A Human Perspective on the Interior Design of Contemporary Hotel Lobbies in the Middle East
The Case of Kuwait's Five-Star Hotels

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Abstract

Objective
Often, the first impression that visitors have of a city comes from the lobby of their hotel, the design of which may simply replicate other branches of a global chain or may contribute towards building a distinct local identity. This paper discusses the relationship between globalization and localization in terms of hotelس industry, and it provides some background on the history of hotels in general and hotels in Kuwait in particular. It goes on to examine the interior design of the lobbies of five-star hotels in Kuwait to determine whether they enhance localization and to see how interaction between visitors and locals is impacted by serving refreshments and by the characteristics of the hotel entrance.

Method
After gathering background information and then studying drawings and design characteristics of the lobby, the researcher developed his own diagrams and spent two days making observations in each lobby, taking written notes and digital photos.

Results
Certain lobby designs were more conducive to family groups, while others were more suitable for business groups. The availability of food and drinks was associated with increased interaction, but since the hotels are not easily accessible to pedestrians, there were not welcoming to the general public.

Conclusions
In general, the research found that interior design styles in Kuwait's five-star hotels reflected a globalized atmosphere and did not focus on building a localized identity.

Keywords:
Interior design, Kuwait, hospitality, hotel lobbies, space layout

Introduction
The hotel is the first touchpoint for any visitor to a new city. The success of any city relies on its distinctive identity, and this research aims to highlight the role of the atmospheric elements that interior design creates to make a unique identity for hotel lobbies in Kuwait as a public space and to enhance the distinctive character of a specific locale. The importance of the research stems from the evident dominance of global culture and the widespread language of international interior design.

Studies shows that the overall atmosphere of any interior affects its users in several perceptional aspects, and indeed hotel lobbies are no exceptions. In addition, the hotel lobby gives its

customers their first impression about the country itself. Hotel customers consider the lobby to be their private, semipublic living room, a place where they can gather with friends and family in a comfortable milieu. Therefore, this research will pay attention to some of the atmospheric elements within the hotel lobby that may influence customers' behaviors and perceptions.

The research starts by defining the concepts of globalism and localism and their roles in influencing all walks of life, but specifically interior design. To study the hotel lobbies, the author reviewed the historic development and birth of hotels as a major commercial activity in contemporary cities, as well as the star rating system and its role in differentiating the quality of hotels worldwide. Since the author aims to study the hypothesis and research questions through close examination of cases in Kuwait, this paper also gives a brief introduction to the historic development of Kuwait and its five-star hotels.

The tools used for data gathering are: - Annotated photographs of the interior spaces of the actual visited Hotel`s Lobbies, the visits also focus on the level of satisfaction on the presence of local design. Data analysis depends on several factors: -The historic development of Kuwait and its five-star hotels. - The background (the historic development and birth of hotels as a major commercial activity in contemporary cities).

Globalization

Typically, globalization refers to the process by which various societies and economies become more tightly integrated and concurrent with the increasing worldwide globalization. In other words, globalization is the integration and interaction among governments, companies, and people worldwide (Irani and Noruzi, 2011). According to Karataş (2016), globalization means the elimination of barriers to cultural exchange, communications, and trade. The term 'globalization' comes from the word globalize, which refers to the development of an international network of economic systems. Therefore, globalization is the act of globalizing; it comes from the term 'global,' meaning that which pertains to or involves the whole world (Karataş, 2016, p. 65).

Based on the various definitions of globalization, and given its multifaceted nature, globalization can be defined as follows: the process encompassing the course, cause, and consequences of transcultural and transnational integration of non-human and human activities. This is a broad perspective that allows the term to be defined as briefly and as comprehensively as possible.

Localization

Declercq (2011) refers to localization as taking a product and making it culturally and linguistically appropriate for the target locale where it will be sold or used; localization is positioned alongside standardization, globalization, internationalization, and translation. According to Chuang (2010), localization is a process used to facilitate globalization by addressing cultural and linguistic barriers; thus, localization is a in fact significant enabler of globalization. When it comes to products, localization means customizing many elements, such as icons, colors, time formats, currencies, and any other part of the product that might otherwise feel foreign to the targeted audiences.

As such, it is clear that five-star hotels are symbols of globalization, while at the same time being strongly affected by it. From a design point of view, one can see that a hotel belonging to

a certain chain, located anywhere, can create a familiar global environment that is manifested in its design, language, food, and lifestyle. These hotels act as global islands, no matter the locale, defying localism and specificity.

Local Identity

The identity of a given city is a concept that forms over time and comprises the natural, physical, social-cultural, and historical characteristics of the city. As such, understanding and appreciating the local identity becomes an important issue in the conservation of the city's character (Rifaioğlu and Şahin Güçhan, 2007). The building of a city's identity is a production process made up of multiple levels and changes, with surrounding factors such as time and environment (Shao et al., 2017). The identity of a city can also be seen in relation to the traditional and heritage characteristics of the region. Considering this, the local identity should provide continuity for preserving and developing the traditions of the local community as the city changes over time. Most importantly, the local identity provides possibilities for urban rehabilitation to develop a sense of community, security, and home for local residents (Shao et al., 2017, p. 25).

Local identity provides a basis for practitioners seeking to improve the image of the city towards the desired quality. It differentiates the city from others in the global competition, enhancing the citizens' sense of belonging as well as encouraging investment and skilled immigrants (Ballesteros and Ramírez, 2007). Fundamentally, local identity represents a small scale—for instance, street level or a city quarter—and provides the residents of the city with a feeling of calmness, pride, and safety while living in that city (Boussaa, 2017, p. 4). Local identity distinguishes both the residents and the place itself from other places and presents a strong, independent image that allows people to develop affection and identification. Thus, the aim of this research is to form an understanding of globalization and localization, as well as discussing the importance of local identity in cities. The author encourages localization and the utilization of hotels as tools for supporting a unique local identity that provides special feelings through memory, sensory, social, and physical perspectives.

The History of Hotels

The origin of hotels can be traced back to ancient cultures, but the word 'hotel' did not exist until the eighteenth century. The French word 'hotel' (meaning a large house) has its roots in the Latin word *hospes* or *hospitium*. In the beginning, the hotel industry was not an economic-based industry; instead, it was simply concerned with sheltering people who were traveling, and the majority of people who used this service were business travelers. Before hotels were established, travelers sought accommodation and security through the hospitality of their hosts, but as the number of travelers increased, this personal courtesy turned into a commercial enterprise, and hotels were established bearing the culture of hospitality.

