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INTERPRETATION CENTERS TO MEANING MAKING: THE CASE
OF BAHRAIN**

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College of Engineering

INVESTIGATING THE CONTRIBUTION OF HISTORIC SITE
INTERPRETATION CENTERS TO MEANING MAKING: THE
CASE OF BAHRAIN

May Jalal Al Saffar

This thesis is submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy

Under the Supervision of Professor Kheira Anissa Tabet Aoul

September 2020

Declaration of Original Work

I, May Jalal Al Saffar, the undersigned, a graduate student at the United Arab Emirates University (UAEU), and the author of this thesis entitled “*Investigating the Contribution of Historic Site Interpretation Centers to Meaning Making: The Case of Bahrain*”, hereby, solemnly declare that this thesis is my own original research work that has been done and prepared by me under the supervision of Professor Kheira Anissa Tabet Aoul, in the College of Engineering at UAEU. This work has not previously been presented or published, or formed the basis for the award of any academic degree, diploma or a similar title at this or any other university. Any materials borrowed from other sources (whether published or unpublished) and relied upon or included in my thesis have been properly cited and acknowledged in accordance with appropriate academic conventions. I further declare that there is no potential conflict of interest with respect to the research, data collection, authorship, presentation and/or publication of this thesis.

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Abstract

This dissertation investigates the role and contribution of the Historic Site Interpretation Centers in the process of meaning-making from the historic site to the visitors, as well as their visiting experience and attendance at the same settings. The Historic Site Interpretation Centers exhibit a unique museum typology dedicated to sites of historical significance, offering a dual mode of interpretation, labeled as ‘in situ’ and ‘in context’. The objective was to evaluate the physical attributes and applied display strategies in conveying meaning from historic sites to visitors and, to explore the resulting stakeholders’ (i.e. service providers and visitors) perception and emotional experience in these dual settings. Hence, a convergent mixed method of multiple case-study analysis was used to evaluate the given settings’ physical attributes, and multi-ethnographic tools inclusive of archival documents, online survey, semi-structured open-ended interviews, and non-obtrusive observation were used to explore the stakeholders’ perception and emotional experience. Four historical sites in Bahrain were selected: Qal’at Al Bahrain, Shaikh Salman bin Ahmed Al Fateh Fort, Bu Maher Fort and Al Khamis Mosque. The findings suggest that visitation interest and meaning-making are primarily affected by first, a range of different contextual relationships between the Historic Site Interpretation Centers and their historic sites, building physical attributes and display strategies. Second, visitors’ interests and expectations are the main trigger for visitation, while their cultural background and collective memory are recognized as influential factors in the process of meaning-making. The difficulty in creating meaning-making may reside in a single or a combination of factors: a rigid de-contextualization of objects, an architectural design of the interpretive center insensitive to the particularities of the location, presentation strategies ineffective enough to generate a disinterest among visitors. Undoubtedly, the present situation of historic sites in Bahrain affiliates itself to the ever-present debate on the philosophical groundings of Critical Regionalism from its generation in the early 80s of the last century to its present and undeniable actuality and force. This research acknowledges the original reasons and ideological perspective behind its inception and the contemporary critical readings of the same text in the light of new economic, environmental, political concerns and design challenges. While understanding some of the concerns and challenges that

drove architectural production since the concept was coined, this research's intention is to remain close to the essence of Critical Regionalism, which is to effectively understand the importance of a context while designing appropriate structures easily interpreted by visitors, and capable to generate coherent meaning-making within a specific setting. Finally, a new classification of museums is suggested on the basis of contextual relationships to the historic site and the involvement of dual modes of interpretation - 'in situ' and 'in context' - in order to overcome the existing dichotomy in the contribution and role of such museums. In addition, this study's ambition is to provide some design and curatorship directions for architects, museographers, and policymakers in Bahrain and beyond.

Keywords: Historic site interpretation centers, historic site, Bahrain, meaning-making, visitor experience, ethnographic research, convergent mixed method.

Title and Abstract (in Arabic)

مساهمة المتاحف التابعة للمواقع التاريخية في البحرين في تفسير المواقع التاريخية وشرحها : دراسة إستكشافية

الملخص

تبحث هذه الأطروحة في دور مراكز تفسير المواقع التاريخية ومساهمتها في عملية توصيل معنى الموقع التاريخي للزوار، بالإضافة إلى تجربة الزيارة والحضور لهذه الأماكن نفسها. تعرض مراكز تفسير الموقع التاريخي تصنيفاً فريداً للمتحف يكون مخصصاً للمواقع ذات الأهمية التاريخية، بحيث أنها تقدّم طريقة مزدوجة للتفسير، يتم تصنيفها على أنها "في الموقع" و "في السياق". كان الغرض هو تقييم السمات المادية واستراتيجيات العرض المطبقة في نقل المعنى من هذه المواقع التاريخية إلى الزائرين واستكشاف نتائج الأطراف الفاعلة (أي مزودي الخدمة والزوار)، والتجربة العاطفية في هذه الإعدادات المزدوجة. ومن ثمّ، يتم استخدام طريقة مختلطة مقارنة لتحليل دراسات الحالة المتعددة لتقييم الخصائص المادية للإعدادات المعينة، والأدوات الإثنوجرافية المتعددة بما في ذلك الوثائق الأرشيفية، والاستطلاع عبر الإنترنت، والمقابلات المفتوحة شبه المنظمة، والملاحظة غير المتطفلة التي تستخدم لاستكشاف تصوّر الأطراف الفاعلة والخبرة العاطفية. تم اختيار أربعة مواقع تاريخية في البحرين: قلعة البحرين، وقلعة الشيخ سلمان بن أحمد الفاتح، وقلعة بو ماهر، ومسجد الخميس. تشير النتائج إلى أنّ الاهتمام بالزيارة وصنع المعنى يتأثران في المقام الأول بمجموعة من العلاقات بالسياق المختلف ذاته بين مراكز تفسير المواقع التاريخية ومواقعها التاريخية، وبناء السمات المادية واستراتيجيات العرض. ثانياً، تُعدّ اهتمامات الزوار وتوقعاتهم هي الدافع الرئيسي للزيارة، بينما يتم التعرف على خلفيتهم الثقافية وذاكرتهم الجماعية بوصفها عوامل مؤثرة في عملية صنع المعنى. قد تكمن الصعوبة لخلق المعنى في عامل واحد أو في مجموعة من العوامل، هي: الفصل الصارم لسياق الموضوع، تفسير التصميم المعماري للمركز غير الحساس لخصوصيات الموقع، استراتيجيات العرض غير فعالة بما يكفي لجعل عدم الاهتمام بين الزوار. مما لا شك فيه أن الوضع الحالي للمواقع التاريخية في البحرين مرتبط بالنقاش الدائم حول الأسس الفلسفية للإقليمية النقدية من جيلها في أوائل الثمانينيات من القرن الماضي إلى واقعيتها وقوتها الحالية التي لا يمكن إنكارها. يقر هذا البحث بالأسباب الأصلية والمنظور الأيديولوجي وراء نشأته والقراءات النقدية المعاصرة للنصّ نفسه في ضوء الاهتمامات الاقتصادية والبيئية والسياسية الجديدة وتحديات التصميم. مع فهم بعض الاهتمامات والتحديات التي دفعت الإنتاج المعماري منذ صياغة المفهوم، فإن نية هذا البحث البقاء على مقربة من جوهر الإقليمية النقدية، والتي تتمثل في فهم أهمية السياق بشكل فعال أثناء تصميم الهياكل المناسبة التي يسهل على الزوار تفسيرها لتكون قادرة على خلق معنى متماسك في بيئة معينة. أخيراً، فقد تم تقديم اقتراح لتصنيف جديد للمتاحف على أساس العلاقات السياقية بالموقع التاريخي وإشراك الأنماط المزدوجة للتفسير - "في الموقع" و "في السياق" - من أجل التغلب على الانقسام الحالي في المساهمة والدور لهذه المتاحف. بالإضافة إلى ذلك، فإنّ طموح هذه الدراسة هو تقديم بعض

التوجيهات المتعلقة بالتصميم والاتجاهات القوامة للمهندسين المعماريين ورسامي الخرائط
وصناع السياسات في البحرين وخارجها.

مفاهيم البحث الرئيسية: مراكز تفسير المواقع التاريخية، الموقع التاريخي، البحرين، كيفية
تفسير المعنى، تجربة الزائر، البحث الاثنوجرافي، المنهج المختلط المتقارب.

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Dedication

To my beloved parents and family

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List of Abbreviations

BACA	Bahrain Authority for Culture and Antiquities
HSIC	Historic Site Interpretation Centers
ICOM	International Council of Museums
UNESCO	The United Nations, Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 Preamble

The purpose of this ethnographic study is to explore the role and contribution of Historic Site Interpretation Centers (i.e. historic site-related museums or visitor centers) in the construction of meaning and investigate their capacity to serve as interpretive tools and meaning generators. These museums are intended, as discussed in related literature, to provide cultural and historic sites with a designed setting that can be appreciated through site visits, artifacts exploration and general contextual experiences. How these museums support the significance of historical sites, and how they transmit the value of artifacts to visitors, when removed from historic sites, while maintaining the same meaning and feelings remains largely unanswered and embodies the focus of this research.

The current role and contribution of site-related museums are at the center of a conflicting debate among specialists and visitors alike. Several challenges are identified to affect the visitors' experience and visitation patterns. One challenge meaning-making will be the focus of this ethnographic and exploratory work in the contextual setting of the author's home country: Bahrain. This introductory chapter presents the rationale of this study and provides an overview of the thesis.

1.2 Background; Site-Related Museums Discourse

The continuous growth of heritage tourism, strengthened by the success of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) World Heritage Program, puts forward an ultimate setting for historic site-related museums to act as a facilitator for intercultural understanding (UNESCO, 2013a). The term "site museum" was first used in the 1950s to describe a museum in a

location that has scientific or historic significance with the intention of explaining the site to visitors (Lewis, 1959). In the 1960s, the term "site museum" was used to describe museums that represented artifacts and narratives from a particular location of historical significance (Frankenberg, 2014; ICOM, 1950; Pawlikowska-Piechotka et al., 2015; Shafernich, 1993). In 1982, the International Council of Museums (ICOM) published a report on Archeological Site Museum, defining the 'site museum' as "a museum conceived and set up in order to protect natural or cultural property, movable and immovable, on its original site, that is, preserved at the place where such property has been created or discovered" as stated in Hermanus Johannes Moolman's seminal article, "Site museums: their origins, definition and categorization" (Moolman, 1996, p. 387; Shafernich, 1993, p. 43). In the 1990s, the site museum included both historic, archaeological museums, and visitor centers in natural/heritage sites, as well as in scenic parks. Further, site museums became an overlapping term for outdoor museums such as open-air museums, museums of living history, interpretive centers, Historic Site Interpretation Centers, and visitor centers that underline the specificity and practice of site museums, with an emphasis on the relationships between the site and the museum (Frankenberg, 2014). In the last two decades, site-related museums, interpretive centers, and visitor centers were developed as a place for history conservation purposes, interpretation and informal learning settings, aiming to enhance the visitors' exploration and interaction with heritage (Baeyens et al., 2005; Brody, 2014; Continenza et al., 2017; Ripp, 2016). Accordingly, the term "site-related museums", "interpretive centers", "Historic Site Interpretation Centers" and "visitor centers" may be used interchangeably with the understanding that they refer to the same setting.

Like any other museum, it has been agreed in the literature that site-related museums should be able to exhibit objects removed from the building and/or adjacent historic site, to outline the historic site narrative and to record the historic events that occurred there with an attempt to explain and convey the historic site intrinsic value (Baeyens et al., 2005; Fraser, 2017; ICOM, 1950). In addition, it enables the visitors to experience the site's physical qualities that symbolize the relationship between the societies and their heritage, and the museum artifacts on display (Rössler, 2017; UNESCO, 2013a), with a particular attention to memorials preservation and interpretation of the aspects they represent (Mgomezulu, 2004), therefore contributing to the construction of meaning. The French philosopher Paul Ricoeur who coined the now famous phrase "*the symbol gives rise to thought*", invites humanity to explore new ways of perceiving and engaging with heritage remains (Ricoeur, 1976, p. 55).

With this newly added function, the site-related museum became a unique type of museums that holds and interprets symbols of the past in close relationship to their original context, highlighting their prospective role in enlightening the society through a dual self-discovery experience. Hence, such museums involve a dual mode of interpretation referred to either, as 'in situ', if it takes place directly on site, or 'in context', if located adjacent to the site. The terms 'in situ' and 'in context' were first used by Kirshenblatt-Gimblett (1991) in her classical article, "Objects of Ethnography". The present study intends to contribute to the current discourse, by exploring the physical and interpretive features of site-related museums, which involve a dual-mode of interpretation, coupled with visitors' experience and input.

1.3 Problem Statement

In this present era, it is a trend for many historic sites, including in the Arabian Gulf States, to build historic site-related museums, interpretive centers and visitor centers on/or nearby sites of historic significance and cultural heritage. Nevertheless, several scholars claim that this type of museums emphasizes the display of artifacts at the expense of their historical source. The widespread concept of highlighting the objects in isolation from their original contextual setting has been widely questioned by many scholars aiming to understand the relationships between ‘in situ’ and ‘in context’ settings, and the meaning-making process (Androniki and Evgenia, 2013; Biln and El Amrousi, 2014; Carvalho et al., 2013; Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, 1991; Mehari et al., 2014; Mgonezulu, 2004).

Despite the healthy scholarly debate they generated, very few studies have explored the site-related museums dual modes of interpretation (i.e. in situ and in context), and their contribution to the visitor engagement and meaning-making (Brida et al., 2016; Frankenberg, 2014; Lewis, 1959; Moolman, 1996; Rémi et al., 2010). Most of the existing studies focused on the traditional museum practice that employed either the approach of ‘in situ’ or ‘in context’ in the field of interpretation and meaning-making (Androniki and Evgenia, 2013; Carvalho et al., 2013; Kempiak et al., 2017; Mehari et al., 2014; Meyer et al., 2013). Some scholars argued that the real problem lied beyond the basic communication mediums such as how meanings should be explained and mediated between sender (i.e. historic site) and receiver (i.e. visitors) via a channel (i.e. site-related museums) (McManus, 2016; Van der Merwe et al., 2019). Hence, interpretation and meaning-making processes have a great impact in the overall visitor experience and have emerged as critical issues within the discourse of site-related museums at World Heritage sites (Albrecht, 2017).

Moreover, such limited understanding of site-related museum practices puts visitors at a disadvantage as it forms a conflict between the conventional practices at museums and the self-experience at historic sites, and whenever there is a gap between ‘in situ’ and ‘in context’ settings, meaning-making opportunities might be dissatisfying (Bussemaker, 2019; Rémi et al., 2010).

Furthermore, the author’s interest in the questioning of the contribution of site-related museums in meaning-making stems from personal experiences in visiting site-related museums, interpretive centers and visitor centers at World Heritage Sites in different regions and particularly in Bahrain. These site visits acknowledged the conservation and curatorship efforts conducted at the site-related museums with an emphasis on their relationship to historic site. In general, moving artifacts from a historic site to museums remains the norm no matter where the museum institution is located. So, what would make the site interpretive center unique and how does it contribute to the meaning-making process are questions this study will attempt to answer.

Considering how visitors perceive and understand objects when removed from their original context remains a crucial problem in the field of museology, as there is little research to suggest approaches of understanding how displaced artifacts located in a very close physical setting can better contribute and convey meanings to visitors. This issue is at the heart of this study in the particular context of Bahrain.

1.3.1 Site-Related Museums in Bahrain

For the purpose of this exploratory research, Bahrain was selected as the case study for this investigation, because of not only the author’s familiarity with the historical context, but also, historic records distinguish Bahrain for its rich ancient background and as the receptacle of numerous cultural sites directly associated with

continuous multicultural and multiethnic human presence since the 3rd Millennium onwards (Wakefield, 2015). Bahrain presents an extremely heterogeneous cultural diversity and hosts historic sites including archeological ruins (i.e. forts, mosques), historic buildings (i.e. houses, cultural centers) and natural remains (i.e. natural landscape). Additionally, since 2005, new site-related museums, interpretive centers and visitor centers were built by Bahrain Authority for Culture and Antiquities (BACA), and more are still under development. These developments were intended to showcase artifacts and narratives within their respective contexts (BACA, 2019a; Matar, 2015). Site-related museums in Bahrain adopted various approaches to exhibit Bahrain's cultural heritage, including 'in situ' and 'in context', offering a good study grounds for the intended research.

Among the historic vestiges, four case studies were selected as they exhibit a range of approaches to site interpretive centers illustrating different physical configuration and presentation techniques. They are: Qal'at Al Bahrain, Shaikh Salman bin Ahmed Al Fateh Fort, Bu Maher Fort and Al Khamis Mosque.

1.4 Aims and Objectives

The purpose of this ethnographic and exploratory research is first, to explore the ability of site interpretive centers to convey and mediate meanings from historic sites to visitors, and second, if when removed from their original location, the same objects are able to convey the same meanings and emotional experiences to visitors. In order to achieve this purpose, it is important to meet the following research objectives:

- Evaluate the physical features and applied display strategies in conveying meaning from historic site to visitors.

- Explore the resulting stakeholders' (i.e. service providers and visitors) perception and emotional experience.

These objectives may be best articulated using their sub-research objectives:

1. What are the physical and interpretive features of meaning-making in the site interpretive centers?
2. What are the elements that shape and form the visitors' experience in the site interpretive centers?
3. What do stakeholders suggest to enhance the visitors' experience and meaning-making?
4. How meanings are conveyed through the site interpretive centers?

To evaluate the ability of each of the two models of site interpretive models, to convey efficient meaning-making, visitors' records are used to understand visitation patterns and popularity of such museum types among the extended Bahraini community at the four selected case studies.

Given its ethnographic and exploratory nature, and in response to the research aims and objectives, this study calls for mixed research methods using ethnographic research approach from within a constructivism paradigm. Therefore, the research involves a two-level investigation; first, the site interpretive centers physical features and interpretive strategies through an architectural analysis, and second, the visitors forms and shapes of experiences through ethnographic data collection tools including; archival documents, open-ended interviews, online survey and non-obtrusive observation.

1.5 Importance of the Study

The motivation behind this research comes from the opportunity that such contextual settings offer visitors the flexibility and prospect to go to either the historic site or the site-related museum (Androniki and Evgenia, 2013; Baeyens et al., 2005) or one after the other, to explore the physical, visual and emotional relationships contribution to meaning-making. This makes the contextual setting an ideal locale for experiencing and exploring both entities at a shared location (Figure 1.1).

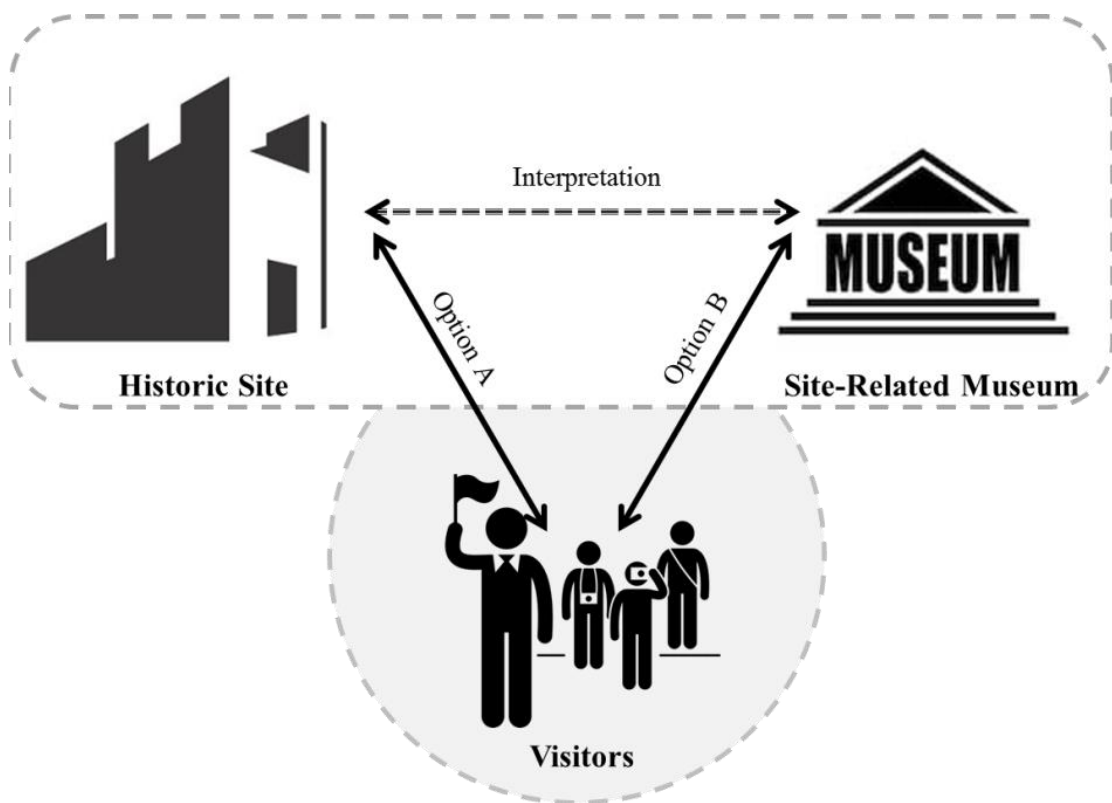


Figure 1.1: Site-related museum contextual components

The contribution to the body of knowledge through the multiple existing case studies in Bahrain, will provide insights and general understanding of the role of site-related museum set in context to meaning-making. This contribution fits the current

discourse on the role of such museum type as well as intends to benefit the Bahraini society and other similar contexts where museums play an important role in communicating local heritage. The greater demand of Bahrain to promote cultural heritage to different audiences, from economic policy to education and engagement with the community, justifies the need for a more effective understanding of the contribution of site-related museums, interpretive centers and visitor centers to meaning transmission and narratives interpretation.

Additionally, several stakeholders' groups may benefit from this study on how site-related museums ought to be designed for improved efficiency. By using the results of this study, architects, museologists and stakeholders alike, may leverage findings to evaluate their current practices and propose directions for architectural design and curatorship practices in order to support the intended transmission of meaning from historic sites to visitors. The outcomes of this research are anticipated to assist in establishing these museums as interpretive devices instead of injecting another form of conventional museums within a sensitive historic contextual setting (Ambrose, 2012; Bussemaker, 2019; ICOM, 2007b).

1.6 Organization of the Study

This study evaluates the ability of historic site-related museums to convey meanings from historic sites to visitors and explores the stakeholders' perceptual and emotional experience of the same settings.

Thus, it is initiated by an extensive examination of the three main areas under investigation comprising; first the museum as an interpretive system, second the interpretation: Historic Site Interpretation Center, and finally conceptualizing the visitor experience, highlighting current practices, challenges, and issues (Chapter 2). A critical part of this chapter aimed to explore the museums historic background,

classification and role, with an attempt to understand where site-related museums stand, considering their relation to the context and the dual modes of interpretation, 'in situ' and 'in context'. Therefore, the Historic Site Interpretation Centers emerged to represent better the relationship between the site-related museum and the historic site. These interrelationships are further examined in two well-known case studies; the New Acropolis Museum in Athens, Greece and the National Museum of Roman Art in Merida, Spain to explore the attributes of Historic Site Interpretation Centers' architecture in conveying stories of the past and providing a meaningful experience to the visitors. The last section in Chapter 2 reviews the elements that characterize and influence the visiting experience in historic sites and museums.

The nature of this research and its objectives calls for a convergent mixed method research using multiple case studies. The research design is a combination of two approaches namely: multiple case study research approach, and multi-ethnographic research approach. Hence, the rationality of an architectural analysis, and the investigation of the stakeholders' (i.e. service providers and visitors) perception and emotional experience through ethnographic data collection methods including archival documents, open-ended interviews, online survey and non-obtrusive observation are presented in Chapter 3. For this exploratory ethnographic research, four representative case studies were selected in Bahrain as they present an opportunity to explore the different physical relationships to the historic site (nearby/within), and different modes of interpretation; 'in situ' and 'in context'. The four case studies are: Qal'at Al Bahrain, Shaikh Salman bin Ahmed Al Fatch Fort, Bu Maher Fort and Al Khamis Mosque.

Considering the dual objective of this research, the physical ability of Historic Site Interpretation Centers to convey meanings from historic sites to visitors,

and the visitors' perception experience of the same setting, Chapter 4 presents case studies analysis as well as visitors records, perception and suggestions as archived, reported and observed. While the visitors emotional experience is explored from the thematic analysis of the semi structured open-ended interviews (Chapter 5). The Historic Site Interpretation Centers' contribution to the meaning-making process and a better understanding of its relationship to the context as well as its interpretive specificities in relation to other museums typologies is discussed in Chapter 5 based on the combined approach; multiple case study analysis approach and the multi-ethnographic approach. Finally, while taking into consideration the study limitations, Chapter 6 summarizes the main findings and opens a venue for future research directions.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

2.1 Overview

This chapter presents a critical review of, first the current discourse and status of knowledge on historic site-related museums, second, the interpretation as a core practice, and finally the visitor experience within a general overview of research on site-related museums as an interpretive system. To understand the relationships between the three mentioned components, two well-known case studies, The New Acropolis Museum in Athens, Greece and The National Museum of Roman Art in Merida, Spain were explored to identify the role of site-related museums in conveying meaning from the historic site to visitors and the ability to provide the visitors with a meaningful experience.

The first part reviews studies on museums and their development from old (object-oriented) to new museology (visitor-oriented), so called the paradigm shift. In addition, it provides the museums classification and function, with a specific focus on World Heritage Sites related museums (Jászberényi et al., 2018; Mayrand, 2015; McCall and Gray, 2014). Traditionally, object-oriented, and visitor-oriented museums are classified in relation to their content and geographical location. Nevertheless, they share the same function as all museums, in terms of acquiring, conserving, preserving and interpreting objects, but in a specific relation to the historical site, either 'in situ' or 'in context'. On this basis, this review questions the current classification that involves a single mode of interpretation and aims to identify a new classification that considers the relationship of the museum to its context.

The second part reviews interpretation as the core construction of meaning activity in museums and historic sites. Construction of meaning is reviewed based on meaning-making philosophies of relevance to explain such process its implementation in museums and historic sites. These philosophies are: Constructivism, Hermeneutics, Semiotics and Phenomenology philosophies (Creswell and Poth, 2018; Dudovskiy, 2017; Eco, 1997; Grondin, 2017). Within the context of this research, Constructivism and Hermeneutics were the most relevant philosophies to identify the relationships between historic site-related museums and ethnographic objects in display.

The well-known New Acropolis Museum in Athens and the National Museum of Modern Art in Merida served to identify the elements that affect the meaning-making process such as contextual settings, architectural appearance, spatial layout, and presentation techniques. This in turn, also informed the critical review approach of the cases under study.

The third part explores the relationships between the visitors' experience and the meaning-making process in historic sites and site-related museums, given the fact that the visitors' experience model is composed of personal, social, and physical contexts (Packer and Ballantyne, 2016). It is considered as a critical component of the meaning-making process and is based on the visitors' collective memory, knowledge and social interaction with others (Ansbacher, 2013; Antón et al., 2018; Falk, 2016)

In addition, it provides the key variables to evaluate the success of any museum including historic site-related museums such as visitors' characteristics, interests, expectations, and concerns. Considering these implications is important to outline the required data collection to answer the primary research inquiry. This

review enabled this research to highlight the current challenges in museum practices and visitors' experience and consequently shaping its own focus.

2.2 Museum: as an Interpretive System

2.2.1 Historical Background

The official use of the English term 'museum' appeared first in 1682 and was developed to conserve, preserve, and present collections of rare, strange and striking attributes (Ambrose and Paine, 2012). Museums were defined with the following widely accepted definition: "A museum is a non-profit, permanent institution in the service of society and its development. Open to the public, it acquires, conserves, researches, communicates and exhibits the tangible and intangible heritage of humanity and its environment for the purpose of education, study and enjoyment" (ICOM, 2007a).

Since the 17th century until recently, museums have evolved from being object-focused towards more visitors and ideas-focused, across three separate phases (Anderson, 2012; Hooper-Greenhill, 2000). The first phase, spanning the 17th and 18th centuries, essentially focused on selecting the collection to display. The second phase occurred during the 19th century with an emphasis on collection, preservation, study and classification, while the third phase began in the 20th century and continues to evolve and supports visitor interaction (Vollgraaf, 2018). Accordingly, the world of museums and new museology have profoundly changed (Jászberényi et al., 2018), to become common social and cultural institutions in the world's major cities (Asma, 2003; Falk et al., 2012). The new museology became the reflection of major changes in culture, demands and expectations related to active social engagement and learning experiences (Sandhal, 2017). It was also defined as "a new approach to

museum practice that appeared at the end of the 1980s. It reflects a greater awareness of the social and political role of museums and encompasses a meaningful community participation in curatorial practices” (Vollgraaf, 2018, p. 376).

Museums are and will continue to hold rich collections of material culture as an evidence of human development and growth. Material culture is described as the physical environment that is deliberately formed by man in a cultural manner (Pearce, 1994; Schlereth, 1985; Velo, 1983). Such environments represent physical objects, resources, and spaces that people used to describe their culture (Blake, 2015; Tilley, 1994; Velo, 1983). The basic objective of preserving material culture is to give a better understanding of the complex lives of individuals and societies who used and interacted with the objects in display (Petrov, 2012) including tangible and intangible cultural heritage (Vecco, 2010). With the development of new museology, cultural groups and social activists, among others, pressured museums to become visitor-oriented rather than object-oriented (Dogan, 2015; Packer and Ballantyne, 2016; Smith, 2014).

For example, at the end of the 20th century, some critics argued that museums struggled to keep a balance between the museum deliverables and visitors’ demands such as, learning, leisure and social engagement (Dogan, 2015; McCall and Gray, 2014; Packer and Ballantyne, 2016; Smith, 2014). In addition, other critics emphasized that museums should no longer be a place for storing and exhibiting objects, but a place for valuing the objects and visitors, as they are the main elements of the museum experience (Anderson, 2012).

The interpretation is the core of meaning-making process in any museum and has a great impact on the overall visitor experience. Therefore, it is necessary to review the museum classifications including their relations to historic sites. As the

nature of historic site-related museums involves, dual modes of interpretation: “in situ” and “in context” which have been so far studied independently, and have received limited attention in the literature on both modes at shared contextual settings (Androniki and Evgenia, 2013; Carvalho et al., 2013; Mehari et al., 2014; Ripp, 2016; Stokes-Rees, 2019). The different types of museums are reviewed next with an emphasis on their relationships to their contextual setting and modes of interpretation.

2.2.2 Critical Review of Museums Types and Classification

Museums may best be classified in two ways; (1) by the character of their content such as Museums of arts, History museums, Anthropological museums, Natural history museums, Technology museums, Commercial museums, and (2) by the purpose for which they are founded such as National museums, Local and city museums, College and school museums, Professional museums, and Museums or Cabinets for special research (Goode, 1896).

Based on UNESCO’s classification, museums are sometimes designated according to their geographical location (i.e. local, regional), to a specific audience (i.e. children, adults), to their specific responsibilities towards the society (i.e. religious, political), to their focus on architectural types and interpretation principles (i.e. classical museum, heritage village, house museum), on specific topics (i.e. history, science) (Ambrose and Paine, 2012; Biln and El Amrousi, 2014; Fraser, 2017). Additionally, other museums were classified based on the old and new museology approaches (Jászberényi et al., 2018; Mayrand, 2015; McCall and Gray, 2014).

Of particular relevance to this research, history museums are facilities that display and interpret objects related to the history of a place (Geoffrey, 1998) while

site-related museums are associated with a specific contextual setting (Frankenberg, 2014). Both, history museums and site-related museums are intended to collect, exhibit, and interpret historical or heritage vestiges of the past, typical act of most museums.

The heritage interpretation stands for “any communication process designed to reveal meanings and relationships of tangible and intangible heritage to the public, through firsthand involvement with an object, artifact, landscape or site” (Baeyens et al., 2005, p. 41). Therefore, these museums are social institutions and active players for heritage preservation, interpretation, research, and education. Basically, historic museums rely on the process of interaction between human beings and their surrounding cultural heritage which involves a set of tangible and intangible values (Anderson, 2012). The UNESCO defines heritage generally as “a set of tangible and intangible values, and expressions that people select and identify, independently of ownership, as a reflection and expression of their identities, beliefs, knowledge and traditions, and living environments, deserving of protection and enhancement by contemporary generations and transmission to future generations” (UNESCO, 2015, I-6).

Since the early 19th century, heritage interpretation evolved rapidly to dominate the practices of history and site-related museums (Plantzos, 2011) and become an area of importance for studying the interpretation of the past through museum exhibits (Baron, 2012; Moshenska, 2013; Packer and Ballantyne, 2016). Therefore, site-related museums rely mainly on verbal and non-verbal communication for interpretation purposes. In such museums, the process of interpretation takes place within their contextual settings and is not simply physical

or sensorial, but interpretive, communicative and meaning generative (Dogan, 2015; Smith, 2014).

However, the concept of site-related museum is still not clear in the literature and overlaps with other terms such as regional museum and open-air museum (Baeyens et al., 2005; Frankenberg, 2014). Accordingly, critics and visitors raised similar questions such as, what are the historical or archeological remains are. Is it the historical entity (i.e. archeological monument), or the objects and artifacts (i.e. silver vessel) that originated in the location? If not clearly defined, this situation would immediately lead to an inaccurate perception of historic objects as they are presented at different eras and languages than the original ones used in the time (Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, 1991). To bring clarity to the historic site-related museum definition within the existing museum typologies, a new classification of museums in relation to their context and interpretation strategies may well be needed.

2.2.3 New Classification: Loose Fit, Tight Fit and Historic Site Interpretation Centers

Based on the museums' relationship to the context and the applied mode of interpretation known as 'in situ' or 'in context', a new classification is proposed to include three distinct typologies. The first type is site-independent museums (i.e. classical museum, private collections, and archives), which depends on 'in context' mode of interpretation. Such museums are object-oriented and considered to have a "loose fit" and obstruction relation to context, but still provide a rich textual and visual interpretive knowledge with minimal physical and experiential engagement. The second type is site-connected museums (i.e. site museums, visitor centers, house museums, and heritage villages), that depends on an 'in situ' mode of interpretation. These types of museums are considered to have a "tight fit", as seen in the house

museum where the whole site is essentially cleared and occupied by the museum. In other terms, it is an intrusion where there are many engagements and activities related to intangible culture that tends to distract the visitor from the main object, which therefore loose the sense of specific meaning. The third type is suggested to be a “Historic Site Interpretation Center”, which is hypothesized to act as a mediator or a bridging instrument between the “Historic Entity” and the visitors, using a combination of ‘in context’ and ‘in situ’ modes of interpretation at shared location. For this research, a “Historic Entity” represents World Heritage Sites, both inscribed and tentative, and sites of cultural values.

The suggested three types of museums are illustrated in Figure 2.1, with an emphasis on their relationship to the context and the applied modes of interpretation.

