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Bridging the Gap: An Exploratory Study of Integrated Facilities Management Practices in Pakistan

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Abstract

Facilities Management (FM) is still not well understood in many parts of Pakistan, especially when it comes to its strategic importance. Because of this, the concept of Integrated Facilities Management (IFM) has yet to find a solid footing in most organizational settings. In many cases, FM-related work happens in isolation, without coordination across strategic, tactical, and operational levels. To explore this issue more closely, feedback was gathered from 21 FM professionals working in sectors such as manufacturing, real estate, healthcare, and banking. Their responses revealed that awareness of IFM is generally low, and many organizations are not set up in a way that supports its implementation. Challenges like limited training, a reluctance to change, and compartmentalized working styles were frequently mentioned. That said, a positive trend is emerging. Many FM professionals are starting to realize the importance of leadership involvement, clear organizational structures, skill development, and the use of digital tools to improve their departments. This study hopes to add to the conversation by highlighting these patterns and offering practical insights that could support a more integrated and forward-thinking approach to FM in Pakistan.

Keywords: Integrated Facilities Management, ISO 41001, Facilities Coordination, Pakistan FM Practices, Organizational Efficiency.

INTRODUCTION

Facilities Management (FM) isn't just about keeping buildings running or handling routine services anymore. It plays a much broader role—helping ensure that the physical setup of an organization actually supports the bigger picture: its goals and day-to-day functioning. Over the years, FM has shifted from being mainly about fixing things when they break to something far more strategic. It's now seen as a key part of how organizations operate and succeed, especially as workplaces become more complex and the demands for sustainability and quality of service keep rising.

In many parts of the world, organizations have started to adopt what's called Integrated Facilities Management (IFM). The idea behind IFM is simple but powerful—it brings together all facility-related services under one roof, with a single team or structure managing them.

This approach facilitates oversight across three distinct levels: strategic (long-term vision and alignment with organizational goals), tactical (resource and process management), and operational (day-to-day execution and troubleshooting). Each level plays a critical role in ensuring that physical infrastructure, support services, and work environments are not only functional but also agile, cost-

effective, and aligned with broader business goals. (Azali, n.d.)
Countries in North America, Europe, and Southeast Asia have embraced IFM as a way to drive performance, optimize costs, improve user experience, and enhance regulatory compliance. In contrast, South Asian nations including Pakistan are still grappling with the transition from fragmented FM to fully integrated systems. While private-sector multinationals and a few progressive public-sector institutions have made headway, the general landscape remains underdeveloped. (*APAC Integrated Facility Management Market Size, Forecast to 2029*, n.d.)

Problem Statement

Farooq et al (2020) details shows that in Pakistan, despite the rapid growth of various industries and infrastructure expansion, the concept of Integrated Facilities Management (IFM) is not widely practiced. According to Facilities management is often regarded as a collection of disconnected operational tasks—such as maintenance, cleaning, and security—managed independently by different teams with limited communication and shared planning. This
fragmented approach leads to poor coordination, duplication of efforts, inefficiencies in resource utilization, and inconsistent service quality.
There is also a notable absence of structured frameworks that link FM functions across the strategic, tactical, and operational tiers. Decision-making is often short-term and reactive, lacking alignment with organizational priorities. Even when facility managers operate effectively at the tactical or operational levels, their roles are rarely embedded in the organization's strategic agenda. This disconnect compromises the ability of FM to contribute meaningfully to business continuity, sustainability, and innovation
(*Raising_the_bar_iii_from_operational_excellence_to_strategic_impact_in_fm_rics*, n.d.) .
Moreover, a significant gap exists between global best practices in FM and the realities of the local environment. Many Pakistani organizations remain unaware of international standards like ISO 41001 or the structured qualifications offered by institutions such as the International Facility Management Association (IFMA). As a result, FM continues to be perceived as a cost center rather than a strategic enabler. This study addresses this critical gap.

Purpose

This study aims to explore the current state of Facilities Management in Pakistan, with a focus on how well FM functions are integrated across strategic, tactical, and operational levels. It will investigate the extent of coordination among FM teams, evaluate the presence of documented FM structures, and assess familiarity and alignment with international FM standards.

