotions are the physical response to a stimulus received. If we can predict the stimuli, we can steer the emotions. This concept is supported by the "predictive coding" model proposed by Friston (2010), which suggests that the brain functions as a predictive system, anticipating sensory stimuli and modulating emotional responses based on expectations. Furthermore, studies on emotional regulation, such as those by Gross (2002), highlight that predicting and cognitively restructuring stimuli can alter emotional responses, confirming the idea that stimulus prediction influences emotional control. Emotions form the basis of human behavior and directly impact psychological and physical well-being. Maslow's (1954) model emphasizes the importance of meeting basic needs to achieve levels of self-actualization (Figure 2).

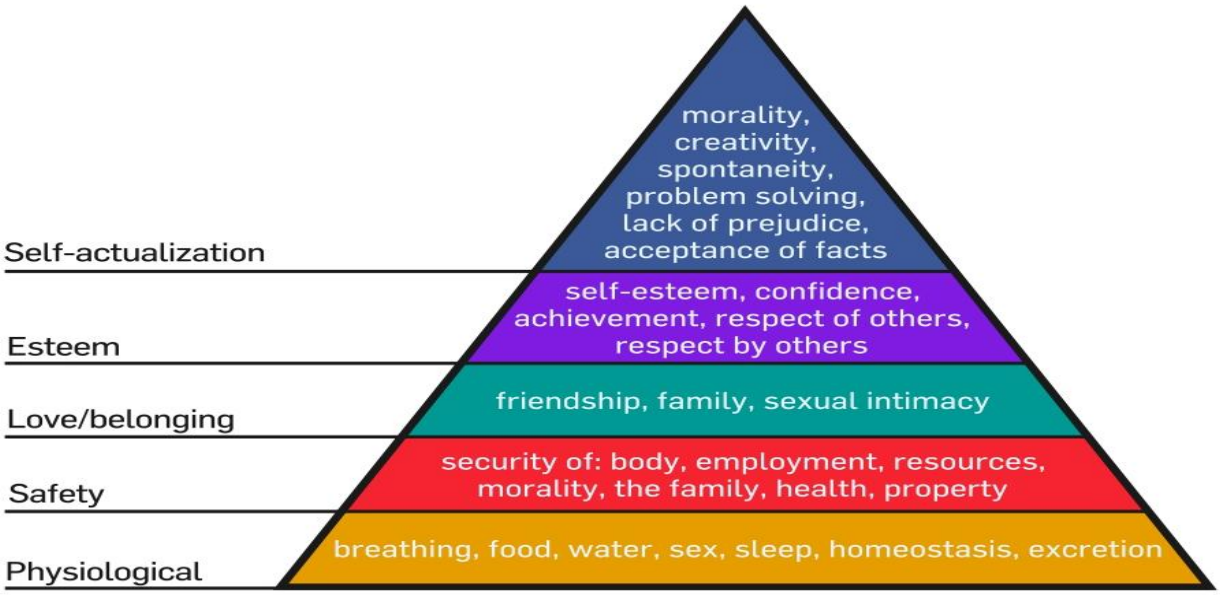

Figure 2: Maslow's hierarchy of needs (Maslow, 1954)

2.6. The Meaning of Dwelling

The concept of habitation (concept of dwelling) comes from the Latin "habitare," the frequentative of "habere" (to have), and takes on the meaning of permanence, habit, and active interaction with a place. The act of dwelling goes beyond mere occupation of a physical space, taking the form of a dynamic and sensory experience that involves the cognitive, emotional, and relational dimensions of the individual. As Ettore Sottsass pointed out, "Architecture is lived in, while art is looked at; this is a fundamental difference. Architecture is a physical and sensory experience because you go inside it." Individuals dwell in multiple places throughout their lives – from home to work, from school to healthcare environments – and each context generates specific perceptual and emotional responses. Space, in fact, sends continuous stimuli to the human body, which, through the five senses, receives and assimilates sensations and emotions that can influence psychological and physical well-being. The conscious design of environments thus plays a key role, as a well-thought-out space not only meets functional needs but also becomes a catalyst for cognitive, emotional, and motivational stimuli, actively contributing to the quality of life of those who inhabit it.