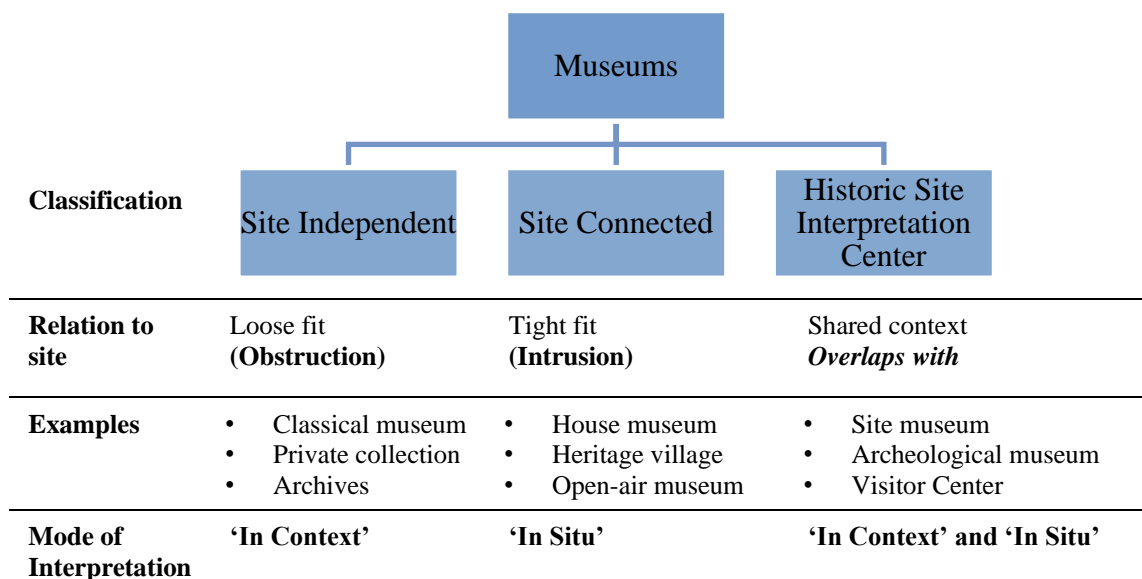


Figure 2.1: Suggested new museums classification in relation to site

The next section reviews studies on “Historic Site Interpretation Center” as an independent museum typology with an emphasis on its purpose and dual mode of interpretation labeled as ‘in situ’ and ‘in context’.

2.2.3.1 Historic Site Interpretation Center

Historic Site Interpretation Centers are a special type of museums that are related to specific historic site of cultural and heritage significance such as, UNESCO World Heritage Sites (Baeyens et al., 2005). Such museums may also be connected to other sites that are recognized for their value to humanity on local, regional and/or international levels (Kwon, 1997; Santa-Cruz and López-Guzmán, 2017; Shirvani Dastgerdi and De Luca, 2019). These museums are intended to communicate historical and cultural information to visitors using multiple techniques such as, guided tours, talks, displays, labels, brochures and other supports (Stamatopoulou, 2016). In addition, these museums are dedicated to improve and augment the visitors' experience by helping them understand the significance of the place they are visiting (Baeyens et al., 2005; Niblett and Allison, 2016).

Historic and archeological sites such as, the Acropolis of Athens in Greece, the Roman Merida in Spain, the Roman Conimbriga in Portugal, the Ancient Petra in Jordan, and many other historic sites of similar significance have established site-related museums to showcase artifacts and collections found directly on site. Such museums provide an appropriate platform for preserving, exhibiting and interpreting historical and cultural vestiges, as well as the related historic site (Archdaily, 2010; Hajela, 2003; Langdon, 2015; Recuero et al., 2019). These museums are recognized to represent the components of the Historic Site Interpretation Centers (i.e. historic site and site related museum) that aim to interpret the site significance and communicate its key messages and stories to visitors (Council, 2015). Despite the importance of understanding the roles of such museums and their relationship to the contextual setting, the offered experience of 'in situ' and 'in context' as dual modes of interpretation has, so far, been less explored (Androniki and Evgenia, 2013;

Farahat and Osman, 2018; Mehari et al., 2014; Merwe et al., 2019; Ripp, 2016). Whereas it is anticipated that dual mode of interpretation at shared ‘in situ’ and ‘in context’ settings may have impacts on the overall visitors’ experience and on the process of delivering meaning from the historic site to the visitors through the Historic Site Interpretation Center. Hence, a critical review of the philosophies and strategies of interpretations is first needed to understand this phenomenon and identify the different variables that may impact the visitor experience, and the process of meaning-making through a dual experience (Baeyens et al., 2005; Niblett and Allison, 2016; Stamatopoulou, 2016).

2.3 Interpretation: Historic Site Interpretation Center Core Practice

Museums have always been unique and effective learning environments (Jeffery-Clay, 1998). As the paradigm shifted, the role of museums in society was transformed (Anderson, 2012) from warehouses of objects to a place where visitors can explore and interact with the objects (Falk, 2016; Smith, 2014).

Since the core of this research is an evaluation of the effective contribution of Historic Site Interpretation Centers to meaning-making, then a review of the practice of interpretation strategies as a concept of meaning-making is essential. Accordingly, this section reviews the practice of interpretation as a conceptual tactic of transmitting knowledge and meaning-making in the field of museology (practice of organizing, arranging, and managing museums). Tailored interpretation should be designed to meet visitors’ needs and expectations in relation to their collective memory and intangible cultural heritage (Biln and El Amrousi, 2014; Falk, 2016; French, 2012). Therefore, it is important to define the concept of meaning-making within the context of Historic Site Interpretation Center.

2.3.1 Interpretation: Concept of Meaning-Making

The term “interpretation” was first used in 1871 by conservationist John Muir in the field of tourism as related by Dumbraveanu et al. (2016). In the 1970s, interpretation of heritage became associated with tourism products such as trails and visitor centers (Quétel-Brunner and Griffin, 2014). Also, interpretation is a frequent term in literacy (Sosa et al., 2016), museography (Biln and El Amrousi, 2014; Christidou and Pierroux, 2019; Dumbraveanu et al., 2016) and in other fields including music, drama and translation. Literature, heritage, culture are different forms of texts that contain meanings requiring interpretation (Bergqvist, 2016; Brochu et al., 2008; Christidou and Pierroux, 2019; Corey and Daniel, 2015; Crang, 2003). The French philosopher Paul Ricœur (1976, p. 79) stated that “If it is true that there is always more than one way of constructing a text, it is not true that all interpretations are equal”. In other words, any form of information is often given as raw data that can be deduced and interpreted differently by different people. Subsequently, this exchange of information is mediated by communication through codified and common spoken or written language, as well as through gestures (Applefield et al., 2001; Dudovskiy, 2017).

The interpretation and meaning-making process is often examined through the visitors’ experience of the site and its embodied artifacts as acknowledged by (McMann, 2017; Samanian et al., 2016). Similarly, this research examines the visitors’ experience of the site (i.e. historic site and Historic Site Interpretation Center). A visitor’s first impression is considered as a passive process of receiving information within a specific context, and often derived by self-motivation, way of perception and sensitivity to the given context (de Rojas and Camarero, 2008; Dumbraveanu et al., 2016). The interpretation and meaning-making process in

Historic Site Interpretation Centers gives an emphasis to the interaction between the user and the place, and between the user and the displayed objects (Silverman, 2010).

For this research and as already introduced (Section 2.1), constructivism and hermeneutics were the most relevant philosophies to identify the relationships between Historic Site Interpretation Centers and ethnographic objects in display, and to understand the interpretation and meaning-making as a process. In addition, it supports humans' component of understanding and learning, as the latter is grounded in the visitors' experience, culture, and collective memory.

2.3.2 The Theories of Interpretation

Constructivism and hermeneutics interpretive theories are applied in this research as it is believed that their function as meaning-making methods should be considered by museographers and curators in their attempt to design a meaningful museum visitor's experience. This section is intended to review both Piaget's (1967) theory of constructivism and Heidegger's (1995) theory of Hermeneutics, and their relation to Kirshenblatt-Gimblett's (1991) conceptual opposition that characterizes the museum interpretive approaches known as 'in situ' and 'in context'.

2.3.2.1 Piaget and Constructivism

Piaget (1967), a leading figure in the fields of cognitive theory and developmental psychology, suggested Constructivism as an educational theory. Piaget believes that knowledge in education is created by the learner's mind, and not limited to the information passed from teacher to student. Constructivism is a learning theory, tackled by people behavior, observation, interaction and engagement (Brandon and All, 2010). In this theory, learning is recognized as an active method, where people make their own meaning in response to their experience and collective memory (Hoover, 1996; Mohammad and Farhana, 2018), as well as their needs and

expectations (Liu and Chen, 2010). In general, visitors are active meaning-makers in museums settings through negative or positive experiences, that are often influenced by factors such as self-identity, companionship and leisure motivations (Silverman, 2010). Therefore, the application of constructivism interpretation approach to site-related museums highlights the relationship between personal and social experience, and the creation of a meaningful learning environment (Greenhill, 1999; Jeffery-Clay, 1998).

On this grounds, constructivism theory on meaning-making depends on the visitors' ability to understand, memorize and rephrase the attained knowledge from their visit to a museum (Liu and Chen, 2010) as an epistemological view that emphasizes on the construction of knowledge building rather than mere transmission (Applefield et al., 2001; Brandon and All, 2010). Given that meaning-making process happens between the historic site and the Historic Site Interpretation Centers, by itself the constructivism interpretive theory may not suffice to fully understand the meaning-making process, because in such cases meanings occurred between the whole (i.e. historic site) and the parts (i.e. objects and artifacts) through experience. Therefore, reviewing the hermeneutic circle and its role in meaning-making process is necessary.

2.3.2.2 Heidegger and Hermeneutical Circle

Heidegger (1995) characterizes Hermeneutics as an interpretation methodology, considering holistic meanings and focusing on the definition of a shared meaning for a given representation or symbol. Hermeneutics is an approach that attempts to achieve a deep understanding and creation of meaning through building a relationship between the whole and the part, and similarly between the historic site and the artifact displayed in the museum (Greenhill, 1999; Latham,

2012). The Hermeneutic circle is one of the most important concepts of the Hermeneutic theory, because the process of interpretation and meaning-making is constantly constructed between small and large units of meanings, in order to determine a holistic meaning of both (Grondin, 2017). Therefore, meanings cannot exist if the smaller unit is isolated from the larger context. In this research, it is anticipated that meanings are determined through two approaches: first, an active interaction between the whole (i.e. contextual setting) and the part (i.e. artifact), and second, between the past and the present. This interaction attempts to improve the readability of meanings created within a specific context, via tight relationships between the visitor's collective memory, behavior, and socio-cultural values, as well as the used interpretive strategies in that context.

The holistic concept of Hermeneutics interpretation process deals with the 'whole' rather than the 'part' and seems closely connected to Kirshenblatt-Gimblett's argument (1991). In her classical essay "Objects of Ethnography", she presented a dichotomy of interpretative approaches which she called 'in situ' and 'in context', as the underlying theoretical conflict that characterizes museum institutions. The first, shows the object within the realm of its natural environment or in other words its original physical, cultural and social context, to include what has been left behind even through artifacts replicas; and the second, shows the object as an abstract entity within an artificial and isolated controlled environment, then interpreted using multiple presentation and description techniques such as; textual captions, maps, diagrams, and different approaches of interpretation (Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, 1991).

Historic Site Interpretation Centers are designed to provide the visitors an opportunity to explore, and better understanding of the historic site cultural heritage through an experience of 'in situ' and 'in context' modes of interpretation at a shared

location. Hence, Piaget, Heidegger and Kirshenblatt-Gimblett philosophies meet best the interpretation and meaning-making process at such settings. This research claims that Historic Site Interpretation Centers exhibits should have a holistic instead of an atomistic (i.e. unconnected) meaning. Therefore, it is necessary to provide a balanced relationship between the museum contextual setting and the visitors' needs to achieve the museums purposes in society (i.e. education, interpretation, and entertainment purposes). To this end, reviewing the three stages of the musealization process (remove, recreate and reintegrate) in museums is needed to highlight the relationships between meaning-making and the dual modes of interpretation known as 'in context' and 'in situ', as a proper understanding of the meaning-making process is an important factor in a museum's success (Silverman, 2010).

2.3.3 Interpretation: Part of Musealization Process

In the current museum praxis and according to Kirshenblatt-Gimblett (1991), museums exhibits (i.e. ethnographic objects) were removed and detached to have a new identification and new appearance, to be then called "ethnographic fragments" in lieu of ethnographic objects. Ethnographic fragments were removed out of their original context in time and space for preservation, conservation, exhibition, education and interpretation purposes (Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, 1991; Macleod et al., 2012; McManus, 2016). In museum studies, this process is called "musealization process" including three separate stages (the three 'Rs') namely: Remove, Recreate and Reintegrate (Rein, 2011).

The first stage (remove) explains the process of separating the object from its original context and moving it to a museum context for further restoration. The second stage (recreate) includes three minor stages; conservation, exhibition curating and interpretation, while the last stage is illustrated in the exhibition hall (Barranha et

al., 2017; Parracho, 2012; Rein, 2012). The third stage (reintegrate) features the integration between museum context and end-users. Therefore, in response to museum paradigm shift, the majority of museums seeks to create an interactive visitor-oriented environment instead of static objects-oriented environment (Fromm, 2016; Rein, 2011).

The three stages indicate that artifacts pass through a long process before being displayed in a museum exhibition. Curators use various representation methods, including verbal and nonverbal presentation strategies, in order to express the artifacts significance and importance (Brida et al., 2016; Campos et al., 2018; Packer, 2015). Within the context of this exploratory research in Historic Site Interpretation Centers, the application of different interpretation strategies attempts to communicate verbal and nonverbal messages to the visitors and seek to enhance the visitors' overall experiences in a shared interpretive context. These messages are often communicated through several 'in context' and 'in situ' interpretive approaches. Therefore, an understanding of the interpretation approaches and their contribution to meaning-making is essential, to identify the different formats used and their influences on the visitors' experience.

2.3.4 Interpretation of “Objects of Ethnography”

The act of interpretation happens 'in situ' or 'in context' in relation to the second stage of the musealization process (recreate) (Rein, 2011). In exceptional cases, as in Historic Site Interpretation Centers, both modes of interpretation arise at the same time in a shared context. Researchers accept that ethnographic artifacts exhibited 'in context' or preserved 'in situ' are often related to ethnography and social backgrounds regardless of the artifact's typology (Ambrose and Paine, 2012; Brida et al., 2016; Martella et al., 2017). Kirshenblatt-Gimblett (1991) defined “ethnography”

as a systematic study of people, culture and objects made by ethnographers with an attempt to acknowledge a cultural phenomenon through the perspective of specific society. Additionally, she argued that the inherited properties of ethnographic artifacts are not clear in terms of development and demonstration. Traditionally, museologists focus on what is important and what is the best way to display in the exhibition hall to visually catalyze visitors' attention (Beaujot, 2015; Capriotti, 2010; Lanir et al., 2017). However, some scholars have suggested that visitors may lose interest in certain artifacts not because of the object's features but because of display contexts and display techniques (de Rojas and Camarero, 2008; Jun and Lee, 2014; Thapa and Lee, 2017).

Similarly, Kirshenblatt-Gimblett (1991) used the term 'detachment' to highlight one of the major issues in museography (description of museum collection). Hence, moving objects from their original context (i.e. space, time and language), reduce their meaning to a label or caption (Miklosevic, 2015). This act makes it harder for visitors to identify the meaning behind the object (Crew and Sims, 1991; Lanir et al., 2017; Miklosevic, 2015; Samanian et al., 2016). To overcome this problem, some museologists reproduce historical artifacts (i.e. replicas), assuming that the visitor's understanding of museum content is eased and enhanced (Blake, 2015; Flexner, 2016; Tilley, 1994).

Ethnographic objects have an effect on the presentation process, regardless of their originality or reproduction, because they reveal the detrimental conditions that an object goes through before being displayed (Barranha et al., 2017; Parracho Sant'Anna, 2012; Rein, 2011). A number of scholars agree with Kirshenblatt-Gimblett (1991) argument that objects of ethnography or "fragments" are incapable to represent their hidden narratives, and consequently cannot foster the visitors'

imagination (Barry and Robert, 2015; Bjerregaard, 2011; Soren, 2009). These assumptions indicate that meanings are not well-communicated from ‘in context’ to ‘in situ’ by museum practitioners, and may result in an inadequate interpretation (Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, 1991; Latham, 2012; Pearce, 1994; Robinson, 2016).

2.3.5 Interpretation between “In Context” and “In Situ”

As established earlier in this chapter, the interpretation of ethnographic objects happens through dual modes labeled as ‘in context’ and ‘in situ’ in Historic Site Interpretation Centers has been less explored (Androniki and Evgenia, 2013; Biln and El Amrousi, 2014; Farahat and Osman, 2018; Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, 1991; Mehari et al., 2014; Merwe et al., 2019; Ripp, 2016). Therefore, learning the meaning of these concepts and how they ‘fit in’, seems to capture the overall theme of this research due to their importance to objects interpretation and visitors understanding (Kelly, 2019; McCarty, 2016). Next, ‘in context’ and ‘in situ’ concepts of interpretation will be reviewed with an emphasis on the presentation techniques and their impacts on the visitors’ experience.

2.3.5.1 In Context

The concept of ‘in context’ focuses on curatorial practices and presentation techniques for interpretation purposes (Biln and El Amrousi, 2014; Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, 1991). Traditionally, in exhibition halls and rooms, ethnographic objects are presented in display cabinets, showcases, and display counters. These objects are interpreted by text captions, diagrams, audio commentary, booklets, seminars, guided tours, performances and other media (Beaujot, 2015; Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, 2014; Packer and Ballantyne, 2016; Wyman et al., 2011). Ethnographic objects in museums attempt to portray the growth of mankind in connection to a rich cultural heritage and specific geographical location (Ahmad, 2006; Gaskell, 2016; Vecco, 2010).

Accordingly, visitors are anticipated to establish a general understanding of what was seen and nothing beyond that (Edge and Weiner, 2006; French, 2012).

2.3.5.2 In Situ

Unlike the 'in context' concept, 'in situ' is defined in respect to objects that are part of an absent whole that may or may not be recreated. 'Metonymy' and 'Metaphor' are sub-categories seen in "in situ" settings. The roles of 'Metonymy' and 'Metaphor' are relatively different in relation to their level of exposure in a historic site (Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, 1991). Metonymy refers to historical remains and original objects that were part of everyday life and contributed in developing culture. These are often perceived as a method of interpretation and not as a product of display (Brida et al., 2014; Flexner, 2016; Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, 1991). Similarly, the representation of a metaphor or a replica within an ethnographic village or recreated environments is projected to deliver a specific message to visitors through the characteristics of the context (Arkitekter, 2010; Plantzos, 2011; Taleb, 2017). In the 'in situ' settings, exhibitions recreate ethnographic life developed in the past through integrating a defined local environment and life aspects including; context design, time, language, costumes, and even scents to convey a comprehensive meaning to the visitor (Biln and El Amrousi, 2014; Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, 1991).

To this end, 'in situ' and 'in context' concepts of interpretation have a unique set of communication approaches. Objects in 'in situ' can speak loudly as they contain several dimensions including space, time and other dimensions ranging from tangible to intangible. Conversely, "in context" objects are interpreted using various methods of presentation techniques regardless of the object actual characteristics. This results in reducing the ethnographic object to a piece of art (Kirshenblatt-

Gimblett, 1991) which leads to a confusion and an underestimation of the object rich content (Samanian et al., 2016).

The aim and challenge of this research is to understand the physical, visual, and emotional relationships between the visitors and the meaning-making process in shared contextual settings. In this regard, the Historic Site Interpretation Center's architectural appearance may integrate and reflect the locale characteristics such as climate, light, topography and culture as argued by Frampton (1998). The relationship between the historic site and Historic Site Interpretation Centers is created through the architectural appearance, spatial layout and exhibition arrangement (Li et al., 2013; Lu, 2017; Macleod et al., 2012; Tzortzi, 2016). These are identified as the main features that contribute in mediating the historic site story and augment the visitors' understanding using dual modes of interpretation; 'in context' and 'in situ'.

Therefore, to evaluate this unique relationship, it was deemed relevant to review some well-known cases that have implemented dual modes of interpretation; 'in context' and 'in situ'. For this purpose, the New Acropolis Museum and the National Museum of Roman Art are reviewed and analyzed in terms of their architecture, relationship to site (i.e. near/on top of site), exhibition layout, displays, and presentation techniques.

2.3.6 Review of Existing Historic Site Interpretation Centers: Reference Cases from Athens and Merida

The New Acropolis Museum in Athens and The National Museum of Roman Art in Merida were selected due to their historical and cultural importance, as well as their potential to represent different relations to their related historic sites. These Historic Site Interpretation Centers were established to interpret historic facts,

convey ancient stories of human life, and provide public access for multicultural visitors, to understand and appreciate the uniqueness of the past in terms of architectural skills and ways of life.

This review has two purposes. First, to provide a better understanding of the contextual relationships between the historic site and Historic Site Interpretation Centers and second, to recognize the role of architectural design, to identify the practical configuration of using dual modes of interpretation (i.e. ‘in situ’ and ‘in context’) in a shared location, and their impacts on the meaning-making process. In addition, this review will help in identifying the needed data and its related data collection methods in response to the research problem statement.

2.3.6.1 The New Acropolis Museum in Athens, Greece

The New Acropolis Museum in Athens was designed by the French architect Bernard Tschumi (Archdaily, 2010). It is an archeological museum established in 2009 to display and protect the Acropolis findings. The museum is located few meters from the sacred rock (i.e. the Acropolis Hill), as the Acropolis is raised more than 100 meters above the Greek capital and ancient city of Athens. The differences between The New Acropolis Museum and the Acropolis levels provides a physical and visual connection between the two (Figure 2.2). In addition, this section reviews the museum architectural appearance, the spatial layout, and the arrangement of exhibits in relation to their roles in meaning-making.

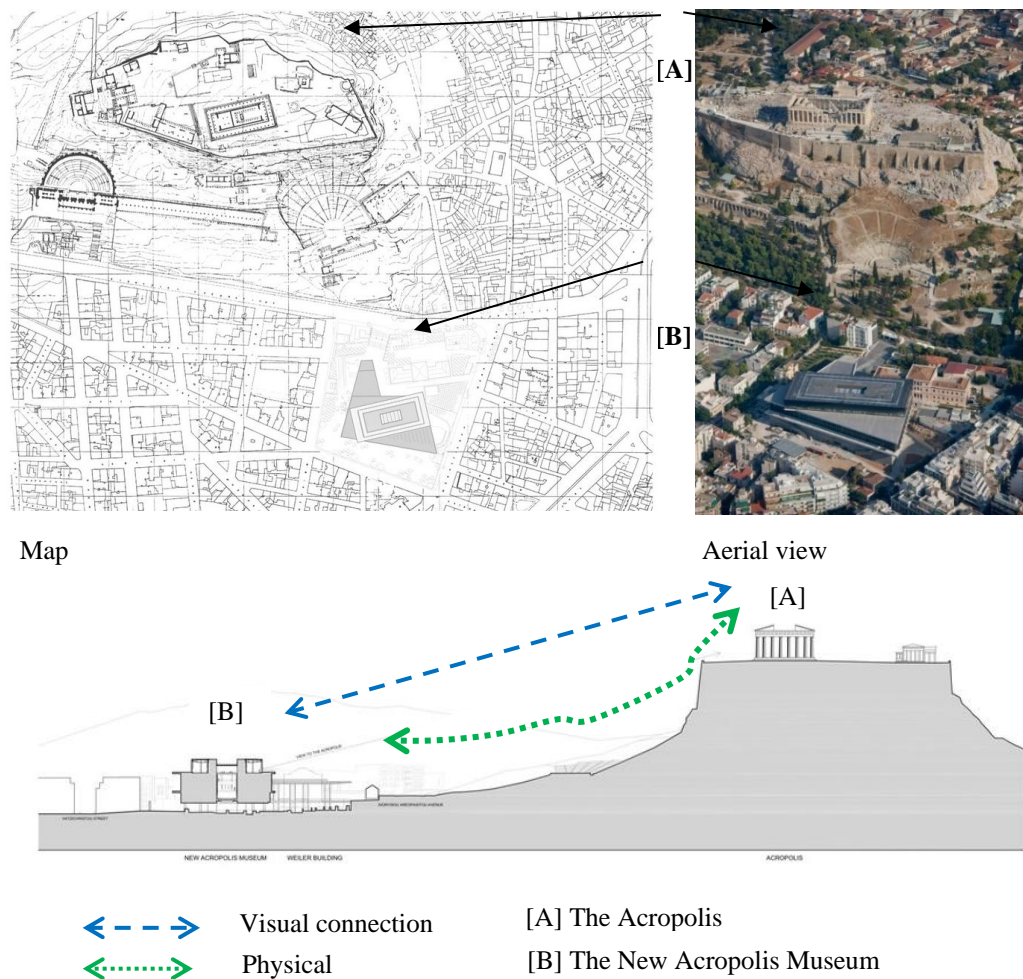


Figure 2.2: The New Acropolis Museum physical/visual relationship to the historic site on interpretation

(Source: Archdaily, 2010).

The museum architectural design expresses the mathematical proportions of the Acropolis and the ideological direction of Ancient Greeks (Archdaily, 2010; Zakakis et al., 2015). The architect described the museum to be simple and not monumental to keep the visitors' mind and emotions focused on the outstanding works and displays within its exhibit spaces (Archdaily, 2010). The museum provides the visitors with a full picture of the Acropolis and its findings within

comfortable modern spaces through a wide range of features including, the panoramic views to both the Acropolis and the city of Athens (Figure 2.3).



Figure 2.3: Panoramic views from the New Acropolis Museums exhibition halls to the Acropolis

In addition, design elements offer a visual connection to the site such as the great opening at the entrance (Figure 2.4), the glass floor of the interior spaces that lead visitors to the national Athenian Neighborhood remains underneath, and the different levels rising from the sloped surroundings to the heart of the central core that represents the Parthenon (Jakobsen, 2012; Archdaily, 2010). This sequence of interlocking spaces gives the visitors a sensation of climbing the rock from inside-outside, which may also contribute to the process of understanding the historic site physical features.



Figure 2.4: The great opening at the New Acropolis Museum entrance

(Source: Archdaily, 2010)

Similarly, the exhibition displays of artifacts and sculptures reproduced the outside environment but internally. The majority of the findings were exhibited to represent the same dimensions of the Parthenon *cella* and the sequence of the frieze, with an attempt to provide the visitors with a unique experience from within the interior of the museum (Jakobsen, 2012; Archdaily, 2010).

The New Acropolis Museum sets the stage to the Acropolis story through a wide range of presentation techniques including labeling systems, sculptures, and audio-visual materials. For instance, the sculptures were not only identified by labels, but also provided the visitors with the opportunity to enjoy the entire decoration of the Parthenon, and allowed them to view the sculptures from all angles to fully appreciate the qualitative differences and fine art skills that went into their creation (Archdaily, 2010). However, the labeling system is described to be very brief and more designed to identify rather than interpret (Caskey, 2011), while the audio-visual materials were used to explain the history of the Parthenon (Richards and Munsters,

2010, p. 138). To this end, the physical and visual relationship to the Acropolis, as well as the New Acropolis Museum minimalist architectural style, were designed to provide the visitors with a sophisticated experience through a dual mode of interpretation within a shared context.

2.3.6.2 The National Museum of Roman Art in Merida, Spain

The National Museum of Roman Arts in Merida was designed by the Spanish architect Rafael Moneo, known to be particularly sensitive to local architectural traditions and historical contexts (Moneo, 1987). This museum is categorized as an archeological museum, established in 1986 to display and protect the memories of Merida City, which was a major urban center during the Roman Empire (Blumberg, 2019). In contrast to the New Acropolis Museum connection to the Acropolis, the National Museum of Roman Art is located over the ancient vestiges and provides another approach of physical and visual connection to the historic site (Figure 2.5).



The National Museum of Roman Art Exterior View

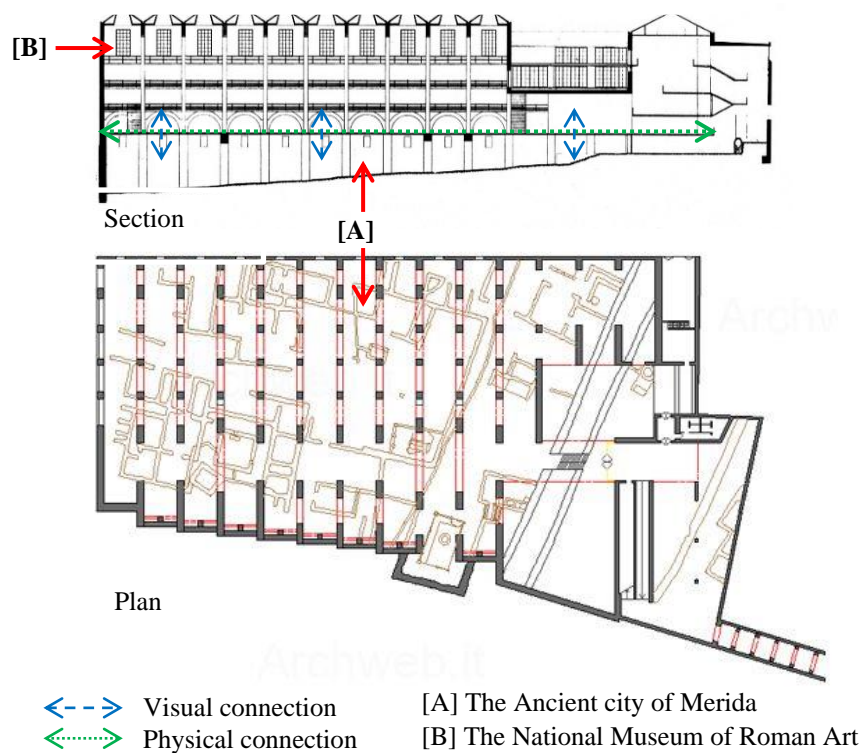


Figure 2.5: National Museum of Roman Art physical/visual relationship to the historic site on interpretation

(Source: Langdon, 2015)

The museum designers gave an equal attention to the museum contextual surrounding (i.e. neighborhood and underground vestiges) and to the outstanding collection found on site. The connection to the historic site of interpretation was achieved by keeping the main part of the museum enclosed within a high, above-ground building where space is expressed by a series of elevated brick arches using the same means of construction and techniques that the Romans had (Figure 2.6).

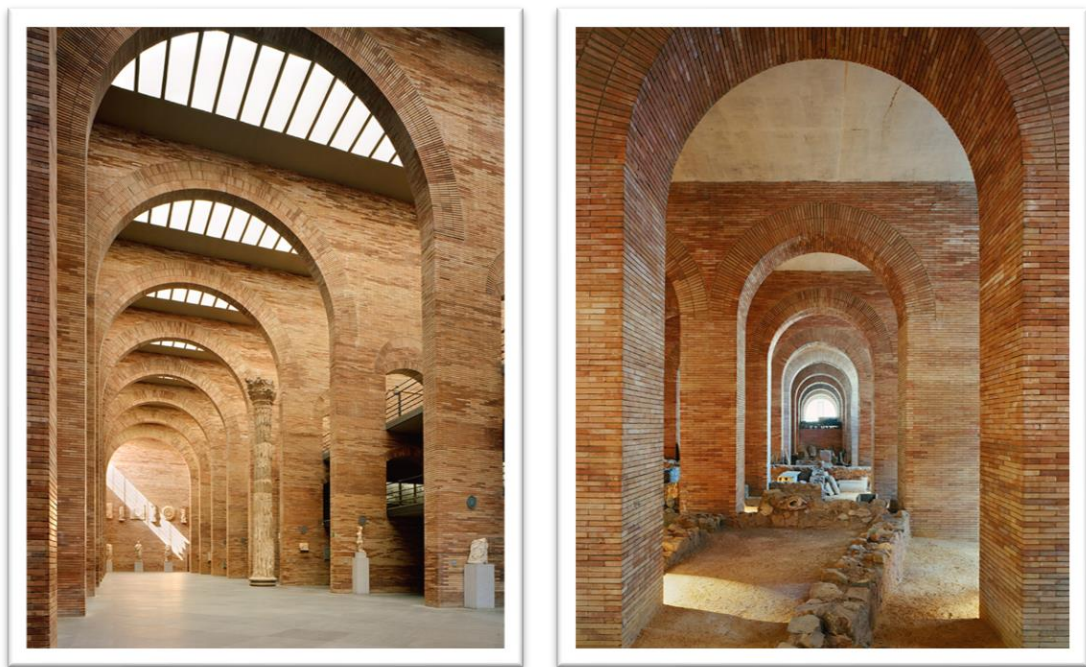


Figure 2.6: The above ground ‘in context’ exhibition space in The National Museum of Roman Arts in Merida (Left) and the underground ‘in situ’ vestiges (Right)

(Source: Langdon, 2015)

The modern part of the building (i.e. the museum) follows the basilica archetype, with an upper-floor exhibition space replacing clerestory balconies along an open central "nave" that allows natural light to fill the room with a warm glow from the skylights above the thin arches (Langdon, 2015). Moreover, right below the ground level, an underground "crypt" (Figure 2.6, Right) takes the visitors into an

intact excavation of the old Roman city, which at once preserves and exposes the museum's archeology and replicates its architecture interpretively (Mutuli, 2019), and clearly shows the museum's intended integration to uncover the existence of the old Roman city (Langdon, 2015). These design aspects are completely driven by the contextual site specifications, which demonstrates a desire to give priority to the context along with museum program and associated themes (Moneo, 2019). To this end, the museum is intended to provide Mérida's inhabitants the opportunity to regain the lost presence of the Roman city upon which the new city was constructed (Moneo, 2019). In addition, to let the visitors admire the well-known Roman public cultural shows by means of great diversity of materials that still takes place at the Merida Classical Theater Festival. It is also designed to discover the different aspects of everyday life in Roman time, and other aspects of religious conflicts of the past through the appreciation of museum content, including sculptures, showcases objects, burial remains and skilled artwork (Carro, 2011). However, only a limited literature is available and limited only to presentation techniques because the architect created an indoor atmosphere that blends gently with the surroundings.

Like the New Acropolis Museum, the presentation techniques used in the National Museum of Roman Art are more of identification techniques rather than explanation. Therefore, obstacles of meaning-making are reviewed next with an emphasis on the connections between the historic site and the Historic Site Interpretation Centers in both Athens and Merida.

2.3.6.3 The Obstacles of Meaning-Making in Athens and Merida

The review of the two existing cases presented the contextual relationship between the historic site and the Historic Site Interpretation Center, architectural appearance, spatial layout and exhibits interpretation via 'in situ' and 'in context'

interpretation approaches. Starting with The New Acropolis Museum, the architectural design was criticized by some scholars and social critics because of a purported de-contextualization of the fragments such as, stones and sculptures whose original context was changed beyond recognition in terms of geographical location, topography, materials and climate (Lending, 2018). Moving the Greek fragments (i.e. artifacts) from ‘in situ’ to ‘in context’ settings infuse different functions and aesthetic values that deeply change their significance (Caskey, 2011; Lending, 2018). In addition, the interpretation and presentation strategies were mainly used to identify the artifacts instead of explaining them, which consequently, created conflicting relationships between the new museum and the historic site context (Filippopoulou, 2017). In a public statement, the Greek culture minister said “Return the Parthenon Marbles is a one-way street” in reference to the continuing disagreement between Greece and the British Museum (Team, 2019), which supports this thesis argument. Critics and analysts also reject the idea of de-contextualization of artifacts and archeological vestiges because it trims off part of the projected message and story to be told. This was evident in Frampton’s classical article “Towards a Critical Regionalism”, as he described that an architectural building, in general, should fit within the context of its culture, nature, topography, climate and light (Frampton, 1998). This concept can be also applied to the Historic Site Interpretation Centers as they contain the physical context, the cultural values in relation to the nature and topography where the museum is located.