Objectives

- To assess the extent of integration in FM practices across various industries in Pakistan.
- To measure coordination between FM teams at strategic, tactical, and operational levels.
- To examine the presence and effectiveness of structured FM systems in organizations.
- To compare current FM practices in Pakistan with recognized international standards.

Research Question

How integrated are Facilities Management practices across various industries in Pakistan, and to what extent do they align with global standards such as ISO 41001?

Significance

This research holds significant relevance given the evolving demands on organizations to be more efficient, agile, and sustainable. As operational complexities increase and resource constraints tighten, FM has emerged as a crucial lever in ensuring business continuity and user satisfaction.
For Pakistan, where urbanization is accelerating and real estate, healthcare, manufacturing, and education sectors are expanding (*Pivoting Toward Sustainable Urbanization in Pakistan*, 2024), there is an urgent need to adopt a more coordinated FM model. The absence of such models limits organizational efficiency, increases costs, and undermines safety and environmental performance (Ndlovu, 2021). This study looks at where current FM practices fall short and suggests practical ways they can be improved. The aim is not just to offer theoretical ideas, but also to share strategies that organizations, policymakers, and training bodies can actually apply to bring local practices closer to international standards.
It also adds to the limited body of research on Facilities Management in developing countries, where real-world data is often hard to come by. More importantly, the study hopes to encourage a shift in how FM is viewed in Pakistan—from a behind-the-scenes support role to a key strategic function within organizations.

LITERATURE REVIEW

International Standards and Best Practices in Facilities Management

While traditionally managed in silos, facilities functions are increasingly converging under Integrated Facilities Management (IFM) to meet modern complexities head-on. This unified approach streamlines daily workflows, breaks down communication barriers, and crucially, ties facility performance directly to core organizational objectives. Drawing from frameworks like ISO 41001:2018, we've seen that implementing structured IFM consistently boosts service reliability and resource efficiency. Beyond these operational gains, it becomes a strategic lever – actively mitigating risks and embedding sustainability into the long-term facility agenda. (*ISO-TC267_ISO41001+ISO55001_26June2018_EN. Pdf*, n.d.).
Beyond ISO, other international institutions such as the British Institute of Facilities Management (BIFM) and the International Facility Management Association (IFMA) have advanced professionalization in FM by offering standardized training and certifications.
Programs like the Certified Facility Manager (CFM) or Facility Management Professional (FMP) create a shared language of practice and knowledge, making FM more strategic rather than reactive (*Ifma-Cfm-Candidate-Handbook. Pdf*, n.d.). In countries like Singapore (*Guide_to_smart_fm_v2.Pdf*, n.d.) and the UAE (*Imda-Im-Discovery-Paving-a-New-Way-for-Integrated-Facilities-Management-Operations-through-Technology-Simpple.Pdf*, n.d.), government mandates and private-sector partnerships have furthered the implementation of IFM, often linked with digital platforms that monitor energy use, predictive maintenance, and space utilization. These case studies highlight the critical role of standards and training in mainstreaming integrated FM.

Challenges in Facilities Management in Developing Countries

While IFM is gaining ground in industrialized nations, developing countries face several roadblocks in adopting this model. The most persistent of these challenges include fragmented service delivery, uncoordinated departments, underdeveloped legal frameworks, and insufficient awareness of the broader value of FM. NdIvou (2021) notes that in South Africa, FM is still largely reactive, focused

on immediate problem-solving rather than long-term planning. This trend is also visible in Pakistan, where FM is often undervalued and underfunded.

Infrastructure instability, bureaucratic inertia, and the absence of national-level FM guidelines contribute to systemic inefficiencies. In many organizations, FM staff operate without performance indicators, budgetary authority, or integration into strategic planning meetings.

Moreover, FM is rarely treated as a profession requiring specialized training, and there is minimal engagement with global networks. Baig & Rahat (n.d.) emphasize that even in sectors like healthcare, where facility reliability is mission-critical, FM functions are often informal and undocumented.