The ancient Greek concept of hospitality is known as Xenia, which refers to the courtesy and generosity shown to people who are far from home (O'Gorman, 2008). During the Roman Empire (265BCE–400CE), as with the Greeks, the early hotel industry served military and religious travelers. The Romans built more than a quarter of a million miles of road throughout the Mediterranean and European regions, and about 50,000 miles of these were paved with

stones. The roads facilitated traveling by military forces as well as public couriers, and the builders established relay stations where travelers could water, feed, and rest their horses and oxen. Each railway station had an inn with dining facilities, and these were originally operated by the state to serve government officials or as barracks for the military. These were followed by commercial entities near the relay stations where travelers could eat or stay (Hudson, 2014). Like the inns of the ancient Greeks and Romans, Middle Eastern caravanserais provided food, drink, security, and accommodation for travelers (Figure 1). Initially, the term 'caravanserai' designated the travelers' inns located on major roads around the Islamic world,

FIGURE 1 AN INTERIOR VIEW OF LIFE IN AN OTTOMAN CARAVANSERAI
(**https://www.mit.edu**)

but after the fifteenth century, it was used to refer to urban inns. These consisted of rest houses for guests, as well as stores, water basins, and wells to be used for both travelers and animals; they might also have road markings, watch towers, and bridges if the terrain warranted such structures.

Some caravanserais were named after princes and sultans; their construction was an act of charity and a way to serve the general public. Since every Muslim is required to perform the Hajj pilgrimage to Makkah at least once in his or her lifetime, if able, large number of caravans traveled all over the roads to make the annual trip to Makkah. In fact, 'caravanserai' is a Persian word meaning 'building for the caravans' (Thareani- Sussely, 2007, p. 123). Serving the pilgrims was—and still is—viewed as a good deed, and this contributed to the importance of caravanserais.

The caravanserais also provided refuge for crusaders and pilgrims on their way to the Holy Land of Jerusalem. In some cases, caravan stations developed along early trade routes (from 700 CE onwards) throughout the Middle East; they were simple tented facilities, and accommodation was free for the traditional three days (Figure 2).
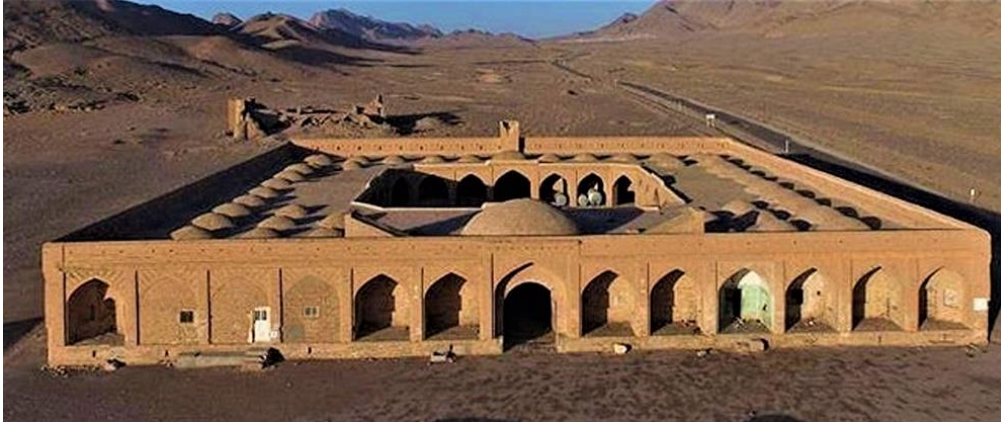
FIGURE 2 THE KALMARD CARAVANSERAI, IN WHAT IS NOW IRAN
(HTTPS://WWW.PARMINET.COM)

European cities were also bound to provide hospitability to strangers. Greeks and Romans established thermal baths in villages, meant for convalescence and relaxation, and during the Middle Ages, abbeys and monasteries in Europe provided hospitality to travelers. Later, people began to establish private inns as commercial endeavors. As more inns opened, competition increased, forcing them to offer amenities other than food and drinks. Providing public, commercial accommodations for travelers was not a nineteenth-century invention in Europe; according to Matthias (2006), there are records dating from 1700 BC that describe tavern-like places offering food and drinks to travelers and traders.

The hotel industry is still a part of the hospitality industry, combining functional and special accommodation services with nutrition and related services. However, the idea of hotels being built to host guests appeared in the eighteenth century (Levy-Bonvin, 2003). This was made possible by advances in technology and the introduction of more reliable methods of transport, which enabled long distance traveling (Djordjevic and Jankovic, 2015). The public could travel with ease, and the increasing number of foreigners in major towns and cities created a need for accommodation, resulting in the development of modern hotels.