On the other hand, the National Museum of New Roman Arts in Merida overcame the issue of de-contextualization as it is not focused on a single type of artifacts, but the overall context through a tight fit between the new architectural design and the authentic interior impressions (Langdon, 2015). In other words, the

museum architecture followed the Avant-Garde architectural style, a theoretical perspective that brings back the actual components of architecture such as topography, tactile, light, climate and culture instead of plain imitation of spectacular architectural style, as proposed by Frampton (1998). A response to Avant-Garde architectural style and meaning-making process, the National Museum of Roman Art is seen as a place to present and communicate the spirit of the remarkable surviving remains of Ancient Roman in Merida. These stories are communicated through the antiques on display and the strong physical and visual connection to the historic site, with an attempt to create full communication.

To this end, it is argued that meaning-making in Historic Site Interpretation Centers cannot function by only using conventional presentation and interpretation techniques presently used in museums (Baeyens et al., 2005). The New Acropolis Museum and The National Museum of Roman Arts illustrated two critical relationships to context and interpretation approaches. The first showed a mere focus on the artifact preservation and display, while maintaining visual and physical accessibility to historic site, whereas the second museum, proposed a balanced relationship between the artifact's preservation and display, and conserved a relationship to the historic site. Therefore, combining the two scenarios may result in a better and balanced relationship between the museum's mission of preservation, exhibition and education, and the creation of experience and meaning-making. Historic Site Interpretation Centers have a great potential to serve as a communicator to their related historic sites (Lai, 2015; Rössler, 2017; UNESCO, 2013b). To this end, contextual setting, exterior architectural design, interior spatial layout, and exhibition arrangement are identified as the key physical features of meaning-making

process. On this account, the considered case studies in this research ought to be analyzed and evaluated against the above recognized impactful features.

2.4 Conceptualizing the Visitors' Experience

The visitors' experience is recognized to be the basic service offered by any visitors' attraction such as museums and historic sites. To conceptualize the visitors' experience, it is necessary to identify the elements that form and characterize the visitors' experience, as anticipated to impact their engagement at Historic Site Interpretation Centers and historic sites, as well as their approaches to meaning-making.

2.4.1 Elements that Characterize the Visitors' Experience

The visitors' experience is known from literature as being dependent on elements that characterize such said experience as subjective, multi-sensory, and bound not only in time and space, but also driven by socio-cultural factors. This section attempts to describe the relationship between the elements, as visitors were found to be active participants in meaning-making and interpretation of realities when linked to their collective memory and interest in knowledge (Mgkekwa et al., 2019; Packer and Ballantyne, 2016; Özlü, 2017).

Subjectively enough, visitors are also motivated to visit museums including Historic Site Interpretation Centers and heritage sites for a number of reasons such as, tourism, self-comprehension, curiosity and experience (Isaac and Çakmak, 2014; Kempiak et al., 2017; Richards and Munsters, 2010).

Some visitors are characterized as "occasional cultural visitors", who prefer a low level of commitment in cultural experience and have a tendency for fun and recreational experiences (Yankholmes and McKercher, 2015). Likewise, tourists often go for recreational and entertaining experiences, but yet passively engage in a

cultural experience, especially those who are interested in the aesthetic and recognition aspects instead of historic significance of an attraction (Kempiak et al., 2017; Richards and Munsters, 2010). In fact, museums and historic sites are places that improve the visitors' visual and physical experiences (Packer, 2015), and indirectly promote emotional and personal interpretation of events and objects that is related to a specific culture and time (Hennes, 2010; Sheng and Chen, 2012). However, the visitors' behavior and experiences are often influenced by social interaction (Brida et al., 2016; Dumbraveanu et al., 2016; Steier et al., 2015). Indeed, visitors are usually watched in groups, couples, friends or relatives for diverse purposes, such as exploring, entertaining, and socializing (Jászberényi et al., 2018; Trinh and Ryan, 2016). These purposes are seen as motivational drivers for visiting the historic attractions, and then, for creating a memorable visiting experience through different forms of written, oral and visual communication (Campos et al., 2018; Mgxekwa et al., 2019; Packer and Ballantyne, 2016). In fact, people document and share their experiences on social media channels, and consequently others will be encouraged to visit and to live a similar experience (Thomas et al., 2020).

Furthermore, the visitors' experience is considered "multisensory" as acknowledged in the literature. The visitors' experience in museums and historic sites is not limited to education and exhibition purposes (Binter, 2014; Lanir et al., 2017; Packer and Ballantyne, 2016), and is often enhanced by the creation of a multisensory environment that uses all senses such as, visual, auditory and tactile (Binter, 2014; Christidou and Pierroux, 2019; Gaskell, 2016; Packer, 2015). In the context of a multisensory setting, visitors can personalize their experience and unconsciously reflect on their past knowledge and experience to bring an additional value to the museum content, that may also contribute to the meaning-making

process (Kempiak et al., 2017). Moreover, it has been claimed that visitors' multisensory experience supports their identity and personal abilities of intellectual understanding (Campos et al., 2018; Falk, 2016; Packer, 2015). To this end, if the experience has a great impact on a visitor's identity and understanding, it is crucial to any cultural institution including museums and historic sites to consider the model of visitors' experience, that includes ten different modes; physical experience, sensory experiences, restorative experiences, transformative experiences, hedonistic experiences, a rational, spiritual and cognitive experiences (Packer and Ballantyne, 2016).

2.4.2 The Drivers of the Visitors' Experiences

A visitor's experience is bound by sensory and physical, emotional, cognitive, and social domains. In regards to sensory and physical domain, some scholars argued that visitors use museum contents (i.e. displays) to feed their personal agenda of acquiring new knowledge and confirming or rejecting their past knowledge with an attempt to construct relevant meanings of a given subject (Packer and Ballantyne, 2016; Sheng and Chen, 2012). The museum physical space including architecture and spatial layout may endorse a certain movement patterns and promote different communication levels that seek to perceive the museum context as a learning setting. The above affords to recognize that museums architectural design is a primary element that impacts the visitor's experience.

Referring to the emotional domain, a visitor's experience is bound in unique time and space (Falk et al., 2012; Sheng and Chen, 2012) that have a different emotional impact compared to everyday experiences (Packer and Ballantyne, 2016). Deep inside, visitors' perceptions are controlled by their past experiences, interests, wishes, expectations and motivations (Packer and Ballantyne, 2016; Tabarsa and

Naseri, 2017). Full body experiences are often connected to local and life casting memories (Binter, 2014; Supara et al., 2014; Trinh and Ryan, 2016). In addition, environmental and physical conditions of spaces stimulate visitors feeling at a given location (de Rojas and Camarero, 2008; Kempiak et al., 2017). Therefore, it is believed that visitors' experiences are driven by their emotions and collective memory.

On the cognitive level, visitors seek a diversified and intellectual experience at museums and cultural platforms (Kempiak et al., 2017; Rémi et al., 2010; Sheng and Chen, 2012). Visitors' intellectual abilities such as, connecting their personal knowledge, cultural backgrounds and museum content are key drivers to the overall experience (Baniyamin and Rashid, 2016; Coffee, 2013; Rémi et al., 2010; Viereg, 2015). Conversely, visitors with minor knowledge and connection to a given culture or ethnographic objects, seek a new experience to create and/or improve their own relations between their inner world and the new given world, leading to a better meaning-making process (Trinh and Ryan, 2016). Since the visitors' experiences are affected by sensory and physical, emotional, cognitive, and social domains, the physical and emotional relationships between the visitors, the space and the interpretive techniques are expressed through new gestures, behaviors, and movements (Steier et al., 2015). Therefore, some museums attracted visitors through the development of unique environments that are suitable for social interaction, physical engagement and emotional involvement (Kempiak et al., 2017).

Moreover, the factors mentioned above should be considered in this research to explore the visitors' movements, behaviors, and social interactions at the four selected case studies in Bahrain, using a combination of ethnographic constructivism research and case study analysis.

2.4.3 Visitor Interests, Expectations and Concerns

The visitors' expectations and interests in learning and exploring cultural evidence at historic sites and museums, as well as Historic Site Interpretation Centers lead to an expressive and meaningful experiences (Kempiak et al., 2017). In general, visiting cultural places is often derived by personal motives (Baniyamin and Rashid, 2016), nostalgia (Devine, 2014) and curiosity (Baniyamin and Rashid, 2016). Few of the museum visitors are classified as oriented visitors that are driven by personal growth and research (Yankholmes and McKercher, 2015). In contrast, some scholars claimed that the majority elects to go museums for recreational purposes (Packer and Ballantyne, 2016; Trinh and Ryan, 2016).

Today, the younger generation of guests is interested in an interactive and engaging experience with the museum displays as well as with other visitors (Brida et al., 2016). Some are interested in visiting historic sites for their size, scale and historical significance (Trinh and Ryan, 2016). Other visitors seek an object-based experience articulated in museums including Historic Site Interpretation Centers (Yankholmes and McKercher, 2015). Therefore, exhibits in display are not experience generators, instead they act as stage for the promised experience (Hennes, 2010).

Before visiting any cultural institution including Historic Site Interpretation Centers and historic sites, visitors often have some concerns that may occur at three stages; before, during and after the visit (Kempiak et al., 2017). Visiting these institutions is often connected to people's expectations with an attempt to learn about the past and have a memorable and exciting experience (Megerle et al., 2015). Such experiences are often achieved through the ease of data accessibility, clear communication strategies and availability of ancillary features such as reasonable

entry fee, food services, toilets, guided tours and other activities (Alexander et al., 2018; Kempniak et al., 2017; Packer and Ballantyne, 2016).

The visitor's expectations are directly connected to the presentation techniques used in museums, Historic Site Interpretation Centers and historic sites, which includes graphic panels, explanatory text, videos and interactive displays (Stamatopoulou, 2016). However, these presentation techniques create a gap between the visitor and the object, and offer an impression that more time and effort is needed to reading the text or watch and make sense of the video (Samanian et al., 2016). In line with the above, comments in visitor books have revealed that certain methods of presentation are not clear enough to understand hidden narratives of objects (Coffee, 2013). However, some studies have also shown that visitors' satisfaction, enjoyment of historical site and pleasure are affected significantly by the quality of the guided tour (Alazaizeh et al., 2019; Lanir et al., 2017).

The characteristics of historic sites and cultural institutions are critical in assessing visitors' frequency and willingness to pay for these experiences (Alexander et al., 2018; Mgxekwa et al., 2019; Thorpe, 2018). Furthermore, accessibility for individuals with disability is another important concern that visitors may consider, some historical sites and museum lacked an accessible parking and accessible routes from the parking to the attraction (Gelpi, 2018; McMann, 2017). Based on the reviewed relevant case studies (Section 2.3.6) as well as, from personal experience of visiting international and local Historic Site Interpretation Centers (i.e. visitor centers) at World Heritage Sites in different regions of the world, it is reasonable to conclude that many of these institutions have implemented secondary services, ancillary features, and accessibility routes for all including people with disability, as well as their core service of preservation and interpretation.

However, most of these have been implemented in different contexts, as visitors' experience is bound in space, time, social and cultural factors. Since this study is taking place in Bahrain, with very limited specialized studies on Historic Site Interpretation Centers that involve dual modes of interpretation, there might be additional elements that need to be explored including social and cultural aspects to unveil their value, relevance and impact.

2.4.4 Visitor's Experience at Historic Sites and Museums

Historic sites and museums including Historic Site Interpretation Centers have an impact on the overall visiting experience, and on the way that a visitor may or may not perceive it as a memorable and enjoyable experience (Kirchberg and Martin, 2012; Packer and Ballantyne, 2016). To explore the role of the visitor as an active meaning maker within 'in situ' and 'in context' interpretation settings, it is necessary to review the visitors experience at historic sites and Historic Site Interpretation Centers.

A visitor's experience is an immediate, maybe continuous, subjective and personal response to an activity given in specific contextual setting that is unfamiliar to the visitor self-context (Kempiak et al., 2017; Packer and Ballantyne, 2016; Parsaee et al., 2015; Walls et al., 2011). Likewise, the visitor's self-context affords to influence the overall experience (Falk et al., 2012; Packer and Ballantyne, 2016). In order to have a successful experience, museology specialists should consider the provision of different kinds of experiences (Packer and Ballantyne, 2016), and develop services that meet different visitors' needs and demands including learning and leisure at historic sites and museums (Brida et al., 2016; Kempiak et al., 2017).

Since that the Historic Site Interpretation Center relationship to context, architectural design and interpretation strategies played a critical role in the visitors'

experience, it is crucial to identify the main gaps and challenges that affects the activity of historic sites interpretation and meaning-making process.

2.5 Museums and Visitors Studies: Status of Knowledge, Gaps and Challenges

There are certainly significant implications of museography (i.e. museums practices) on the overall visitors' experience. These are mainly falling on the types of contents, objects, and events that a museum environment or a historic site setting has, as well as the presentation techniques used for the interpretation purposes. Such approaches offer a variety of communication possibilities (i.e. physical, visual, verbal, and emotional) to ease the visitors' understanding of the intended message conveyed from context, objects, and events. Despite this known criticism, museums including Historic Site Interpretation Centers are challenged to function as promised, and struggle to build a balanced relationship to their users (i.e. visitors), as well as their ability to convey meanings. In this regard, the issue of de-contextualization was raised as the main obstacle of meaning-making in contexts of shared modes of interpretation (i.e. 'in situ' and 'in context) as presented in (Section 2.3.6.3). Therefore, this section aims to provide an overview on status of knowledge and challenges that occurs between the museum practices and visitors' experiences.

2.5.1 The Museum Studies

The current discourse of museum studies and visitors' experience identifies a set of challenges in the meaning-making process. These challenges were identified as the gap between the museum mission and benefits, the continuous use of conventional museography and object-oriented practices instead of visitor-oriented the lack of personal identity due to globalization and finally the lack of museum visitors.

2.5.1.1 The Gap between the Museum Mission and Benefits

Previous studies focused on the museum roles of delivering several services for the public (i.e. preservation, exhibition and education) (Cerquetti, 2016). Regardless of these common services, museographers must also consider the context in which they operate, involve diverse societies and have a value for different stakeholders (Albrecht, 2017; Antón et al., 2018; Cerquetti, 2016). In reality, archeological objects hold tangible and intangible cultural values, but within the museum context these objects are often reduced to their tangible characteristics only (Ross et al., 2017). These objects are usually interpreted by the curators' own understanding of historic sites (Barry and Robert, 2015; Langmead et al., 2015), although some of these historic sites are either physically inaccessible or already destroyed since the beginning of their exploration (Correia et al., 2015). Museum professionals assume that curators can provide the visitors with a general understanding of the museums content via verbal and nonverbal interpretive strategies (Macleod et al., 2012; Nieroba, 2018; Sosa et al., 2016), but might fail to understand the powerful feelings that such contents may generate (Mygind et al., 2015). Altogether, these observations illustrate well the gap between the intentions and realities of museums in relation to the visitors' experience. Therefore, museums including Historic Site Interpretation Centers and historic sites are required to build a cultural value to the visitors, and to ensure that the visiting experience of museums space and contents is interesting, explicit, and meaningful (Cerquetti, 2016). Such values are attempted to enable visitors to get new knowledge or expand their current understanding (Kempiak et al., 2017). Accordingly, recent studies focused on the connections between historic contextual settings, objects in display and visitors, in

order to create a memorable experience (Mgxeke et al., 2019; Packer and Ballantyne, 2016; van der Merwe et al., 2019; Özlü, 2017).

2.5.1.2 Object-oriented Museography is Still Used Today

Traditionally and in practice, museography treated objects in museums including Historic Site Interpretation Centers as documents (Garner et al., 2016; Latham, 2012), that are often communicated to visitors through various modes of interpretation, mainly labels and panels of written text and/or graphical content (Miklosevic, 2015). Even after the museum paradigm shift in the 20th century, curatorship remains the center of any museum practice (McCall and Gray, 2014; Nieroba, 2018). Curators are responsible for collecting and exhibiting items, such as archeological vestiges, historic records and artworks (Niblett and Allison, 2016). In addition, they organize objects in certain arrangement or sequencing to produce meanings within museum contexts (Beaujot, 2015). This act is important and may affect the way meanings are communicated, but certainly reduce the visitors' involvement and emotional engagement (Barry and Robert, 2015). For this reason, curators were accused of treating visitors as mere receivers of information (i.e. like an empty vessel) (Falk, 2016; Nieroba, 2018), and ultimately limit the visitors' ability to go beyond what is displayed (Crang, 2003; Pascal, 2015). In addition, many scholars argued that curators have given a large attention to the museum collections over the visitors' experience (Falk et al., 2012; Kempniak et al., 2017; MEI and BeMA, 2019). Therefore, museums should be more socially accountable, and relevant to visitors. This can only be achieved by transforming the museums to be visitor-oriented instead of being object-oriented (Flexner, 2016; Özlü, 2017). Furthermore, museums must improve their practices in order to better respond to learning, emotional and social needs (Anderson, 2012; Scott, 2009; Tlili, 2016). If

this was applied, museums will move from being a collection of archives into public centers and spaces for co-creation and storytelling (Campos et al., 2018; Jun and Lee, 2014).

2.5.1.3 Lack of Identity and Globalization

Nowadays, governments tend to recruit star architects and curators to design their museums and curate their exhibits, in order to gain international recognition (Robinson, 2016). For example, The Louvre Abu Dhabi was designed by the French architect Jean Nouvel, Zayed National Museum was designed by the British architect Norman Foster, while Frank Gehry designed the Guggenheim Abu Dhabi in Abu Dhabi (Vogel, 2014). However, this approach was not very successful as many other examples in the Middle and Far East prove it, as they suffered from the lack of identity and connection to the local cultural content (Brida et al., 2014; Dimache et al., 2017; Fibiger, 2011). Thus, one would argue that the full picture and important aspects of a given cultural identity like history, politics and culture cannot be recognized by foreign architects and curators (Robinson, 2016).

2.5.1.4 Lack of Museum Visitors

Object-oriented museum practice has proven itself to limit visiting patterns in museums (Stylianou-Lambert, 2019). Museum visitors and non-visitors have highlighted that the main hindrances to visiting museums are lack of interest, lack of time, affordability and accessibility (Cerquetti, 2016). In fact, the museum architectural design and its surroundings often influence the visitors' preferences positively or negatively, especially when they are exploring a history that is foreign to them (Brida et al., 2014; Broomhall and Spinks, 2010; Isaac and Budryte-Ausiejene, 2015). In addition, the use of foreign languages instead of the original

contextual language may decrease the cultural value and interrupt the process of interpretation (Quétel-Brunner and Griffin, 2014).

As an alternative to this dilemma, museums including Historic Site Interpretation Centers tend to organize small and large-scale activities to attract visitors (Lanir et al., 2017). These are mainly for educational and recreational purposes. The activities were added to compete with other alternatives of leisure and entertainment facilities offered in malls and entertainment centers (Brida et al., 2016). For example, some Historic Site Interpretation Centers and historic sites initiated live performance storytelling to enhance visitors' experience, and to facilitate meaning-making, with the aim to attract more visitors (Niblett and Allison, 2016).

2.5.2 The Visitors' Studies

Throughout the reviewed literature, on visitors' experience in museums including Historic Site Interpretation Centers and historic sites, the visitors' experience seems to be influenced by different realms including their characteristics, interests, expectations, concerns, and others attributes as described in section 2.4. This section aims to identify the challenges and difficulties found in visitors' studies and consequently affect the overall visitors' experience. These issues included the limited understanding of visitors' behavior, underestimating the visitors' expectations and demands, also the undervaluing of the overall visitors' experience.

2.5.2.1 The Limited Understanding of Visitors' Behavior

The current visitors' understanding does not go beyond frequency and demographic statistics (Falk et al., 2012; Greenhill, 1999; Martella et al., 2017). In addition, demographic information is insufficient to reflect the visitors' emotional, intellectual and social realms that may affect their overall experience within the

museum contextual setting (Antón et al., 2018; Falk, 2016). It can be argued that the existing studies do not provide the basis for measurements and descriptions of visitors' experience of the contextual setting, the exhibition layout and presentation techniques (Kevan and Ryan, 2016).

2.5.2.2 The Visitors' Expectations and Demands are Underestimated

Museum success is determined by the quality of the visitors' experience (Brida et al., 2016), that is a result of personal, social and physical interactions (Kempiak et al., 2017; Sheng and Chen, 2012). This statement supports the new museology paradigm of shifting museums from object-oriented to visitor-oriented (Packer and Ballantyne, 2016). Therefore, understanding visitors' experience from their own perspective is important, because it will enable the curatorship team to understand the visitors' needs subjectively, and then creates a setting of co-creating atmospheres that can provide a better visiting experience (Packer and Ballantyne, 2016; Sheng and Chen, 2012). Therefore, museologists and curators may refer to the museums guest books to collect the visitors' feedback on their experience (Campos et al., 2018; Magliacani et al., 2018), as well as the travel reviews websites such as TripAdvisor (Alexander et al., 2018). Therefore, identifying the modes of visitors' experience is important to describe and measure visitors' experiences quality and success (Supara et al., 2014).

2.5.2.3 The Visitors' Experience is Undervalued

The existing studies highlight the great interest in interactive and emotionally engaged visitors' experience (Campos et al., 2018; Scott, 2009; Sheng and Chen, 2012), which is influenced by many aspects including; time, space and content (Martella et al., 2017; Sheng and Chen, 2012; Smith, 2014). Museums' contents are recognized as a source of knowledge that needs to be communicated to visitors, with

an attempt to educate and entertain them, as well as to promote awareness of historic significance (Kempiak et al., 2017; Sheng and Chen, 2012). It has been claimed that visitors learn better in historic sites 'in situ' than in museum 'in context' settings (Falk, 2016; Kempiak et al., 2017). Because, in 'in situ' context, visitors tend to spend more time exploring the dynamics of the whole site by involving full body experience (Frampton, 1998; Langmead et al., 2015; Ross et al., 2017; Tlili, 2016), while in 'in context' setting, visitors are constrained by static and permanent displays (Blake, 2015). However, there is no clear evaluation technique to assess the visitors' experience in relation to their visual satisfaction and emotional engagement within the context of Historic Site Interpretation Centers that involves, 'in situ' and 'in context' modes of interpretation at a shared location (Alazaizeh et al., 2019; Falk, 2016; Kelly, 2019).

2.6 Summary

This chapter reviewed the relevant literature on site-related museums discourse and status of knowledge, the interpretation as a core practice, and the contributing factors to the visitors' experience. This enticed a suggesting of a new classification of museums with an emphasis on the existing relationships between the museum contextual setting and the interpretation approaches as 'in situ' and 'in context'. The new classification identifies the relationships as Loose Fit, Tight Fit and Historic Site Interpretation Centers.

To understand the relationships between the three components, as well as the approaches of interpretation used to ease the meaning-making process in similar cases; two relevant case studies were reviewed. The New Acropolis Museum in Athens and the National Museum of Roman Art in Merida presented different relationships to the context and approaches of combining 'in situ' and 'in context'

modes of interpretation. The review also underlined the impacts of dual settings on meaning-making process in relation to constructivism and hermeneutics theoretical frameworks. Following the findings noted above, a review of the status of knowledge of museum and visitors' studies identified a set of challenges and gaps between the museum's practices and visitors' demands, highlighting the issue of de-contextualization as evident after the review of relevant literature and the review of the two relevant case studies. These are recognized as hindrances to the visitation levels and as a limitation to the visitors' understanding and ability to construct meanings within the museum context, the focus of this research. To this end, de-contextualization of fragments was the most striking obstacle that limited the mediation of meanings from the historic site to the visitors, and consequently affected their overall experience, calling for a reconsideration of context inclusive of 'in situ' and 'in context' modes of interpretation at shared location.

From a hermeneutics phenomenology perspective a good interpretation is only possible when the Historic Site Interpretation Center's architecture is in harmony with the whole and the part (i.e. the historic site and the artifact), without neglecting the local characteristics of the original landscape in which the museum is located, so called an Avant-Garde architectural style. It is anticipated that by contextualization, the visitors' experience will be improved, and meanings will be unblemished. For this reason, the study of Historic Site Interpretation Centers should be undertaken with respect to a specific contextual setting. In this case, the setting of Bahrain was selected for further investigation, with the intent to evaluate the impactful architectural characteristics of the four selected case studies and explore visitors' experience and feedback in real-time context through ethnographic

approaches from within the constructivism paradigm. The research design, methodological approach and data collection procedures are therefore presented next.

Chapter 3: Methodology

3.1 Preface

The purpose of this chapter is to introduce the research design and its rationale for this exploratory research on how a Historic Site Interpretation Center contributes to the meaning-making process. This inquiry calls for a better understanding of Bahrain's historic centers physical settings, explores 'in situ' and 'in context' contribution to meaning-making from visitors' self-exploration and reflections upon the same setting, with the purpose to provide a way to develop a conceptual understanding from the data in order to answer the above-mentioned question.

Given the nature and multiplicity of data needed, as evidenced in the literature review (Chapter 2), to answer the research question, a convergent mixed research method using multiple case studies and a multi-ethnographic approach was needed. Hence, in this chapter the applicability of a convergent mixed-method is first presented, its rationale discussed. The research design, including the methodology, study participants, data collection procedures, analysis methods, pilot testing, and ethical concerns are the other important parts discussed in this chapter.

3.2 Research Design: Mixed Methods

A Convergent mixed method approach is appropriate when the objective of the research is to provide in-depth understanding of the phenomenon under investigation (Creswell, 2014e; Miles et al., 2014). This research complies with the recommendation made by scholars to use a combination of a mixed method research approach (qualitative and quantitative) and a multiple case study design research approach (qualitative) (Creswell, 2014b; Hesse-Biber, 2010; Yin, 2014). In addition

to its fullness and effectiveness, there are many arguments for using a mixed research methodology. First, to obtain complementary but separate data on the same topic (Morse, 1991), and second, to address both inconsistencies and consensus between quantitative and qualitative findings (Carter et al., 2014). Furthermore, in the research fields, it is accepted that quantitative research methods are often used in exploratory social studies to ensure validity and reliability (Creswell, 2014b). In addition, the case study analysis approach is recognized by researchers as an important part of any ethnographic study within a constructivist framework (Groat and Wang, 2013a). This reinforces the argument that a convergent mixed method research approach is the most adequate method to respond to the research objectives of understanding the visitors' experience at a given location (Creswell, 2014e; Miles et al., 2014; Williamson, 2006).

Mixed methods research approach involving both quantitative and qualitative data collection methods are best to reflect the exploratory nature of this research aiming to identify the physical qualities of Historic Site Interpretation Centers from the users' point of view and to ensure that the research findings are grounded in their experiences. In terms of process, this type of research design, qualitative and quantitative data are collected in parallel, analyzed separately and then combined (Creswell, 2014d; Morse, 1991).

3.2.1 Rationale and Justification of Research Design

The mixed method approach that has been applied for this research is discussed and the reason why each research method was chosen is explained and justified next. First, the case study research method is used to evaluate the contribution of Historic Site Interpretation Centers to the meaning-making process from historic site to visitors. Hence, the purposeful selection of case studies with

different contextual relationships between the Historic Site Interpretation Centers and the historic sites in Bahrain. Second, the use of multi-ethnographic tools (i.e. archival documents, observation, survey, and interview) to explore the elements that shape and form the stakeholders' (i.e. service providers and visitors') perception and emotional experience. Each ethnographic tool through its collected data is expected to contribute differently to the understanding of the phenomenon under study. Thus, the archival documents included architectural drawings, Instagram records, site photography, and visitors' records. Architectural drawings were used for the case study analysis, while Instagram records and photographs were used to provide evidence of activities on site and visitors' engagement at Historic Sites Interpretation Centers. Field observations were used to explore participants' engagement in natural setting (i.e. case studies) over a limited number of sessions yet cannot provide general information about visitors' attendance and patterns over the whole year. Therefore, it was complemented with records covering the whole year to indicate patterns in frequency and visitation. The survey was used to get general information from a sample of the population about preferences and opinions. Interviews were used to investigate, in depth, how specific stakeholders think and feel about the phenomenon under investigation. The four sets of data collection were conducted concurrently, analyzed separately and, at the end, interpreted collectively (Creswell, 2014a). The research framework designed specifically for this work is illustrated in Figure 3.1 as a foreword to a more detailed presentation of the mixed methods and data collection tools and resources.

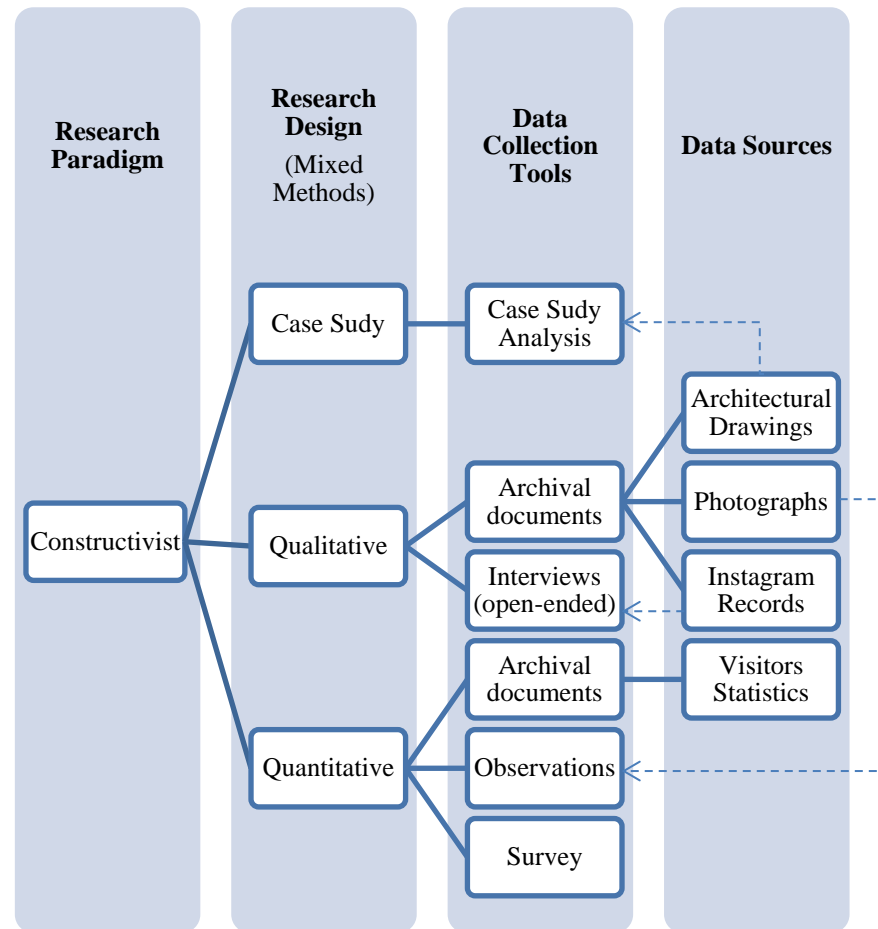


Figure 3.1: Research design framework

3.3 Research Methods: Qualitative and Quantitative

3.3.1 Qualitative Research Methods

The qualitative case study offers a thorough understanding of an event at a particular time and place through multiple data collection methods (Creswell, 2014d; Yin, 2003a). Based on this premise, this exploratory research is performed using a multiple case study research and multi-ethnographic tools from within a constructivism paradigm.

3.3.1.1 Case Study Research Design

Case study is referred to as “an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context, especially when the

boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident” (Yin, 2014, p. 18). It is largely accepted that any specific contextual setting could have a special effect on the character of the visitor's experience according to his/her personal, social and physical aspects (Christidou and Pierroux, 2019; Packer and Ballantyne, 2016).

According to De Souza (2015), the case study approach has five contributions. First, case studies focus on the relationships and interactions between the phenomena observed and the reality, to offer a deep understanding and meaning of the given framework. Second, when in a natural setting, case studies afford to explain a phenomenon. Third, conceptually, the approach is a process that explains the subject under investigation. Fourth, it is a useful strategy to investigate various conditions that do not show true meaning of the phenomenon. Finally, the case studies approach helps introduce new potential theoretical ideas and then similar studies that involve critical data collection can be validated.

In this research, the case study approach is aimed at evaluating the contribution of Historic Site Interpretation Centers' features including contextual environment, architectural design, spatial layout, and presentation techniques (Langmead et al., 2015; Lu, 2017; Tzortzi, 2016). It also attempts to define how different visitors' movement patterns and paths are introduced in the contextual setting (Farahat and Osman, 2018; Tabarsa and Naseri, 2017). The case study approach, thus, helps to identify the role of Historic Site Interpretation Centers' architectural design and artifacts displaying in transmitting meanings (Anderson, 2007; Chandavarkar, 1988; Farahat and Osman, 2018; Tabarsa and Naseri, 2017).

In this regard, the four selected representative case studies chosen in Bahrain present different scenarios of relationships to their respective historic sites and the contribution of their architectural design, spatial layout, and its applied artifacts

presentation techniques. In addition, these case studies are important at historical, national, and cultural levels. This research's selection is also in conformity with the idea that multiple case studies are also beneficial for results generalization and external validity as results cannot be generalized from a single case study (Carter et al., 2014; Wikfeldt, 1993).

As a reminder, the four selected case studies are: the Qal'at Al Bahrain Site Museum, the Shaikh Salman bin Ahmed Al Fateh Fort permanent exhibition, Bu Maher Fort visitor center and Al Khamis Mosque visitor center.

3.3.1.2 Ethnographic Research Approach

Ethnographic research is a qualitative approach where researchers observe and/or communicate with participants in their real-life setting (Cohen and Manion, 2007). Ethnography has been popularized in sociology but is also used in various social scientific fields including visitors' studies (LeCompte and Schensul, 2010; Pink et al., 2010; Williamson, 2006). It is well recognized that people play an active role in developing their own meanings within their natural and cultural environments, in relation to a given context (Cohen and Manion, 2007; Sommer and Sommer, 2002). Thus, ethnographic analysis is often utilized in studies to investigate the museum, heritage site and tourist experience within a constructivism paradigm - sometimes labeled as interpretivist paradigm - as exemplified in several scholarly works (Corey and Daniel, 2015; Kevan and Ryan, 2016; Quérel-Brunner and Griffin, 2014; Savova, 2009; Smith, 2014; Stylianou-Lambert et al., 2014). Nonetheless, constructivism involves definition, explanation, verification and evaluation purposes of a phenomenon that is typically preformed in a real context (Creswell, 2014d; Leedy and Ormrod, 2010).

The definition and explanation of a phenomenon is often obtained by using

multiple qualitative research techniques including archival documents, survey, observation and interviews (Cohen and Manion, 2007; Creswell, 2014c; Groat and Wang, 2013a). The use of multiple qualitative research methods helps the researchers to investigate in detail people's perception and emotional experience from different perspectives. Furthermore, investigating the given phenomenon could potentially help gain knowledge on specific circumstances and establish a grounded understanding of the visitors' viewpoints in a short time. Consequently, using several qualitative research approaches, certain assumptions, observations, or generalizations in naturalistic settings are evaluated, and finally the efficiency of the specific practices in this phenomenon is assessed.