Pakistan shares many of these developmental hurdles. Public sector bodies and even private enterprises continue to rely on outdated models of property maintenance. Furthermore, there's little emphasis on sustainability, lifecycle costing, or the total cost of ownership—all key elements of modern FM thinking. The cumulative effect is inefficiency, user dissatisfaction, and operational risk.

Organizational Structure and Integration in Facilities Management

A well-defined FM organizational structure is the cornerstone of effective IFM. It clarifies roles, reporting lines, and decision-making authority across the strategic, tactical, and operational levels. Ndlovu (2021b) asserts that without such a structure, FM becomes a collection of reactive tasks performed in isolation, rather than a proactive function that contributes to organizational performance.

In integrated FM, strategic leadership typically resides with a facilities director or chief operating officer who links FM to long-term business strategy (*Strategic Facilities Management*, 2013),. Tactical-level roles include planning and resource managers who optimize asset utilization and budgetary efficiency, while operational teams carry out maintenance, housekeeping, and vendor management. When these roles are not defined or aligned, the result is overlapping responsibilities, delayed response times, and resource leakage.

Many organizations in Pakistan lack such clear segmentation. Facilities staff often report to HR, Administration, or Engineering departments with minimal cross-functional engagement. This leads to disjointed services and weak accountability. Adopting a centralized FM unit or a matrix structure that allows for coordination across functions can substantially improve FM outcomes.

Gaps Between International Standards and Local Practices

Despite the availability of globally recognized FM standards, their adoption in Pakistan is minimal. Baig & Rahat (n.d.) argue that most organizations lack awareness of ISO 41001 or perceive it as irrelevant to their operations. Even when leadership is aware of these standards, implementation is often resisted due to perceived cost, lack of internal expertise, or inertia in institutional culture.

Resistance to change is further compounded by limited capacity-building infrastructure (Maqsoom et al., 2020). There are few local institutions offering accredited FM certifications or diplomas, and industry bodies have yet to establish strong lobbying arms. Moreover, even in multinational organizations with internal FM policies, local adaptation is inconsistent and often diluted by legacy systems (*(47) Need of Facilitates & Equipment Management and Its Education for Reliability & Safety in Pakistan. | LinkedIn*, n.d.).

This gap leads to a fragmented operational reality, where some practices may align with international norms while others fall short (*Changing the Concept-Facility Management*, 00:00:00+05:00). It also restricts benchmarking and performance evaluation. Addressing this divide requires a two-pronged approach: increasing awareness through case studies and success stories, and investing in local training infrastructure. Encouraging participation in global networks like IFMA or BIFM and

organizing FM conferences or forums could also bridge this knowledge gap.
In sum, the literature highlights a consistent narrative: while the value of IFM is universally acknowledged, its adoption is uneven, especially in developing economies. For Pakistan, overcoming these barriers will require not just technical adjustments but also cultural and institutional change.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

This study adopts a quantitative, descriptive research design, which is particularly suited for exploring emerging patterns and practices in under-researched areas such as Integrated Facilities Management (IFM) in Pakistan. Unlike qualitative methods that focus on in-depth exploration of individual experiences, the descriptive quantitative approach allows for a broad- based assessment of current trends, general awareness levels, and structural conditions across various organizations. Given the limited scholarly attention paid to FM practices in Pakistan, this design supports a systematic and replicable framework for collecting standardized data from a
diverse population of FM professionals. The aim is not to establish causality but to map the prevailing landscape and identify common themes that merit further investigation.

Data Collection Method

Primary data was collected through an online survey using a structured questionnaire. This tool was selected for its efficiency, scalability, and ability to reach geographically dispersed professionals without requiring face-to-face interaction—a critical consideration given the time and logistical constraints of the researcher, who was concurrently employed full-time. The questionnaire included a combination of closed-ended questions for quantitative analysis and open-ended questions to capture nuanced, qualitative feedback. A better visualization was obtained through these open-ended questions which provided the flexibility to the participants to give their insights which were not covered in the instrument forwarded to them.