2.7. Integration of Ecology, Aesthetics, and Emotions

The ecological approach in design is not limited to the use of natural materials or the incorporation of vegetation in built spaces, but involves a systemic view in which the artificial environment is an integral part of the ecosystem. *Conscious Emotional Design* adopts a perspective that values the synergy between nature, aesthetics, and emotions, promoting a harmonious balance between humans and the context in which they live. The integration of nature in designed spaces not only has aesthetic value but also directly impacts the psychological and physical well-being of individuals, as demonstrated by numerous studies in environmental psychology. The adoption of strategies inspired by biomimicry – the imitation of natural models, processes, and strategies – allows for the creation of sustainable environments that can adapt to human needs and generate positive stimuli for the individual.

The relationship between environment and well-being has been extensively studied in the context of environmental psychology. The Environmental Psychological Model for Educational and Learning Places proposed by Gifford (2007) highlights how physical spaces influence cognitive and emotional processes, determining the level of comfort, attention, and productivity of individuals (**Figure 3**). Similarly, Ardigò's Quadrilateral provides an evaluation tool for the environment and well-being, emphasizing the role of the interaction between mind, body, environment, and society in defining overall health status (**Figure 4**).

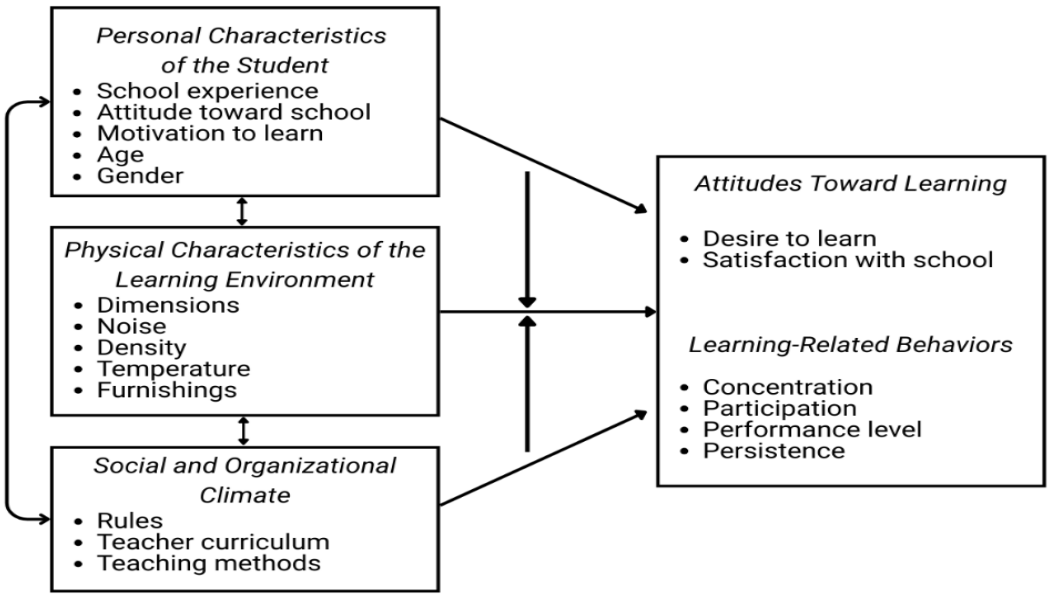

Figure 3: The Environmental Psychological Model for Educational and Learning Spaces proposed (Gifford, 2007)

Figure 4: The Ardigò Quadrilateral (Ardigò, 1997)

The integration of natural elements in the design of spaces also has a direct impact on individual motivation. Motivation, understood as an internal force that directs behavior toward a goal, can be stimulated through an environment that offers comfort, inspiration, and appropriate sensory stimuli. Environments designed according to the principles of *Conscious Emotional Design* promote a sense of belonging, reduce stress, and enhance psychological and physical well-being, thus contributing to a higher quality of life and a more harmonious interaction between humans and the natural environment.

2.8. Conscious Emotional Design and ESG Principles

The integration of *Conscious Emotional Design* with ESG (Environmental, Social, Governance) principles opens new perspectives for the design of sustainable, ethical, and human-centered spaces. The ESG approach, increasingly adopted in the architecture and design sectors, promotes strategies that reduce environmental impact (E), foster social well-being (S), and ensure responsible project management (G).

From an environmental (E) perspective, *Conscious Emotional Design* incorporates sustainable materials, biophilic strategies, and principles of biomimicry, creating environments in harmony with nature and reducing ecological footprints. This approach aligns with the growing need for buildings and spaces designed to improve the quality of life without compromising natural resources.