3.3.2 Quantitative Research Methods

The goal of quantitative research in this type of exploratory studies is to generate a general knowledge on a social phenomenon, collect quantifiable data and present tabular and graphical data (Creswell, 2014b). Ethnographic research tools such as surveys and observations can be considered quantitatively (Creswell, 2014d). The survey is one of the most common data collection tools, typically sent to a target sample physically or over the internet (Graefe et al., 2011; Harrie, 2010). The survey data collection tool is good for measuring, recognizing trends and generalizing data under investigation (Creswell and Poth, 2018). Some researchers have used the survey to better understand the connections between the personal background of the visitors and the museum context (Harrie, 2010; Samanian et al., 2016). In regard to this study, online survey was selected because it is a generalized, practical and time-effective method to reach a wider range of target participants (Evans et al., 2009; Graefe et al., 2011).

Observational data and census data (archival documents) are also frequently

used to explain a phenomenon by defining trends, paths and behaviors of participants under study over a period of time (Creswell, 2014d; Williamson, 2006). To this end, previous studies used tabular and graphical methods to describe survey results (Graefe et al., 2011; Harrie, 2010; Samanian et al., 2016), while some others used the same method to define observational field notes (Capriotti, 2010; Goulding, 2000; Zhou et al., 2013). Nevertheless, surveys and observation approaches are not sufficient to collect and analyze the input of stakeholders and can only provide general information about the phenomenon under study. Therefore, they need to be supplemented by census data, photographs, and interviews.

Two sets of data, quantitative and qualitative, were therefore collected by means of archival documents (i.e. architectural drawings, visitors records, Instagram and photographs), unobtrusive observations (i.e. visitors frequency, traffic patterns and practices) were recorded, online survey including closed and open-ended questions, and open-ended interviews were carried out with stakeholders within a given contextual settings (i.e. the four case studies).

3.4 Data Collection: Ethics, and Research Design Procedure

This section provides an explanation of the research methods procedures and pilot testing before the actual data collection. In addition, the research ethics procedures that governed this research are outlined.

3.4.1 Research Ethics Procedures

Considering that ethnographic tools including, archival documents, an online survey, unobtrusive observations, and open-ended interviews deal with people, an ethical procedure was required. Prior to the conduction of the data collection, ethical permissions were pursued for all the mentioned instruments from the institution where the PhD was conducted. The permission was obtained from the United Arab

Emirates University's (UAEU) Institutional Review Board, the Social Sciences Research Ethics (ERS_2018_5728), found in Appendix A. Following that, the researcher sent a formal email to the museums directorate of the Bahrain Authorities for Culture and Antiquities, requesting a meeting with the museums' director: Shaikh Khalifa bin Ahmed Al Khalifa and a list of the required archival documents was requested in the same email. Next, a meeting with the museums' director was scheduled to discuss the PhD study objectives and request an official permission to conduct an online survey and unobtrusive visitors' observations, as well as conduct open-ended interviews with both service providers and visitors. Accordingly, a verbal permission was given from the director on behalf of Bahrain Authority for Culture and Antiquities in order to get access to the research sites (historic sites and Historic Site Interpretation Centers), to conduct this research and collect the required data through multiple ethnographic methods.

3.4.2 Data Collection Methods and Procedures

3.4.2.1 Archival documents

The archival documents were obtained from Bahrain Authority for Culture and Antiquities. These documents include the visitors' records at the four selected case studies for the year 2018, considering that records for all sites are only available in this year. Also, it includes the Historic Site Interpretation Centers' architectural design drawings and their aerial photographs; these were used for the case study analysis, while the statistics of visitors show the visitation over a period of one year and overcome the limitation of the few observation sessions. Likewise, Sommer and Sommer (2002) indicated the usefulness of combining archival documents with data collected by other methods.

3.4.2.2 Online Survey; Design and Pilot Test

As in most studies involving users' preferences, museum research often resorts to ethnographic techniques such as surveys (Bitgood, 2013; Brida et al., 2016; Capriotti, 2010; Dogan, 2015; Lanir et al., 2017; Samanian et al., 2016; Winter, 2018). The surveys are frequently used to reflect a sample of a specific population (Leedy et al., 2019), and to gather information about their beliefs', attitudes, values, and behaviors towards a specific topic (Sommer and Sommer, 2002).

During the last decade, the online survey technique has increased rapidly due to being user-friendly, low-cost, self-programming and statistical data provision (Evans et al., 2009; Sommer and Sommer, 2002). Online survey provides an alternative to on-site data collection techniques, as they are more interactive with follow-up questions tailored to specific replies (Loomis and Paterson, 2018; Sommer and Sommer, 2002). In addition, it can reach a large group of target participants in sufficient time and efforts (Bulmer, 2004; Dornyei, 2010), and would disclose valid results when quality control procedures are applied such as the use of the participants language and the use of technology for responses and documentation (Graefe et al., 2011; Winter, 2018). Online survey platforms such as Survey Monkey and Google Forms are recognized to provide the service of creating survey forms, receiving responses and presenting the data graphically and numerically for subsequent analysis (Kilanowski, 2018; Kimball, 2019). Regardless of the survey type (online, or on-site), the survey questions should be restricted to one topic, and customized to specific participating population and context (Isaac and Michael, 1981; Samanian et al., 2016; Winter, 2018).

In terms of layout and format, Sommer and Sommer (2002), and Leedy et al. (2019) recommended that the survey should be short, simple, unambiguous, and has

a clear purpose. In terms of design and process, Groves et al.(2009) outlined that a survey should be designed with clear directions to measure and represent the data before its execution. This process first, involves a clear definition of the survey objectives within the discourse of a research, then a selection of the mode of collection and the sample, third, the construction of the survey and testing it, finally, the execution of the survey, followed by an analysis.

In this study, the survey was mainly designed to explore Bahrain's residents' visitation patterns and perceptions of the country's historic sites and Historic Site Interpretation Centers using four types of questions: dichotomous ('Yes/No') questions, multiple-choice questions, checkbox questions ('select all that apply) and open-ended questions. The survey begins with two demographic questions (gender and age) and the other ten questions were arranged under three themes: (1) visitation patterns and preferences of historic related settings, (2) perceptions of display and presentation techniques, (3) behavior, hindrances, and suggestions (Figure 3.2).

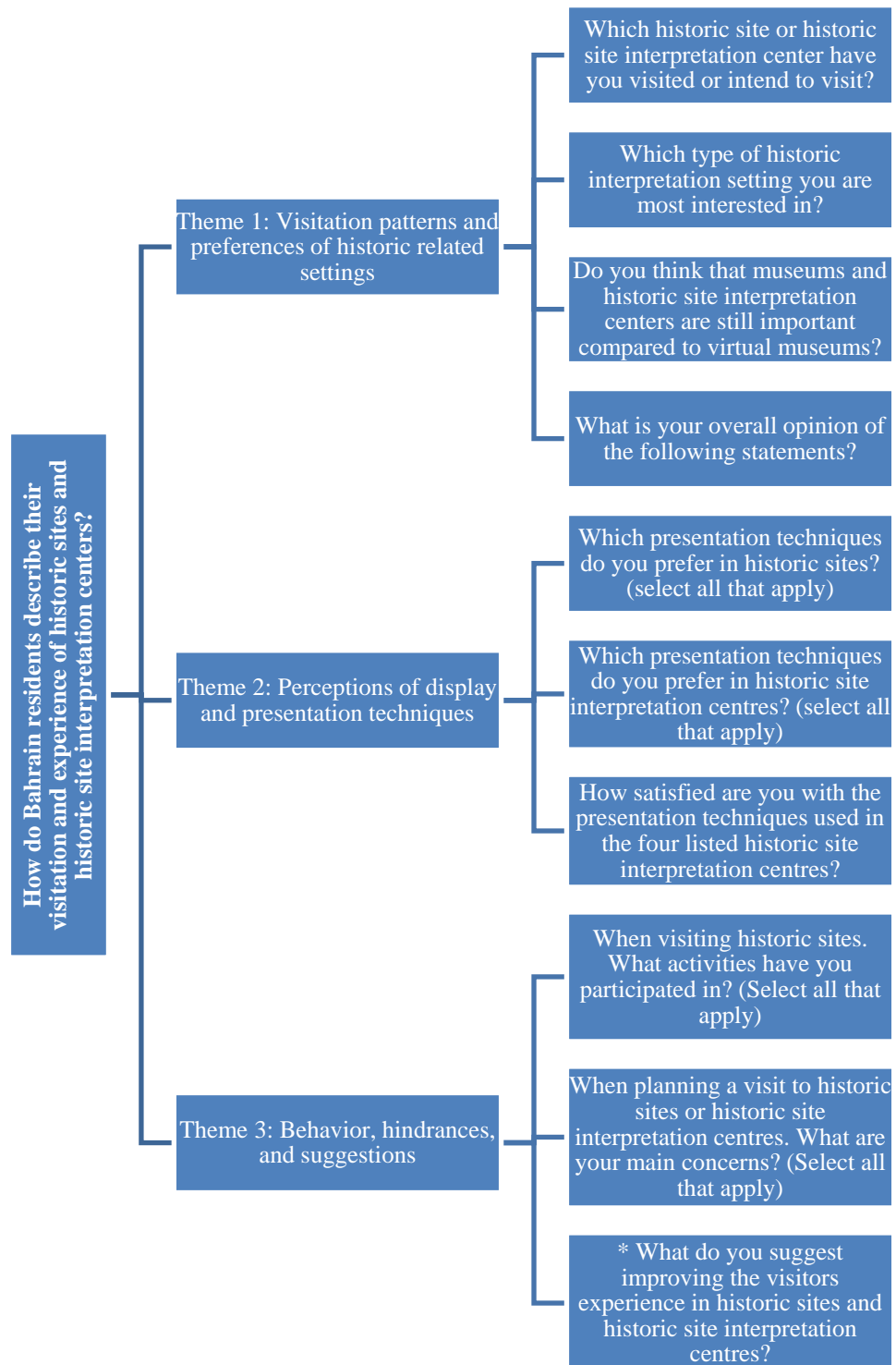


Figure 3.2: The relationship between the research questions, topics, and the online survey questions . * indicates the open-ended questions

The presented questions are the actual questions used in the online survey, as the initial questions were reviewed by a panel of two PhD candidates in

the College of Engineering in the United Arab Emirates University and an independent researcher in sociology and human social relations reviewed the validity and reliability of the survey. The review panel requested modifying some questions to enhance their clarity (Table 3.1). The result made up the actual survey questions presented in Figure 3.2.

Table 3.1: The survey question modification after panel review

Initial questions	After modification
Theme 1: Visitation patterns and preferences of historic related settings	
What are your preferences of the following list of historic related settings? Do you believe that museums are still important? What do you think of the following statements? (list of actions)	What type of historic interpretation setting you are most keen on? Do you think that museums are still important? What is your overall opinion of the following statements?
Theme 2: Perceptions of display and presentation techniques	
What do you do to understand historic sites? What are your preferred display and presentation techniques in historic site related museums? How do you rate your experience at the historic site related museums?	Which presentation techniques do you prefer in historic sites? (select all that apply) Which presentation techniques do you prefer in historic site interpretation centers? (select all that apply) *Give an example of a well-known historic site/interpretation center (applies for the two questions above in theme 2). How satisfied are you with the presentation techniques used in the four listed historic site interpretation centers?
Theme 3: Behaviour, hindrances, and suggestions	
What are your activities when visiting a historic site? What are your hindrances to visit? What do you suggest enhancing the visitor experience?	When visiting historic sites. What activities have you participated in? (Select all that apply) When planning a visit to historic sites or historic site interpretation centers. What are your main concerns? (Select all that apply) What do you suggest improving the visitors experience in historic sites and historic site interpretation centers?

A pilot testing is one of the essential stages in any research project to ensure its validity and reliability (Cohen and Manion, 1994b; Creswell, 2014; Yin, 2003b). The pilot test is also necessary to ensure clarity, refine its content, wording and

length (Cohen and Manion, 1994a; Vogel and Draper-Rodi, 2017). Further, the pilot study attempts to test the participants acceptance to participate in such studies, to identify their interests and to ensure the clarity and readability of the questions and finally, to obtain responses rapidly. Considering, that some scholars suggested using them, social media platforms such as Instagram is a useful way to recruit participants and to evaluate the effectiveness of the research instruments in relation to the main research objectives (Kim et al., 2017; Patricia et al., 2020; Thomas et al., 2020). This survey's participants are selected on random sampling basis from the author's personal Instagram account followers, where all the followers are resident in Bahrain. Therefore, a pilot testing to the online survey was carried out before the conduction of the actual survey.

The pilot testing was done using "Direct Message" feature. The survey was sent to three public figures in Bahrain to evaluate the clarity and consistency of the questions in relation to the research objectives. At the same time and through the same social channel, the author used "Question Feature" to evaluate the proposed sample acceptance to participate in this study. The survey questions were posted and shared with the 159 participants (followers of the account) in May 2019 for 24 hours, as the question feature allows that maximum period. The survey questions focused on 'Yes' or 'No' questions only. Samples of the questions and the answers are illustrated in Figure 3.3. The first picture illustrating the author (on the left) and Shaikha Mai bint Mohammed Al Khalifa, president of the Bahrain Authority for Culture and Antiquities (on the right) was included to show the participants that this survey was authentic and officially approved by Bahrain Authority for Culture and Antiquities. There were about 110 viewers and the number of respondents to each question was not identical, indicating the familiarity and interest of

the Bahraini community with historic sites and Historic Site Interpretation Centers.

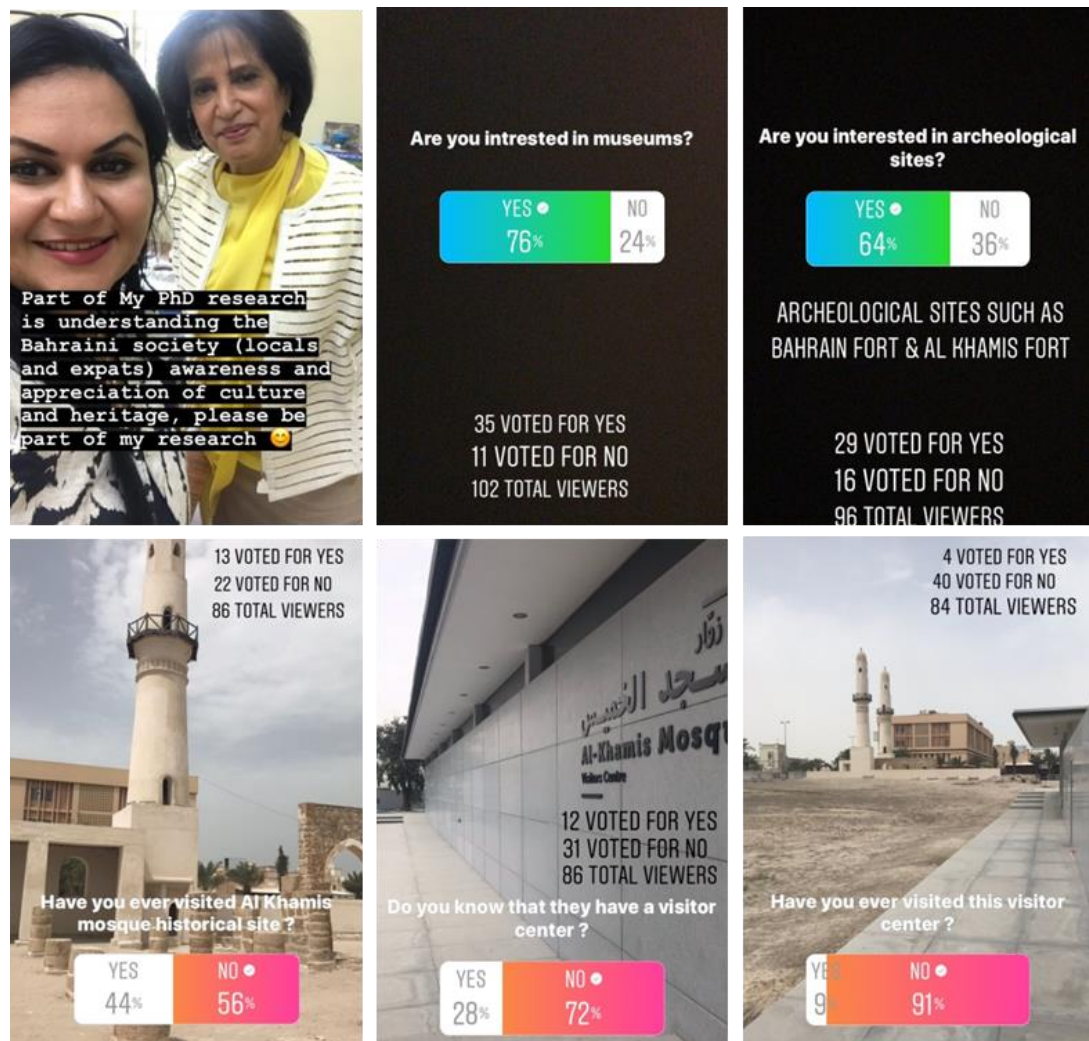


Figure 3.3: Samples of the online pilot survey

The comprehensiveness, ease of use and consistency of the questions in relation to the research aims and objectives were approved after the pilot survey was completed. The survey was then, translated from English into Arabic to ensure that participants who preferred the Arabic language had equal access. Then, it was reviewed a second time by an Arabic translator for translation accuracy. English and Arabic surveys are available in Appendix B. The online survey link was sent to

participants through the researcher's personal Instagram and through WhatsApp with the help of a group of public figures in Bahrain.

3.4.2.3 Unobtrusive Observation

Previous ethnographic studies relied largely or partially on unobtrusive observation (Groat and Wang, 2013b; Martella et al., 2017; Zhou et al., 2013). Unobtrusive observation method is described as “a method in which a researcher takes part in the daily activities, rituals, interactions, and events of a group of people as one of the means of learning the explicit and tacit aspects of their life routine and culture without them knowing that they are being observed” (Musante and DeWalt, 2010b, p. 1). The unobtrusive observation can also be described as a different level of data collection to further explore, analyze, and verify the information collected from the online survey and validate the visitation frequency obtained from the archival documents. Moreover, observation reveals what the researchers can perceive and typically fits into the research interpretive framework (Schensul and LeCompte, 2012), where the researcher shifts from a controlled environment, such as in interviews to a field in which people act freely and spontaneously (Maruyama and Ryan, 2014). In addition to that, observation sessions are often complemented by maps and other baseline indicators that may alter overtime, like day, year and seasonal changes (Schensul and LeCompte, 2012). The dual consideration of visitors' onsite observations reinforced with the detailed case studies analysis are an effective support to further the understanding of the Historic Site Interpretation Centers' relationship to the historic site and its spatial layout.

In this research, observations were carried out systematically at the four sites under investigation on weekdays and weekends, mornings and evenings, winter, and summer, both with and without the existence of an event, spanning from December

2018 to July 2019 (Table 3.2). The observation protocol is available in Appendix C.

Table 3.2: Systematic observation guide

Case Study	Date/day	_ / _ 20_		Day		S	U	M	T	W	H	F
	Time	From _: _ am/pm		To _: _ am/pm		Season			Summer		Winter	
Observation No.	Station	Historic Site					Historic site Interpretation center					
	Event/ No Event	_____										
Age	Under 5		5 to 12		13 to 20		28 to 35		Above 35		Total	
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
Interaction/space*												
Interaction/social*												
Field notes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • _____ • _____ 											

*alternative list available in Appendix C

Between 4 and 5 observation sessions were conducted at each site. Each observation period lasted 90 to 120 minutes, sufficient enough to obtain detailed data on the observations and, in parallel, prepare field notes. The observational protocol mainly covered three fields: gender, interactions, and field notes which could include unexpected actions within the investigated contextual setting to respond to research questions and attain its aims and objectives. During the observations, some photographs were also taken to illustrate the observed case and provide evidence for the collected data. The photographs were taken with respectful distance to ensure visitors' anonymity and privacy.

In terms of ethics, the anonymity of studied participants is maintained without any expected risk (Musante and DeWalt, 2010c). In order to ensure the collected data accuracy, the observed participants were not told of any course of observation to avoid influencing their actions and behavior and to make sure that the gathered data represented the phenomenon in its natural setting. Internal validation

would be achieved by ensuring that "observation", as an instrument of data collection, illustrates a specific research problem. Regarding external validity and reliability, the data collected would be checked by cross-checking between findings of a similar situation over a given period of time and compared to other data collection instruments (i.e. visitation records, interviews and surveys) (Musante and DeWalt, 2010a).

3.4.2.4 Semi-Structured Open-Ended Interview Design and Pilot Test

This study used a semi-structured open-ended interview with an attempt to explore the elements that shape and form the stakeholders' (i.e. service providers and visitors) perception and emotional experiences. Kvale (2007b, p. 51) defined the semi-structured interview as a "planned and flexible interview with the purpose of obtaining descriptions of life world of the interviewee, with respect to interpreting the meaning of the described phenomenon". Some scholars recognize that semi-structured interviews are the best approach for qualitative data collection (Creswell, 2014c; DiCicco-Bloom and Crabtree, 2006). Semi-structured interviews usually depend on open-ended questions focusing on participants personality and experience on the areas under exploration (Creswell, 2014d). Like any data collection method, the semi-structured opened-ended interview needs to follow a procedure. Yet, there is no standard procedure for conducting an interview, but there are standard choices of methods at different stages of the interview inquiry (Kvale, 2007c). In this regard, Kvale (2007c), suggested that an interview project can follow seven stages as presented in Figure 3.5.

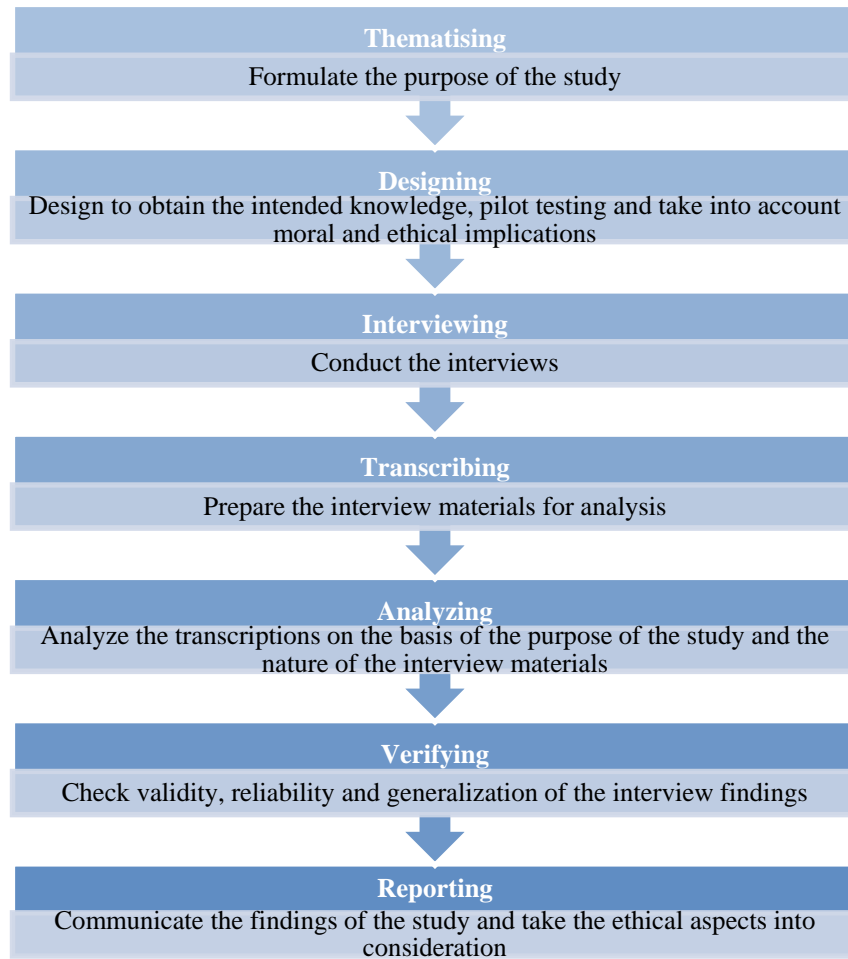


Figure 3.4: Seven stages of an interview inquiry

Source: Kvale,(2007)

The seven stages of planning an interview were applied in this research from the first thematising stage to the last reporting stage. In the thematising stage, the purpose of the interview was formalized in relation to the research objectives (Chapter 1, Section 1.4) and in relation the literature review of museums, interpretation and visitors' experience topics covered in Chapter 2. This is to clarify the purpose of the study, and to obtain a pre-knowledge of the subject under investigation before the preparation of the interview questions in the interview designing stage. Further, a theoretical background of the interview techniques is recommended to get familiarized with the different techniques of interviewing and

analysing to get the intended knowledge (Kvale, 2007c).

In the design stage, the procedures and techniques of how to obtain the purpose of the study are involved in relation to anticipated outcomes of the other instruments used in this study. For instance the survey data collection tool can provide a general pattern about a phenomenon under investigation but cannot provide details about the indicated pattern (Sommer and Sommer, 2002). Therefore, in this stage a careful tailoring of the interview questions is essential to fill gaps emerged from other data collection tools, including the number and category on the interviewees. Kvale (2007c) suggested that in exploratory studies the number of interviews tends to be around 15 ± 10 interviews, considering the combination of time and available data resources, further explained in section 3.6.

This research accepts the recommendation made by scholars to include six topics that are: (1) behavior, (2) thoughts, (3) emotions, (4) knowledge, (5) sensory, and (6) backgrounds/demographics (Brida et al., 2016; Capriotti, 2010; McNamara, 2009). These topics were not taken in order, but the first five topics were addressed indirectly within the interview questions. Yet the backgrounds and demographics questions were kept to the end of the interview to provide the interviewees with enough confidence to express their opinions, experience and avoid any risk of being intrusive or invasive. As mentioned in the previous paragraph, Table 3.3 presents the relationship between the research objectives, topics (1 to 5), and the types of questions used in this study.

Table 3.3: The relationship between the research questions, topics, and the interview questions

Research question	Interview question
<p>1. What are the physical and interpretive features of meaning-making in the site interpretive centers?</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Topics (2) thoughts (4) knowledge</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>What are the motivations of the current developments?</u> • Can you tell me about this historic site/historic site related museum? • Do you think this type of museums is important? Why? • What makes this museum different compared to the National Museum of Bahrain? • Do you think that the architecture of site-related museum is important? Why? • Does the museum spatial layout helped you to understand the historic site story? How? • What are the current display techniques used in this museum?
<p>2. What are the elements that shape and form the visitors' experience in the site interpretive centers?</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Topics (1) behavior (3) emotions (5) sensory</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can you describe your experience of this historic site/historic site related museum? What happened? What did you like/dislike of your visit? • What did you do? How do you remember it? Did you enjoy your time? • How do you feel about it? How was your emotional reaction towards the experience? • What do you think about it? How do you conceive its success in conveying the historic site story? • Can you describe the visitors over there? • <u>What did the museum offer to attract visitors?</u> • What are the drivers and challenges to visit museums?
<p>3. What do stakeholders suggest enhancing visitor experience and meaning-making?</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Topics (2) thoughts</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What do you suggest enhancing the visitors experience in such museums? • What do you suggest improving the meaning-making process in historic site/historic site related museum?
<p>4. How meanings are conveyed through the site interpretive centers?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Check notes below
<p>Notes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All questions were targeted to service providers and visitors, but the underlined questions were specifically for service providers. • Question 4 was not addressed directly during the interview as it is more theoretical and derives its answers from the research findings 	

During the interview design stage, Saldana et al. (2011), Castillo-Montoya (2016) and others recommended to check and evaluate the interview questions for clarity and quality purposes. Accordingly, the interview questions presented in Table 3.1, and the full interview protocol, available in Appendix D, was checked and reviewed by the same panel who reviewed the survey questions (3.4.2.2). Finally, the designing stage ended by getting the questions accepted and confirmed to conduct the actual interview sessions.

The third stage, interviewing will first involve a pilot study, as outlined by Sommer and Sommer (2002), who stated that a pilot study is needed before the actual data is collected, no matter how carefully it was reviewed to identify further unseen issues in the interview protocol and to improve its precision.

Prior to conducting the pilot testing and then the actual study, the researcher sought first, an approval to voluntarily engage in the study, obtained an authorization to record the interview and then, begun the interview. The interviews were recorded by means of Voice Memos recording feature on smart phones (i.e. iPhone). In this study, each interview lasted between 10 and 40 minutes, as several follow-up questions were added for unexpected revelations where more details were sought, and interviewees were asked to explain them further and to verify their interpretations.

Following that, interviews were transcribed manually from an oral to a written format, keeping the same words used in the recorded interviews. This is an agreed method to closer analysis, and itself a preliminary analysis to make a cross-comparisons among the different interviews (Kvale, 2007c; Sommer and Sommer, 2002). In addition, the inclusion of pauses, repetitions and tone of the voice may also reflect emotional interpretation on the levels of satisfaction or dissatisfaction of a

subject matter, consequently data analysis is affected.

The nature of this exploratory research objectives calls for an analysis focusing on meanings in relation to the participants' perception and emotional experience of a given setting. Kvale (2007a) recommends that such analysis should involve coding (i.e. attaching few words to a text segment), condensation (i.e. deeper meanings expressed in short formulation), and interpretation of meanings (i.e. conceptualization). Coding and categorization are the first steps in interview analysis, followed by thematizing and ended by a general conceptualization of a statement. This process is called thematic analysis (Groat and Wang, 2013b; Kvale, 2007a; Miles et al., 2014; Sommer and Sommer, 2002), further explained in section 3.7.3.

Considering Sommer and Sommer's (2002) recommendation about the importance of pilot testing prior to the actual interview, three pilot interviews were conducted separately with one service provider (visitor guide) and two visitors (1 national and 1 expatriate) at Qal'at Al Bahrain site museum to test the questions clarity, interviewing, transcribing and analysis procedures, as well as learning from the pilot testing to fix and establish the final protocol. After the pilot study was completed, the researcher transcribed and coded the data for initial analysis (Figure 3.5).

(0:15) May: Nice to meet you Mrs. Leena. As an employee in Bahrain Museum, please tell us what is your position and duties in the museum. I would really like to know how does the museum function and what have been done to enrich the identity and culture in Bahrain.

(00:40) Leena: Well, I've joined the directory of culture in 2008 and it was my first job. In the beginning I was employed as a "visitor guide" and after that I moved to the educational section in the museum, particularly through the workshops and seminars prepared and given by the museum for the sake of awareness, entertainment and education. We established a club named: "Ankeero children club" which mainly aims to attract children and educate them about the Bahrain culture and identity. We established the club to create a new knowledgeable generation from early age. The club was founded in 2009 and it's still functioning till today and every month we organise one to two workshops.

(1:22) May: Interesting, since that you are working in museums and mainly in organising those workshops, where are they held? And could you describe what exactly happens in a workshop day.

(1:42) Leena: Initially we start the workshops by a guided tour through the museum to show them the museum contents and exhibits to ensure their understanding and appreciation to museum goods and collection, because all the conducted workshops are purely related to the museum collection, the museum itself or the adjacent archaeological site. So after the guided visit I take them to the outdoor yard.

(2:02) May: Okay, so from your experience and personal point of view, what is your favourite place in the museum building with reference to the conducted workshops?

(2:20) Leena: Among the entire museum halls, I personally prefer "Middle Dilmun hall" because I see it as the book of Dilmun, because as you reach to middle Dilmun hall you can easily understand and value the history or old times of Bahrain, I mean Dilmun. In addition to that, once the visitor arrives to this hall he/she and appreciate its contents will be able to anticipate the subsequent stages. Therefore, most of the workshops are focused on this stage "Middle Dilmun". However, there are other halls for Early Dilmun, late Dilmun, Taylos and others but due to the richness of middle Dilmun era, I was not able to cover it since in the conducted workshops since 2008 till today.

(2:49) May: Wow! I'm amazed

(2:52) Leena: Yeah, because it's simply like a storybook and there is much to read between the lines.

Figure 3.5: Samples of pilot interview transcriptions and initial coding

The initial analysis and coding of the three pilot interviews confirmed the clarity and the reliability of the questions but called for a critical look into the interviewee's selection criteria. For example, a visitor guide cannot provide a clear answer to this question: "What are the motivations of the current developments?", as it requires the voice of decision-makers, architects, and museum experts, while the nationals and expatriates could all fit under the distinctive visitors' category because of the weight carried by their interests, motivations, and collective memory. Accordingly, the protocol was fixed as presented in Appendix D.

Twenty-two interviews were conducted in this study with 11 service providers and 11 visitors. Most interviews, with either visitors or service providers, were carried out in the four Historic Site Interpretation Centers under investigation, while some were carried out in Bahrain Authority for Culture and Antiquities offices,

and a few others via telephone and e-mail as participants were outside Bahrain during the time of interview.

The time and the flow of the interview were not identical because some participants allowed very little interview time and others provided short answers, difficult to exploit, whereas some questions exceeded the data accuracy saturation mark. As discussed earlier in this chapter, the demographic and background questions were left to the end of the interview to provide the interviewees with enough confidence to express their opinions and experience and avoid any risk of being intrusive or invasive. Regarding the consent form (Appendix E), some participants agreed to provide their written consent, while others preferred to give verbal consent instead, at the end of the recorded interview. It should also be noted that some participants preferred to use pseudonyms instead of their initials for personal reasons.

After the completion of each interview, the researcher transcribed the recordings and prepared the interview materials for analysis. Some interviews were in both Arabic and English languages, so the researcher translated the interviews literally into English and included all breaks and repetitions. Prior to the analysis stage, the researcher arranged a follow-up discussion at the interview site or submitted the transcripts to the participants, via e-mail, to ensure that the transcriptions are correct and free of any flows and bias. To this end, reliability, and validity of the interview findings are achieved by the interviewees and by continually checking the consistency of the findings against the research inquiry.

With the research design and methodological approach laid out and given that the approach is based on case studies, an understanding of the contextual setting is needed.

3.5 Contextual Setting: Bahrain

This section presents the contextual setting and its selection rationale in relation to the research objectives, including the rationale and justification of selecting the four case studies with an emphasis on their contextual relationship to the historic site.

3.5.1 Rationale and Justification of Selecting the Research Setting; Bahrain

Alongside the fact that Bahrain is the authors' home country, where knowledge of context, language, history, and well as access to information is important to conduct this study, it also has historical status though varied historic vestiges that were only internationally recognized in the 19th century (Insoll et al., 2016). They included inscriptions, burial mounds, temples, and other sites such as mosques and cemeteries. There are also a number of vestiges of prehistoric sites of Dilmun civilization settlements such as Qal'at Al Bahrain (Fibiger, 2011; Heritage, 1993a). Such sites confirmed a continuous human occupation of more than 3,000 years. In addition, the vestiges indicate Bahrain's connection to other civilizations such as Mesopotamia and The Indus Valley (MOI, 2004; Smith, 2013).

In 1953, a Danish archaeological expedition arrived in Bahrain and led to many discoveries that shed the light on the ancient history and civilization of the area (Heritage, 1993a; Insoll et al., 2016). The search for vestiges continued with major archeological explorations carried out by local and international expertise (Al-Khalifa, 2011).