Survey Distribution

To get maximum participation, the survey was shared through Google Forms and circulated across various professional platforms. It was posted in WhatsApp groups specifically for facilities professionals, shared on LinkedIn—particularly in forums like the Pakistan Facilities Management Association (PFMA)—and sent directly to contacts working in sectors such as manufacturing, real estate, healthcare, education, and oil and gas. The idea was to use an informal snowball approach, where recipients were encouraged to pass it along to other FM professionals in their circles. To keep the responses coming in, a reminder was sent out a week after the initial round. The survey stayed open for two weeks, giving people enough time to respond without losing momentum.

Population and Sampling

FM professionals from different sectors in Pakistan were contacted for this study. These
included facility managers, administrative heads, operations supervisors, and directors involved in the planning and delivery of FM services. Due to limitations in time and access, a non- probability convenience sampling strategy was employed. While this approach does not ensure statistical generalizability, it is commonly used in exploratory research and allows for quick collection of

preliminary data. The final sample comprised 21 respondents from various sectors, offering a snapshot of FM practices in the country. The diversity in experience levels and organizational sizes adds value by presenting a range of perspectives.

Survey Instrument

The survey instrument consisted of 15 questions divided into multiple sections, covering demographic information, awareness of IFM, coordination practices, organizational structure, familiarity with international standards, and perceived challenges. It was developed based on insights from existing literature and validated questionnaires used in similar FM studies in other developing contexts. Particular attention was given to defining key concepts—such as "Integrated Facilities Management," "Strategic," "Tactical," and "Operational"—to ensure consistent interpretation by respondents with varied backgrounds. A small pilot test was conducted with 3 professionals prior to full distribution to assess clarity and usability, leading to minor refinements in language and sequencing.

DATA ANALYSIS

The collected data was analyzed using descriptive statistics to identify patterns and frequency distributions. For categorical (nominal) data—such as industry type and role— percentage distributions and bar charts were employed. Ordinal data—such as ratings of organizational understanding and coordination levels—were analyzed using medians and modes to reflect central tendencies without assuming interval-scale behavior. Open-ended responses ere analyzed using basic thematic analysis, where recurring suggestions, pain points, and recommendations were grouped into common categories.

Although no advanced statistical software like SPSS or R was used, Microsoft Excel was sufficient for visualizing trends and conducting comparative analysis. Where appropriate, comparisons were drawn between sectors (e.g., real estate vs. manufacturing) to explore any sector-specific variations in FM practices. While this analysis is exploratory in nature, it provides a foundation for future, more detailed research.

Ethical Considerations

The study followed standard ethical protocols to ensure participant safety and data integrity. Participation was entirely voluntary, and respondents were informed at the beginning of the survey that they could withdraw at any time. No personal identifiers such as names, email addresses, or IP addresses were disclosed. An introductory note in the Google Form assured participants of the confidentiality of their responses and stated clearly that the data would be used solely for academic purposes as part of a doctoral research requirement. In addition, Google Forms' built-in security ensured that data remained private and accessible only to the researcher. Given the minimal risk involved, no formal institutional review board (IRB) approval was sought; however, ethical principles of anonymity, transparency, and informed consent were strictly upheld.

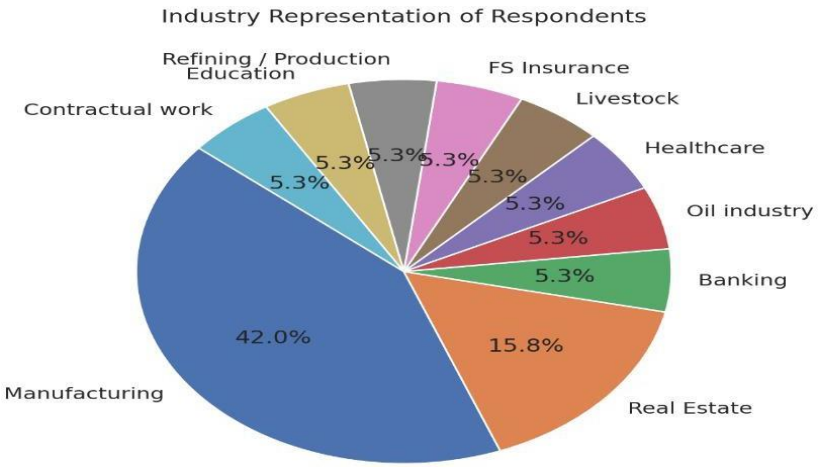
RESULTS

Profile of Respondents

The study gathered 21 complete responses from professionals engaged in facilities management roles