On the social (S) front, the EMOHTIONS method places the individual's experience at the center, actively involving them in the design process. This fosters more inclusive design, adapted to the different emotional and psychological needs of those who inhabit the spaces, thus improving their interaction with the built environment.

Finally, the governance (G) aspect translates into ethical and transparent design management, considering the economic and social implications of design. The adoption of ESG practices in emotional design allows for the development of corporate social responsibility (CSR) strategies for businesses, institutions, and public spaces, promoting responsible and sustainable development models.

The integration of ESG principles into *Conscious Emotional Design* not only strengthens the effectiveness of sustainable design but also demonstrates how design can be a key element in promoting widespread well-being, generating environments that respect both the ecosystem and the people who inhabit them.

2.9. The EMOHTIONS Method: Approach and Phases

The EMOHTIONS method represents the core of *Conscious Emotional Design*. It breaks down the design process into distinct phases, aimed at ensuring that the space reflects the true needs of the individual.

The EMOHTIONS method is an innovative design approach conceived and developed by the Authors, who, as practicing designers, have recognized the limitations of traditional design methodologies. Conventional design practices, primarily grounded in technical principles, often fail to fully address the needs and experiences of the individuals inhabiting the space. As discussed in the previous sections, this observation is supported by a growing body of research in psychology and sociology. In response, the EMOHTIONS method bridges traditional design frameworks with scientific evidence highlighting the profound impact of spatial environments on human behavior and well-being. At its core, EMOHTIONS aims to promote the transformation of spaces in ways that enhance the well-being of their users.

2.10. The Experiential Workshop: Analysis of Needs and Emotions

The first phase involves the activation of an experiential workshop, a space for direct interaction between the designer and the client, which allows for:

Collecting qualitative data through various activities to become aware of how the home is currently experienced and the expectations related to the project.

Mapping each individual's personal profile and identifying areas for enhancement.

Engaging future users, such as family members, to obtain a complete view of relational dynamics.

The workshop was developed in collaboration with a psychologist specialized in environmental psychology, who, together with the Authors, designed three "playful" activities aimed at uncovering the genuine needs of space users by engaging all five senses. The experiential workshop is structured in the following phases:

Phase 1 – Individual Awareness: In this initial phase, each inhabitant of the space independently completes a "desire chart," indicating their current level of satisfaction for each area within the space to be designed or furnished. They are also asked to specify the desired level of satisfaction they wish to achieve in the new design. For example, in the context of a residential dwelling, participants rate, on a scale from 0 to 10, their current satisfaction in categories such as kitchen space, self-care, guest reception, cleaning routines, and so on. They then define the target level they aim to reach in each of these categories through the new project. A participant might assign a low score to "self-care" in the current state and a higher score in the future vision, while another category, such as "guest reception," might already receive a satisfactory score that remains unchanged. This phase serves as a moment of individual reflection and awareness, helping participants articulate their present experience and desired future outcomes.

Phase 2 – Collective Discussion and Co-design: Upon completing the individual reflections, the space users come together to discuss their respective insights and needs. As a group, they then move to a collaborative activity in which they sketch their aspirations directly onto the architectural floor plan. Each participant also places a representation of themselves within the new space, identifying where they imagine being most present or comfortable. To conclude this phase, the group collectively chooses a name for their new project, symbolizing a shared vision.

Phase 3 – Sensory Materials Board: In the final phase, participants create a personalized materials board by selecting materials, colors, scents, and music that they envision for their future environment. This multisensory approach emphasizes not only aesthetic preferences but also how each element contributes to sensory stimulation and emotional well-being. The process encourages participants to consider the impact of design choices on all five senses, reinforcing the method's emphasis on holistic and human-centered design.

These three phases, when considered collectively, serve to analyse and foster awareness of users' needs. The process begins with an examination of the state of the art, followed by the identification of areas of interest—whether spatial, environmental, or aspects of daily life—in which targeted interventions may enhance outcomes. When the process is carried out collaboratively, the workshop not only enables participants to gain awareness of their own needs but also fosters understanding of the needs of others.

The workshop constitutes a pivotal stage in the overall process, both for those who will later be responsible for design activities and for the users or clients themselves, as it allows them to develop a clearer understanding of their project

objectives. Each phase plays a crucial role in identifying individual and collective needs, as well as personal and group goals, thereby fostering the formation of a cohesive team oriented towards a shared aim.

