

"تصميم الاستراحة الطلابية الجامعية: زيادة الارتباط بالمكان، التقارب الاجتماعية، وراحة الطلاب"
"Designing Student Lounge at University: Fostering Place Attachment,
Socialization, and Restoration"

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أستاذ مشارك بقسم التصميم الداخلي — كلية التربية الأساسية الهيئة العامة للتعليم التطبيقي والتدريب، الكويت

Abstract:

Objective: The purpose of the study is to investigate the student center needs and activities of undergraduate students in the College of Basic Education in Kuwait.

Methodology: A quantitative research approach was implemented in the study by employing a survey questionnaire. An online questionnaire was distributed to undergraduate students through WhatsApp messages. Of the one thousand and twenty-six (N=1,026) undergraduate students who completed the survey questionnaire, ninety percent (90%) were females.

Results: The findings of the study illustrate that the top first Third Place for college students to spend off time is coffee shops. The key findings regarding the expected activities at the student center included: eating and drinking (60%), hanging out with friends (59%), prayer (48%), taking a nap (27%), school assignments (25%), group study (15%), and hosting small parties (6%). The most essential facilities to be the smartphone charging stations (61%), sleeping areas (60%), lockers (46%), couches (42%), study rooms (42%), kitchenettes (41%), dining room (35%), computer labs (35%), and entertainment areas (33%). Based on the findings of this study, twelve interior design students designed student lounges proposals, then they were submitted to the school administration for implementation.

Conclusion: The paper brings together practical information that can aid School administrators to renovate spaces to accommodate students of the twenty-first century.

Keywords: Interior Design, student lounge, undergraduate students, Kuwait

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Introduction

One of the fundamental roles for interior designers is to develop environments enhancing attachments human experience. Unfortunately, places that may not be designed effectively would eliminate human interactions and preferences. The user experience is positively influenced by when places are physically and emotionally comfortable which enhances users' wellbeing (Herman Miller, 2009), and improves students' collaboration (Tural, Read & Lee, 2016). Studies have indicated many students need places to communicate, rest and restore with their colleagues. Interior strive build designers interior to environments to enhance those opportunities for college students. Over thirty percent of freshmen students feel frequently overwhelmed (Keup Stolzenberg, 2004). Therefore, college students seek places to relax and restore mainly off-campus (Waxman et. al, 2007).

Purpose

The purpose of this cross-sectional study is to investigate undergraduate students' needs and activities in the student lounge in Kuwait. The current student lounge at the College of Basic Education (CBE) is not accepted by students since it does not meet their expectations and needs. Therefore, undergraduate students were surveyed to investigate their requirements of the student lounge, then multiple undergraduate interior design students participated in redesigning the lounge in a design studio project under the supervision of a design educator. The main objective of this paper, therefore, is to investigate the characteristics that graduate

students seek in the environmental design of a student lounge.

Significance

The findings of this study provided insights into how students would most likely use this space. This study encompasses a large population of undergraduate students in Kuwait from different universities and institutions to examine their preferences, and needs in the lounge activities, environment. This study may help other universities around the world to design or redesign student centers by employing an evidence-based design approach. Also, approximately twelve students lounge designs proposals were developed and sent to the school administration as a proposal for developing the new student lounge at the CBE.

Review of Literature

Conceptual framework

This study employed evidence-based design Place-attachment Theory conceptual framework. Evidence-based design, meanwhile, refers to the practice of adopting reliable evidence from the literature for designing built environments, enabling interior designers and architects to employ the findings of reliable research when developing interior designs meant to satisfy and improve people's health, safety, and welfare. Therefore, in this study, the researcher employed an evidence-based design approach, conducting a study among a group of the population that occupies the space in consideration and using key findings from other reliable studies.