across Pakistan. Respondents represented a cross-section of sectors, with the manufacturing industry comprising the largest segment at 38%, followed by real estate (14%), healthcare, banking, and oil-related operations, detail distribution shown in Figure 1 below. This spread indicates that the issue of Facilities Management (FM) spans both production-centric and service-oriented domains. Titles reported by participants included Director Administration, Facility Manager, and Operations Supervisor, reflecting the involvement of senior-level professionals who are responsible for FM strategy and operations in their organizations.

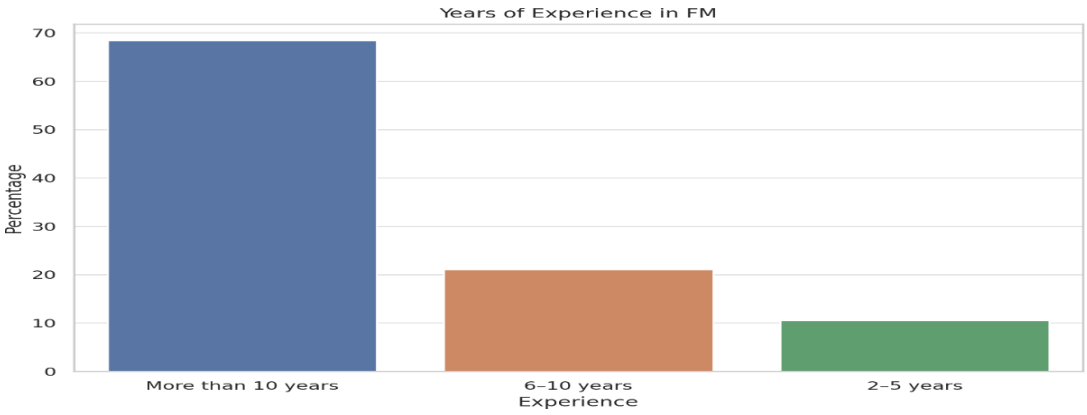
Figure 1: Industry Representation of Respondents



Note. Industry percentages are based on 21 total respondents.

Regarding work experience, over 60% of the respondents had more than 10 years of experience in FM, with several exceeding 15 years as depicted in Figure 2 below. Another 24% reported 6–10 years of experience. This profile suggests that the data reflects informed opinions and insights based on extensive practical exposure to organizational systems, FM processes, and strategic challenges within Pakistan's business environment.

Figure 2: *Years of Experience of Respondents*



Note. Industry percentages are based on 21 total respondents.

Awareness of IFM and Global Standards

While nearly all participants (95%) reported being familiar with the concept of Integrated Facilities Management (IFM), their evaluation of how well their own organizations understood and implemented the concept was less optimistic. On a 5-point Likert scale, the average organizational understanding score was 3.3. The median response was "Average," and responses ranged from "Very Poor" to "Very Good." This implies that while the term IFM may be familiar, its actual integration and application are not widely institutionalized.

Table 1: Awareness of IFM and Global Standards

Scale	Organizational Understanding of IFM	Familiarity with International FM Standards
1	1	6
2	3	6
3	10	3
4	4	5
5	3	1

Note. Results are based on 21 total respondents.

When asked about familiarity with international FM standards—such as ISO 41001 or IFMA guidelines—the average score dropped to 2.5, indicating general unfamiliarity. The most frequently selected response was "Not Familiar," and only 19% of respondents claimed to be "Very Familiar." Further, 43% reported that their organizations do not follow any international FM standard. Among those who did claim alignment, ISO 41001 and IFMA's best practices were sporadically mentioned. This gap between global standards and local practice remains one of the key findings. The detail distribution is shown in Table 1.