In 1988, the Bahrain National Museum was built to conserve and preserve the rich archeological collection explored in Bahrain such as artifacts and archival documents (Jeong and Hae., 2016). This museum falls under the category of 'loose fit', as it is object-oriented and has an obstruction relation to context as described in

Chapter 2 (Section 2.2.3). In 2008, Qal'at Al Bahrain site museum was built nearby Qal'at Al Bahrain to preserve and display artifacts that were moved from the nearby site. In other words, the site museum was specifically built to interpret Qal'at Al Bahrain historic site. In addition, Qal'at Al Bahrain site museum was built responding to a UNESCO's inscription in 2005. Ultimately, two historic sites in Bahrain were listed as UNESCO World Heritage Sites. The first site Pearling Testimony of an Island of Economy inscribed on 2012 and the Dilmun Burial Mounds sites were inscribed in 2019 (BACA, 2019c).

The rich cultural heritage in Bahrain shaped the trend of the growing number of new museums such as Historic Site Interpretation Centers, visitor centers and cultural institutions. These interpretive centers are designed for both exhibition and interpretation purposes. Hence, Bahrain as a contextual setting for this study is appropriate to explore and answer the main research question, as it has the main components of this research namely, Historic Site Interpretation Centers and historic sites. In addition, these offer the potential to represent different contextual configurations and relationships between the historic site and the historic site interpretation centers, as further presented next.

3.5.2 Rationale and Justification of Selecting the Four Case Studies

Among the many Historic Site Interpretation Centers in Bahrain, Qal'at Al Bahrain and site museum, Shaikh Salman Bin Ahmed Al Fateh Fort and exhibition center, Bu Maher Fort and visitor center, and Al Khamis Mosque and visitor center were selected as case studies for this research. These settings were chosen due to their national, historical, and cultural importance and their ability to represent different relationships with their own specific context (Figure 3.6).

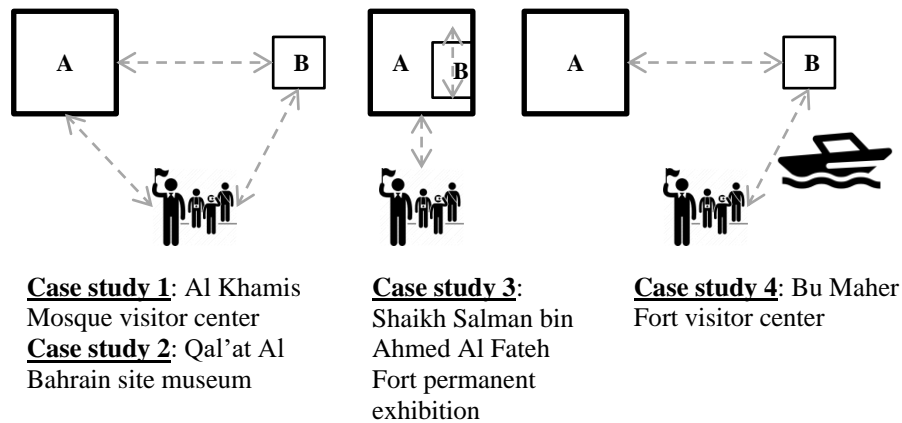


Figure 3.6: Different relationships between Historic Site Interpretation Centers and historic sites in Bahrain.

A: Represents the historic site (in situ) and B: Represents the historic site interpretation center (in context)

Figure 3.6 illustrates the different relationships between the contextual settings 'in situ' and 'in context' of each of the considered case studies. Qal'at Al Bahrain site museum and the Al Khamis Mosque visitor center are located nearby the historic site. The contextual setting provides an interchangeable walking path between the historic site and the site museum. Shaikh Salman Bin Ahmed Al Fateh permanent exhibition is located within the related historic site, which means that people can only reach the permanent exhibition by accessing the historic site itself, whereas Bu Maher Fort visitors' center is situated near the historic site, and is only accessible by water ferry, then the setting provides an interchangeable walking pattern between the historic site and the visitor center. These relationships are the core of this study, while it aims to evaluate the Historic Site Interpretation Centers physical features in conveying meaning from historic site to visitors and explore the elements that shape and form the stakeholders' views as hypothesized.

Regarding the second objective of this study, each contextual setting interprets a different historic site narrative that the visitor may or may not know, as

the given examples below hold different historic narratives. These interpretation strategies may affect them differently. For instance, Al Khamis Mosque was used for worship until the 1960s, and the yard nearby the mosque served as a traditional market, known as “Souq Al Khamis” (Insoll et al., 2016). While, Qal’at Al Bahrain had a series of human occupation, and what could be presently viewed is the last one (Portuguese) and the rest remains hidden until today. Today, these sites are not having similar functions to those held in the past, instead they are touristic landmarks that reflects Bahrain’s heritage. Also, both have interpretive centers to display their collections and to convey their significance to visitors, the same applies to the other cases. This phenomenon remains the heart of this research, which is to explore the contribution of these centers to convey meanings from historic sites to visitors in Bahrain.

With the context described and justified, an understanding of the methods of sampling is required to account the possible impacts of participants’ classifications on the overall research findings.

3.6 Methods of Sampling: Online Survey and Open-Ended Interview

3.6.1 Online Survey Participants

A random sample of 113 participants (among the author’s network), all residing in Bahrain, either Nationals or expatriates, agreed to participate in the online English and Arabic survey which was distributed through the author’s personal Instagram and through WhatsApp with the help of a group of public figures in Bahrain as described in section 3.4.2.2. The survey targeted Bahrain’s residents who visited or intend to visit the four case studies including historic sites and Historic Site Interpretation Centers. The respondents were asked to answer the survey questions presented in Appendix B. The exact number of participants of the survey were

identified as 2/3 female and 1/3 male (Table 3.4). The participants' age ranged between 20 and 50 years as indicated in Table 3.5.

Table 3.4: Distribution of online survey participants' gender

Gender	Number	Percentage
Male	44	39%
Female	69	61%
Total	113	100%

Table 3.5: Distribution of online survey participants' age

Age	Number	Percentage
20-29	19	17%
30-29	45	40%
40-49	23	20%
50 +	26	23%
Total	113	100%

The participants' nationality and role - service provider or visitor - were not considered, because they should have no impact on the results of the online survey as the main purpose of this instrument is to have a general insight on the participants' preferences, experience and opinion regarding the provided services at the given contexts.

3.6.2 Participants in the Semi-Structured Open-ended Interview

A random sample of twenty-two participants represents two categories: 11 service providers and 11 visitors. Participants in the service providers group were considered according to their role (decision maker, archeologist, curator, visitor guide, and receptionist) and their professional affiliation (Bahrain Authority for Culture and Antiquities, the four case studies under investigation and architectural firms). Visitors were selected randomly based on their own free will (approved/disapproved the participation) and for their presence at the four research

sites. The number of participants at each research sites was not identical but determined by the size of the staff at each location (Table 3.6).

Table 3.6: Distribution of staff in the four case studies

Location	Staff size	Role
Qal'at Al Bahrain	>15	Director, receptionist, visitor guides, tickets seller and security guards
Shaikh Salman Bin Ahmed Al Fateh	>10	Director, visitor guide, tickets sellers and security guards
Bu Maher Fort	>6	Tickets sellers and security guards
Al Khamis Mosque	>3	Receptionist and security guards

Of the 11 service providers who participated in the interview, 3 (14%) were the president of the Bahrain Authority for Culture and Antiquities, 1 archeologist and 1 curator/ archeologist, 1 (5%) was an architect from an international firm, WOHLERT Arkitekter , and 7 (31%) including 3 visitor guides, 3 receptionists and 1 supervisor in the four case studies. While the visitors sum is 11 (50%) distributed between the same case studies (Table 3.7).

Table 3.7: Distribution of open-ended interview participants' number in relation to contextual settings

Location	Participants		Percent
	Service Providers	Visitors	
Bahrain Authority for Culture and Antiquities	3		14%
WOHLERT Arkitekter	1		4%
Qal'at Al Bahrain	4	3	32%
Shaikh Salman bin Ahmed Al Fateh Fort	1	3	18%
Bu Maher Fort	1	4	23%
Al Khamis Mosque	1	1	9%
Total	11	11	100%

Most of the participants preferred to conduct the interview anonymously and declined to be recorded, except the decision-makers, archaeologists, curators, and the

architect accepted the recording and the disclosure of their names. Table 3.8 presents the 22 participants' demographics; the underlined are the given names and the rest are pseudonyms to protect the confidentiality and anonymity of the participants.

Table 3.8: Description of open-ended interview participants

Participant Name	Gender	Category / Rank	Location	
Sh. Mai Bint Mohamed Al Khalifa*	Female	President	Bahrain Authority for	
Dr. Salman Al Mahari*	Male	Archeologist	Culture and	
Dr. Nadine Boksmati-Fattouh*	Female	Archeologist /Curator	Antiquities	
Mr. Claus Wohlerl*	Male	Architect	WOHLERT Arkitekter	
Mrs. Layla	Female	Visitor guide	Qal'at Al Bahrain	
Mrs. Noora	Female	Visitor guide		
Mrs. Sameera	Female	Visitor guide		
Mr. Mohamed	Male	Receptionist		
Ms. Emile	Female	Visitor		
Mrs. Sonia	Female	Visitor		
Ms. Fatima	Female	Visitor		
Mr. Mahmoud Al Binkhalil*	Male	Director		Sh. Salman bin Ahmed
Mr. Salem	Male	Visitor		Al Fateh Fort

Table 3.8: Description of open-ended interview participants (cont'd)

Participant Name	Gender	Category / Rank	Location
Mr. Mahmoud Al Binkhalil*	Male	Director	Sh. Salman bin Ahmed
Mr. Salem	Male	Visitor	Al Fateh Fort
Ms. Dalal	Female	Visitor	
Mr. Saleh	Male	Visitor	
Mr. Aziz	Male	Receptionist	
Mr. Ahmed	Male	Visitor	Bu Maher Fort
Mr. Khalid	Male	Visitor	
Mr. Osama	Male	Visitor	
Mr. Bassam	Male	Visitor	
Mr. Jassim	Male	Receptionist	
Mrs. Amal	Female	Visitor	Al Khamis Mosque

*Indicates the real participant names. Others are given names.

3.7 Data Analysis Procedures

The nature of research design, data collection tools and data sources as illustrated in Figure 3.1, call for three different analytical approaches. The first one is a case study descriptive analysis of archival architectural drawings at site, building and interpretation levels. The second one is a quantitative data analysis of numerical results from archival visitors' statistics, online survey, and unobtrusive observations, using tabulation and graphical presentation techniques. Finally, a qualitative data analysis of interview transcripts using thematic analysis techniques, and analysis of photographs taken by the author or posted on Bahrain Authority for Culture and Antiques' Instagram account using content analysis techniques is developed. Figure 3.7 illustrates the data analysis framework.

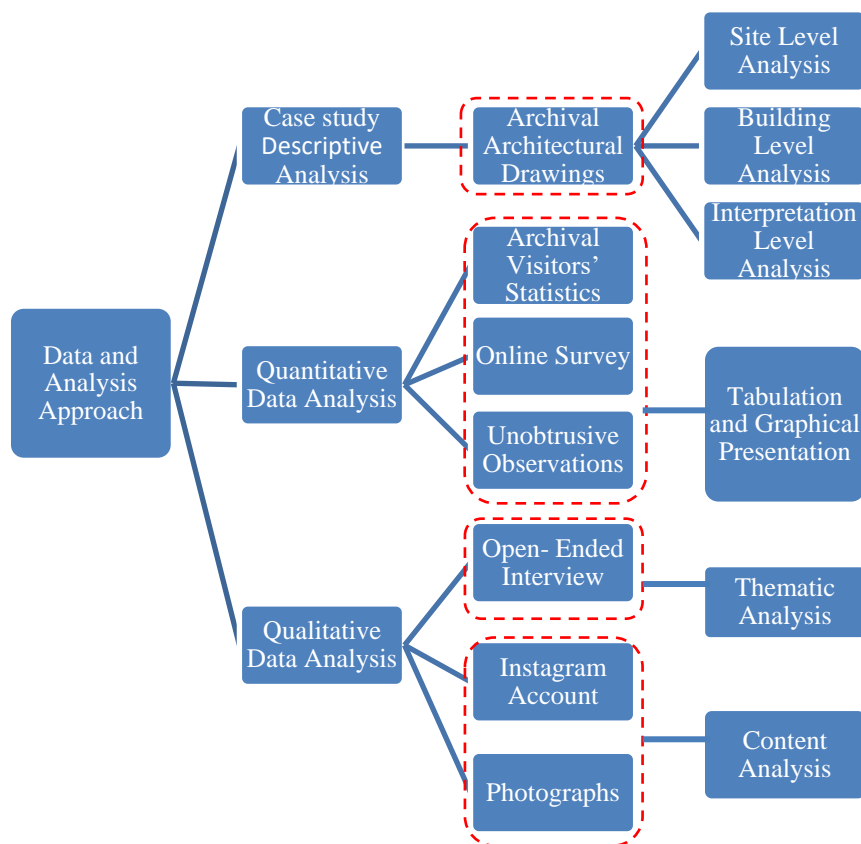


Figure 3.7: Analysis framework illustrating the analysis approach, data sources and the analysis techniques

3.7.1 Case Study Architectural Analysis: Site, Building and Interpretation Levels

The architectural analysis was carried out on the four Historic Site Interpretation Centers at three levels. The first level attempted to evaluate the site and its contextual configuration. Here, the analysis looked at both the relationship between the historic site and its surrounding and the relationship between the historic site and the Historic Site Interpretation Centers in terms of architectural features, scale, proposed modes of accessibility to the context and proposed movement patterns between the two settings. The second level aimed to evaluate the architecture of the building focusing on the general appearance and spatial layout to assess its physical contribution to meaning-making. The last analytical level evaluated the interpretation generated by exhibits and presentation techniques. This level focused on the types of exhibits as archival records or display objects at small, medium, and large scales, as well as the site itself as the main object of interpretation. In addition, it focused on the presentation techniques either textual, technological (i.e. digital), or traditional techniques. As a multi-level approach, the architectural analysis attempted to evaluate the contribution of the physical features and the applied display strategies in conveying meaning from historic site to visitors.

3.7.2 Quantitative Data Analysis: Tabulation and Graphical Presentation Techniques

The quantitative data analysis covered the visitation records, the online survey results, and the field observational notes. Visitation records were graphically summarized using Microsoft Excel software. This descriptive analysis attempted to compare the number of visitors among the four case studies considering their popularity. The visitors' records highlighting the visitation levels during a one-year period (3.4.2.1), helped to identify the relationships between the visiting patterns and

the weather condition.

Second, the online survey was conducted using Google Forms, an online survey platform. After receiving the participants' responses, the data was automatically translated into percentages. However, there were two sets of survey; the first was in English and the second in Arabic. 11 (84.6%) of the survey questions were fixed alternative questions as shown in the survey questions (Appendix B). For these questions, the online survey descriptive analysis attempted to compare the participants' responses in relation to their visitation patterns, perception, experience, and concerns.

Third, after the completion of the observation sessions at the four case study locations, the results and field notes were tabulated and graphically presented again using Microsoft Excel software. The observation sessions were classified into three parts; a) information, including days of the week, time of day, season of the year, both with and without the existence of an event; b) numbers of visitors, gender and both being alone or in group in the historic site and the Historic Site Interpretation Centers, and c) a description of observations using field notes of site visits which focused on activities thought to contribute to the process of meaning-making.

Finally, the observation analysis compared the subjects in their natural setting without intervention and validated the information obtained from both visitors' records and survey responses.

3.7.3 Qualitative Data Analysis: Thematic and Content Analysis

The qualitative data analysis covered the content analysis of the office account of Bahrain Authority for Culture and Antiquities and the photographs taken by the author, as well as the thematic analysis of the interview transcripts.

The content analysis of Bahrain Authority for Culture and Antiquities official

Instagram account sought to know the current and the future events to plan an observational session accordingly, also to scan the different types of events that happens in the four case studies with an attempt to find links between the types of events and the visitation patterns as archived, reported and observed. While the photographs taken by the author during the observation are useful to analyze the visitors engagement and interaction during a visit, both in ‘in situ’ and ‘in context’, as well as to describe whether the visitors were male or female, nationals or expatriates alone or in group, self-guided or tour-guided.

The interview transcripts were analyzed using thematic analysis focusing on meanings of text and on the linguistic expressions (Kvale, 2007a). The analysis procedure was carried out as follows: After finishing the interview transcription, the researcher analyzed, verified, and reported the findings following five steps. The first step was to read, reflect and get familiarized with the transcribed interviews; second, to assign codes describing the text content; third, to identify themes and patterns across the different interviews conducted; fourth, to review and define the themes and finally to produce the report (DiCicco-Bloom and Crabtree, 2006). In the first and second steps, the researcher identified repetition, transitional expressions, and similarities/differences to produce codes and prepare the data for thematic analysis. In the third step, the researcher reviewed the codes, grouped them and then assigned them to appropriate and representative themes (Saldana et al., 2011). After completion of the data analysis, and interpretation, verification is sought to ensure the data reliability and generalization within the context of the study. The data was first validated internally by re-listening to the recorded interviews, re-reading the transcripts, and lastly by re-checking the analysis findings, while external validation was sought by the participants themselves (mainly service providers), as it was

difficult to reach the visitors. Finally, the last part of the interview findings were reported, using quotes and excerpts from the original interview as evidences to support the research argument, and considering the similarities / contrasting ideas in relation to the participants category to gain a better understanding of the phenomenon under study.

3.8 Summary

Using a convergent mixed research approach that combined case study, quantitative and qualitative methods should enable this research to seek a true in-depth understanding of the phenomenon under investigation. It is believed to be adequate and in synergy with the research objectives of understanding the visitors' experience with the services proposed as a meaning-making by historic sites and amenities. Further, the approach, using the constructivist paradigm, includes processes by which the data collection is validated and verified as reliable, whereas the quantitative and qualitative data analysis ensured that the survey and interview participants' points of view on Historic Site Interpretation Centers are grounded in their own experiences, thus, giving the research a solid body of knowledge and materials to be further analyzed and developed in chapters 4 and 5.

Chapter 4: Case Study and Visitors' Descriptive Analysis

4.1 Preface

This chapter consists of two parts. The first part is an in-depth analysis of the case studies, while the second part, presents the descriptive analysis of the visitors records and experience at the four selected sites in Bahrain, as introduced in chapter 3 (Section 3.5.2). In more details, the first part aims to evaluate the Historic Site Interpretation Centers' physical features and applied display strategies in conveying meaning from historic site to visitors, with an emphasis on the relationships between first, the interpretive center and its context, second the interpretive center architectural appearance and spatial layout, and finally the implemented presentation techniques used at both the interpretive center and the historic site. The second part presents a descriptive analysis of the visitation records and the elements that shape and form the visitors' perception and emotional experience as reported through the online-survey (Appendix B), and as observed on site (Appendix C).

In the study of the architectural characteristics or features of the case studies, one tangible aspect of the environment in Bahrain is highly considered in the analysis, that of the potential impact of the climate on both the meaning-making and visitors' movement patterns between the historic site and the Historic Site Interpretation Center. In brief, Bahrain's climate is classified as hot desert with two main seasons: an extreme hot summer and a mild winter. High levels of humidity are present throughout the year. During the summer, the temperature ranges between 36°C and 46°C, with high humidity ratio averaging 77% making the summer season uncomfortable, hard to bear and reduces significantly outdoor activities.

4.2 Architectural Analysis of Physical Features and Interpretive Strategies in Historic Site Interpretation Centers

This section examines how the Historic Site Interpretation Center's contextual relationship to the historic site, architectural design, and the interpretive strategies may shape visitors' experience at the four selected case studies. As a corpus, they represent three different contextual configurations and express different relationships to the interpreted historic site (Section 3.5.2 and Figure 3.6). Hence, each Historic Site Interpretation Center exhibits a unique spatial layout, exhibition content, presentation techniques and anticipated visitors' trajectories and experiences.

The case studies are reviewed in chronological order, from oldest to newest. The first case study is Al Khamis Mosque visitor center, which is related to Al Khamis Mosque. It was built in the 8th century as the first mosque erected in Bahrain and is also recognized as one of the oldest in the Persian Gulf region (Insoll et al., 2016). The second case study is Qal'at Al Bahrain site museum. Qal'at Al Bahrain historic site is a testimony to human presence from about 2500 BC to the 16th century AD. It represents the largest archeological site in Bahrain and the Persian Gulf region and was designated as a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 2005. The third case study is Shaikh Salman bin Ahmed Al Fateh Fort permanent exhibition, which is devoted to the history and traditions of the Bahraini royal family, Al Khalifa. Shaikh Salman Bin Ahmed Al-Fateh Fort, also referred to as Riffa Fort, was built during the 17th century. The fourth and last case study is Bu Maher Fort visitor center, solely dedicated to the pearl diving history, in relation to Bu Maher Fort. Bu Maher Fort was built in the 19th century and in 2012, was designated as a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

Each case study will be presented and reviewed on three levels; first, at site level and contextual configuration to explore the relationship between the Historic Site Interpretation Centre and the interpreted historic site, as this relationship is an important feature that determines how meanings are transmitted from the site to the visitors and how such configuration affects the visitors' movement patterns. Second, at the building level, the architectural review is designed to investigate the effects of the Historic Site Interpretation Centres architectural appearance, visual vistas, and spatial layout on the visitors' experience as explored in The New Acropolis Museum in Athens and The National Museum of Roman Art in Merida (Chapter 2; Section 2.3.6). The third level addresses interpretation and exhibits presentation techniques, which aim to examine how 'in situ' and 'in context' dual interpretation contributes in meaning-making process and if it enhances or not, the visitors' perception and emotional experience.

4.2.1 Al Khamis Mosque Visitor Center

Al Khamis Mosque was built over three phases between the 8th and 16th century (Insoll et al., 2016). At first, the mosque was a simple rectangular stone building. During the 11th century, the building was enlarged, and one minaret was added. A second minaret was added two centuries later (Heritage, 1993d). The complex has undergone several renovations during the past two decades by Bahrain Authority for Culture and Antiquities. In 2017, Al Khamis Mosque visitor center was built nearby Al Khamis Mosque to preserve and exhibit artifacts found on site and document the Islamic urban heritage in Bahrain (News, 2017).

4.2.1.1 Site Level: Contextual Configuration

Al Khamis Mosque historic site is in the old city center, also known as "Bilad Al-Qadim" village, of the Capital Governorate (Figure 4.1).

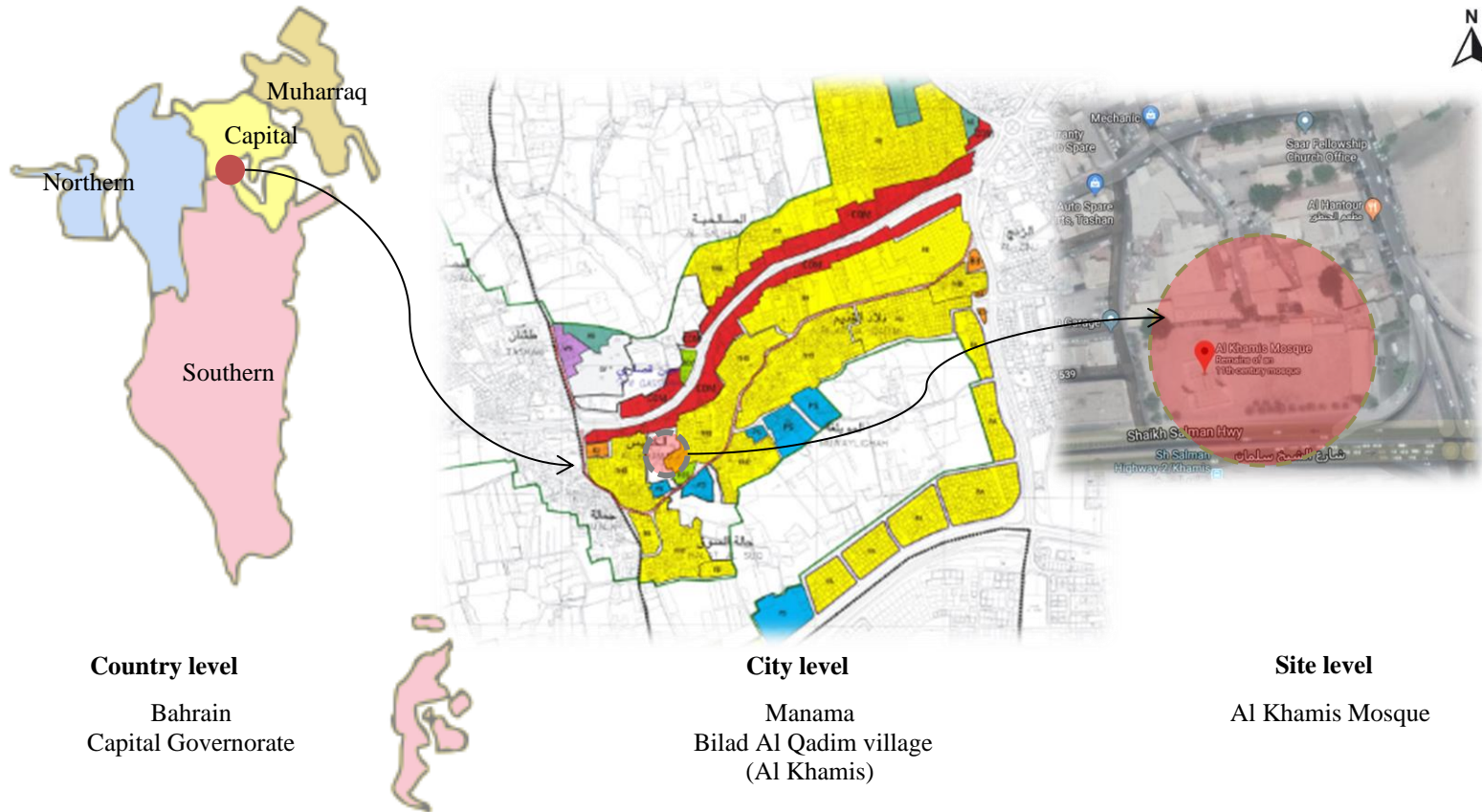


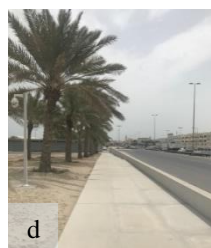
Figure 4.1: Al Khamis Mosque location in relation to the country, the city and immediate surroundings

The historic site is located within an area of national significance formed of different site components including a cemetery, remnants of dwellings and workshops (Insoll et al., 2016). The historic site is surrounded by modern residential and public buildings, such as schools, restaurants, and commercial facilities. The site can be accessed by foot and by vehicles. Access to the site is well defined by an effective road signage (Figure 4.2).

The historic site's main access is to the south. This access was the former main entrance to the mosque courtyard. The courtyard used to be the praying hall and served in the past as a traditional market for the village. Besides the main entrance, there is a second entrance to the east that provides the visitors a shaded path starting right from the parking area, and acts as a background frame for building photo opportunities (Figure 4.2, d). The historic site is located about 75 meters away, a short walk from the visitor center (Figure 4.2, the site plan). This separation distance ensures the preservation and protection of the archaeological site. The visitor center is connected to the site through a perimeter paved pathway that allows the visitor to freely choose to visit the visitor center and/or the historic site as illustrated in (Figure 4.3).



a From the main road



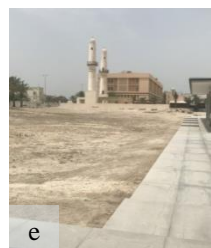
d Walkway between the site



g Between the site and the main road – Looking west



b From the main road (Road Signage)



e Walkway inside the historical site



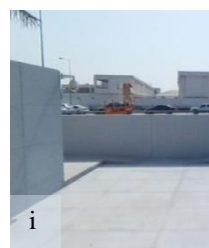
h Between the site and the main road – Looking east



c The main road and the surrounding



f Closer view to the historical site



i Overlooking the school – Looking south



j The visitor center – From the car park

Figure 4.2: Al Khamis Mosque surroundings - Site level analysis

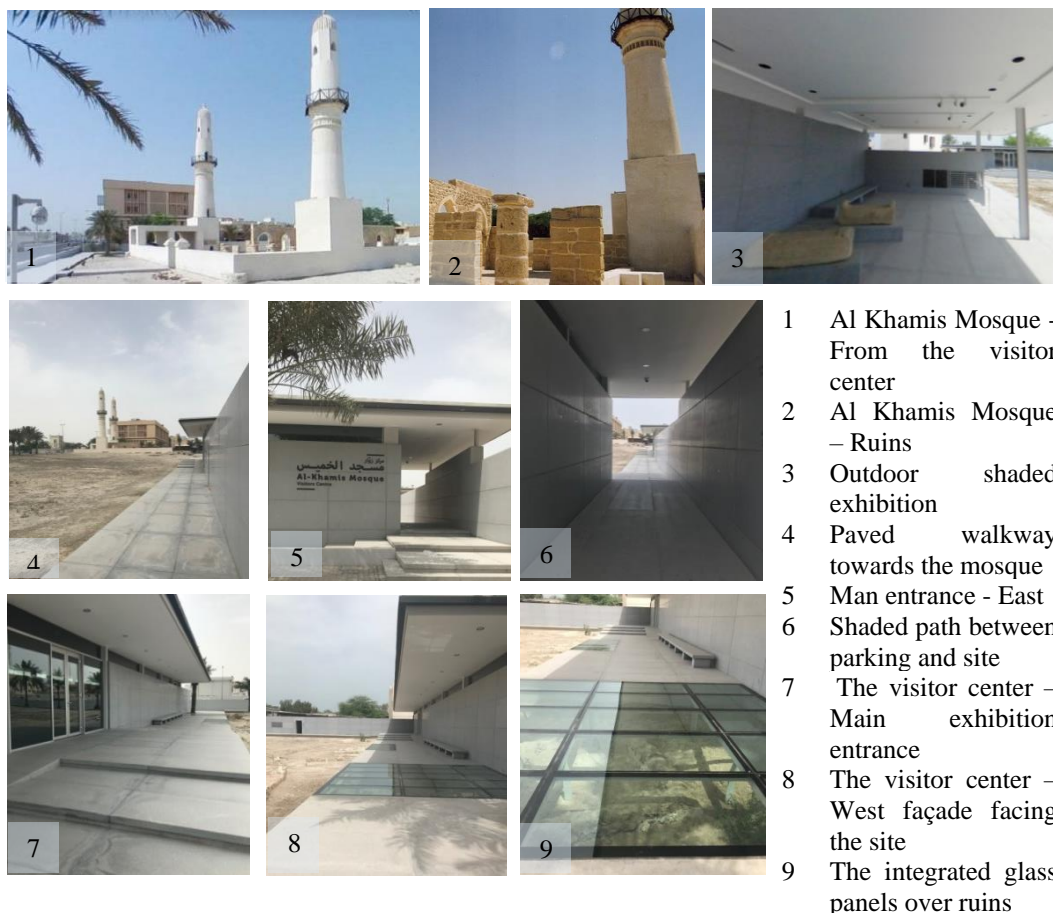
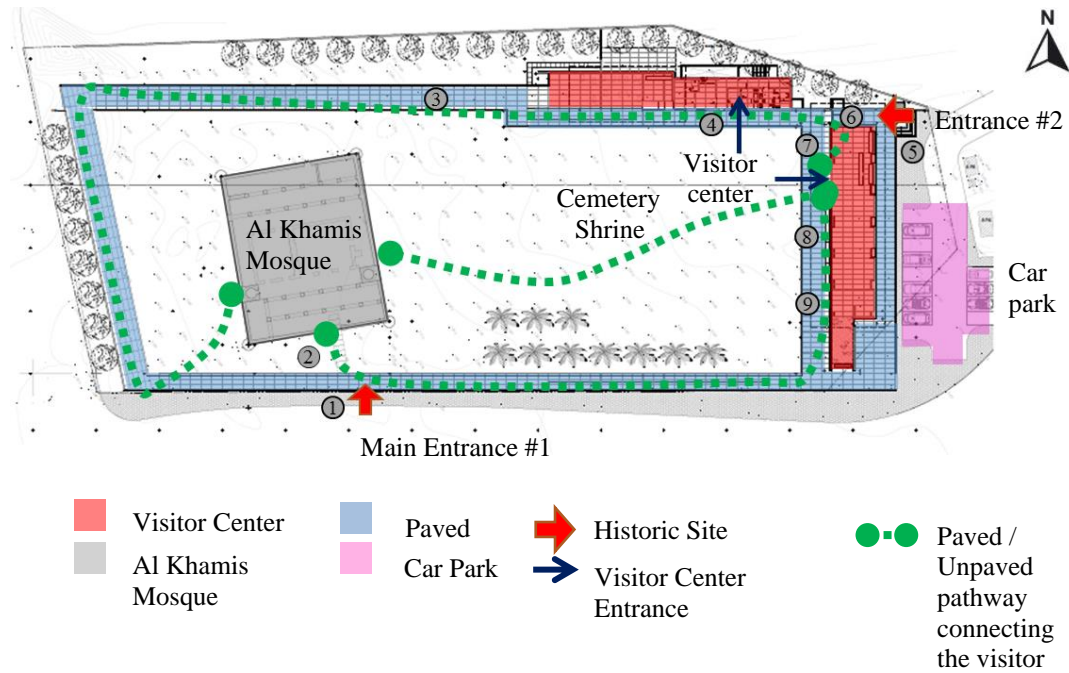


Figure 4.3: Al Khamis Mosque visitor center architectural review

The overall contextual setting provides a paved pathway around the site. This configuration eases the site exploration visually and physically through walking

around the archeological mosque's features including arches, minaret, and other elements (Figure 4.4).



Figure 4.4: Al Khamis Mosque archeological vestiges

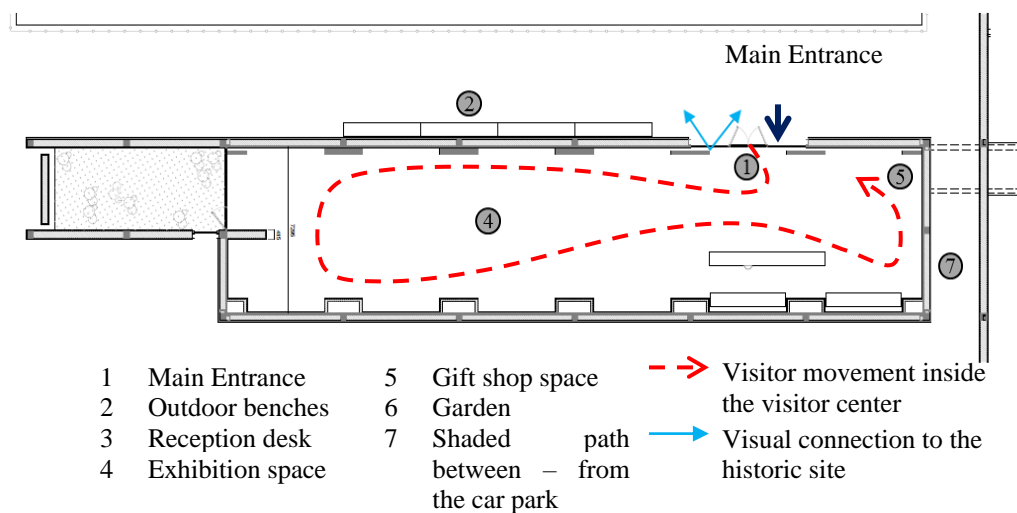
In addition, the site also provides a close visual contact between the visitors and the past, through the glass floor panels that cover the archeological excavations as shown in Figure 4.5.