Modernism is associated with a radical break with the past. During the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, people concurrently searched for new forms of expression and engaged in experimentation. Therefore, hotels during this era broke away from the ancient concept of a hotel as they sought new ways to meet the needs and desires of a growing number of travelers, and this period saw the development of an organized hotel industry. The City Hotel in New York, established in 1794, was the first hotel building (Figure 3). In 1839, London and Birmingham were the first cities in the UK to have railway hotels, and by the end of the nineteenth century, the Bristol was one of the best hotels in London. Many elegant hotels—such as the San Francisco Palace, the Brown Palace in Denver, and the Waldorf Astoria in New York—were also opened in the US around this time (Levy-Bonvin, 2003).
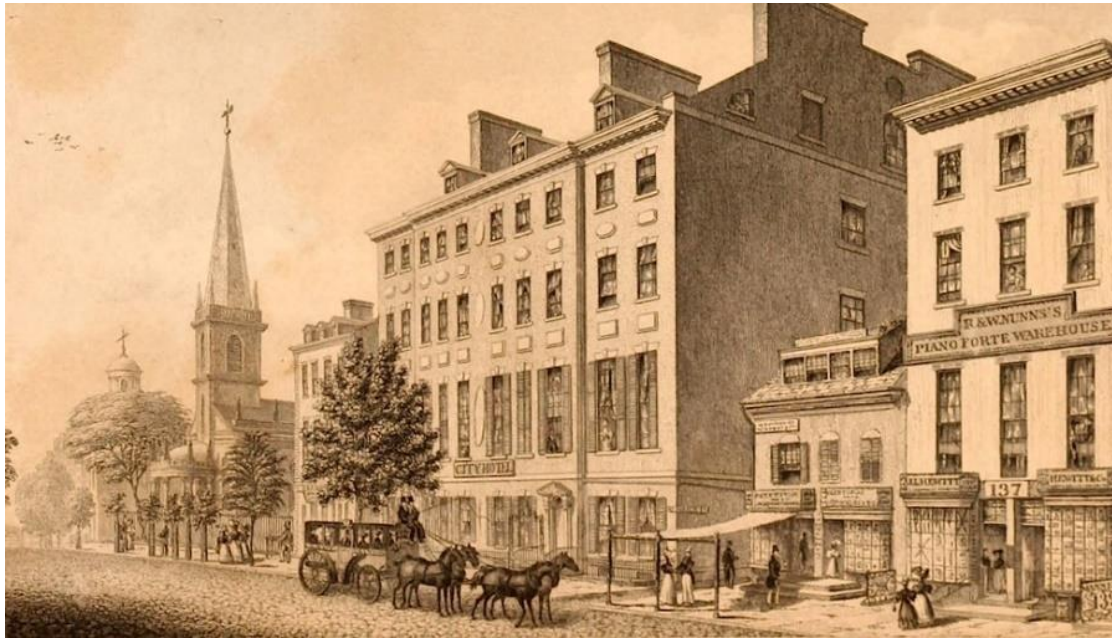
FIGURE 3 CITY HOTEL, BROADWAY 1794, MANHATTAN
(HTTPS://DIGITALCOLLECTIONS.NYPL.ORG/ITEMS/5E66B3E9-0486-D471-E040-E00A180654D7)

The modern hotel industry has come a long away from its ancient counterpart. The contemporary hotel industry takes many forms and has developed significantly from its humble beginnings in the eighteenth century, especially in France. The hotel industry has never been as dynamic as it is today; the development of technology, the changing needs of customers, and the availability of a significant amount of information have brought about many changes. The hotel industry was affected significantly by the First and Second World Wars (Levy-Bonvin, 2003) but enjoyed a boom after each of these wars. The first casino hotels were established in the 1950s, after World War II, and the airlines also started to develop their own hotels. Branding and segmentation are among the many characteristics of contemporary hotels.

Hotel Rating Systems

For a long time, hotels were mainly concerned with offering food, drinks, and accommodation. As the hotel industry grew, a rating system was developed to classify hotels based on their quality, by referring to local or national laws and regulations or by applying criteria established by hotel associations, independent organizations, guidebooks, national consumer travel organizations, volunteer organizations, and travel websites (Martin-Fuentes, 2016). The purpose of rating hotels is not only to inform travelers about the facilities they can expect when they visit a given hotel but also to assess the overall hotel experience. The terms 'classification', 'rating,' and 'grading' are all used to refer to this same concept of ranking hotels. Different ratings systems have been developed by various organizations around the world, and most of these systems involve stars; the more stars a hotel has, the greater its quality or luxury as compared to hotels with fewer stars.

Early inns and hotels provided little more than the basic necessities, but tourism that emerged in the last half of the nineteenth century introduced wide-ranging improvements. To enable consumers to easily identify facilities offering specific amenities, pressure was placed on hotels and inns to meet some minimum standards. The rating systems were developed mostly in

Europe, through the efforts of the automobile and cycling clubs, whose guidebooks for their members recommended hotels and inns, based on the features that they offered their clients.

The hotel star rating system, which has been used for many years, can be traced back to the Michelin Guide that started in 1900 in France. To stimulate interest in the future of the motor car, the Michelin brothers decided to provide motorists with a document that facilitated their travels. This small guide was meant to improve the mobility of these motorists, so the first Michelin guides included basic information such as how to repair tires and where to find petrol stations and hotels.

Globally, there are hundreds of systems for classifying hotels, and even a single country may have multiple hotel classification systems (Katsoni and Stratigea, 2016). Countries use hotel classifications to create a hierarchy of hotels based on their quality of service. Today, the Internet allows new ways of sharing information, and this has changed the way hotels have traditionally been ranked. Instead of relying on trained personnel to rate hotels, the Internet enables customers who have used the facilities to rate them themselves to reflect their level of satisfaction. The available hotel classification systems use various factors such as human resources, sustainability, online ratings, accessibility, infrastructure, service quality, services, and facilities (Sufi and Singh, 2018).

Spatial and Interior Design Standards and Criteria

The spatial and interior design standards of a hotel, restaurant, or spa are taken into account as part of hotel ratings. Each hotel classification system has different requirements when it comes to spatial and interior design standards, but those of a one-star or one-diamond hotel are different from those of hotels with higher ratings, regardless of the system used. Spatial and interior design are groups of many related projects involving turning an interior space into an effective setting for various human activities, and the spatial structure of the hotel facility must be constructed with the goal of providing both the private residential and public identity of the guest floors.

The American Automobile Association (AAA) awards diamond ratings according to a system that was revamped in 2020 that consists of four rankings:

- Approved: Noteworthy by meeting the industry-leading standards of AAA inspections.
- Three diamond: Comprehensive amenities, style and comfort level.
- Four diamond: Upscale style and amenities enhanced with the right touch of service.
- Five diamond: World-class luxury, amenities and indulgence for a once-in-a-lifetime experience. (American Automobile Association, 2020, p. 11)

The AAA does not include properties that do not meet the minimum criteria for hotel operations and the cleanliness and condition of all public areas, guest rooms, and bathrooms. Detailed criteria are specified for each level; for instance, the "furniture quality and design" elements of an approved hotel include "Modest enhancements to materials or design; for a three diamond hotel, "Significant enhancements to materials or design;" for a four diamond hotel, "Upscale materials e.g., granite/stone, solid wood, polished metals, high-gloss lacquers, veneer finishes with solid wood accents, high-grade laminate insets;" and for a five diamond hotel, "Luxurious materials," "Custom workmanship," and "Leading-edge design and effect." (American Automobile Association, 2020, p. 15). Almost all other rating systems use similar criteria.