Structure and Role Clarity in FM

Roughly 62% of the respondents confirmed that their FM functions are formally segmented into strategic, tactical, and operational levels. However, this segmentation did not always translate into clearly articulated organizational structures. Only 52% stated that their organization has a documented FM structure outlining responsibilities at each level. Moreover, only 38% confirmed that such structures are reviewed or updated on a regular basis.

These figures highlight a partial formalization trend—organizations are beginning to adopt segmented roles, but many still lack the institutionalization of these roles in policies, charts, or performance indicators. This lack of clarity could lead to overlaps, role ambiguity, or inefficiencies in coordination. The details are as shown in Table 2 below

Table 2: Structure and Role Clarity of FM

Response	Number of Respondents	Percentage (%)	Question
No	8	38	Q7. Formal Division
Yes	13	62	Q7. Formal Division
No	10	50	Q9. Documented Structure

Response	Number of Respondents	Percentage (%)	Question
			Q9. Documented
Yes	11	52	Structure
No	13	62	Q10. Regular Review
Yes	8	38	Q10. Regular Review

Note. Results are based on 21 total respondents.

Communication and Coordination

When asked about inter-level coordination, respondents rated FM team communication at an average of 3.1 out of 5. This score, while not alarming, reflects inconsistency. Most participants selected "Sometimes," indicating that coordination is ad hoc rather than systematic. Only 14% reported "Very Frequent" communication across FM levels, whereas 24% noted that it "Rarely" happens.

Table 3: FM Team Communication

Scale	Number of Responses	Percentage (%)
1	1	5
2	7	33
3	7	33
4	2	10
5	4	19
	Avg= 3.1	

This inconsistent communication poses a serious challenge to integration. Without regular exchanges between the strategic planners, resource allocators, and frontline operational staff, the alignment of FM activities with organizational objectives remains weak. These findings resonate with previous studies from developing countries that reported fragmented FM services due to insufficient coordination.

Challenges in Implementation

Participants were asked to identify the biggest barriers to effective FM implementation.
The top five responses were:

1. Lack of awareness about IFM (57%)
2. Shortage of trained FM professionals (48%)
3. Resistance to adopting new practices (43%)
4. Fragmented FM services or teams working in silos (38%)
5. Limited budget allocation for FM (33%)

These challenges are closely interrelated. The lack of trained professionals and limited awareness hinder adoption of best practices. Resistance to change, often from mid-level managers or departmental silos, further slows integration. Additionally, financial constraints reflect FM's perceived secondary importance in many organizations.

Perceived Value of IFM

Despite the challenges, sentiment around the potential value of IFM was overwhelmingly positive. Two-thirds of the respondents rated the potential impact of IFM on organizational performance as "Very Significant." Another 19% selected "Significant," while the remaining gave a neutral score.

Not a single participant deemed IFM as having "Minimal" or "No" impact. This is a critical finding. Even in the absence of robust structures or standard adherence, FM professionals in Pakistan acknowledge the transformative potential of integrated practices. The opportunity lies in converting this belief into structured implementation. The details are:

Table 4: Perceived Value of IFM

Response Category	Number of Respondents	Percentage (%)
Significant	9	45
Very Significant	7	35
Moderate	4	20

Insights from Open Comments

The open-ended section of the survey allowed participants to share qualitative reflections on current issues and suggestions. Themes that emerged included:

- **Education and Awareness**: 7 respondents explicitly recommended structured awareness programs and executive-level briefings on IFM concepts.
- **Digital Tools and Automation**: 6 called for digital FM systems for tracking maintenance, monitoring space usage, and aligning services with KPIs.
- **Defined Roles and Communication Protocols**: 5 emphasized the need for updated FM charts and scheduled inter-departmental meetings.
- **Training and Capacity Building**: Several noted that existing FM teams lack exposure to international practices, and suggested partnerships with institutions like IFMA.
- **Budgetary Support and Accountability**: A few voiced concerns that FM budgets are reactive and minimal—often tied only to repairs rather than preventive management.

Overall, these qualitative insights reinforce the quantitative data and provide deeper context. They also suggest that FM professionals are not just aware of the issues, but are actively reflecting on solutions. Organizations seeking to reform their FM models can benefit immensely by consulting frontline managers in their design phase. This combination of statistical and thematic data gives a well-rounded picture of FM practice in Pakistan—partially aware, partially structured, but fundamentally ready for transformation.