Furthermore, the theoretical framework for this study was guided by Seamon's Theory of place attachment, which studies the relationship between humans and their experiences in the physical environment (Seamon, 2014). Place meanings attachment are influenced by the special originated qualities, which was interpersonal communal and communication and engagement of building users. Seamon defined place as a generator of interaction between building users and and the built environment. factors influenced maintaining or eroding place attachment. Thus, Place-attachment can be defined as a set of feeling that emotionally bonding humans to certain places (Giuliani, 2003). Those places are to be considered after home and work/school to spend free time.

Place Attachment and Interior Environment

successfully To design interior environments that serve as third places, personal or social spaces after home and school or work, and social gathering places, designers should understand the social and physical attributes of interior space that improve the client's experience, that encourage comfort, the logic of belonging, and a bond between the populace and place (Waxman, 2006). The interior environment plays an important role in enhancing peoples' attachment to places. A study found that interior architecture, finishing materials, attractive views of outside, artificial, and natural lighting, and movable furniture attracted patrons to coffee shops (Waxman, 2006). Α further acknowledges that the environmental design has a strong influence on college students to the campus facilities (Waxman, Clemons,

Banning& McKelfresh, 2007). The researchers added a coffee cart and seating area to facilitate students inside the campus library studied the influence of specific features of the built environment that lead to the feeling of attachment to the campus and surrounding community on college students. Waxman (2006) found out that the physical design aspects have a strong influence on creating place attachment among certain places.

Students and the university

Several reasons have led to the discussion of the student lounge and coffee shop inside the campus. Previous research indicated that coffee shops are at the top of the list of third places selected by students (Banning et al., 2006). This shows the potential of having a coffee shop inside the student center/ lounge where students restore and relax. Lawsen (2004) suggested one of the important recommendations is having a coffee shop within the library, which has both implications financially and socially, to improve students coming to the library.

Most schools place a high value on retaining talented and motivated students to their programs. When students arrive on campus, many aspects impact experience and intentions of their school. In their study, Hennig-Thurau, Langer, and Hansen (2001) found that loyalty can be achieved by the quality of student relationships on campus. The study reported the emotional attachment a student makes to the university is extremely important, one of the main factors is the quality of the experience a student has with university services such as the library, student center, and computer lab. To attract students and improve students' experience, schools

should focus on the environmental factors that attract students.

Research Question

What characteristics do undergraduate students seek in the environmental design of student lounge?

Methodology

A quantitative research approach was employed in this study. Α survey questionnaire instrument consisted of closeended questions, intended to measure the preferences and interests of undergraduate students at several universities and colleges in the state of Kuwait. One thousand and twenty-six (N=1,026)undergraduate students completed survev the questionnaire, ninety percent (90%) were females

Data collection

An online questionnaire, using a google form, was distributed to undergraduate students through their phone messages, using the WhatsApp application. Those messages directed participants to take the online questionnaire explaining the purpose and significance of the study to participants along with a link that directed them to a web survey.

Research instrument

The survey questionnaire used in this study consisted of eight questions. Two questions related to participants' information, gender, and school of study. The third question asked participants about their preferred third place after school and house. The rest of the questions have related the spending of their free time on campus, activities they plan to

engage in the student center, and requirements of the lounge. Also, participants were asked about their opinion of having a nursery on campus. The questionnaire used for data collection is attached as Appendix. A.

Validity and Reliability

A pilot testing was conducted through face-to-face structured interviews with a group of twenty undergraduate students to validate the research instrument. The pilot test ensured that the instrument statements were clear and understandable. The pilot study also enabled the researcher to ask practitioners to add more necessary items needed to the survey. After conducting the pilot study, the researchers refined the research instrument.

Data Analysis

A quantitative method was used to seek answers to the close-ended questions. Microsoft Excel Program 2016 was used to code and analyze the quantitative data, illustrating percentages and frequencies for the participants' responses to each question.

Results

One thousand and twenty-six (N=1,026) undergraduate students completed the survey questionnaire, ninety percent (90%) were females while only (10%) were males. Of the participants, seventy-seven percent (77%) were students from colleges at the Public Authority for Applied Education and Training (PAAET), (21%) students at Kuwait University, and only (2%) of the students at private schools in Kuwait (see table 1).