In conclusion, the transformation in the hotel industry from the ancient to the contemporary has brought many changes, one of which is how hotels, ranging from economy to high-end hotels, are differentiated. Various systems—such as star ratings, diamond ratings, and numerical rankings—evolved in Europe between the late nineteenth century and early twenty-first century. Various countries use different criteria to rate hotels, but the major rating agencies are either public or private associations in various parts of the world, including the AAA, Official Hotel and Resort Guide (OHRG), Forbes Travel Guide, VisitScotland, and VisitBritain, among others. To rate a hotel using any criteria, various aspects such as spatial and interior design are evaluated.

Contemporary Interior Design Trends

Several studies have focused on the influence of atmospheric elements on consumer behavior in the merchandising world, yet few studies have explored their influence on consumer behavior and satisfaction in the hospitality industry, particularly in hotels and their lobbies. In line with the aim of this research, Designer Claire Richards emphasized the importance of the lobby:

We would start with the lobby as our first place to design or upgrade. First impressions are very important and the lobby can set the tone for your stay at the property. The trend we see for the lobby is to be transformed into more of a clubhouse/living room environment with small groupings for guests to linger and be a part yet separate from others, like the Starbucks phenomenon. The other areas that could be addressed are the food-and-beverage components, transforming them to have a greater emphasis on local culture and cuisine. People want to feel that they are having a unique experience when they travel and this helps them relate to the local area (Hess, 2019).

Bitner (1992) stated that spatial layout refers to the ways in which machinery, equipment, and furnishings are arranged; their size and shape; and the spatial relationships among them, with functionality indicating the ability of those items to facilitate performance and the accomplishment of goals. The layout may have a direct effect on consumers' quality perceptions, pleasure, and excitement levels, and it may have an indirect effect on their desire to return (Wakefield & Blodgett, 1999). For example, the location of tables in restaurants has a tremendous influence on the customer's overall experience. Table placement can transmit a sense of privacy, indicate the functionality desired, and operate as a boundary for the customer (Lin, 2004). Moreover, signage, symbols, personal artifacts, decor, and other physical elements serve as explicit or implicit signals that communicate with users (Bitner, 1992). Berman and Evans (1995) divided atmospheric stimuli into four categories: the exterior, the general interior, layout and design variables, and point-of-purchase and decoration variables. According to their categorization, the exterior dimension comprises such elements as the storefront, the marquee, the entrance, the display window, and the building architecture.

Kuwait's Urban Environment

Kuwait is a modern state that gained its independence in 1962. As a major port town located in the north of the Arabian Gulf, it had a population who had depended on pearl diving and trade with India and other ports in the Arabian Gulf, and it acted as a trade hub that transferred many essential goods to the Arab tribes in the heart of the Arabian Peninsula. Thus, throughout its

history, the town of Kuwait has welcomed visitors and enjoyed a diverse population of immigrants from numerous locations, and this contributed greatly to its development and success. Still, despite being a major commercial hub, Kuwait did not have any caravanserais; most visitors entered the city for short visits and stayed either with friends or in tents at the outskirts of the city wall.

FIGURE 4 SAMI RAMIS PALACE HOTEL, KUWAIT (AL RAYES, 2017)

FIGURE 5 SHERATON HOTEL, KUWAIT CITY (TRAVELZAD.COM, 2019)

In 1935, Merza Hadi established one of the first hotels in Souq Wajif, the old market; it consisted of two floors, with shops on the ground floor and a few rooms on the upper floors, but it was not actually called a hotel. Later, in the early 1950s, Sami Ramis Palace Hotel was opened (Figure 4). After the economic boom, the Gulf, Carlton, and Bristol Hotels opened on Fahad Al Salem Street, one of the most important commercial boulevards in downtown Kuwait City. The Carlton Hotel was considered the first high quality hotel in the city, and in 1966, the Sheraton (Figure 5) and Hilton became the first five-star hotels in Kuwait (Al Rayes, 2017).

After the discovery of oil in the 1950s, the state enjoyed greater financial resources, and it carried out a development plan that covered all areas of life: economic, social, and urban. This modernization process opened the country further and attracted a great number of experts, laborers, and visitors. This was reflected in the growth of the population, which increased from about 269,000 in 1960 to about 4,671,000 by the end of 2020 (Public Authority for Civil Information, 2020). This process demanded changes in all walks of life and led to the establishment of many social and commercial institutions, among which were hotels, including five-star hotels.

In modern society, the hotel serves the local population by providing outlets for entertainment and services. For the foreign visitor, it provides a safe and familiar place from which to conduct business and get to know the city better. The author contends that with cities competing to invite tourists and businesspeople from around the world, the availability of five- star hotels that strengthen the local identity and generate healthy interaction can contribute to the development of successful centers.

This research will investigate the spatial characteristics of the lobbies of five-star hotels in Kuwait: Jumeirah Messilah Beach Hotel (est. 2013), Kuwait Regency Hotel (est. 1981), J.W. Mariott Hotel (est. 1980 as Le Meridien Hotel and rebranded in 2003), and Kuwait Sheraton

Hotel (est. 1966). It looks at the following elements: relation to the street, layout, interior design style, available amenities, and public use. In examining this topic, this study seeks to answer four research questions:

1) What is the impact of interior design on the enhancement of localization?
2) Can the hotel lobby act as a semi-public space that encourages interaction?
3) Will the availability of coffee shops or restaurants in the hotel lobby attract local residents and encourage further interaction among visitors and the local population?
4) How does the hotel entrance encourage or discourage visits from the public?

Method

Observation is a method of collecting data through the five senses. The observation data collection method used in this study is classified as a participatory study because the researcher must immerse himself in the setting where the phenomena is observed, taking notes and/or recording data during the process. As a research methodology, observation is flexible in nature. It has several disadvantages, though, such as the long duration and the possibility of bias.