DISCUSSION

The results of this study paint a clear yet concerning picture of how Facilities Management (FM) is currently practiced in Pakistan. While professionals in the field demonstrate a sound understanding of Integrated Facilities Management (IFM), this understanding is not yet reflected in how most organizations operate. A consistent theme emerging from both quantitative data and qualitative insights is the disconnect between individual competence and institutional adoption.

The fact that a majority of respondents had over a decade of experience strengthens the credibility of the data. Yet, the moderate average rating (3.3 out of 5) for organizational understanding of IFM suggests a fundamental misalignment. Many FM professionals are aware of the principles and potential of IFM, but the organizations they serve have yet to translate these into practice. This finding resonates with observations by Ndlovu (2021), who noted similar gaps in other developing countries, where FM is often relegated to the background rather than treated as a strategic enabler.

Looking at the structural side of FM, the responses revealed that although many organizations claim to separate their FM roles into strategic, tactical, and operational levels, only about half have

a formal structure to back this up. Fewer still engage in periodic review of these structures. This lack of formalization undermines the benefits of segmentation. In line with ISO 41001 guidelines, clearly documented systems and regular performance evaluations are necessary to ensure alignment with evolving organizational goals. Without them, FM operations risk becoming fragmented and inefficient.

Team coordination showed similar inconsistencies. With an average score of 3.1 for communication across FM levels, it is evident that while some collaboration exists, it remains irregular. The most common response was "sometimes," suggesting that coordination is reactive rather than planned. Poor communication across FM tiers disrupts workflow continuity, leads to duplicated efforts, and dilutes accountability. This finding supports Moore and Finch's (2004) assertion that seamless internal communication is foundational to achieving true integration.

Respondents also identified several recurring obstacles that hinder the transition from traditional FM to IFM. Chief among them were lack of awareness, inadequate training opportunities, resistance to adopting new practices, and siloed operations. These are not isolated issues. As reflected in Ndlovu's findings and in the contextual examples from Pakistan's own infrastructure reports, these challenges are systemic and reflect broader institutional inertia. The persistence of these problems also reinforces the urgent need for a change in how FM is perceived by senior management — from a cost center to a strategic function.

Encouragingly, the study also revealed a strong sense of optimism among FM professionals. About two-thirds of the respondents felt that adopting IFM could bring a noticeable improvement in their organization's efficiency. What makes this insight meaningful is that many of them were not only aware of the current shortcomings in their FM practices but also seemed hopeful about finding ways to address them. This sense of optimism is a strong starting point for driving real change. Interestingly, their views echo what Murphy (2019) pointed out— that IFM isn't just about cutting costs. It's also about aligning operations with broader goals, managing risks more effectively, and delivering better services overall.

The open-ended responses shared by participants brought valuable depth to the study. A number of professionals stressed the need for greater investment in awareness—particularly aimed at both senior leadership and middle managers—so that FM is better understood across all levels. Many also pointed to the importance of embracing digital tools, recommending FM software to improve how maintenance, space usage, and planning are tracked. Some respondents highlighted gaps in role clarity and accountability, and called for more standardized procedures. What stood out is that these suggestions weren't just idealistic—they were practical, rooted in local realities, and closely aligned with global best practices.

One of the key themes that emerged was the need to move away from a reactive approach to Facilities Management and adopt a more preventive mindset. Several respondents pointed out that FM budgets are often used mainly for urgent repairs, leaving little room for long-term planning or asset performance improvement. This kind of short-term thinking not only drains resources but also keeps organizations from using FM as a strategic tool. These insights suggest a shift is needed—FM should be seen as a long-term investment in operational stability, not just a fix-it service when things go wrong.

Leadership also came up as an important part of the puzzle. While participants didn't always say it directly, many hinted at the lack of support from top management when it comes to pushing FM reforms. Even when FM teams understand the value of integration, they often don't have the authority or backing to drive meaningful change across departments. Without leadership buy-in, it's difficult to implement broader changes like those recommended in ISO 41001. When senior leaders actively support IFM, it creates space for cross-functional collaboration, faster reforms, and stronger implementation overall.