Table 1. Institution of participants

Institutions	Percent
PAAET	77%
Kuwait University	21%
Private Institutions	2%

The students' preferential third places, in order, were coffee shops (35%), shopping malls (22%), restaurants (16%), other places (10%), movie theater (9%), and gym (8%) (see table 2). Participants were asked regarding spending their free time, the findings illustrated that most students (84%) tend to spend most of their free time incampus, while (16%) tend to spend their free time off-campus (see chart 1). The

following question asked participants regarding the places where they spend their time on campus. The findings illustrated that students spend their free time in a variety of places, such as outdoor locations (27%), cafeteria (24%), sitting at hallways and corridors (13%), classrooms and studios (13%), other places (13%), and university library (9%) respectively (see table 3)

Table 2. Third-place preferences by college students (N=1,026)

Areas	Percent
Coffee shop	35%
Shopping mall	22%
Restaurant	16%
Other	10%
Movie Theater	9%
Gum	8%

Offcampus 16% In-campus 84%

Chart1. Students spend most of their free times (N= 1,026)

Table 3. Location of participants spending most free-times in-campus (N=1,026)

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Area	Percent
Sitting outside buildings	27%
Cafeteria	24%
In-classes	13%
Sitting in hallways	13%
Others	13%
University library	9%

The primary activities that undergraduate students anticipated engaging at the student lounge were eating and drinking (60%), hanging out with friends and peers (59%), praying (48%), taking a nap (27%), doing school assignments (25%), studying with colleagues (15%), having a small party (6%), and other activities (1%) respectively (see table 4). When asked about the most essential facility that they would like to have in the student center, the participants most highly valued charging stations for smartphones and tablets (61%), resting,

sleeping if needed, area (60%), lockers (46%), couches (42%), studying area (42%), a full kitchen (41%), dining area (35%), computer facilities (35%), entertainment area (33%), video games (17%), watching Television (13%), and reading newspapers and magazines (6%) respectively (see table 5). The research participants were asked regarding their thoughts of having a daycare for babies in-campus, fifty-nine of them (59%) agreed of having a daycare for babies in-campus, while forty-one (41%)disagreed.

Table 4. Main functions and activities at student lounge (N=1,026)

Activities	Percentage
Eating & drinking	60%
Hanging out	59%
Prayer	48%
Taking a nap	27%
Doing assignments	25%
Studying with groups	15%
Small parties	6%
Other activities	1%

Table 5. Most important requirements needed in the student lounge (N=1,026)

Requirements	Percentage
Charging stations	61%
Resting & napping area	60%
lockers	46%
Couches	42%
Study area	42%
Kitchenette	41%
Dining area	35%
Computer labs	35%
Entertainments	33%
Video games	17%
Watching TV	13%
Reading newspaper & magazine	6%
Others	2%

Discussions

Most college students in Kuwait tend to spend most of their free time in-campus (see chart1). This is strong evidence to support the implications for college lounges that have added coffee shops in hopes of increasing foot traffic and user activity since the first top their place for them is coffee shops. The marketing of the student lounge as a place for socializing, rejuvenating, group study, eating and drinking, reading, and its role in social regeneration. Unlike western countries, having a prayer room in the student lounge is highly appreciated. Students tend stay in-campus to approximately 13 hours in campus, which requires students to pray their prayers. Hence having a prayer adjacent to the student lounge in the Middle Eastern countries is highly required.

More than a quarter of the research participants tend to spend most of their free

time sitting outside building in-campus. This research questionnaire was distributed in wintertime that the weather is anticipated to be wonderful. Unlike winter, summer season tend to be hot and harsh weather when students don't have the opportunity to sit outside on campus and enjoy the weather. Therefore, the researcher anticipated that I the survey were distributed in the summertime, a very little percentage of participants who reported sitting outside building in school would be reported.