For this study, a structured method was applied. Data was collected according to a pre-defined schedule, with the researcher also being aware of any other valuable phenomena that might contribute to answering the research questions. The researcher chose five hotel lobbies in the state of Kuwait and carried out specific observations to address the research questions. Data was collected in the following four stages:

1. Gathering background information from the hotel administration.
2. Studying drawings and design characteristics.
3. Developing diagrams.
4. Conducting walkthrough observations for two days, recording results on notepads, and taking photos with a digital camera. (Abu Samah, Ibrahim, Othman, & Abd Wahab, 2012)

Sight visits analyses

Figure 6 shows the layout of the lobby of the Jumeirah Messilah Beach Hotel, and Figure 7 shows a photograph of the same lobby. Table 1 summarizes the observations recorded there.
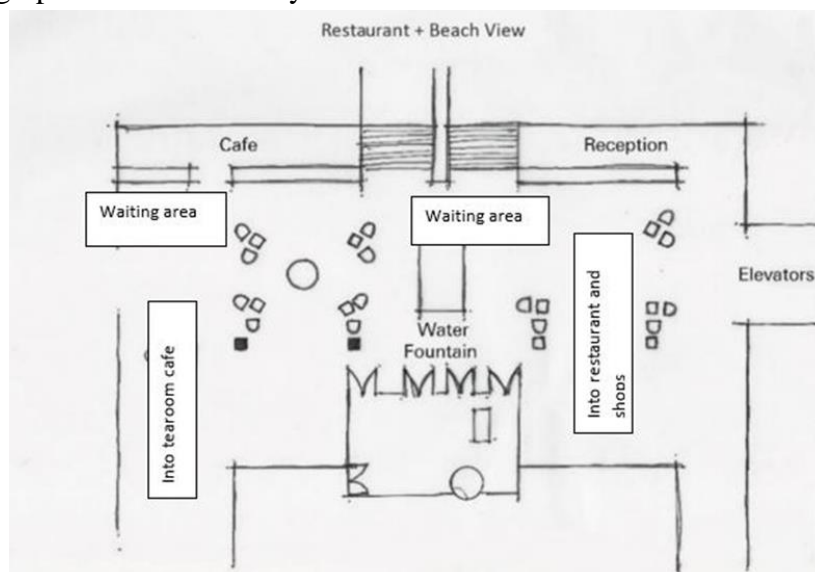

FIGURE 6 JUMEIRAH MESSILAH BEACH HOTEL LOBBY DIAGRAM

FIGURE 7 JUMEIRAH MESSILAH BEACH HOTEL LOBBY PHOTO
(HTTPS://WWW.JUMEIRAH.COM)

TABLE 1

JUMEIRAH MESSILAH BEACH HOTEL LOBBY

Criteria	Observation
Relationship to the street	Drop off area setback
Layout	Rectangle entryway and security, reception, coffee bar, water feature (modern sculpture fountain, flower arrangement); one level down leads to buffet and beach view.
Interior design style	Eclectic.
Available amenities	Café, flower shop, perfume shop, car rental desk, concierge.
Observations on public use	Friendly and family-oriented, socializing in comfortable furnished zones areas, dining.
Color standard	Natural colors and light blue.
Appropriate and compatible materials	Marble, glass art, wallpaper, wood, fabric, carpets.
Security and safety	Security is strong because the entrance is away from the main street; security device is available.

Figure 8 shows the layout of the lobby of the Kuwait Regency Hotel, and Figure 9 shows a photograph. Table 2 summarizes the observations recorded there.
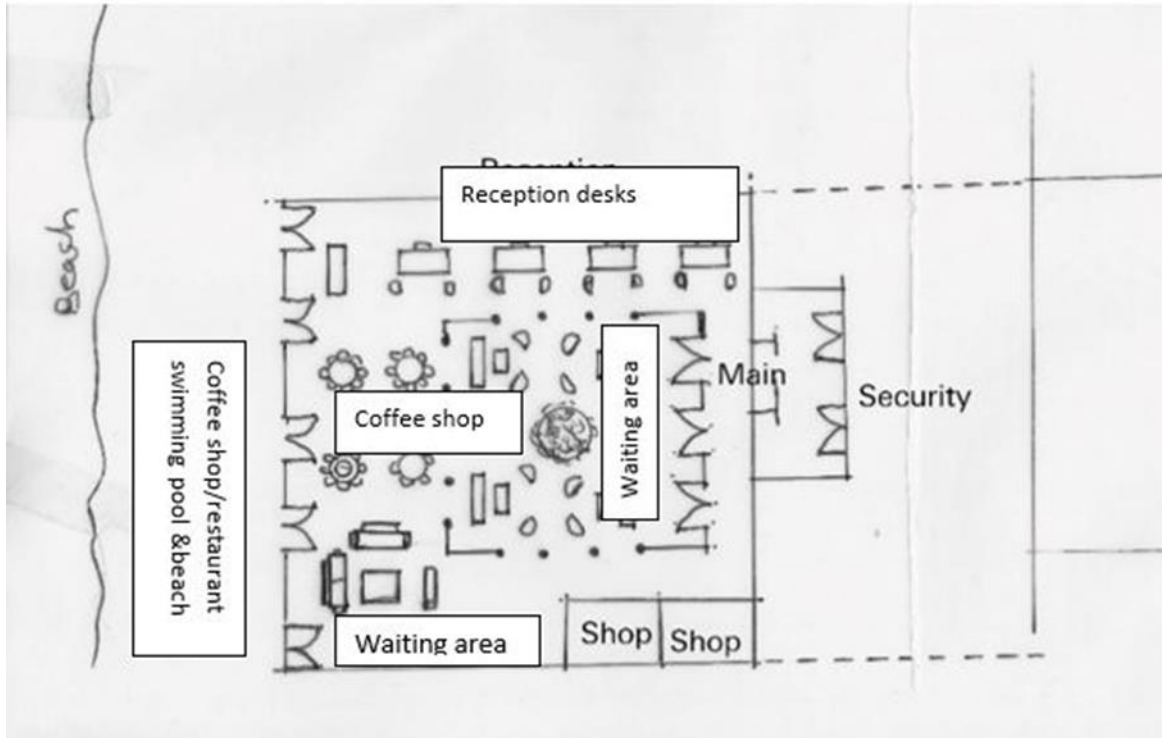
FIGURE 8 KUWAIT REGENCY HOTEL LOBBY DIAGRAM

Figure 9 Kuwait Regency Hotel Lobby Photo
(https://www.agoda.com)

TABLE 2

KUWAIT REGENCY HOTEL LOBBY

Criteria	Observation
Relationship to the street	Drop off area, setback, valet service, electronic security gate system.
Layout	Square lobby (indoor courtyard-like theme), aisle reception area, central thematic flower arrangement, cafe bar and dessert trolley, lobby divided as living room zone sitting areas, concierge desk.
Interior design style	French/English classic, formal, luxury decorations.
Available amenities	Perfume shop, chocolates and candy shop, private beach view with food and drinks privileged service.
Observations on public use	Friendly and family-oriented, business meetings arrangements, sitting zones, tourist gathering.
Color standard	Yellow, blue, beige.
Appropriate and compatible materials	Marble, mirror, wallpaper, wood, carpet/rugs, fabric.
Security and safety	Security is strong because the entrance is away from the main street; security device and checkpoint are available.