Figure 4.5: Visual contact through integrated glass floor cover over archeological vestiges

4.2.1.2 Building Level: Architectural Review

The visitor center and the landscape layout were planned and designed through a partnership between an international firm, Wohlert Arkitekter, and a local private architectural firm, Plan Architecture and Design, known as PAD. The visitor center is a rectangular space, 40 meters long and 7 meters wide. The center sits on a pedestal 75 centimeters higher than the road level. The free-flowing plan mainly functions as an exhibition hall along with other supporting facilities such the information desk and a gift shop (Figure 4.6).



Exhibition space

Figure 4.6: Al Khamis Mosque visitor center exhibition space

The exhibition space is naturally lit through clearstory windows to attain different light levels throughout the visitor center and to ensure intensities of light exposure and readability of the artifacts. The exhibition itself was designed to be fluid and allows the visitor to start the visit at any section, while keeping a continuous visual connection to the historic site through the horizontal glazing that forms the entrance to the center (Figure 4.7).

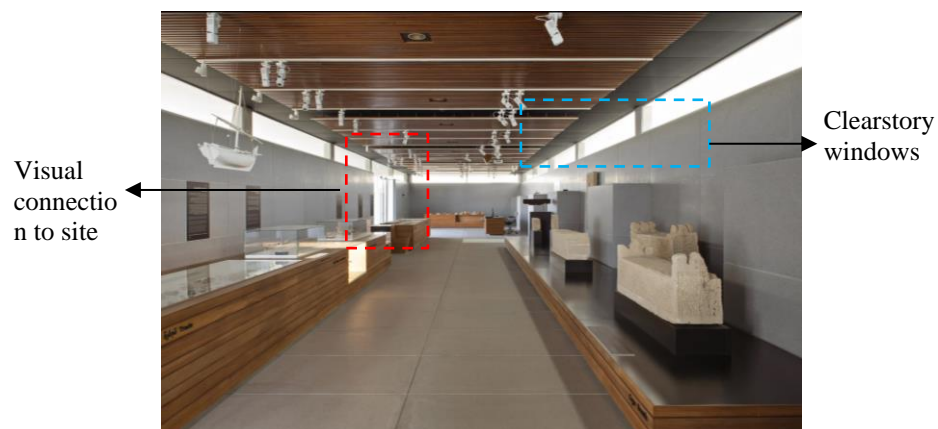


Figure 4.7: Al Khamis Mosque visitor center daylighting strategies and visual connections

This design feature is clearly implemented to enhance the space and encourage the visitors to go and explore in more detail the historic site. Unfortunately, the paved pathway around the historic site is unshaded. Therefore, it may be quite uncomfortable during hot seasons and consequently may well limit the visitors' interest to navigate the site.

4.2.1.3 Interpretation Level: Exhibits and Presentation Techniques

Until the 1960s, Al Khamis Mosque was part of Al Khamis market, which took place every Thursday. Most of the objects in display were originally found in the nearby historic site and stand as a testimony to people's life at that time. On this basis, the exhibits can be categorized as (1) archival documents (i.e. drawings and

historic documents), (2) small objects (i.e. ceramics, metals, and stones) and (3) large objects (i.e. gravestones associated and a single shrine for the entire graveyard).

Al Khamis Mosque visitor center offers different presentation strategies. For instance, the first type of exhibits which are archival documents depends on textual captions and visual illustrations. Additionally, an audio system provides the visitor with voice recording of the original people's interaction in Al Khamis Market. The second type of exhibits made of small objects in glass showcases, and large objects placed on elevated platforms, depends solely on textual captions and visual presentation qualities. In addition, the visitor center exhibits illuminated wall panels, data screens and wall projection facilities. These interpretation strategies are intended to promote and enhance the overall understanding of the historical site and offer multiple communication mediums that address the needs and interests of different visitors. For example, some artifacts such as painted ceramic plates, vases, seals, and stones give evidence about materials, skills, abilities, and ways of communication of the era, (Figure 4.8). However, using textual captions to interpret such fragments may reduce the value of such objects, since these objects are displayed out of their original context.

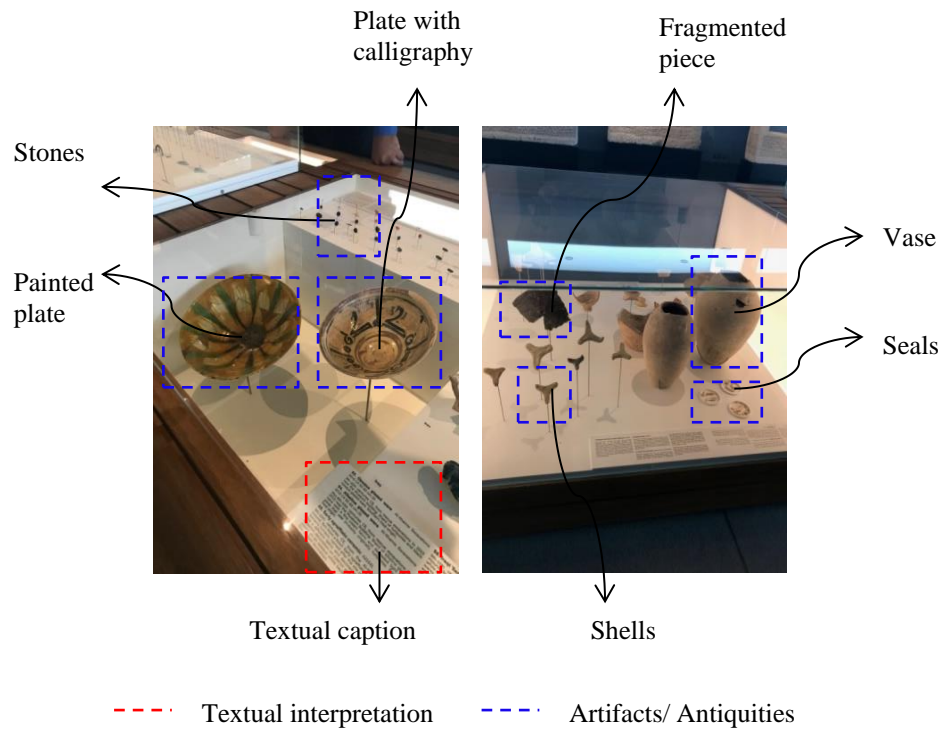


Figure 4.8: Presentation techniques at Al Khamis Mosque visitor center

Additionally, the archeological site has only one information panel at the entry point on the south with general information about the site (Figure 4.9), inclusive of a worded invitation to discover more at the visitor center. This strategy is intended to encourage the visitors to approach the visitor center for further information.

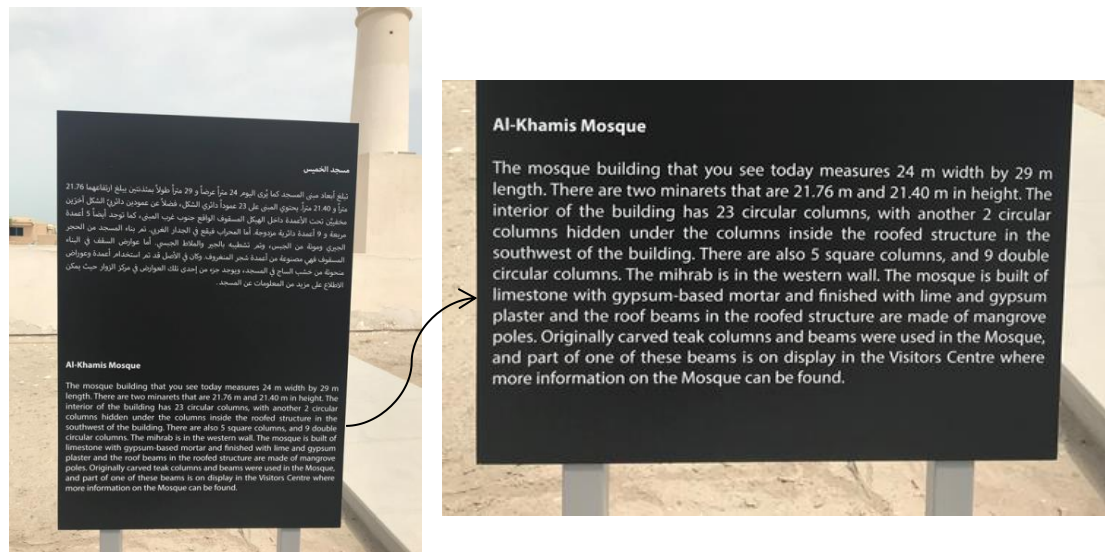


Figure 4.9: Information panel at Al Khamis Mosque historic site

4.2.2 Qal'at Al Bahrain Site Museum

Qal'at Al Bahrain is the largest historic site in the country and one of the most important historic sites in the region. The importance of Qal'at Al Bahrain is derived from its unique historical function. In the past, Qal'at Al Bahrain functioned as a focal point linking between Mesopotamia and the Indus Valley, where different people met, lived and practiced their commerce, and ultimately was a real meeting junction for diverse cultures (MOI, 2004). Qal'at Al Bahrain is a typical tell constructed from successive layers of human occupation dating back to the 3rd millennium (Smith, 2013). On the top of the 12 m tell (i.e. small hill) there is the striking Portuguese fort erected in 1559, which gave the whole site its name, the Portuguese Fort (UNESCO, 2005). Only 25% of the tell has been excavated presenting different settlement typologies: residential, public, commercial, religious and military (missing ref 2004). These important findings testify to its trading role in the past, the site played over centuries. Due to the local, regional and international importance of this archeological site, Bahrain Authority for Culture and Antiquities

built in 2008 an Interpretation Center referred to as Qal'at Al Bahrain site museum (Al-Khalifa, 2011).

4.2.2.1 Site Level: Contextual Configuration

Qal'at Al Bahrain is located on the northern seashore of Bahrain Island, about 6 kilometers away from the capital Manama. It is part of Karbabad village morphology, which is recognized to be a transitional point between the traditional Al Qal'a village and the capital city of Manama (Figure 4.10). Qal'at Al Bahrain has two access points; one is on the south and the second is on the east, mainly used by the visitors coming from the site museum. The fort is located about 350 meters away as measured during this study, a relatively short walk from the site museum.

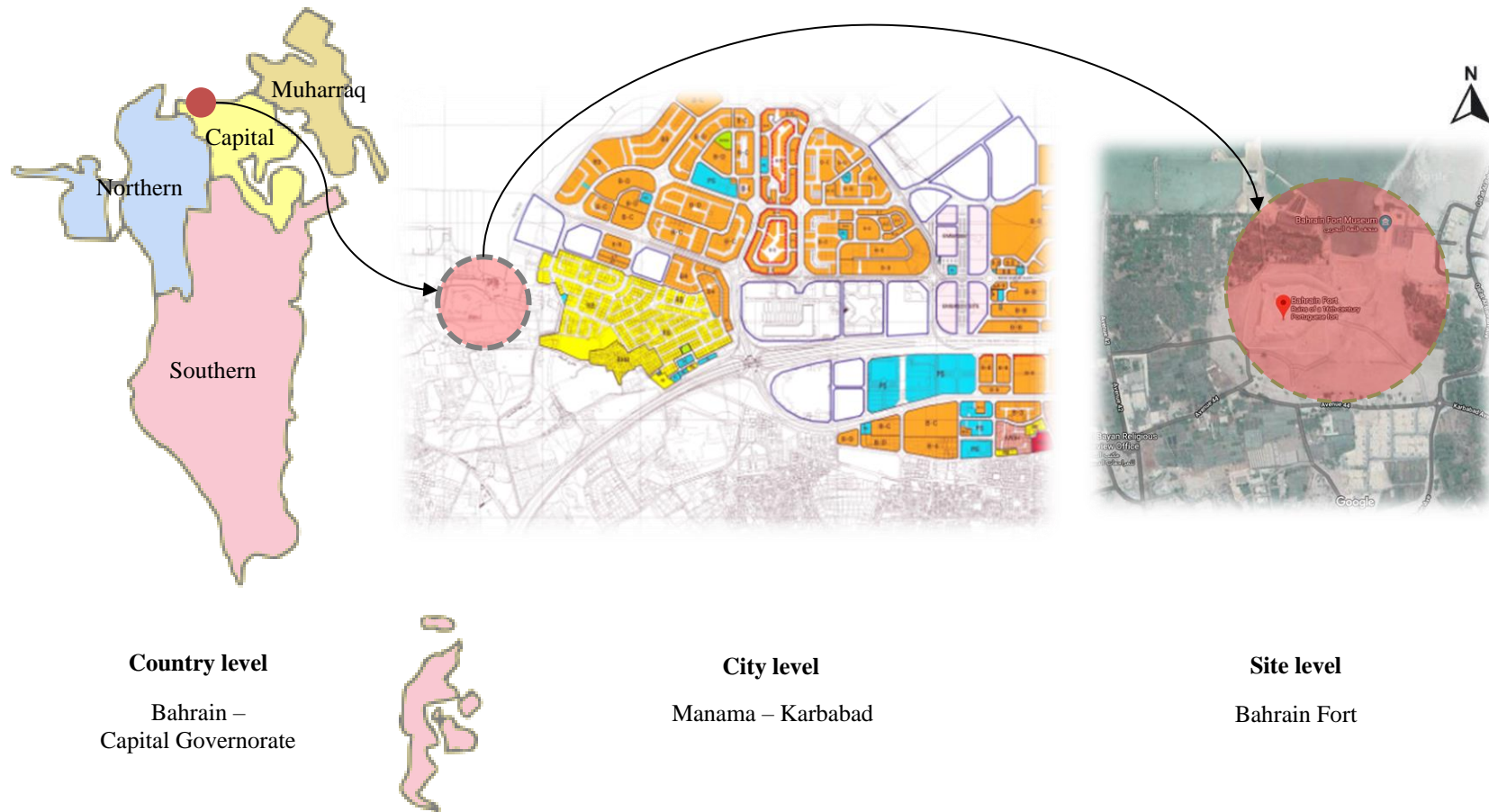
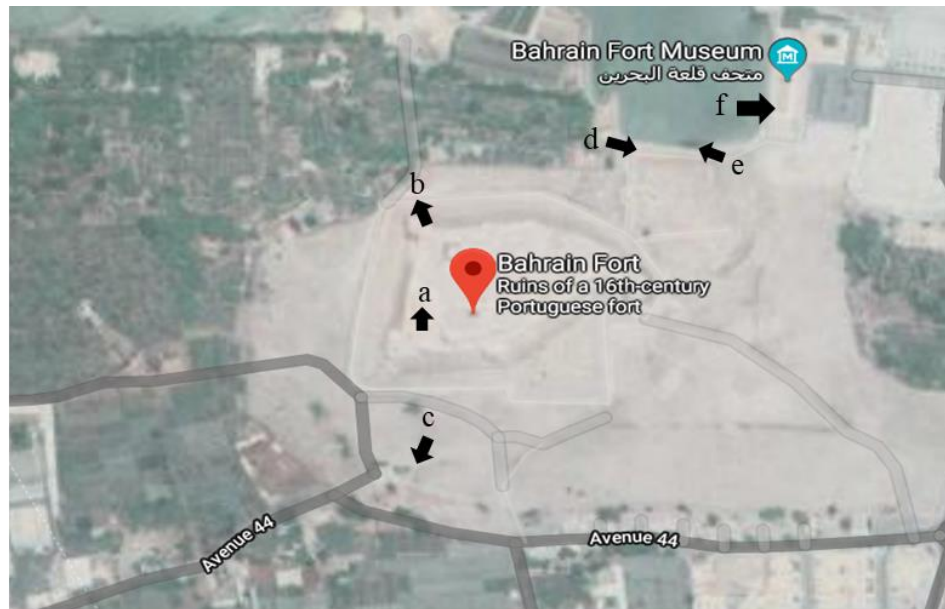


Figure 4.10: Qal'at Al Bahrain location in relation to the country, the city and immediate surrounding

The historic site is surrounded by an attractive seascape and greenery that surrounds the urban infringement (Figure 4.11).



Bahrain Fort (North)– overlooking natural vegetation



Bahrain Fort (North-West) – overlooking Manama skyline



From the Fort (South-West) – overlooking Hillat Abdul Saleh village.



Bahrain Fort walkway (South-East) – Walking towards the Fort



Bahrain Fort walkway (North-West) – Walking towards the Bahrain Fort site museum



Bahrain Fort Site Museum (East) – Bahrain Fort

Figure 4.11: Qal'at Al Bahrain surroundings

Qal'at Al Bahrain historic site represents the richest vestiges of Dilmun civilization including; massive stone walls and different types of arches such as pointed arches and round arches, as these vestigae are a testimony of parts being erected during different time period such as Portuguese, Greek and Islamic (Heritage, 1993a) (Figure 4.12).



Round Arch –
From the Greek Period

Massive Defensive Walls –
From Portuguese Period

Pointed Arch –
From the Islamic Period

Figure 4.12: Qal'at Al Bahrain vestiges from different periods

The site has different architectural features such as a watch tower, below ground rooms and connecting bridges. The site's monumental and defensive architecture is a testimony to the continuous human occupation for almost 4500 years, thus covering most of Bahrain's known history including Dilmun and its successors during Tylos and Islamic periods (UNESCO, 2005).

The overall contextual setting is composed of the museum exhibition halls and administration, the main historic site of Qal'at Al Bahrain and other archeological remains including the Islamic fort and the costal fortress that share the same context (Figure 4.13). Given its size and the different components, it seems logical that the site museum is at the periphery rather than within the heritage site. This is for conservation purposes and to provide the visitor a sighting walk through the different phases that the site went through.

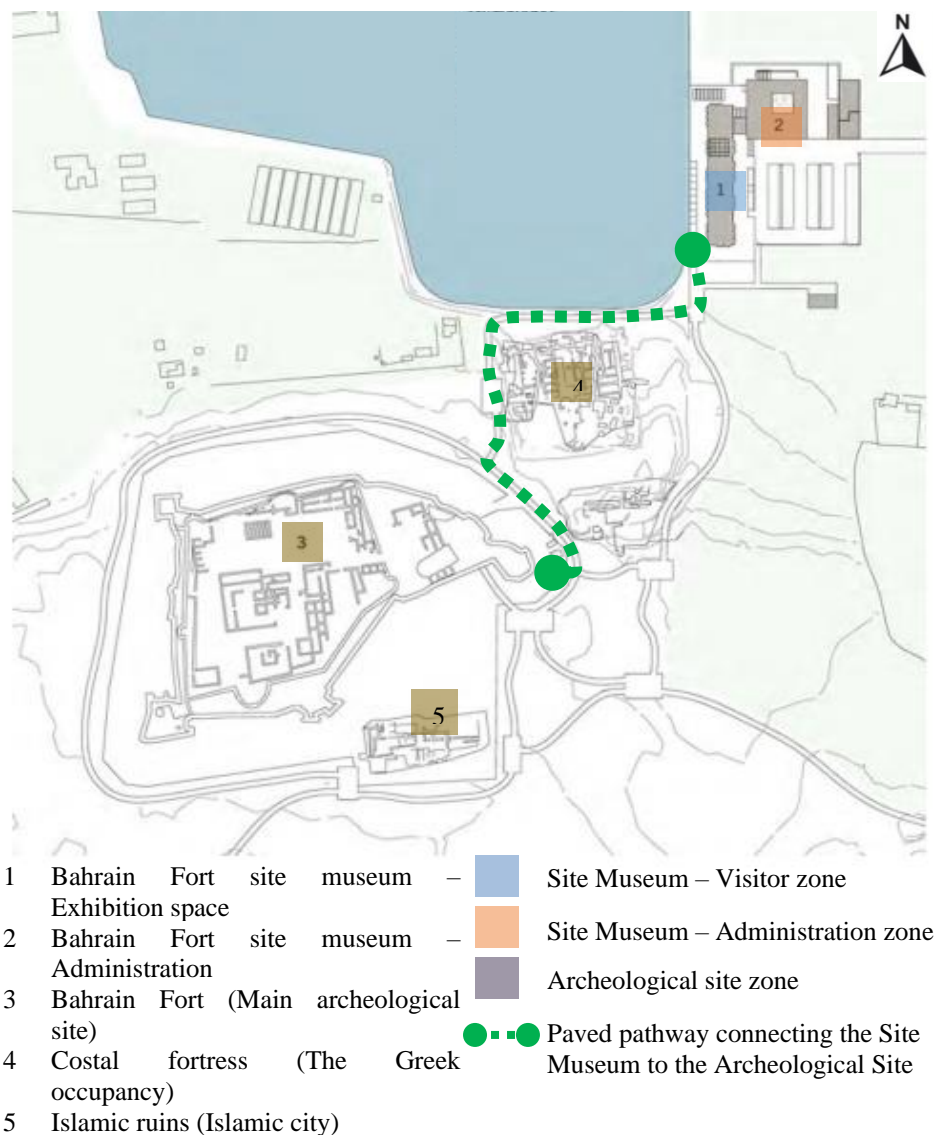


Figure 4.13: Qal'at Al Bahrain contextual setting

Several site visits were conducted to understand Qal'at Al Bahrain contextual setting, preservation, and interpretation efforts, incorporated into the site's message. Qal'at Al Bahrain location offers the visitors multiple exploratory experiences and acknowledges the different forms of economic, political, and social factors that contributed to shaping the overall significance of the site.

4.2.2.2 Building Level: Architectural Review

Qal'at Al Bahrain site museum is located on the land reclamation areas to the east of the historical site, along the waterfront, and covers 2000 square meters. The site museum is composed of exhibition halls, administration block, restaurant/café, gift shop, security/ service block and a car park (Figure 4.14).



Figure 4.14: Qal'at Al Bahrain site museum aerial view and functional components

The site museum was designed by the Danish architectural firm, Wohler Arkitekter (Arkitekter, 2010). This minimalist architectural design of the site museum was intended to create a unique blend with the surrounding by retaining the scale of the adjacent traditional buildings rather than express an introvert architectural style (Arkitekter, 2010). The museum design is integrated to the

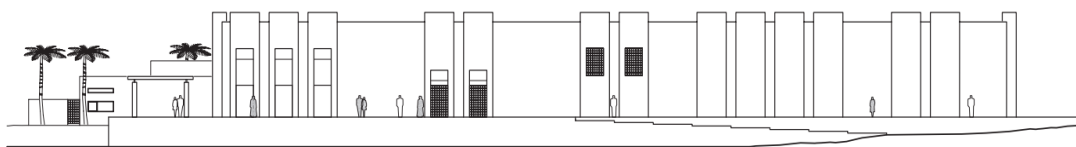
surrounding through the use of some of the local architectural elements such as the entrance courtyard, limited openings to the exterior, and the use of light sandy color on the facades (Figure 4.15).



Site Museum – Inspired by Traditional Architectural Elements



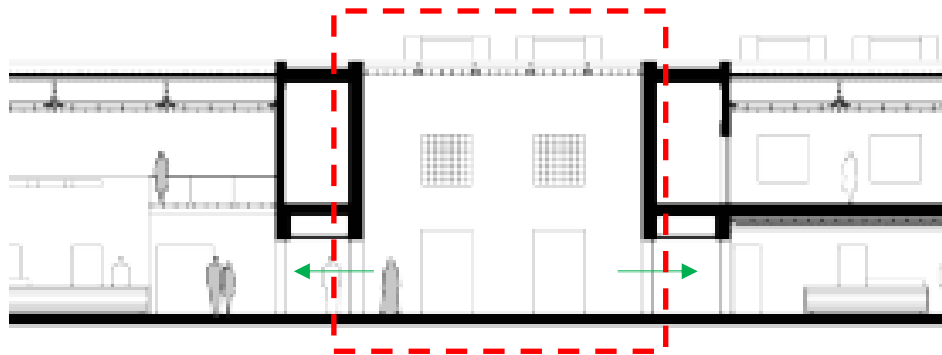
Main Entrance



Front elevation

Figure 4.15: Qal'at Al Bahrain site museum architectural style

In addition, these architectural elements are passive design strategies, reminiscent of the vernacular past traditions used to control excessive heat and lighting levels within buildings. For example, the site museum is mainly accessed through a courtyard that forms a transition between the exterior and interior spaces (Figure 4.16). The courtyard acts as an intermediate point that invites the visitor to a framed view of the historic site or a defined entrance to the site museum. In fact, the platform around the site museum allows the visitors to view the museum's topic of interpretation and to explore the site museum architectural qualities (Figure 4.17).



Section

Figure 4.16: Qal'at Al Bahrain site museum transitional courtyard at the entrance



Framed view from the site museum courtyard towards the historic site



Visual connection between Qal'at Al Bahrain site museums and the historic site

Figure 4.17: Visual connection from Qal'at Al Bahrain site museum to Qal'at Al Bahrain historic site

The exhibition area is designed in harmony with archeological sedimentation levels around the 30-meter long central display area, representing an integrated reconstruction of the archeological strata (Figure 4.18).

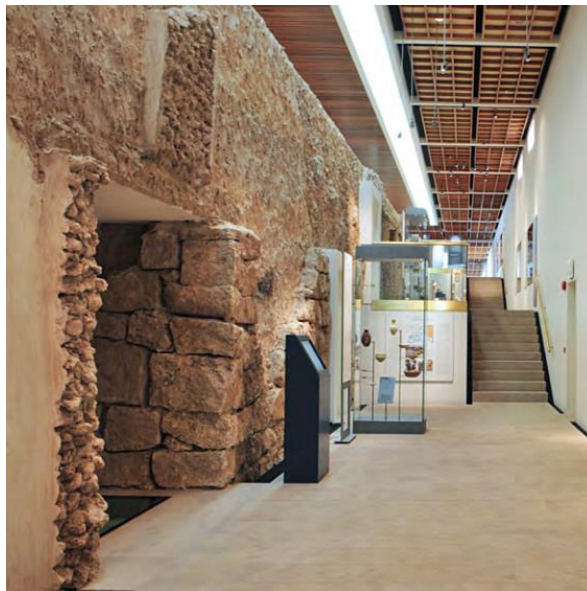
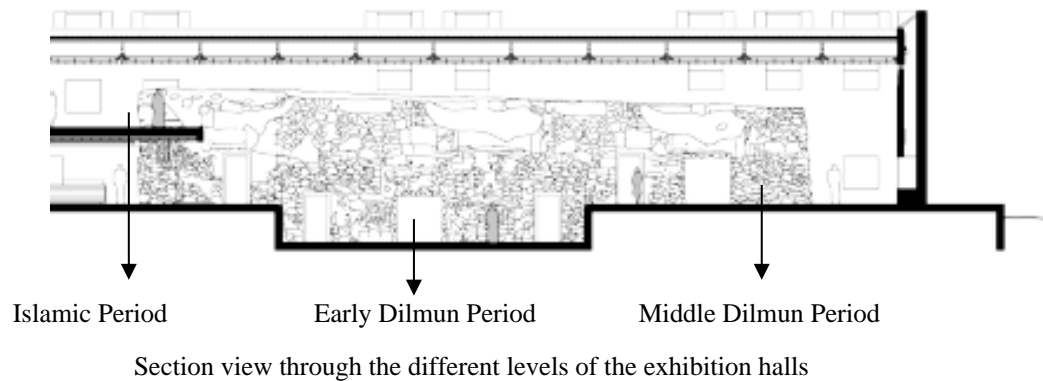


Figure 4.18: Dominant reconstructed archeological wall connecting different exhibition halls at different levels

The exhibition is organized in different levels, with the lower one dedicated to the earliest Dilmun period, and the highest to the Islamic exhibition as illustrated in Figure 4.19 (Arkitekter, 2010).



View from the Middle Dilmun period exhibition hall towards early Dilmun period exhibition hall

Figure 4.19: Qal'at Al Bahrain site museum exhibition halls

Different leveled exhibition halls organized around the massive reconstructed
archeological wall

The site museum (i.e. interpretive center) architectural design provides the visitors free movement and circulation around and within the museum. The exhibition space spatial layout arrangement on different levels, represents the different phases of Qal'at Al Bahrain historic site creation by different successive

human occupation from 2500 B.C. to 1954 A.D. (UNESCO, 2005). This layout plays a critical role in conveying the site museum's message and is anticipated to contribute to meaning-making (Figure 4.20).

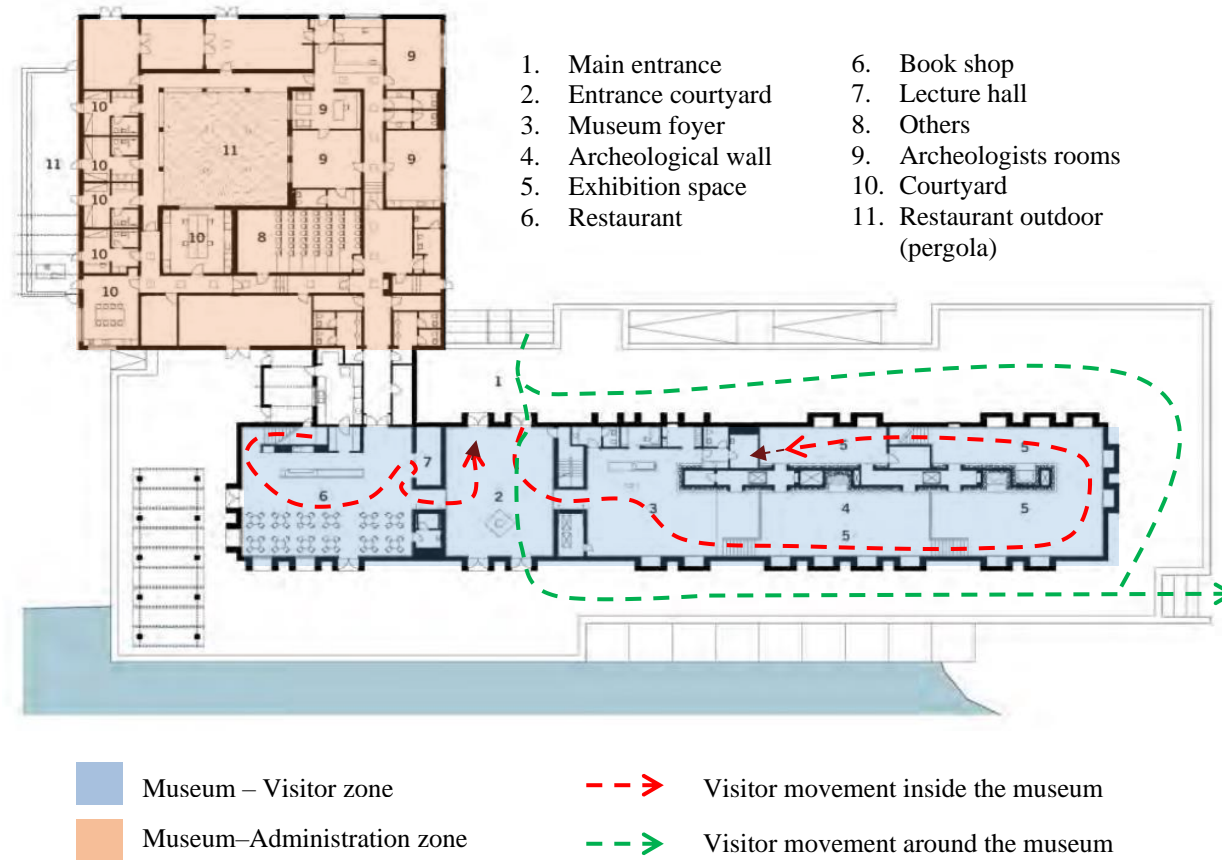
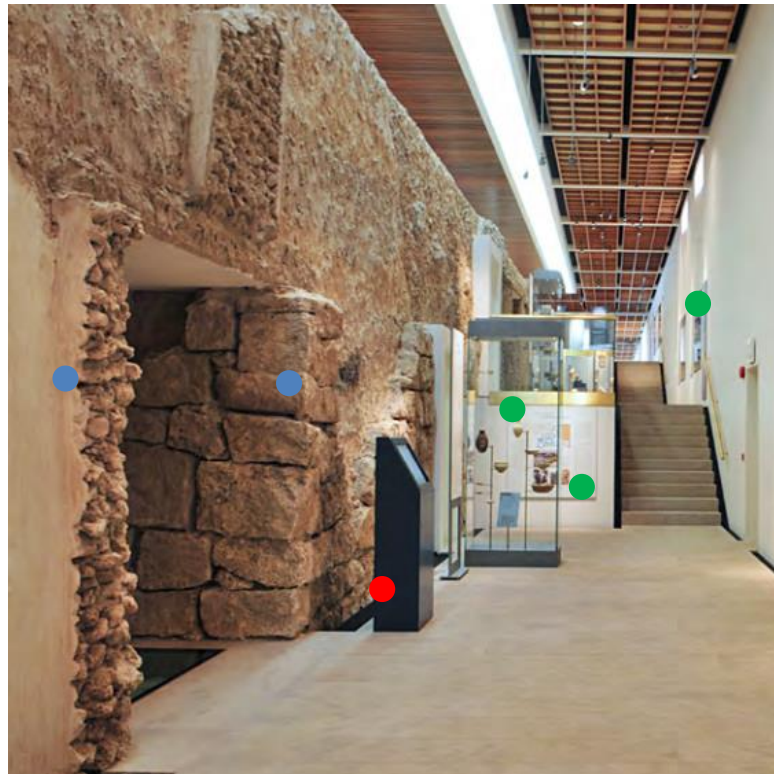


Figure 4.20: Qal'at Al Bahrain site museum plan
 Adapted by the author after Wohlert Arkitekter (2010)

4.2.2.3 Interpretation Level: Exhibits and Presentation Techniques

Qal'at Al Bahrain site museum exhibits a wide range of displays including artifacts, antiques, small and large-scale objects, maps, and figures. These exhibits rely on multiple presentation techniques including traditional, technological, and tactile strategies (Figure 4.21).



- **Tactile:**
 Archeological wall
 Replica
- **Technological:**
 Interactive Screen
- **Traditional:**
 Display case and
 Wall display

Figure 4.21: Different Presentation techniques in Qal'at Al Bahrain site museum

The traditional display techniques include glazed display showcases and display cabinets for artifacts and antiques, as well as wall display boards containing maps, figures, and timelines. On the other hand, technology is used with interactive screens and audio-visual projectors interpreting a specific topic and/or display stands, while the tactile techniques are used in the central display, exhibiting the archeological wall replica that represents different construction techniques.

Regardless of the display strategy, most incorporated textual captions describing the object in display with an aim to meet the educational objectives of an exhibit and visitor's satisfaction (Dumbraveanu et al., 2016; Miklosevic, 2015). Figure 4.22 illustrates the associated textual captions.



Figure 4.22: Textual captions are common communication medium in Qal'at Al Bahrain site museum

Unlike Al Khamis Mosque historic site, Qal'at Al Bahrain heritage site is supported by different presentation techniques including traditional information panels throughout the site, technological techniques in the site audio-guides, art installations, sound and light projection that take place in the evening during scheduled events, and finally tactile interpretation techniques in the whole historic site including the walls and the ancient date press room, known as Madbasa remains (Figure 4.23).