Recommendations and Implications Guidelines for designing undergraduate student lounges

The following guidelines for designing the student lounge were based on the findings of this study, interviews, and observations of students in-campus, and recommendations from the literature (Waxman, 2004; Waxman et al., 2007). Although available space and spatial

configurations of the student lounge may vary, the following design guidelines can provide a framework for both the evaluation of the existing student center and the design of the new one. The guidelines include:

Layout: flexibility in design is one of the main considerations in the student lounge. Flexibility means being able to change the place layout by using movable walls and furniture with walls. Also, humans, in general, prefer seating while anchoring themselves with walls or architectural features, such as walls, partial height partitions, and windows. As patrons admire being sheltered through architectural features of the space while being able to see coming and going, designing people clustered areas in the student lounge would positively influence students' behaviors in the place.

Flooring: student lounges in schools are high traffic. Hence, interior designers should select flooring that holds up to high traffic, is easy to clean, and is non-slippery such as ceramic tile. It is recommended to avoid using carpets due to cleaning and durability issues. Also, wood flooring should be avoided in student lounges due to durability and acoustic problems especially in the case of an open concept area.

Seating: Interior designers should focus on providing a variety of seating types. Some students would go to the student lounge alone and prefer to sit alone, whereas others would go with a group of students and look for seating to accommodate them. Some students prefer seating at tables while using their laptops and spreading their belonging, while others want large comfortable chairs, sofas, or lazy chairs. Therefore, designing the student lounge should consider students'

behaviors in the place to accommodate their preferences.

Technology equipment: students tend to bring their laptops, smart tablets, and other tech equipment to the student lounge. Thus, electricity blogs and cords should be easily accessible and nearby seating areas and tables. Also, proving charging stations to charge smartphones is important for students, especially they spend a considerable amount of time on campus.

Supporting areas: one of the main requirements of college students in the lounge is having a coffee shop. According to the findings of this study, coffee shops are the best Third place for a student in Kuwait. Therefore, incorporating a coffee shop in the lounge is essential for students. Also, integrating a small kitchenette where students prepare their snacks and Arabic coffee is recommended. The kitchenette may include a fridge, stove, microwave, and coffee machine. Nevertheless, providing kitchenette inside the student lounge may cause several issues including cleaning, maintenance and safety. Thus, providing a full service coffeeshop that may include helping students with heating drinks and food for extra charge would be suitable, or perhaps hiring parttime students working in the student lounge kitchenette to keep it organized, well maintained and clean.

Lighting: Lighting is highly important in the student lounge depending on the activity taking place in the area. For example, an adequate amount of lighting should be provided for reading and multipurpose areas. Task lighting might be provided in the reading area, for instance. In general, lighting plays an important role in interior design in terms of functionality and aesthetics. Interior designers should use a

variety of lighting techniques in the lounge such as direct and indirect lighting. Also, cove lighting is one of the essential techniques that is recommended to be used to increase the spaciousness of the area.

Acoustics: using acoustical materials and finishes are highly recommended in the student lounge due to the high traffic of students. It is recommended to use a total acoustics performance ceiling that absorbs and blocks sounds. Also, noise control flooring should be considered. Flooring, such as HDF and laminate wood flooring, cause noise, and sound transmission should be avoided. It's recommended to use sound isolation panels and partial height walls as partitions to break down the noise in the entire area.

Visual appeal: the student lounge is the area where students sit and relax between classes or waiting for colleges. Therefore, the main intention for designing the student lounge should be to take students from an academic setting Their-Place to environments. The main challenge for interior designers when developing student lounges is to build environments on campus without institutional design. The student lounge design should be appealing and attractive for its users using finishing

Figure 1 Lounge with seating

materials, such as flooring, walls, colors, and texture, and lighting.

Access to reading material: since many college students invest their free time reading books, it is recommended to include a reading corner where students pick books and magazines. Students tend to invest in themselves in their free time through different means of development through reading materials. Providing casual reading spaces in the lounge along with coffee shop beverages would have the potential for students to stop by the lounge.