In the end, this study points to a real opportunity for Pakistan to rethink how Facilities Management is positioned. There's already a strong foundation—skilled professionals, early- stage structures, and growing awareness of international standards. What's needed now is a focused effort to close

structural gaps, improve coordination, and commit to long-term change so that IFM can grow into a core part of organizational strategy.

Bringing about this kind of transformation will take effort on several fronts—awareness, policy shifts, smart investments, and strong leadership. Organizations need to start seeing Facilities Management not just as a behind-the-scenes function, but as a strategic partner in achieving their goals. Only with this mindset can FM in Pakistan move beyond fragmented practices and start functioning as a truly integrated, value-driven part of the organization.

CONCLUSION

This study set out to explore how well Integrated Facilities Management (IFM) is being put into practice across different industries in Pakistan. While many FM professionals are familiar with the concept and understand its benefits, what's happening on the ground tells a different story. In most organizations, FM is still handled in a reactive, fragmented way. There are very few formal systems that connect big-picture planning with the day-to-day work. Departmental coordination tends to be patchy, and international standards like ISO 41001 are still far from being widely adopted.

That said, there are plenty of reasons to be hopeful. A large number of respondents showed strong confidence in IFM's potential to improve how organizations operate—whether through better service delivery, smoother operations, or closer alignment with overall business goals. The feedback from experienced professionals across sectors suggests that the desire for change is there. What's needed now is leadership commitment, proper resourcing, and the right systems to help make that shift.

In the end, this study reinforces the idea that IFM isn't just a nice-to-have concept—it's becoming essential for how modern organizations function. The basic ingredients are already in place: professionals who understand the value of integration, a clear sense of what's holding things back, and a shared interest in doing things better. The next step is turning that interest into real, lasting change.

Recommendations

Raise Awareness Across Leadership

There needs to be a shift in mindset at the leadership level. IFM should be viewed as a strategic driver, not just an operational expense. To build this perspective, senior leaders should be engaged through tailored awareness sessions, leadership briefings, and exposure to real-world examples where IFM has added value. Securing leadership commitment is critical for making IFM a lasting part of the organization's approach.

Adopt International Frameworks Like ISO 41001

ISO 41001 offers a solid foundation for aligning FM with broader business goals. Using such internationally recognized standards helps build credibility and sets a clear path for continuous improvement. To make it work locally, organizations can benefit from hands-on implementation support, training sessions, and benchmarking activities to adapt the standard to their context.

Create Clear Organizational Structures

For IFM to work effectively, everyone involved needs to understand their role—whether at the strategic, operational, or support level. These roles should be formally defined, documented, and

communicated clearly across the organization. And as business environments change, these structures should be revisited and adjusted to stay relevant and effective.

Invest in People

A skilled and confident workforce is key to making IFM successful. That means investing in people through targeted training programs, linking up with global certification bodies like IFMA, and encouraging ongoing professional development. When people are equipped with the right skills, they're more likely to champion and sustain change.

Break Down Silos

Siloed operations are still a major hurdle for FM. To move past this, organizations need to promote regular, structured collaboration across departments. This could include joint planning meetings, shared goals, and integrated workflows. Breaking down these barriers shouldn't be left to chance—it should be an intentional, built-in part of how FM operates.

Embrace Digital Tools

Technology can completely reshape how FM is managed—making it more efficient, transparent, and proactive. Whether it's automating maintenance, optimizing space usage, or tracking energy consumption, digital tools offer practical benefits. Investing in FM software suited to local needs will enable better planning, reporting, and decision-making based on real-time data.

Closing Thought

By taking these recommendations seriously, organizations in Pakistan have the chance to rethink Facilities Management—not as a routine administrative task, but as a key part of achieving operational excellence. When properly implemented, IFM becomes much more than a system—it serves as a connector, aligning people, processes, and spaces to improve performance and build long-term resilience. With growing awareness and support from FM professionals, this is the right moment to push for meaningful change. The opportunity is here—it just needs to be acted upon.

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