Furthermore, the workshop facilitates awareness of the ways in which spatial configurations influence human perception. In particular, during Phase 3, participants are encouraged to experiment and to begin developing strategies aimed at addressing the needs identified in the earlier stages.

2.11. Design Concept

Following the Experiential Workshop phase, the design process continues with the definition of a specific Emotional Design Style, tailored to the needs and values of the individual or community that will inhabit the space. Each project addresses unique needs and requirements, not only in relation to the contextual application of emotional design but also due to the individual differences between the people involved. For this reason, the design cannot rely on standardized solutions but must be the result of a process of listening and in-depth analysis of the specific needs of the users.

Inspiration from nature plays a central role in this process through the application of principles such as biophilia and biomimicry. The integration of natural elements and design strategies inspired by biological and morphological processes observed in nature not only promotes psychological and physical well-being but also contributes to the creation of innovative and sustainable solutions that effectively address the challenges of the contemporary built environment. In an era characterized by fast-paced rhythms, the pervasiveness of the digital world, and growing interconnectedness, it is essential to design spaces that re-establish a genuine connection with nature. Even when this connection is subtly and indirectly proposed, it can deeply stimulate the individual, fostering a sense of well-being and a feeling of belonging to the surrounding environment.

The entire process, however, must be tailored to the specific characteristics and needs of the person. A thorough preliminary analysis and attentive listening to the user's needs allow for the development of spaces that not only meet functional and aesthetic requirements but also generate sensory and emotional experiences that enhance the relationship between the individual and the environment, creating places that are simultaneously welcoming, stimulating, and harmonious.

2.12. The Virtuous Circle of Well-Being

Emotional Design aims to actively contribute to the creation of a Virtuous Circle of Well-Being (**Figure 5**) through careful and targeted design of living spaces. The main goal of this approach is to achieve a state of well-being, understood as a balance between psychological and physical health and the sensory experience of the surrounding environment. The space we inhabit is not a neutral element, but a dynamic system that sends continuous stimuli to our body and senses, directly influencing our perception and emotional state.

Architecture and interior design, in fact, do not limit themselves to an aesthetic function but become tools through which it is possible to modulate and improve the quality of life. Every spatial element—colors, proportions, shapes, temperatures, materials, combinations, and configurations—generates a sensory and emotional impact that conditions our mood (Higuera-Trujillo et al., 2021). If the space we live in is designed to evoke positive emotions, it becomes an inexhaustible source of well-being, contributing to the creation of an environment that stimulates psychological and physical balance and individual serenity.

Emotions represent the immediate response to stimuli received from the environment. Studies in affective neuroscience and environmental psychology show that interaction with harmonious and well-designed spaces promotes the release of neurotransmitters associated with well-being, such as serotonin and dopamine, helping to reduce stress and improve quality of life (Yan et al., 2024). Consequently, consciously designing environmental stimuli allows for the generation of positive emotions, feeding a cyclical process in which the daily experience of living becomes an element of well-being in itself.

This mechanism represents the core of the Virtuous Circle of Well-Being: through continuous and unconscious interaction with the designed space, the individual receives stimuli that translate into positive emotions, which in turn

reinforce the sense of comfort and safety in the lived environment. Emotional design, therefore, does not limit itself to shaping the space but actively intervenes in the construction of individual well-being, transforming the daily act of living into an experience that regenerates and sustains psychological and physical balance.