Site informative panels



Site audio guide panels



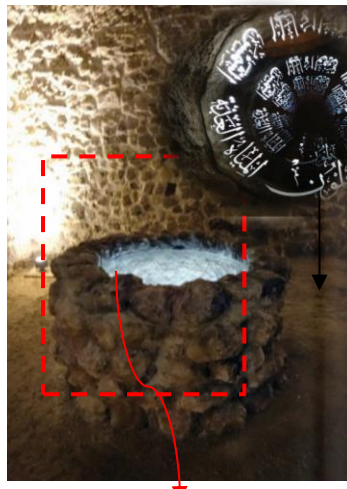
Al Madbasa (i.e. date press) illuminated art installation



Al Madbasa remains (i.e. date press)



ENKI WELL interactive installation



Sound and light projection



An interactive and moving audio visual show. Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Fridays at 7 pm.

● **Tactile:**
Archeological

● **Technological:**
Interactive display

● **Traditional:**
Presentation strategies

Figure 4.23: Presentation techniques at Qal'at Al Bahrain historic site

Such a diversity of presentation and interpretation techniques is best thought of as a medium to establish a connection between the visitors and what they can discover in historic sites with an emphasis on knowledge and leisure (Brochu and Merriman, 2008; Dumbraveanu et al., 2016). Moreover, interpretation improves the people's appreciation of the historical resources presented in the nearby historic site (Van Winkle, 2014). Hence, engaging the visitors at the historic site may leave a long-lasting impression compared to presentation techniques used in the site museum because it provides a full body experience (Cravins, 2014; Macleod et al., 2012).

4.2.3 Shaikh Salman bin Ahmed Al Fateh Fort Permanent Exhibition

Shaikh Salman Bin Ahmed Al Fateh Fort, also called Riffa Fort for its location in the city of Riffa, includes a Historic Site Interpretation Center that is referred to as the "permanent exhibition". The surviving fortification was built atop the remains of an old 17th century fort (Heritage, 1993b). It was built on a high ground facing Hunanaiya Valley in 1812, during the reign of Shaikh Salman bin Ahmed Al Khalifa Al Fateh, Bahrain's president at that time. In the 19th century this fort was the residence of Shaikh Salman bin Ahmed Al Fateh and the seat of government until 1869. This fort also was the place of birth of Shaikh Isa bin Ali Al Khalifa, who ruled Bahrain from 1896 to 1932. Until the restoration and reopening of the site, the fort was considered and continues to be an important historic landmark in Bahrain.

In 1993, the fort was restored and opened its doors to the public with the aim to promote Bahrain's cultural heritage and local architecture that stands as evidence to the memories of Bahrain's ruling family, Al Khalifa. Two decades later, in 2013 Bahrain Authority for Culture and Antiquities built a permanent exhibition (i.e. interpretive center) within the fort's largest courtyard. The permanent exhibition is

intended to showcase the history and lifestyle of Al Khalifa family within the vicinity of the city of Riffa. In addition to its primary exhibition function, the fort hosts cultural events organized by the Bahrain Authority of Culture and Antiquities.

4.2.3.1 Site Level: Contextual Configuration

Shaikh Salman bin Ahmed Al Fateh Fort is in the north-south axis of the southern governorate of Bahrain, called Riffa area (Figure 4.24). The Fort is surrounded by contemporary two to four-story residential blocks (Figure 4.25, b), public service buildings such as schools (Figure 4.25, f), health center, a mosque (Figure 4.25, e), recreational areas, and the Military Museum (Figure 4.25, c).

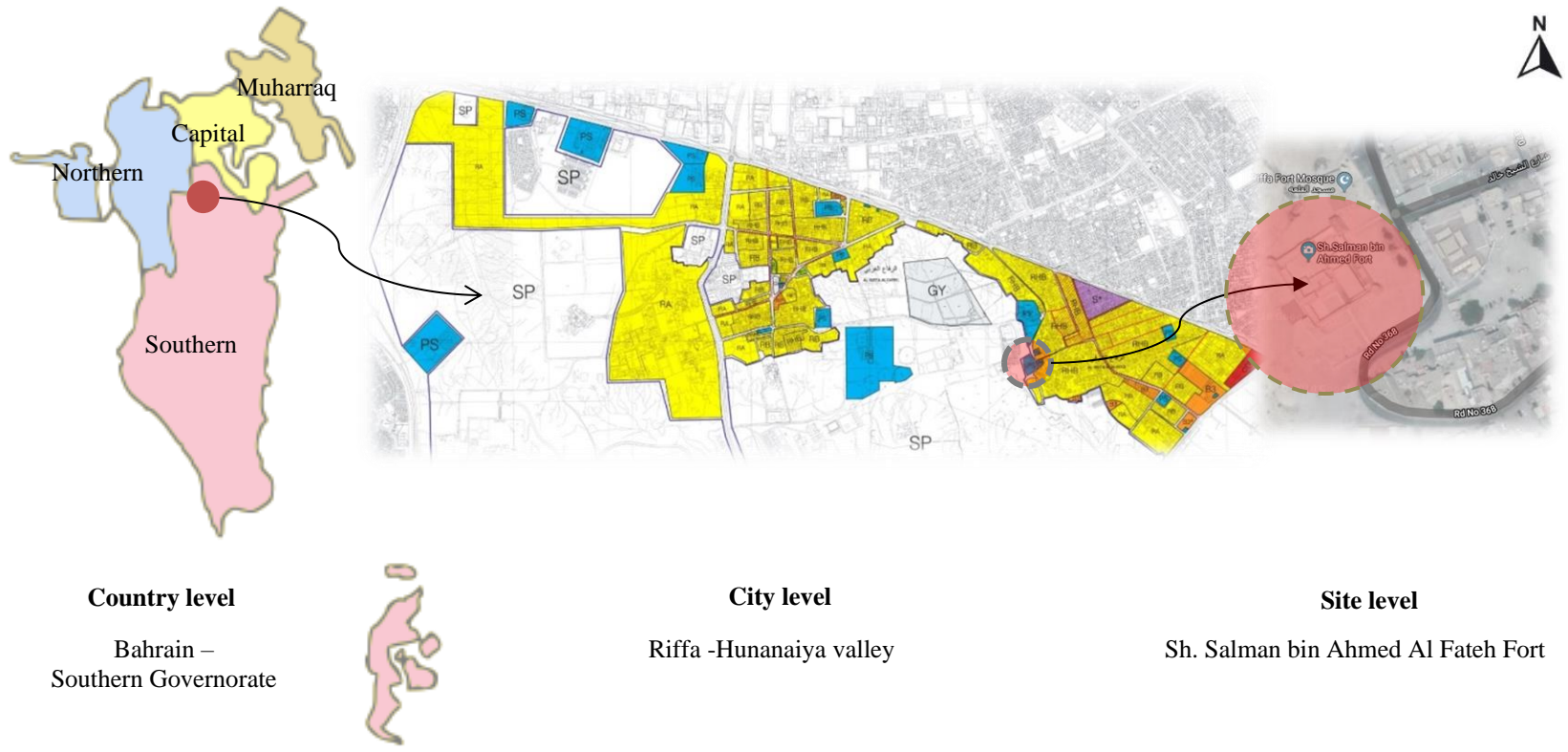


Figure 4.24: Shaikh Salman bin Ahmed Al Fateh Fort location in relation to the country, the city and immediate surrounding



a From the valley



d Road signage



b The valley neighborhood



e The Fort mosque



c Bahrain Military Museum



f Road between the Fort and school

Figure 4.25: Shaikh Salman bin Ahmed Al Fateh Fort surroundings

Shaikh Salman bin Ahmed Al Fateh fort can be reached by private and public land transportation (i.e. car or bus). The visitors are directed by the brown road signage on the main road (Figure 4.25, 4). The brown signboards are specific to tourist attractions (i.e. historic sites, museums, and interpretive centers). However, there is no representative sign recognizing the presence of the permanent exhibition (i.e. Historic Site Interpretation Center) within the fort. Therefore, it is anticipated that finding the permanent exhibition is not possible without accessing the historic site that combines 'in situ' and 'in context' facilities from within as presented in (Chapter 3, Figure 3.6).

The author visited Shaikh Salman bin Ahmed Al Fateh Fort several times to explore its physical features and carry the observations. The fort is spacious inside and has a strong sense of physical and visual enclosure. The first, separates the traditional fort interior environment from the contemporary surroundings, and the second, gives the feeling of a residence (i.e. home) as it functioned as one in the past. It has two entrances (east and south); the east entrance is recognized to be the main entrance which takes the visitor through a gateway to a small entrance lobby with an information panel holding brief information about the fort's history and the opening times. The south entrance directly opens onto the fort's largest courtyard, where the permanent exhibition is located (Figure 4.26). The two courtyards are connected through a series of small rooms. On the western edge, the Arabic restaurant and café: Saffron is strategically located with an outdoor dining area that provides open, panoramic views over Hunanaiya Valley (Figure 4.27).

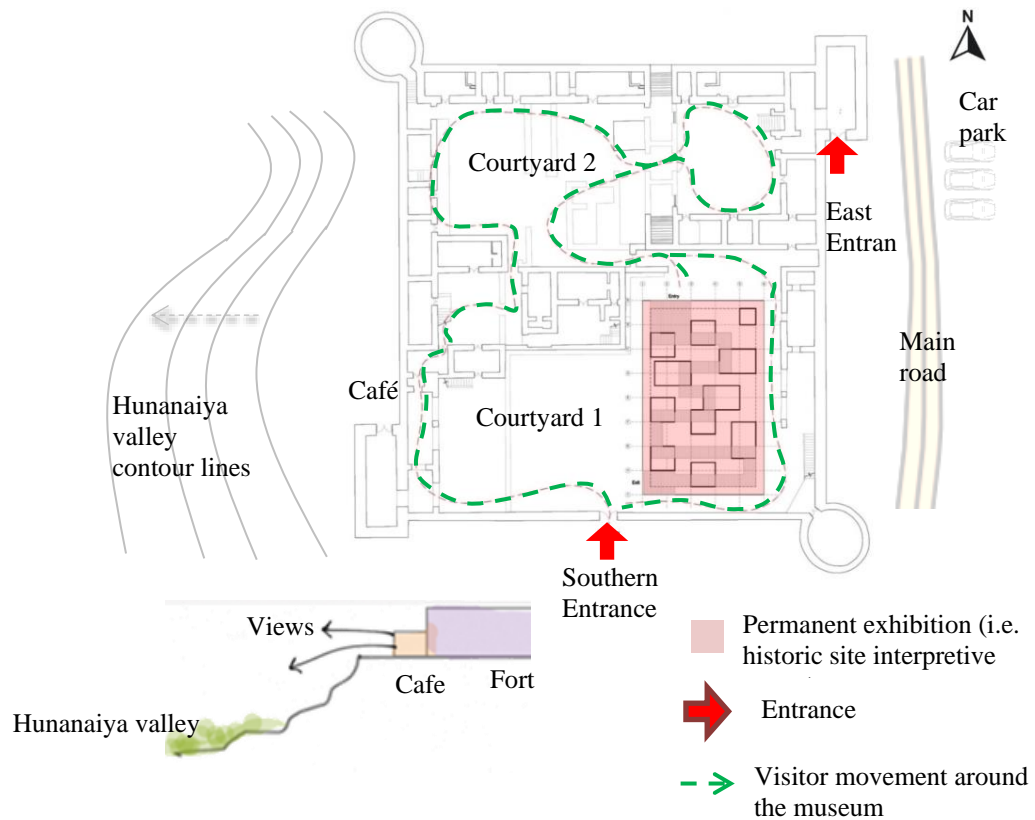
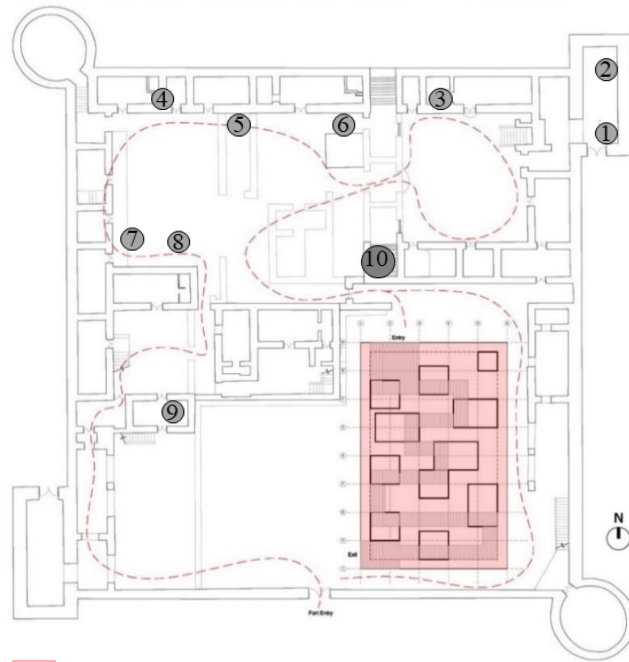


Figure 4.26: Shaikh Salman bin Ahmed Al Fateh Fort contextual setting
(Source: PAD (2011))



Figure 4.27: Shaikh Salman bin Ahmed Al Fateh Fort and views to Hunanaiya valley from the café terrace

Shaikh Salman bin Ahmed Al Fateh Fort has a square two-level ground plan with two circular and two rectangular towers at its corners. The northeastern tower serves as the gate tower (Figure 4.28, a and b), while the others are defensive towers (Figure 4.28, d). Unlike other forts in Bahrain, this one was, not only used for defensive and protection purposes, but also as a residence. Therefore, the fort has several individual rooms that used to house the Shaikh's army and the ruling family as well (Figure 4.28, g and h). It has several staircases connecting the rooms at different levels and to the fort roof (Figure 4.28, i). The fort also includes one water reservoir and an efficient drainage system, as well as an old date press room, known as "Madbasa" (Figure 4.28, f). The architectural features such as the massive high walls, minimum opening towards the outside, courtyard (Figure 4.28, c and d) and the overall layout reflects many aspects of the local's lifestyle with an emphasis on privacy, which is accommodated with a set of design elements present in old dwellings in Manama and Muharraq (Figure 4.28, e and i). Other elements such as, the drainage system and the date juicing facility enable the visitors to appreciate past people's abilities and allow them to compare the current systems to those used in the past.



Permanent exhibition (i.e. historic site interpretive center)

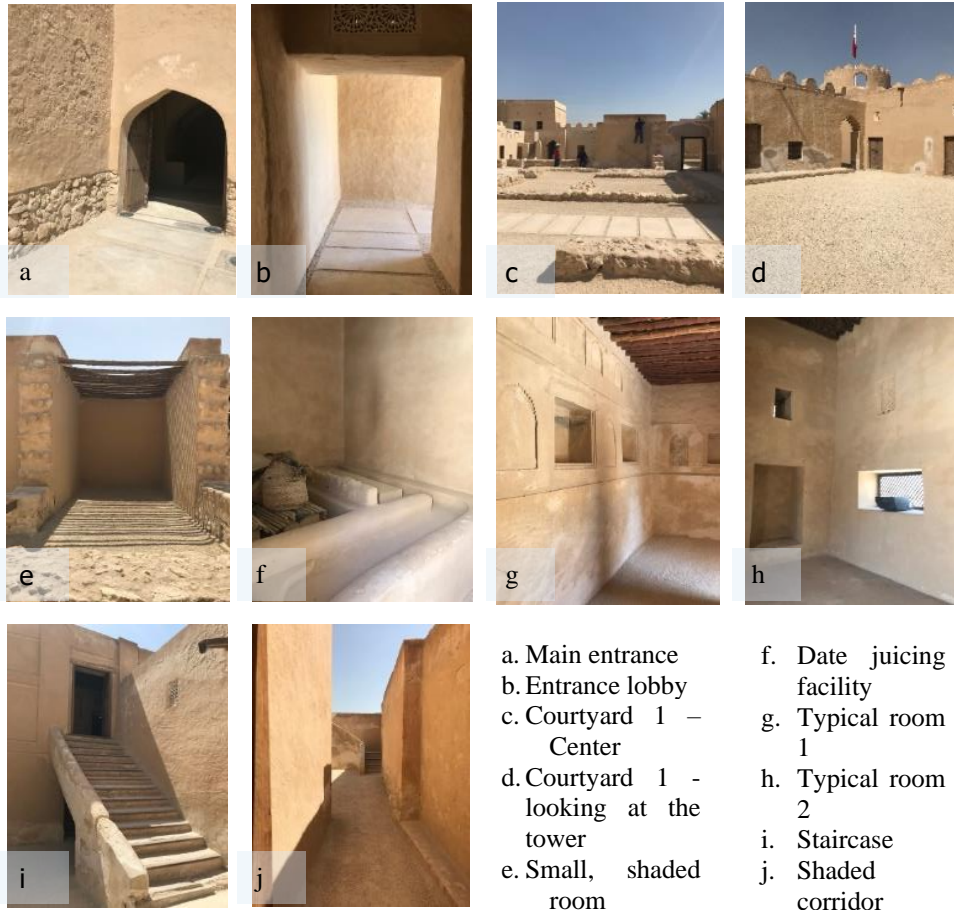


Figure 4.28: Shaikh Salman bin Ahmed Al Fateh formal qualities

4.2.3.2 Building Level: Architectural Review

Shaikh Salman bin Ahmed Al Fateh Fort permanent exhibition is characterized by a free-standing glass pavilion located in the eastern courtyard of the archeological fort (Figure 4.29 and 4.30).

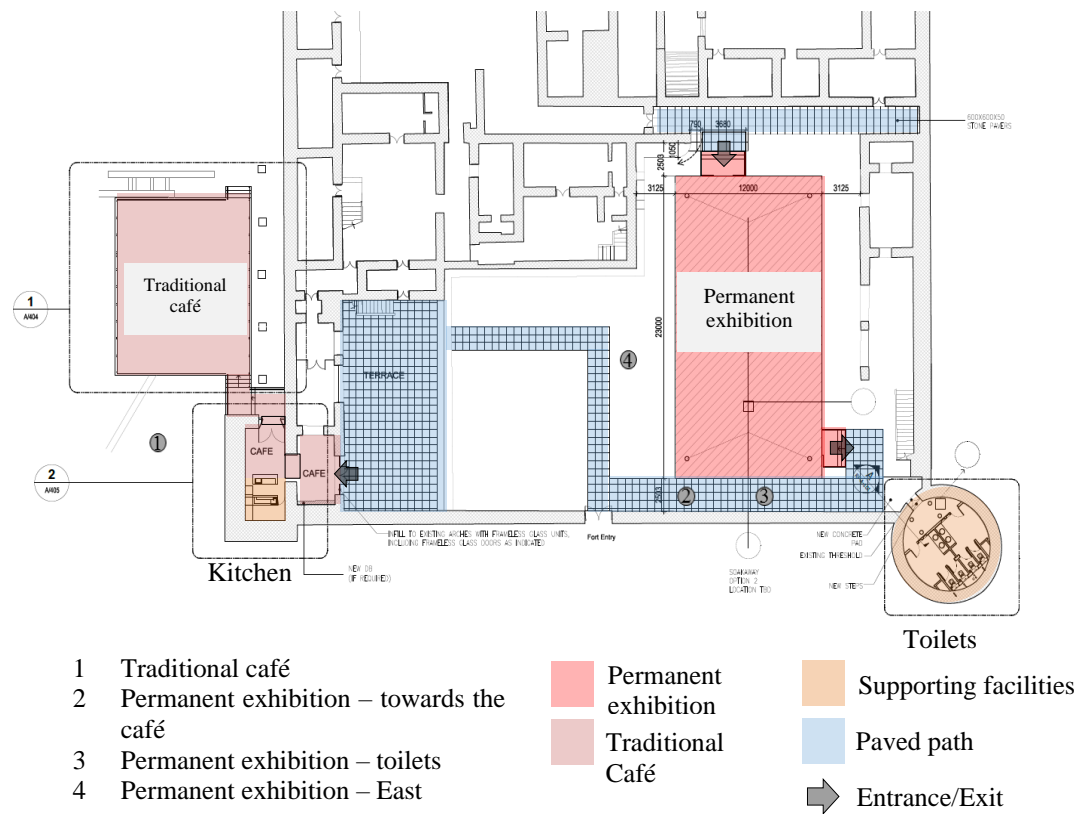


Figure 4.29: Preliminary study of buildings configurations at Shaikh Salman bin Ahmed Al Fateh Fort

(Adapted after PAD (2011))



Figure 4.30: Passage within Shaikh Salman bin Ahmed Al Fateh Fort

The reflective glass pavilion was designed by PAD, a local architectural firm (Figure 4.31), which emphasized on the integration between the ‘in situ’ and ‘in context’. The mirror-like appearance of the glass facade appears to play a dramatic role in integrating and blending the modern interpretive center within the authentic historic site. This makes the building composition less obstructive and allows also a continuous visual connection to other parts of the Fort when a visitor walks its interior alleys and courtyards.

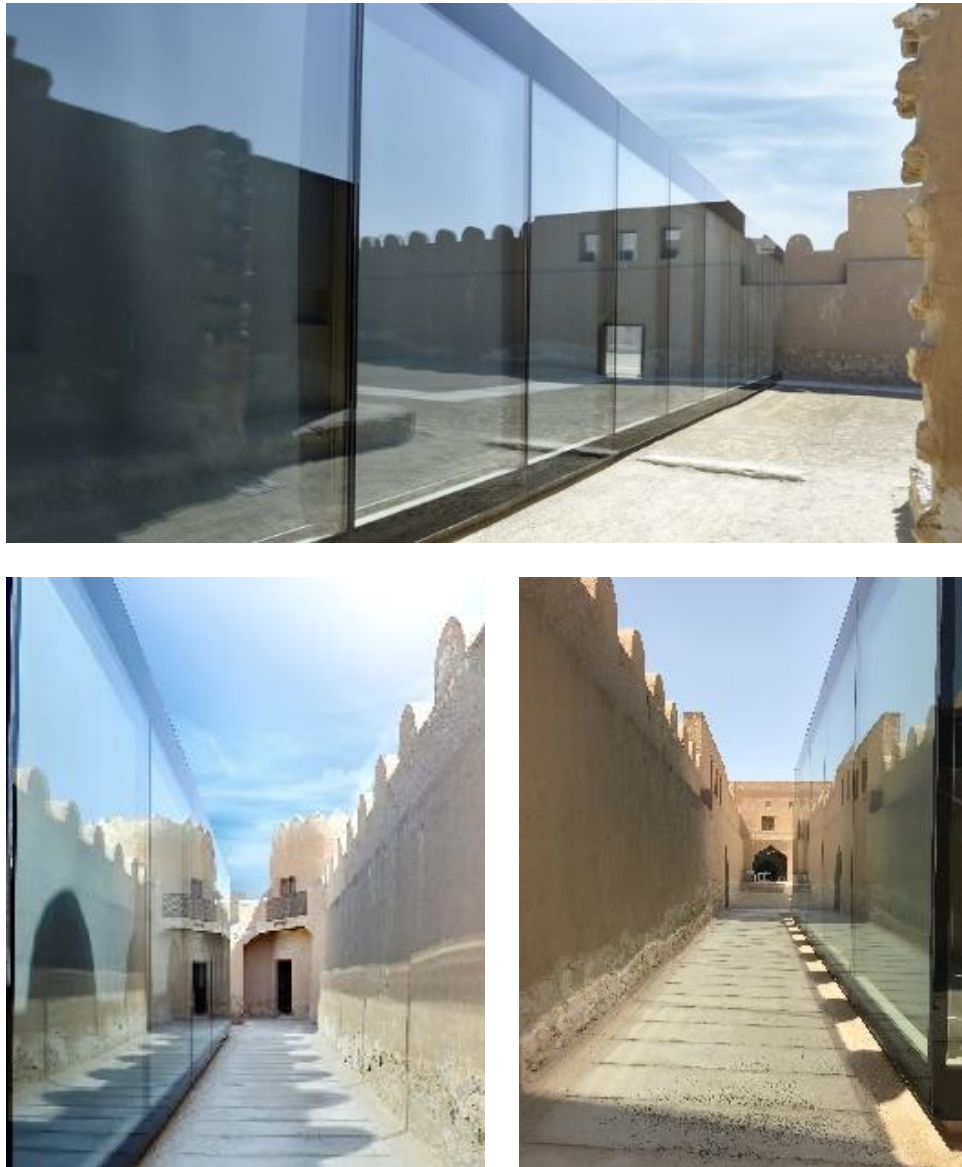


Figure 4.31: The reflective glass and the free standing permanent exhibition
 Located within Shaikh Salman bin Ahmed Al Fateh Fort, eastern courtyard

The exhibition hall platform is raised over the original ground of the historic site for preservation and conservation purposes. It illustrates the architect's approach to integrate a contemporary structure within a historic site for the dual purpose of preservation as well as direct protected visual contact with the historical site. For instance, the translucent enclosure allows a continuous visual connection between the 'in situ' and 'in context' with an attempt to mitigate the physical gap between the old and the new structure. The freestanding reflective enclosure serves as a background

to the exhibits, while allowing visitors an uninterrupted visual relationship to the historic site. Such architectural design approaches emphasize this relationship as it is unique in this typology (i.e. Historic Site Interpretation Center).

In practice, the exhibition spatial layout design is referred to as ‘tandem’ (Li et al., 2013). The linear layout connects three exhibits contents (i.e. topics) in sequence and provides a directional circulation flow pattern. This arrangement exposes the visitor to different types of exhibits in sequence from the origins of Bahrain’s ruler family, Al Khalifa to their territory and way of living, and ends in exhibiting Bahrain’s and the World (Figure 4.32).

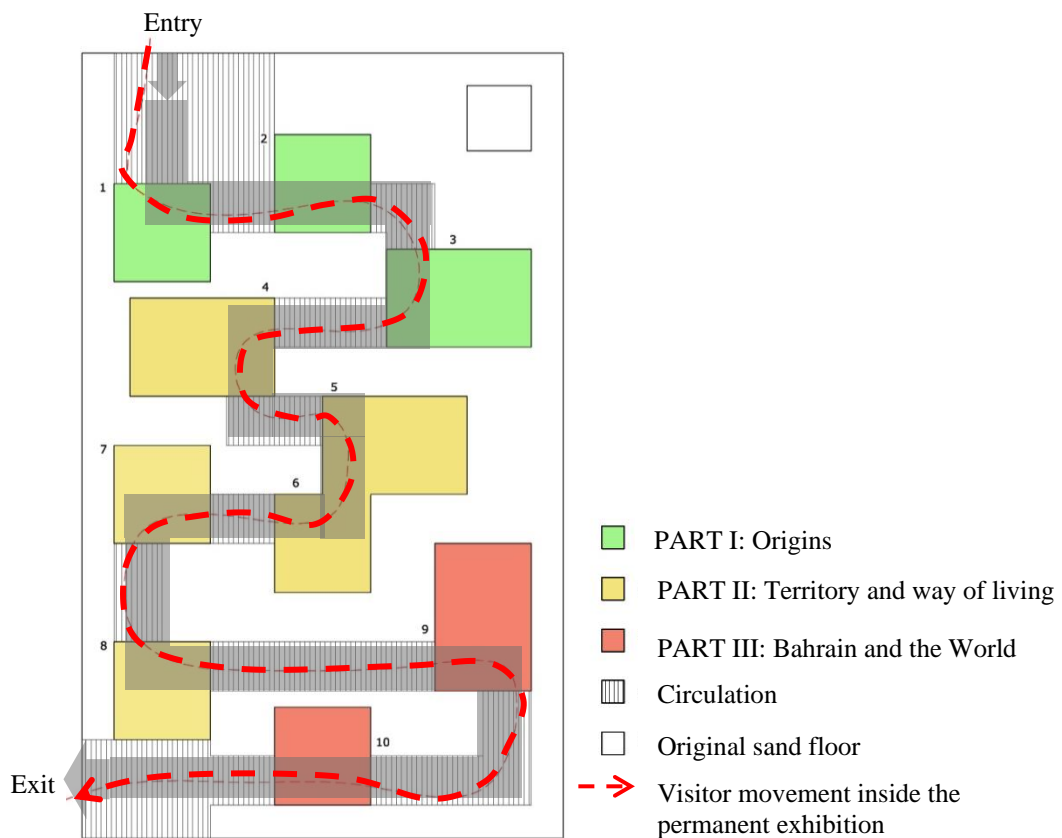


Figure 4.32: Exhibition trio parts and spatial configuration
Source: PAD (2011)

4.2.3.3 Interpretation Level: Exhibits and Presentation Techniques

As mentioned earlier, the permanent exhibition at Shaikh Salman bin Ahmed Al Fateh Fort was designed by the local architecture firm PAD, in conjunction with the French audio-visual company La Meduse (BACA, 2013c). The exhibition design follows traditional curation approaches used in museums, which is to arrange display exhibits along the free-standing walls in showcases for different types of display such as documents and small-sized artifacts. In addition, some displays used technology and smart applications such as, interactive touch screens and interactive three-dimensional light projected objects (Figure 4.33). The various types of exhibits interpretation techniques are a definite attempt respond to different users' needs and expectations (Figure 4.34).

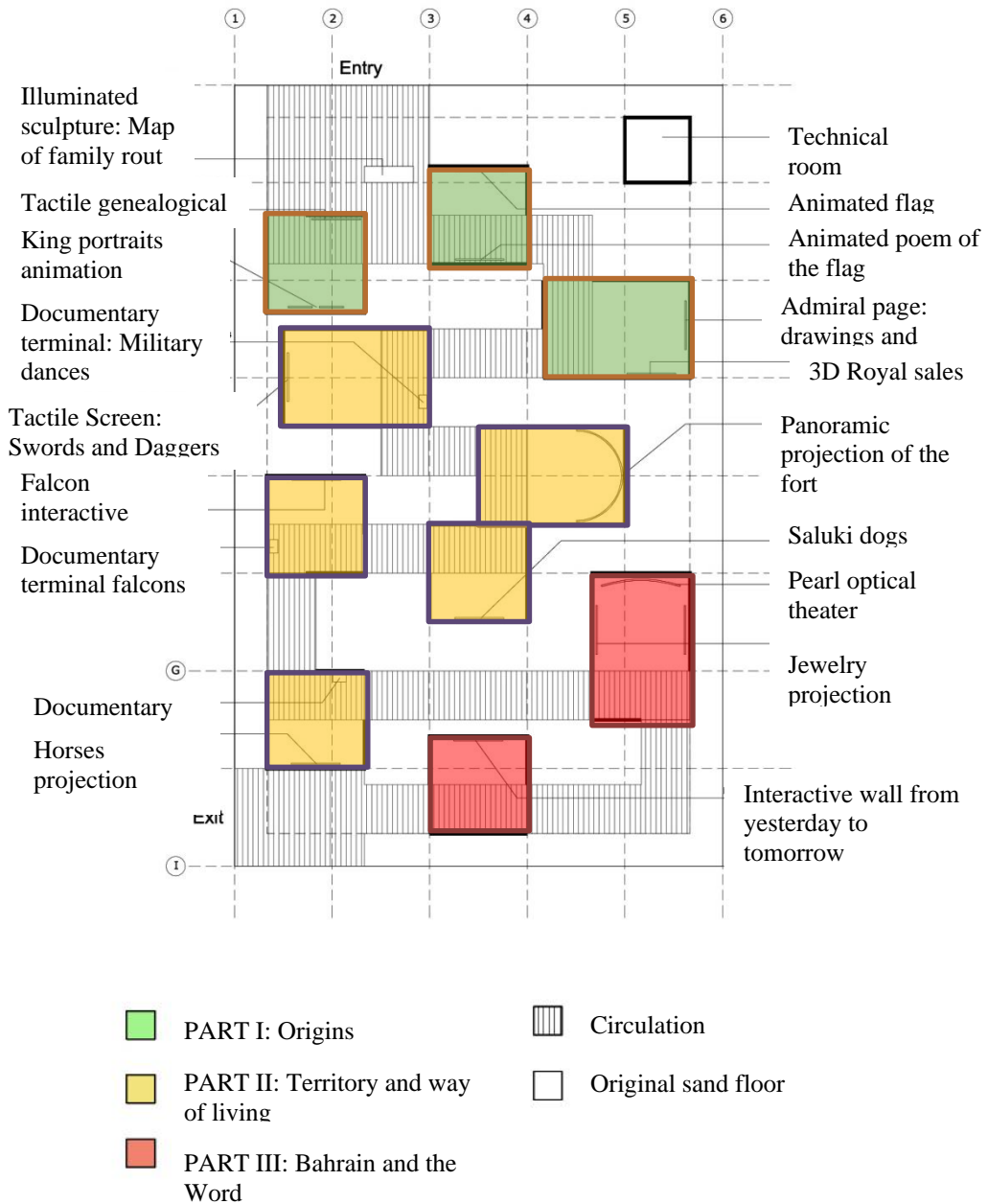
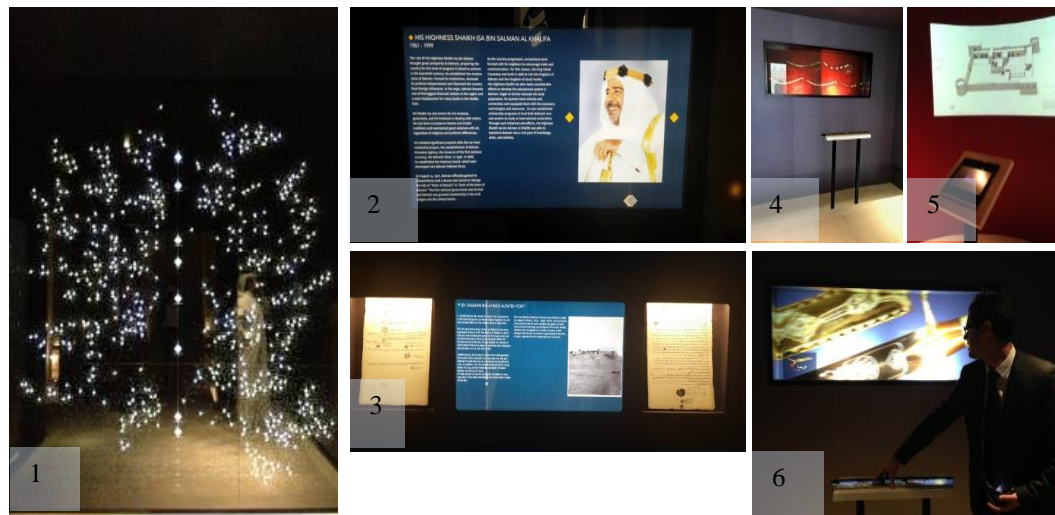


Figure 4.33: Exhibition layout and contents in the Shaikh Salman bin Ahmed Al Fateh Fort permanent exhibition

Source: PAD (2011)



- | | | | |
|---|----------------------------------|---|---------------------------------------|
| 1 | Tactile genealogical tree | 4 | Documentary terminal: Military dances |
| 2 | Rulers portrait animation | 5 | Panoramic projection of the fort |
| 3 | Admiral page: drawings and diary | 6 | Jewelry projection |

Figure 4.34: Presentation techniques in Shaikh Salman bin Ahmed Al Fateh Fort permanent exhibition

Although the permanent exhibition space included a range of communication media, the historical site interpretive strategies were, however, limited and consisted only of year of construction and visiting hours. In fact, the historical site (i.e. in situ) does not provide any information panels or an itinerary map to identify the spaces within the fort. This situation may reduce the visitors' understanding of the fort's historical significance, and may also limit their ability to relate to the exhibition displays themselves (i.e. In context).