Figure 10 shows the layout of the lobby of the JW Marriott Hotel, and Figure 11 shows a photograph. Table 3 summarizes the observations recorded there.
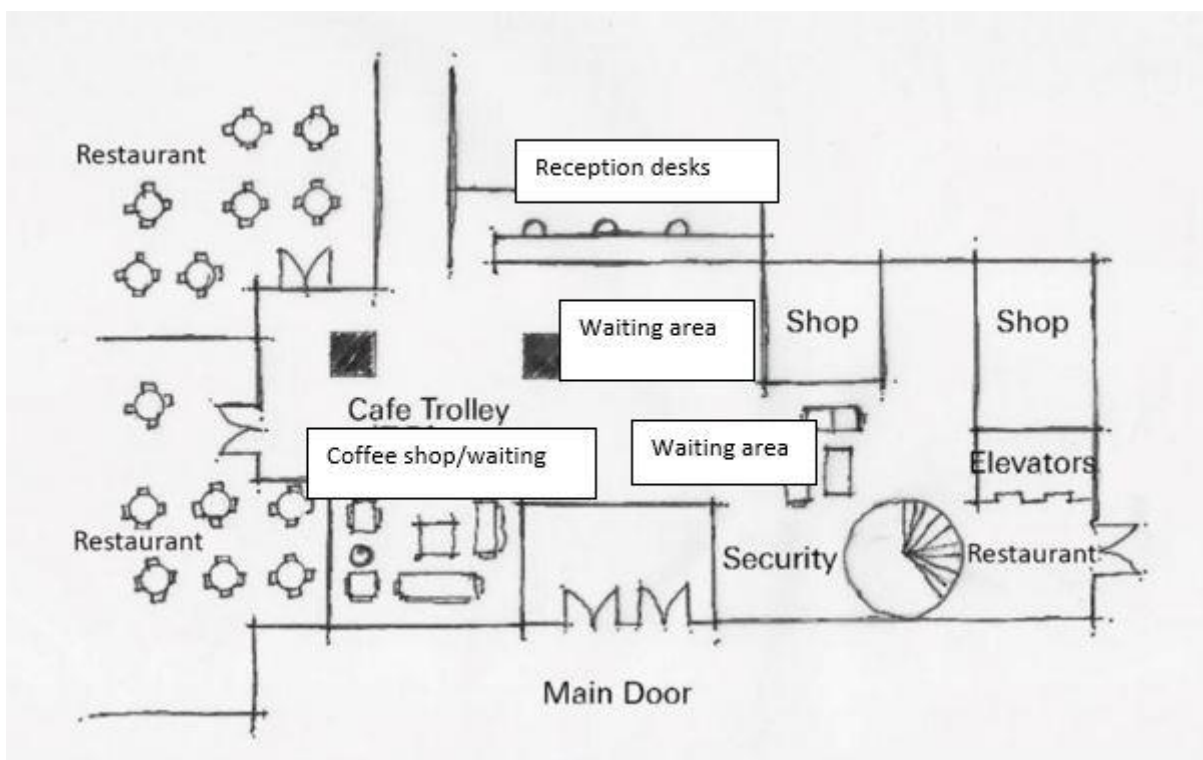

FIGURE 10 JW MARRIOTT HOTEL LOBBY DIAGRAM

FIGURE 11 JW MARRIOTT HOTEL LOBBY PHOTO
(**https://agoda.com**)

TABLE 3
JW MARRIOTT HOTEL LOBBY

Criteria	Observation
Relationship to the street	Drop-off setback area, valet service, electronic security gate, downtown view.
Layout	Rectangular entryway; long, rectangular reception desk; flower arrangement; concierge desk.
Interior design style	Modern semi-classic, lounge furniture arrangement, dining setting and café.
Available amenities	Coffee shop, Japanese restaurant, steak restaurant, men's clothing shop, Arabic perfumes shop, Arabic coffee hospitality.
Observations on public use	Not family-oriented, business hub, wedding and celebration waiting area.
Color standard	Natural colors.
Appropriate and compatible materials	Marble, leather, mirror, wallpaper, wood, fabric.
Security and safety	Security is medium because the entrance is near the main street; security device is available.