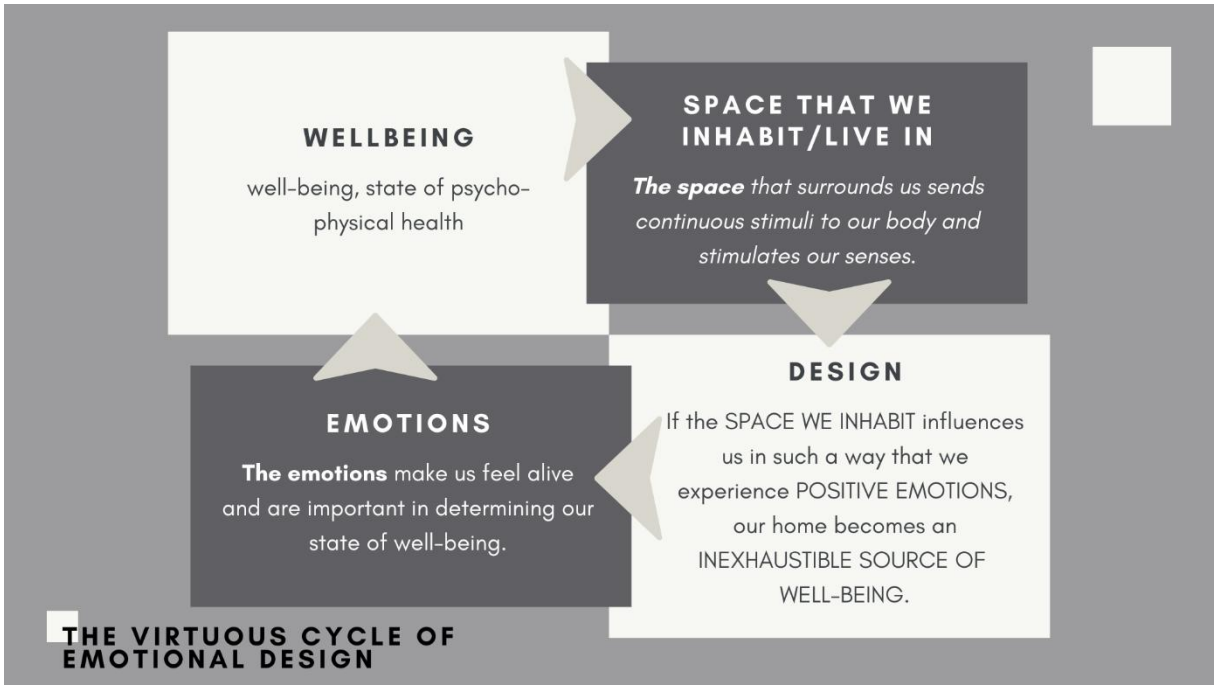

Figure 5: The virtuous circle of emotional design (By authors)

3. Results: Cases and Practical Applications

The application of the *EMOHTIONS* method in various contexts has demonstrated how *Conscious Emotional Design* can transform spaces, unlocking their true potential and actively contributing to the psychological and physical well-being of individuals. The environment, as highlighted by the *Quadrilateral of Ardigò* (Figure 4), is one of the determining factors in conditioning a person's state of health or illness. Since humans spend most of their time in built environments rather than natural ones, it becomes crucial to consciously preserve and design the spaces we inhabit so that they can offer adequate support and stimuli.

Throughout life, individuals interact with multiple spaces, often simultaneously, from the home to the workplace, from school to healthcare environments. For this reason, space design should not be limited to functional aspects but must also integrate an emotional component that enhances the living experience and promotes overall well-being. The analysis of different application contexts of *Conscious Emotional Design* highlights the importance of a targeted and personalized design approach, capable of responding to the specific needs of each environment.

3.1. Healthcare Environments

In hospital and rehabilitation settings, the design of spaces plays a key role in supporting the care process and promoting the psychological and physical well-being of both patients and healthcare staff. A well-designed, harmonious, and functional environment can have a significant impact on the quality of hospitalization and the response to treatments.

The adoption of emotional design in healthcare settings allows for:

Creating a more welcoming and less stressful environment, contributing to improved care experiences.

Providing a stimulating space that meets the cognitive, emotional, and motivational needs of the patient.

Reducing stress and anxiety levels, enhancing the perceived comfort of patients.

Encouraging patient involvement, making them an active participant in the healing process.

Stimulating individual motivation through environmental interventions, as a well-designed space, can facilitate cortical reorganization and rehabilitation.

Accelerating recovery processes by focusing on natural light, air quality, ergonomics, and multisensory stimuli.

Supporting the well-being of not only patients but also healthcare staff and volunteers, creating spaces that promote comfort and reduce work-related stress.

Recognizing the crucial role of healthcare professionals by designing environments that improve their well-being, thus enhancing the quality of care provided to patients.

Promoting the well-being of patients' families by reducing guilt and providing peace of mind, knowing that their loved one is in a pleasant, less sterile, and impersonal environment compared to traditional healthcare spaces. A design that integrates natural elements and focuses on aesthetics and spatial quality can transform a healthcare facility into a new home for some patients, making their stay more dignified and respectful of their identity. In this context, addressing emotional and psychological aspects is essential to ensure a better quality of life for both patients and their families.

3.2. Workspaces

In work environments, *Conscious Emotional Design* can significantly impact productivity, motivation, and employees' sense of belonging. Recent studies show that careful planning of the workspace positively affects psychological well-being and professional performance.