Student lounge design proposals

This research supported taking an evidenceapproach based design undergraduate student lounge. The current location available for the student center is the student lounge at CBE (Hall 9). The main goal of the project is to design several proposals for the student's lounge that may be used particularly at CBE or any school in the state of Kuwait. Those design projects were developed by interior design students at CBE and submitted for implementation to the school dean's office as recommendation by school students (see Figures 1-12).

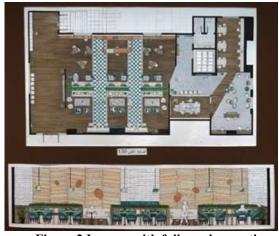


Figure 2 Lounge with full-service, seating, prayer room, computer lab, study and group



Figure 3 Lounge with coffeeshop and relaxation room.



Figure 4 seating, study, and conference rooms.



Figure 5. seating, computer lab, study area, and prayer room.



Figure 6. Seating and computer lab.





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Figure 9. coffeeshop, seating, and computer lab.



Figure 11. Coffeeshop, conference room, and lab.

Conclusion

The purpose of this paper was to guide the development of the student lounge in schools, particularly in Kuwait. This project was guided by the researcher and the work of his students, and the reporting of their behavior and preferences regarding third places. It is important to note due to the number of respondents of the study, the findings of the study can be generalized to any undergraduate student in the world. The researcher and the student team believe that with the evaluation of the student lounge,



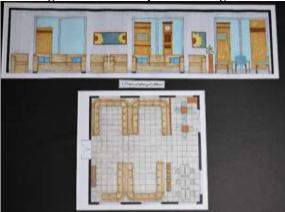


Figure 10. Lounge seating, computer lab, and dining tables.



Figure 12. Coffeeshop, conference room, and lab.

college students are looking at the student lounge as a place to socialize, relax, restore, hang out, eat, and drink. The student lounge may, in the future, find its uniqueness in developing a place to retrieve new students to schools.

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الملخص:

هدف الدراسة: تهدف هذه الدراسة الى معرفة رغبات ومتطلبات الاستراحة الجامعية بالنسبة للطلاب الجامعيين.

منهجية الدراسة: استخدم في هذه الدراسة المنهج التحليلي للبيانات التي تم جمعها من خلال ألف وسته وعشرون (٢٠٦) استبانة الكترونيا على طلاب الجامعات داخل دولة الكويت ووزعت من خلال تطبيق (WhatsApp) وذلك باستخدام الهواتف الذكية.

نتائج الدراسة: من أهم نتائج هذه الدراسة أن من أكثر الأنشطة التي يقوم بها الطلاب في الاستراحة الجامعية هي: الأكل والشرب ((0.7%))، الجلوس مع الأصحاب ((0.7%))، الصلاة ((0.7%))، القيلولة ((0.7%))، عمل الواجبات المنزلية ((0.7%))، مشاريع عمل جماعي ((0.7%))، وعمل احتفالات صغيرة ((0.7%)). أهم الأمور التي يجب توافر ها في الاستراحة هي مكان لشحن الهواتف ((0.7%))، مكان للنوم ((0.7%))، أماكن تخزين ((0.7%))، جلسات ((0.7%))، غرف خاصة للدراسة ((0.7%))، مطبخ تحضيري ((0.7%))، أماكن للأكل ((0.7%))، مختبرات حاسوب ((0.7%))، مكان للترفيه ((0.7%)). بناء على نتائج الدراسة، قام اثنا عشر طالب بعمل تصميم داخلي مقترح للاستراحة الطلابية.

الخلاصة: هذا البحث يعطي معلومات تطبيقية بجانب مساعدة صناع القرار في الجامعات الى معرفة رغبات واحتياجات طلاب القرن الواحد والعشرون لتلبيتها داخل الحرم الجامعي.

المصطلحات العلمية: التصميم الداخلي، استراحة طلابية، الطلاب الجامعيين، الكويت.

Appendix A (Survey)

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