Figure 12 shows the layout of the lobby of the Hilton Kuwait Resort, and Figure 13 shows a photograph. Table 4 summarizes the observations recorded there.
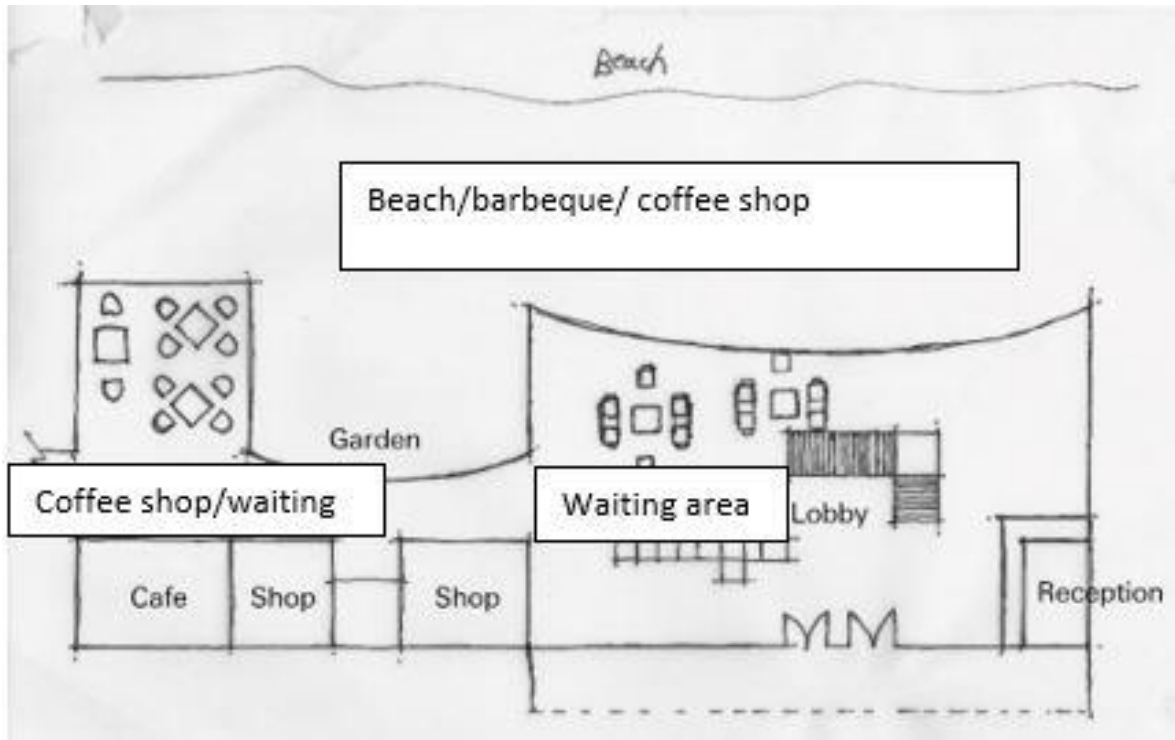
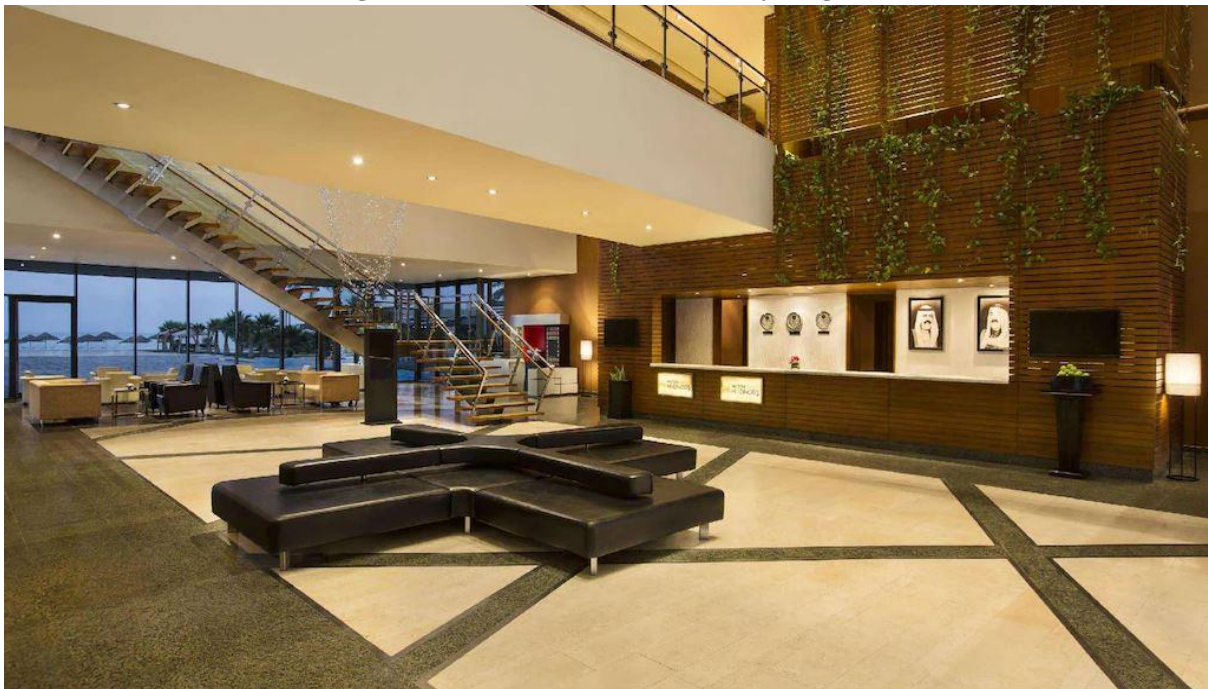**Figure 12 Hilton Kuwait Resort Lobby Diagram**

Figure 13 Hilton Kuwait Resort Lobby Photo
(https://kw.mosafer.com)

TABLE 4

HILTON KUWAIT RESORT LOBBY

Criteria	Observation
Relationship to the street	Drop-off setback area; valet service; rectangular entry with electronic security gate; square, open, double space lobby; concierge desk; beach view.
Layout	Cold materials (mostly glass, wood, concrete, and marble) and leather furniture, limited and uncomfortable lounge furniture layout.
Interior design style	Urban modern and coastal.
Available amenities	All amenities located on the other side of the lobby: men's clothing shop, perfume shop, café, international restaurant with buffet, flower shop.
Observations on public use	Casual setting for beach activities and coastal entertainment, socializing among family and friends, beach and sea games and gadgets.
Color standard	Neutral colors
Appropriate and compatible materials	Marble, leather, wood, glass.
Security and safety	Security is strong because the entrance away from the main street; security device is available.