The integration of an emotional approach to workplace design offers numerous benefits, as demonstrated by the following points:

Increased productivity and creativity: A stimulating and motivating environment that engages the senses and emotions contributes to greater inspiration and a smoother workflow. Elements such as the use of vibrant colors, innovative designs, and bright spaces can enhance problem-solving abilities and creativity.

Reduced absenteeism and improved quality of work life: Ergonomic environments, with comfortable seating, well-organized spaces, and attention to physical health (such as using eco-friendly materials and optimizing natural light), can reduce fatigue and discomfort, leading to fewer illnesses and higher job satisfaction.

Active involvement of employees: Allowing employees to participate in designing their workspace promotes a strong sense of belonging. The result is a more personalized environment that meets individual needs, creating a deeper connection between employees and the organization.

Motivation through inspiring spaces: Spaces that encourage reflection, innovation, and collaboration, such as open areas and creative zones, promote individual and group motivation. A design that inspires can also enhance commitment and enthusiasm.

Improved teamwork and sense of connection among colleagues: Designing spaces that promote interaction, such as communal areas and collaborative zones, facilitates communication, improves idea sharing, and strengthens team bonds. This contributes to a more cohesive corporate culture where teamwork is encouraged.

Through the integration of these principles, workplace design becomes a powerful tool to improve not only productivity but also the psychological well-being and overall satisfaction of employees.

3.3. Residential Spaces

The application of *Conscious Emotional Design* in residential environments focuses on creating personalized spaces that reflect the needs and identity of the inhabitants, providing them with a safe and harmonious refuge.

In this context, emotional design allows for:

Creating tailored environments designed based on the emotions and specific needs of users.

Harmoniously integrating common and private areas, fostering a balance between socialization and privacy.

Promoting daily well-being through the use of natural materials, the stimulation of the five senses, and the creation of nature-inspired spaces.

A home designed according to these principles becomes a place where people can regenerate, regain balance, and experience a living environment that enhances their overall well-being.

3.4. Educational Spaces

The educational environment has always been subject to reforms and updates related to teaching and assessment methods. However, there is often a lack of adequate awareness of the importance of physical spaces in the learning process. Studies in environmental psychology show that the environment plays a fundamental role in influencing students' concentration, motivation, and engagement.

The application of *Conscious Emotional Design* in educational spaces allows for:

Designing environments that reflect the identity and needs of students and teachers.

Enhancing the aspects identified during the *Experiential Laboratory*, ensuring a targeted and personalized design.

Integrating common areas to encourage interaction and socialization among students.

Creating environments that stimulate the five senses and are inspired by nature, improving well-being and learning capacity.

The quality of the educational environment is not a universal parameter but must be consistent with the teaching context and the specific needs of the students. A well-designed school environment can significantly enhance the educational experience, just as much as a well-structured curriculum and a competent teacher.

The analysis of these case studies highlights the fundamental role that *Conscious Emotional Design* can play in the design of spaces across various contexts, from healthcare to workplaces, from residential to educational environments. When designed consciously, each space not only meets functional needs but also becomes an active element in promoting psychophysical well-being and creating emotionally meaningful experiences.

The key to this approach lies in the integration of design, emotions, and ecology, with particular attention to sustainability and the personalization of spaces based on users' needs.

The application of these principles in different contexts demonstrates that design is not merely an aesthetic discipline but a powerful tool for improving quality of life, transforming spaces into places that stimulate, support, and inspire those who inhabit them.

4. Discussion

The EMOHTIONS method originates from a critical and in-depth analysis of the foundational tools of interior design. It challenges the assumption that effective design can be achieved solely by adhering to technical requirements. Instead, it asserts that interior spaces must be conceived with careful attention to the individuals who will inhabit them. Traditional design approaches too often prioritize functionality and aesthetics, overlooking the emotional dimension of space—an element that, as previously discussed, plays a vital role in human well-being.

Unlike conventional human-centered design (HCD) frameworks—which often limit user involvement to initial interviews or post-design feedback—EMOHTIONS integrates continuous and participatory interaction throughout the entire process. This ensures that emotional, cognitive, and sensory dimensions are not peripheral considerations but structural components of the design logic. Such an approach aligns with and expands upon established theories in environmental psychology (Gifford, 2007) and neuroarchitecture (Higuera-Trujillo et al., 2021), where environmental stimuli are understood to directly affect neurophysiological responses, behavioral patterns, and subjective well-being.

From a critical perspective, EMOHTIONS addresses a gap left by many design methodologies that remain overly reliant on standardized typologies and aesthetic conventions. By contrast, the method fosters design uniqueness, resisting the tendency toward homogenization seen in globalized design practices. This distinctiveness is not purely

stylistic but is anchored in the specific sensory and emotional needs uncovered through the Experiential Workshop. In doing so, it offers a counter-narrative to the "designer-imposed vision," replacing it with a co-created, emotionally resonant solution.

The paradigm shift promoted by EMOHTIONS reflects broader socio-cultural changes, where well-being is no longer perceived as an optional outcome but as an intrinsic right embedded in all aspects of daily life. This aligns with the WHO's holistic definition of health, which includes physical, mental, and social well-being, and resonates with the ESG (Environmental, Social, Governance) framework discussed earlier. The environmental dimension (E) is reinforced through the integration of biophilic and biomimetic strategies, while the social (S) is embodied in the method's inclusivity and participatory ethos. Governance (G) emerges in the transparency of the design process, fostering accountability and ethical responsibility.

The method's application in healthcare, workplace, educational, and residential contexts demonstrates its versatility, but also highlights the necessity of context-specific calibration. For instance, in healthcare environments, the focus on multisensory stimuli directly supports therapeutic objectives, whereas in workplaces, the same stimuli may be modulated to enhance focus, collaboration, and productivity. This adaptability is a strength, but it also presents a challenge: the requirement for in-depth preliminary analysis can extend project timelines and demand multidisciplinary expertise, potentially raising project costs. Nevertheless, the long-term benefits—improved user satisfaction, enhanced well-being, and greater spatial efficiency—suggest that these investments are justified.

A critical observation concerns scalability: while EMOHTIONS proves highly effective in bespoke or small-to-medium scale projects, further research is needed to evaluate its application in large-scale or mass-housing developments without losing the granularity of user engagement. This opens a promising field for methodological evolution, possibly through digital and AI-assisted tools capable of preserving personalization while optimizing design resources.

Finally, EMOHTIONS not only responds to immediate user needs but also anticipates future ones by embedding flexibility and adaptability into the spatial configuration. This proactive stance is particularly relevant in a world marked by rapid technological, social, and environmental change, where spaces must be resilient to shifting functions, demographic profiles, and climate-related constraints. In this sense, EMOHTIONS positions itself as both a design methodology and a cultural proposition—advocating for an expanded role of design as a catalyst for systemic well-being and sustainable transformation.

5. Conclusion

The design process based on the *EMOHTIONS* method highlights how the centrality of the individual is fundamental in creating environments that reflect real functional and emotional needs in every project application area. The *Experiential Laboratory* becomes the crucial moment where an essential connection is established between the designer and the client, transforming the process into a shared journey of awareness and personal growth.

The application of nature-inspired principles not only enriches the aesthetics of spaces but also enhances energy efficiency, environmental sustainability, and a deeper connection with individual nature. Emotional design aims to respond to the needs of contemporary society: today, health is increasingly viewed as a balance between body, mind, and emotions. It also seeks to drive cultural change: the goal is to become catalysts for broader change, inspiring other realities to consider personal analysis and the proposal of a unique emotional design as an essential factor for health and well-being within the spaces we inhabit. In this context, *Conscious Emotional Design* emerges as a strategic response to future challenges, where individual and collective well-being becomes the primary criterion for space design.

Conscious Emotional Design, through the *EMOHTIONS* method, represents an innovative and sustainable approach to spatial design. From the *Experiential Laboratory*, which deeply analyzes users' needs and emotions, to the sensory design phase inspired by nature, the entire process is structured as a participatory experience that generates functional, aesthetically pleasing environments capable of improving quality of life.

The results achieved across various contexts – from healthcare environments to workplaces, from educational spaces to residential projects – confirm the effectiveness of an approach that integrates nature, emotion, and conscious design. This paradigm not only addresses current needs but also lays the groundwork for future design solutions capable of promoting global and sustainable well-being.

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A heartfelt thank you goes to all those who stepped up, shared their experiences, and provided us with positive feedback. Many highlighted how, until now, their approach to working with a designer often meant having to adopt the designer's vision. With the *EMOHTIONS* method, however, they felt truly understood and became an integral part of the project. They saw their desires translated into design and, for the first time, experienced the creative process by becoming Architects of themselves.

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