Figure 14 shows the layout of the lobby of the Kuwait Sheraton Hotel, and Figure 15 shows a photograph. Table 5 summarizes the observations recorded there.
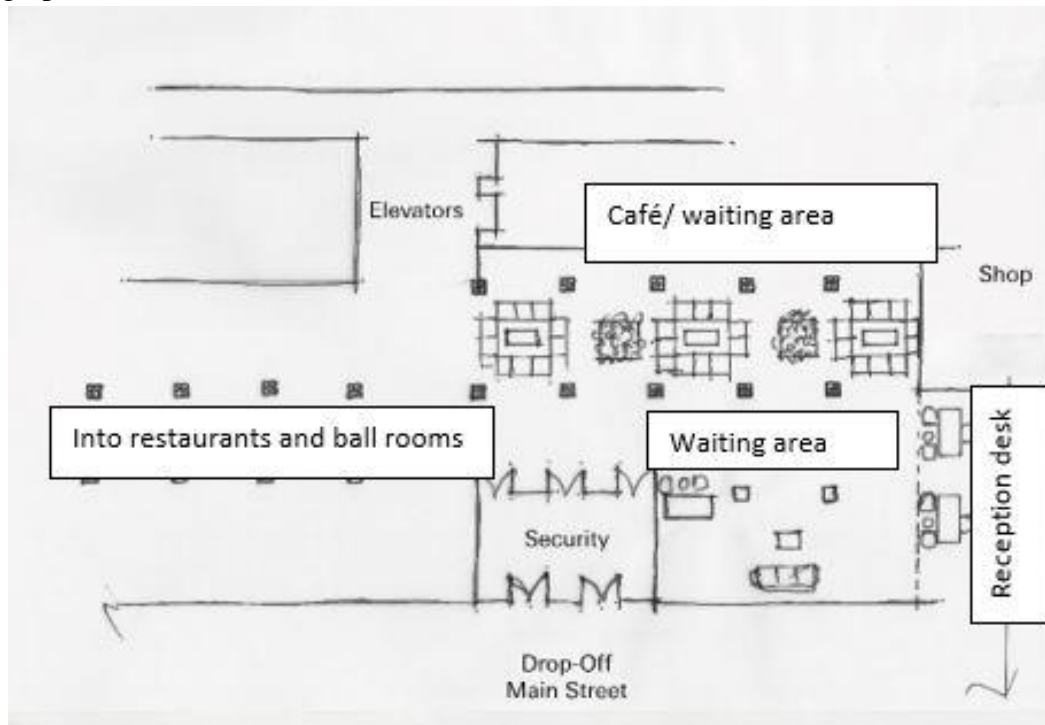

FIGURE 14 KUWAIT SHERATON HOTEL LOBBY DIAGRAM

FIGURE 15 KUWAIT SHERATON HOTEL LOBBY PHOTO
(**https://www.maplandia.com**)

TABLE 5 KUWAIT SHERATON HOTEL LOBBY

Criteria	Observation
Relationship to the street	Drop-off area and setback, rectangular entryway, valet service, electronic security gate.
Layout	Rectangular reception; luxury decorations; main street view; flower arrangements; small and cluttered, yet luxury, reception desks; lavish chandeliers.
Interior design style	Classic European, mixed with traditional Islamic motifs and accessories.
Available amenities	Coffee shop, tearoom located on the other side of the lobby.
Observations on public use	Not family-oriented, business meeting seating, private sitting areas behind huge columns.
Color standard	Natural colors.
Appropriate and compatible materials	Marble, leather, mirror, wallpaper, wood, wall panorama, paintings.
Security and safety	Security is strong because the entrance is away from the main street; security device is available.

Discussion

The research findings pertaining to the four research questions are described below.

1) What is the impact of interior design on the enhancement of localization?

Hotels act as major landmarks in a city, providing vital services and acting as hubs for hospitality and entertainment. They are both semi-public and relatively open, hosting diverse populations and offering a unique venue for showcasing the local culture and identity. However, this research found that for the most part, Kuwait's five-star hotels maintain a global outlook, with branding strategies and interior design styles that reflect international values. Such international designs have become synonymous with standardization, systemization, mass production, functional logic, and economies of scale. Consequently, the design of hotel lobbies in Kuwait has paid scant attention to promoting the local identity by reflecting local styles and culture; the five-star hotels function as agents of globalization and negatively impact the shaping of a local identity.

2) Can the hotel lobby act as a semi-public space that encourages interaction?

Semi-public interior spaces are venues for public gathering and interaction between visitors and residents, which contributes to building the local identity. Interior design strategies and tools can influence the level of interaction among the users of space; for example, the shape of the space and its furniture arrangement affect the potential for communication. Observation of the selected cases discovered that the design and layout of their hotel lobbies encouraged meetings and spending more time there. Some of the hotels targeted adults and business users, whereas others welcomed a wider audience, encouraging families and children to enjoy the space.

3) Will the availability of coffee shops or restaurants in the hotel lobby attract local residents and encourage further interaction among visitors and the local population?

In today's five-star hotels, the availability of coffee shops and restaurants is of prime importance for attracting people and encouraging interaction, which also contributes to the creation of a strong local identity. Fieldhouse (1995) noted that "… food is a vehicle for expressing friendship, for smoothing social intercourse, for showing concern" (p. 78). In the five hotels studied, the researcher noticed that when there were coffee shops and when food and beverages were served in lobbies, there was a higher level of interaction.

4) How does the hotel entrance encourage or discourage visits from the public?

The livelihood of cities, as well as their maintenance of a strong local identity, depends on their ability to connect people and enhance the experience of interaction. When hotel lobbies face main roads, this boosts their visibility and proximity, and they are able to attract more attention from the general public. In Kuwait, though, the urban condition is mainly dependent on cars; all the five-star hotels studied are approachable only by private vehicle, so very few informal pedestrian activities take place in front of hotel entrances. As such, their level of accessibility is exceptionally low, and they are secluded from the general public. In some cases, guests may appreciate more privacy, making this an advantage, but in general, this excludes the public and creates a real barrier between the hotel lobby and the casual passerby.

In terms of data collection, it was difficult to find sources pertaining to the history of the Kuwaiti hotels and to gain access to the interior design concept, floor plans, design process, pictures, and themes behind each hotel style. It is difficult to generalize the results of the study

because it examined only five-star hotels in Kuwait, so the sample size was limited. Further research might investigate how the interior design of Kuwaiti hotels could showcase and promote traditional themes to support a distinct local identity.

Conclusion

The research confirms that appreciating the local identity of a city becomes an important issue in the conservation of the city's character, and interior design plays a major role in the creation of that local identity, which can be manifested in private and public spaces alike. The research observed that five-star hotels in Kuwait are global entities; as such, their branding strategies and interior design styles reflect international values. The design of hotel lobbies and the arrangement of their furniture influences the ability of users to interact with one another. The research confirms that when coffee shops are available and when food and beverages are served in lobbies, the level of interaction is enhanced. Finally, lobbies that face main roads can attract some attention from the public, but this is not the case with five-star hotels in Kuwait.

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