However, it is important to state that in the past during the 1990s, Bahrain National Museum and Shaikh Salman bin Ahmed Al Fateh fort used to provide an informative leaflet to interpret the historical site significance and guide the visitors through its spaces. The leaflet included brief information about the historical site, a map that presents the fort's main components (i.e. courtyards) and the three construction phases that the fort went through from the 17th to the 19th century.

Additionally, it includes the fort location map to ease the visitors' way finding, as well as the visiting hours. Although such techniques are conventional within the context of an interactive and digital techniques, they remain, however, very important to supplement the visitors' experience, especially when the tour guides are not regularly present and only available by a pre-scheduled appointment for official delegates, tourist cruises and school visits. Therefore, a combination of old and new museology approaches is important to ease the visitors' experience (Jászberényi et al., 2018; McCall and Gray, 2014), and consequently contribute to the meaning-making process.

4.2.4 Bu Maher Fort Visitor Center

Bu Maher Fort was built in 1840 by Shaikh Abdullah bin Ahmed Al Khalifa, who ruled Bahrain during the 18th century (Heritage, 1993c), most likely reusing the old ruins from the Portuguese fortifications in the 16th century (Carter et al., 2011). In the past, the fort was used to protect Muharraq island bay along with an older fort set in the eastern side seashore, named Arad.

Previous records indicate that Bu Maher Fort was first occupied from the Ummayyad or early Abbasid era (Heritage, 1993a). In 1866, Bu Maher Fort was destroyed by the British navy during the Qatari-Bahraini War (UNESCO, 2012). In 1930, the Fort was restored and served as a quarantine station for smallpox infections disease (Carter et al., 2011). In the 1970s, the fort was partially rebuilt. Then, in 2010 an archeological excavation was carried out and uncovered the fort foundation, preserved and renovated the remaining vestiges that includes a watch tower, the fort foundation and three rooms that were connected to the remaining watch tower (Figure 4.35).



The uncovered fort foundations The renovated watch tower The three renovated rooms

Figure 4.35: Bu Maher Fort remaining vestiges

Bu Maher Fort is recognized as one of the main touristic attractions in Bahrain and it maintains a strong relationship with the seafaring and pearl diving history. This fort is part of the Bahrain Pearling Trail, inscribed in the World Heritage Site listing in 2012 as a unique testimony to a cultural tradition (UNESCO, 2012). The Bahrain Pearling Trail is the last remaining complete example of the cultural tradition of pearling that testifies of seven thousand years of pearling history in the Arabian Gulf (UNESCO, 2012). It consists of three oyster beds in the northern waters of Bahrain, a part of the coast and seafront of Bu Maher Fort historic site, and 16 properties in the historic part of Muharraq. In the earlier stages of the project, it was proposed that Bu Maher Fort would be connected by a pedestrian bridge to the rest of the 3.5 kilometers pearling path in order to enable visitors to explore and sightsee the whole setting (i.e. Bu Maher Fort and the Pearling Trail) interchangeably (BACA, 2013a).

In 2013, Bahrain Authority for Culture and Antiquities built a relatively small visitor center nearby Bu Maher Fort to provide general information about the significance of this historic site, and an overview of the architectural design of the buildings along the pearling path, as well as their classification as onshore or offshore sites, while also forming the starting point of the Pearling Trail sightseeing.

In July 2019, the Bahrain Authority for Culture and Antiquities announced the start of the construction of the pedestrian bridge, designed by the Belgian office of Kersten Geers and David Van Severen in collaboration with the Ismail Khonji, a native architect (Figure 4.36).



Figure 4.36: The under-construction pedestrian bridge connecting Bu Maher Fort and the Pearling trail

(Announced through the BACA (2019b) official Instagram account)

4.2.4.1 Site Level: Contextual Configuration

Bu Maher Fort is in the southern edge of Muharraq City, the second largest island in Bahrain. The fort vestiges and its visitor center are located nearby Bahrain's coast guard base in the same city.

Therefore, Bu Maher Fort dual setting ('in situ' and 'in context' as illustrated in Figure 3.6; Chapter 3) can only be accessed by means of water transportation (boat shuttles). The schedule of these shuttles is announced officially through Bahrain Authority for Culture and Antiquities website (BACA, 2013a), and regularly through social media channels. An added observed difficulty: entry tickets are to be purchased at the National Museum of Bahrain, one kilometer away from the visitor center, which ultimately led to a reduced number of entries although the Fort itself offers a unique panoramic view of the coastline of the capital Manama and other parts of Muharraq governorate that attracts visitors (Figure 4.37).

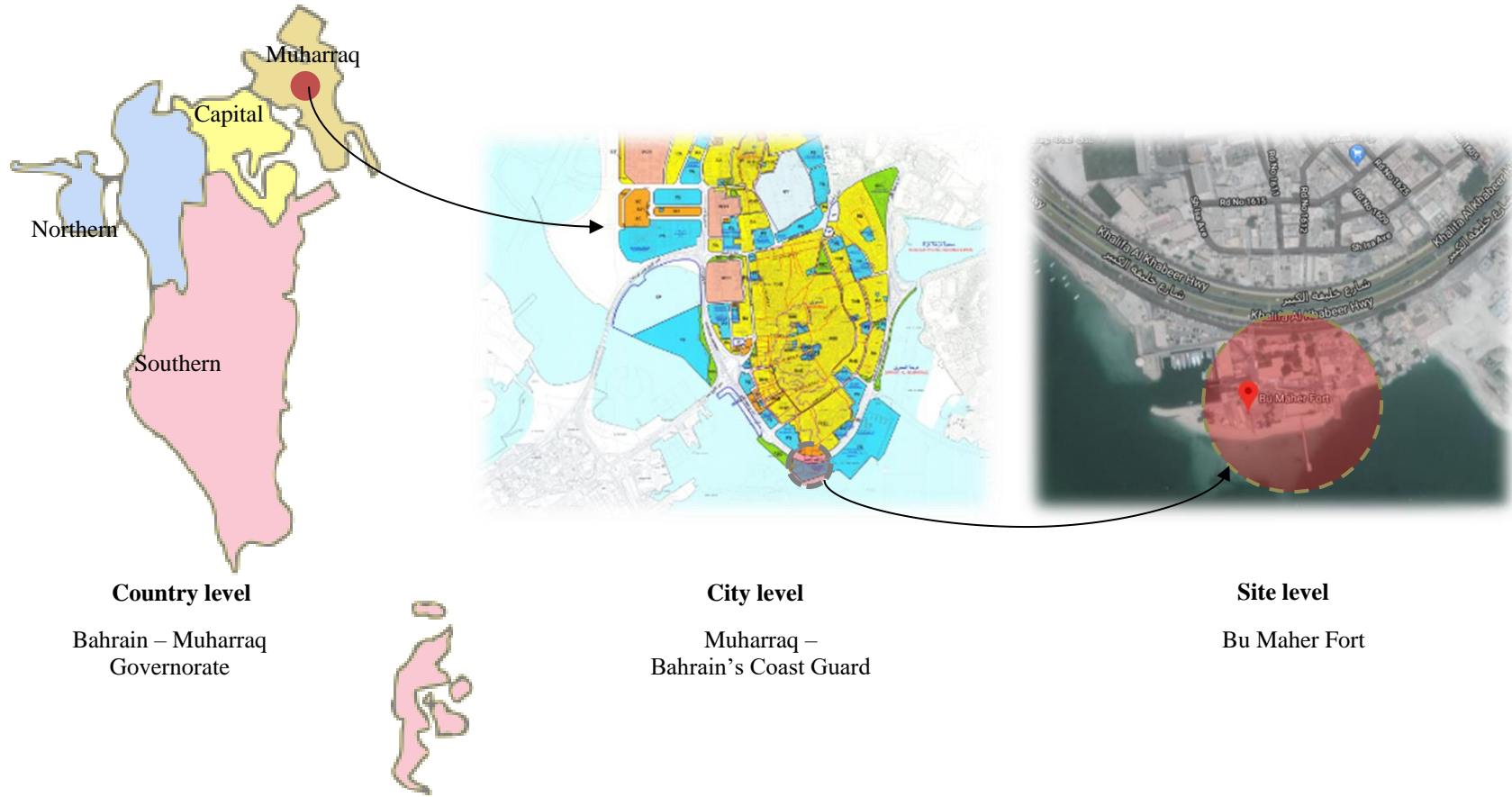


Figure 4.37: Bu Maher Fort location in relation to the country, the city and immediate surrounding

4.2.4.2 Building Level: Architectural Review

Bu Maher visitor center was entirely designed by PAD, a local Bahraini architectural firm (BACA, 2013b). Hence, this visitor center architectural style reflects a wide range of local influences such as the use of local materials, colors and building elements. The L-shaped visitor center's architectural design maybe best characterized as introverted, modern, simple and in harmony with the surroundings (Figure 4.38). The architectural appearance blends with the surroundings as it maintains a relative proportion, massing, height, colors and building materials.

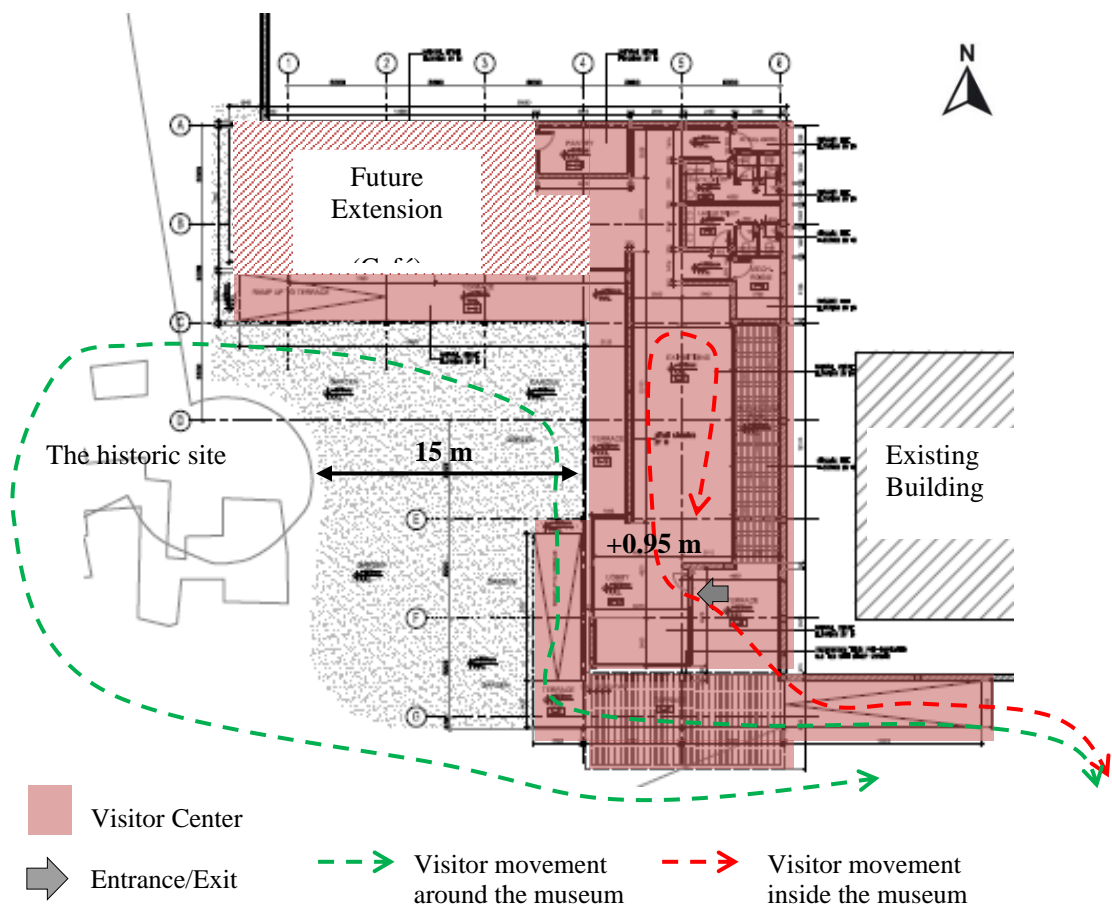


Figure 4.38: Bu Maher Fort visitor center location in relation to the historic site and proposed movement patterns between 'in situ' and 'in context'

Adapted by author from PAD (2013))

Moreover, the visitor center floor level was raised 95 centimeters over the original historical site ground to preserve, conserve and to minimize the negative impacts of new land use on the archeological environment. Also, the visitor center is set back approximately 15 meters to preserve the fort foundations vestiges and to enhance the views from ‘in context’ to ‘in situ’ settings. Figure 4.39 demonstrates Bu Maher Fort visitor center architectural appearance and its relation to the surroundings (i.e. height, color, and materials).



- Height: The visitor center (right) height is kept with the historical site (left) characteristics and not exceeding the onsite palms and the surviving tower height
- Color: The visitor center natural earth tone hues that match the surrounding
- Material: The raised glass-walled visitor center overlooks Bu Maher Fort that connects the visitor visually from ‘in situ’ to ‘in context’ and vice versa

Figure 4.39: Bu Maher Fort visitor architectural appearance and physical connection to the surrounding

The glass-walled visitor center provides an unobstructed view from the interior exhibition space interior to the exterior. The relatively transparent glass panels material enables an open and direct visual connection to the historical site, thus providing a learning experience that stimulates the process of visual discovery from ‘in context’ to ‘in situ’ (Figure 4.40).



Figure 4.40: Bu Maher Fort visitor center visual connection to the historic site

In addition to the physical and visual connections between the visitor center and its surroundings, a wooden bridge inspired by traditional design and materials was added to serve as a pier and a direct physical link to the building (Figure 4.41). The bridge is deemed to provide the visitor with multiple panoramic views of Bahrain's skyline, and offers an inspiring vista of the different features available in the Bu Maher Fort setting. The bridge walk serves as an important component of the sightseeing experience between the land and the sea.

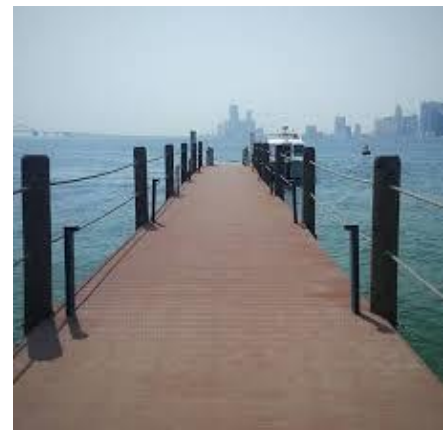


Figure 4.41: Bu Maher Fort visitor center wooden bridge inspired by traditional design and local materials

The visitor center has a single entry/exit point that opens to the exhibition space. In addition to the exhibition space, it houses the entrance lobby, a front desk, a management office, and public toilets. The current exhibition space covers approximately 60% of the visitor center building area and the rest is reserved for a potential extension of the café. The exhibition layout is best described as a “hall type” category (Li et al., 2013), that offers the visitors a free movement pattern around the central display and eases the viewing of the display from all directions. In addition, one of the exhibition walls is fully clad with limestone panels that replicate the archeological site walls, and accordingly blend the interior to the exterior atmosphere through a tactile sensory experience (Figure 4.42).

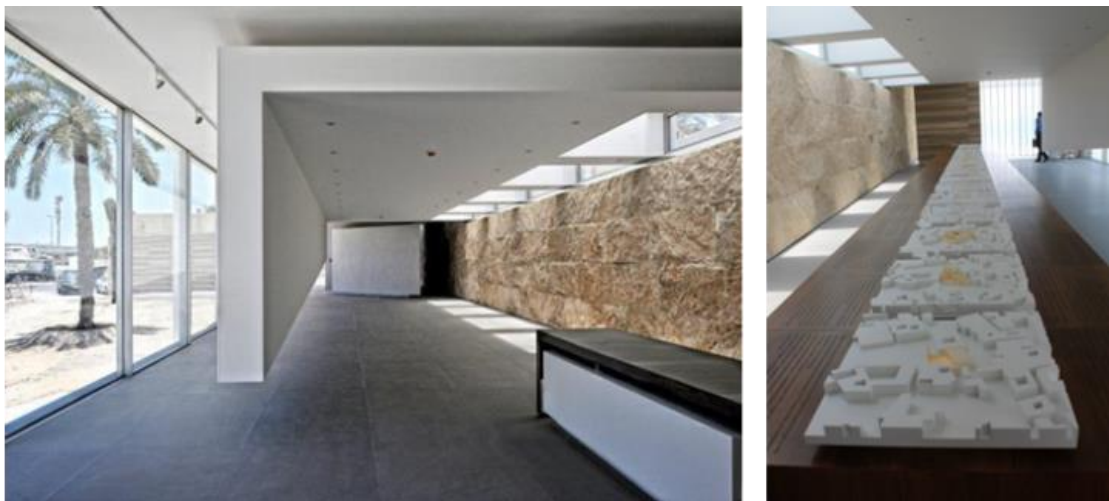


Figure 4.42: Bu Maher Fort visitor center exhibition space spatial configuration

4.2.4.3 Interpretation Level: Exhibits and Presentation Techniques

The main presentation technique at this site relies on a central display in the form of a scaled three-dimensional architectural model, representing Bahrain Pearling Trail map showing the pearl traders’ houses. The massing model takes the visitors into a journey through the overall development to appreciate the local architectural style and its features. The architectural model is complemented by text

captions about the owners of the traders' houses and their history. Each caption has a remote light switch that enables the visitors to control and identify the property in question. In addition to that, there is a three-dimensional vertical map displayed on a free-standing wall. This wall divides the exhibition space to the central display zone and a clear passage zone that allows the visitors to view the historic site before or after viewing the central display (Figure 4.43).

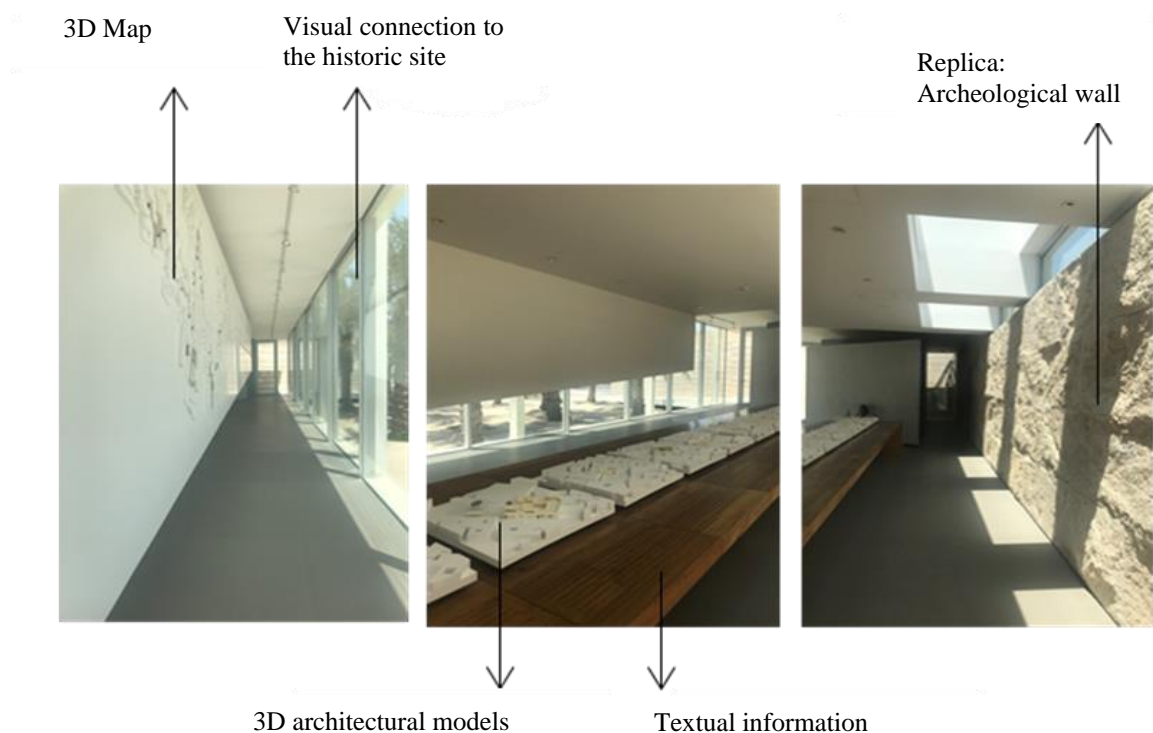


Figure 4.43: Presentation techniques at Bu Maher visitor center

In contrast with Qal'at Al Bahrain historic site, Bu Maher Fort lacks the presence of any tour guidance facility, signage or information panels that may guide and explain the ruins, which may impact the visitors' experience and meaning-making process.

Up to this level in this chapter, the four selected case studies that shape the body of this thesis, were addressed through the evaluation of their contextual setting, physical features, and the presentation strategies in potentially conveying meaning

from historic site to visitors. This approach contributes to the understanding of the Historic Site Interpretation Centers contextual relationship to the historic site, architectural design, and the interpretive strategies prospective role in shaping the visitors' experience, yet this needs to be supported and validated by their experience. This calls for consideration of additional supportive data including visitation records, visitors' feedback, and visitors' observations.

4.3 Descriptive Analysis of the Visitors' Records and Experience

This section aims to explore the visitation records at the four selected case studies for the year 2018, the feedback of the residents of Bahrain who visited or intend to visit the sites under investigation, and finally the visitors' experience in context. Analyzing the visitors' records and experience is anticipated to provide a better understanding of the selected case studies popularity and significance, as well as their impacts on visitors' attendance. This review may also uncover any influential factors impacting visitation patterns such as climate and events. In addition, the multiple data collection approach determines the validity and reliability of the gathered data that enable the researcher to find relationships between the archived, reported and observed data. All findings are here analyzed quantitatively and presented in tabular and graphic formats.

4.3.1 Visitation Records of Historic Site Interpretation Centers and Historic Sites: As Documented

This research relied on the archival data of 2018, except for Qal'at Al Bahrain which has records since 2010; the remaining sites have visitation records from 2018 only. The archival data of 2018 indicates a total number of 26,624 visitors to all four historic sites and Historic Site Interpretation Centers (i.e. 'in situ' and 'in context'), inclusive of nationals, expatriates, group visits, educational organizations

and official delegations. The total number of visitors is available in a combined format for both historic sites and Historic Site Interpretation Centers, except for Qal'at Al Bahrain where the number of visitors to each setting (i.e. historic site and site museum) is documented separately in the visitors' statistics from 2010 onwards.

The number of visitors among the four sites indicates large variation, where almost half of the visitors went to Qal'at Al Bahrain (12,293 visitors), Shaikh Salman Bin Ahmed Al Fateh Fort came next with around 7,075 visitors, Bu Maher Fort was visited by 4,604 persons while Al Khamis Mosque captured only 2,649 visitors as illustrated in Figure 4.44.

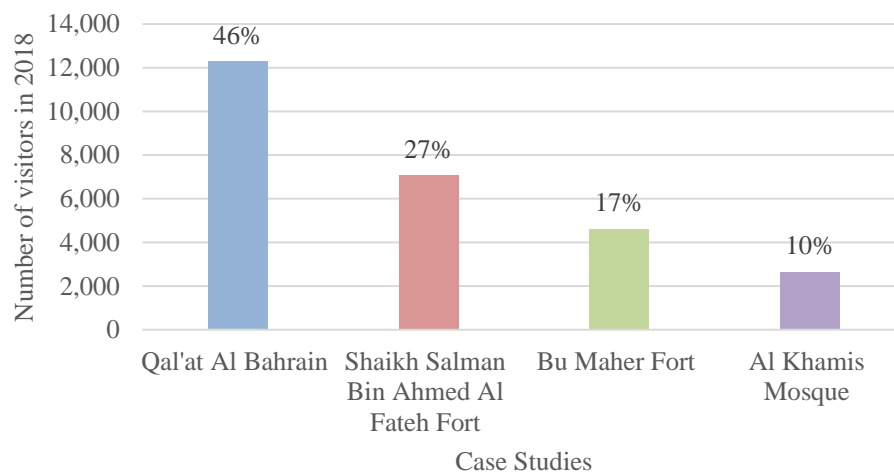


Figure 4.44: Number of visitors in 2018 at the four case studies under investigation ($n= 26,624$)

Source: 2018 Visitors Archives, (2018)

There are likely several reasons affecting the popularity of each site. A closer look at Qal'at Al Bahrain, the most visited site, highlights two possible influencing factors. First, it is the largest historic site not only in Bahrain, but in the region while also being a classified World Heritage Site. It also regularly hosts different social, cultural, and educational events. On the other hand, Al Khamis Mosque was the least

visited historic site. This may well be related to its religious nature that limits the type of events that can be hosted there, or due to the lack of other supporting services such as an eatery. This observation calls for further exploration with other research instruments.

In the case of Qal’at Al Bahrain site museum, where visitation records are available since 2010, a review of its yearly records was carried out to uncover other potentially influencing factors, if any, that may have impacted its visitation records (Figure 4.45). The 2010 – 2018 data indicates that in 2015, the number of visitors to Qal’at Al Bahrain site museum reached its record peak, likely as a result of several separate events that occurred in the same year; Bahrain Authority for Culture and Antiquities successfully participated in the 2015 Milan World Expo, and launched the first edition of “Cultural Tourism Passport” award as an initiative to invite people to visit and explore 21 of its most iconic and historical landmarks such as Qal’at Al Bahrain and other sites including the three case studies under review. In line with the mentioned events, Qal’at Al Bahrain historic site and site museum were largely promoted locally, regionally, and globally, which boosted the number of visitors. After 2015, the number of visitors declined but still maintained a slightly higher visitation than previous records.

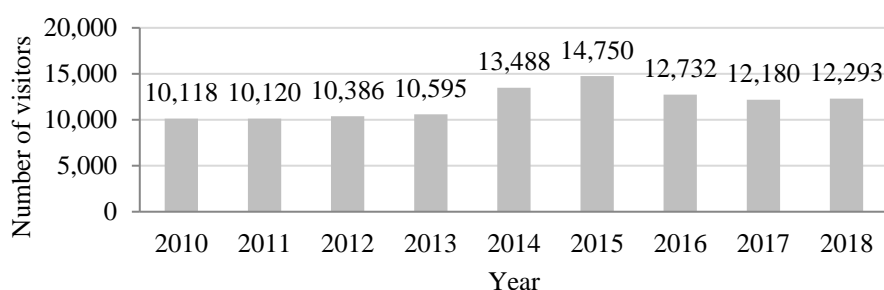


Figure 4.45: Number of visitors to Qal'at Al Bahrain Site Museum from 2010 to 2018 ($n= 94, 369$)

Source: 2018 Visitors Archives, (2018)

The review of the number of visitors' distribution over a one-year period is important to identify similarities and differences in relation to external factors including, seasonal variations, recreational and educational opportunities, (Figure 4.46).

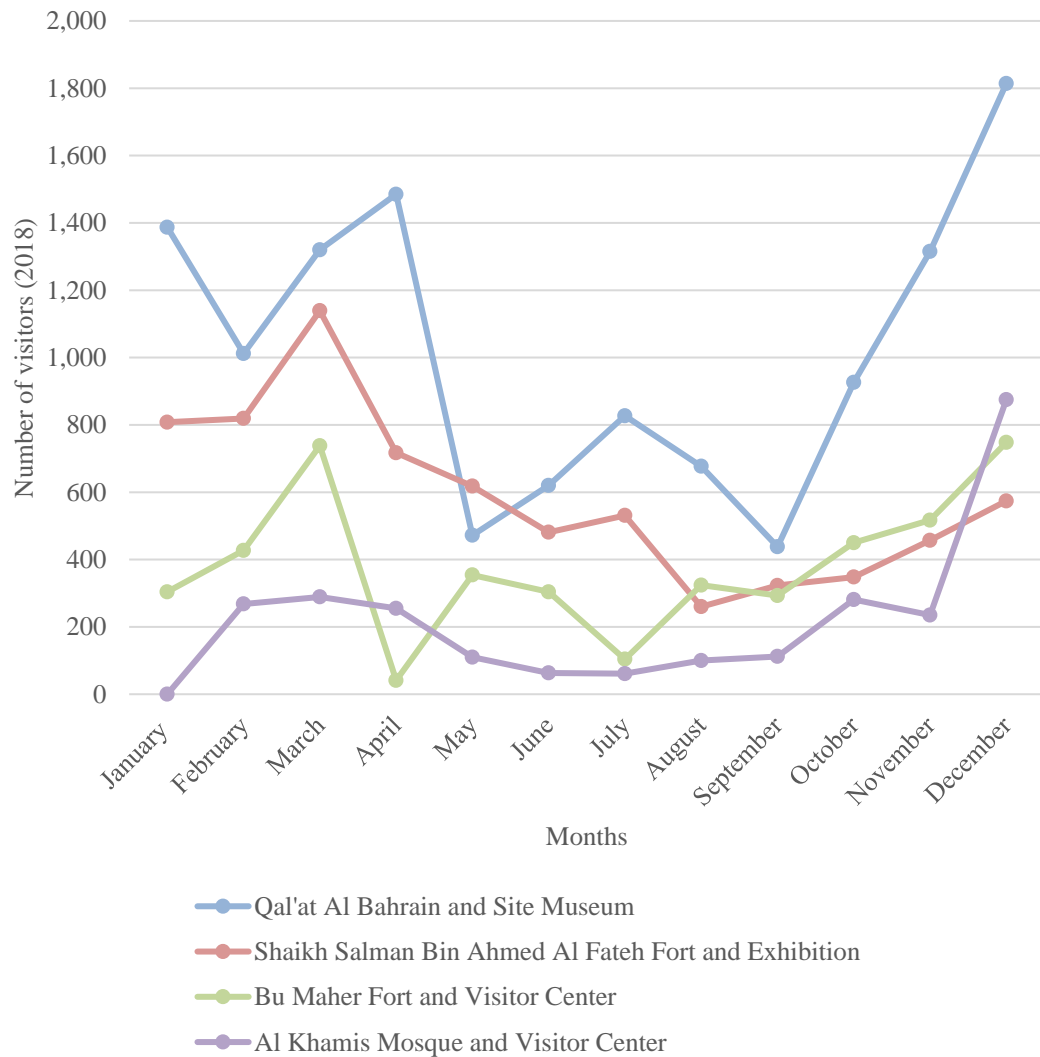


Figure 4.46: Number of visitors per month to the four case studies under investigation
Source: 2018 Visitors Archives, (2018)

The monthly distribution of visitors at the four sites indicates a similar pattern, where the number of visitors increases from October to January and decreases the rest of the year, a likely direct impact of seasonal factors with more visitors in the cooler months, except for international and/or national events, during which there is a marked increase. For instance, the ‘Spring of Culture’, an international event which usually takes place between February and April, and the national day that is celebrated in December in some sites translates into remarkably higher visits. These events attract people with different types of interests; likely to network, get entertained and be educated. In contrast, Al Khamis Mosque does not enjoy similar peaks in visitation, most probably, because of its religious character and the lack of any similar events hosted there. Another relevant fact, May 2018 recorded a very low level of visitors to all sites due to the hot weather, but more importantly the occurrence in 2018 of the holy month of Ramadan when people are fasting during the day, which may limit all outdoor activities. Hence, overall weather conditions and major events are either barriers or drivers to sites’ visitation.

4.3.2 Elements that Form the Visitors’ Experiences, Concerns and Suggestions: As Reported

As presented in Chapter 3 (Figure 3.2), the online survey questions focused on three themes. First, visitation patterns and preferences for history-related settings, then the participants’ perception of display and presentation techniques, and finally their behavior, hindrances and suggestions when visiting or intending to visit both the historic site (in situ) and the Historic Site Interpretation Center (in context) at the four selected case studies in Bahrain.

In accordance with the above three themes, the reported responses to the online survey, were addressed and analyzed as follows: (a) relevance of museums

and Historic Site Interpretation Centers, (b) visitation distribution between historic sites and Historic Site Interpretation Centers, (c) visitors' preferences: historic sites or Historic Site Interpretation Centers, (d) interpretation and presentation: participants preferences, (e) participants activities at historic sites and Historic Site Interpretation Centers, (f) barriers to visitation and experience, (g) preservation and interpretation in Bahrain: views and opinions, and finally (h) better visiting experience: participants' suggestions. The online survey responses are documented in Appendix B.

The online survey was distributed in English and Arabic languages to 159 participants from the author's network. Among those, 113 (71%) participants responded to the survey questions. The gender split indicated slightly more males than females primarily of an age span between 20 and 50 years old. The responses as reported are graphically presented and analyzed next.

4.3.2.1 Relevance of Museums and Historic Site Interpretation Centers: Participants' Views

The first survey question; *“Do you think that museums and historic site interpretation centers are still important compared to virtual museums?”* attempts to measure participants' awareness of the importance of museums as physical entities for historic preservation, education and entertainment, because virtual museums today compete by offering a 360-degree panoramic view of museum exhibits, for learning and sightseeing purposes (BACA, 2015; Giaccardi, 2006; Linda, 2020). Most participants, 99 persons out of 113, expressed a marked preference for the museum as a physical entity indicating a high level of awareness and sensitivity to the museum's importance in the era of technology, compared to 13 (11%) who were unsure and did not provide a clear answer (Figure 4.47). Hence, the results indicate

that despite the availability of digital technology and virtual museum facility to enjoy and understand museum exhibits, most of the respondents expressed a significant preference and value of the Museum as a key physical entity.

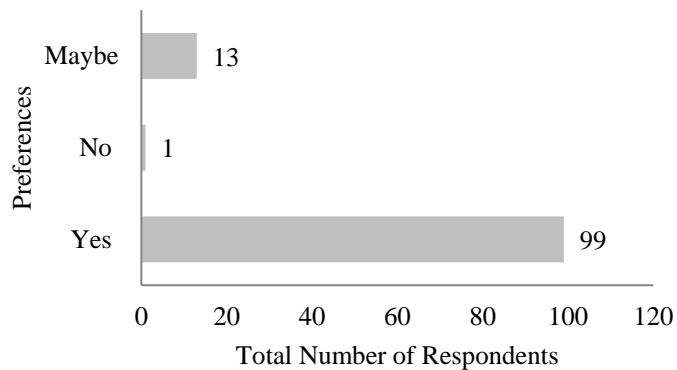


Figure 4.47: Respondents preference of Museum and HSIC as physical entities versus virtual museums

4.3.2.2 Visitation Distribution at Historic Sites and Historic Site Interpretation Centers

The popularity of the four site-related museums or visitor centers under investigation was explored through the question; “*Which historic site or Historic Site Interpretation center have you visited or intend to visit?*” It is important to note that participants were asked to select all that applied; thus, the percentages do not equal 100%.

The finding suggests that participants have a greater tendency to approach historic sites over Historic Site Interpretation Centers, where 211 (67%) persons visited or intend to visit historic sites, and only 104 (33%) visited or intend to visit Historic Site Interpretation Centers. The participants’ responses also indicate that Qal’at Al Bahrain historic site and Qal’at Al Bahrain site museum are the most important places for them to visit, since they are thought to be the most significant

and attractive sites among all the considered case studies. This result agrees with the visitation records (Section 4.3.1). Of the 113 respondents, 84% of the participants visited or intend to visit Qal'at Al Bahrain historic site, and 61% visited or intend to visit Qal'at Al Bahrain site museum. On the other hand, and in dire contrast with the recorded visitation data, participants indicated that Al Khamis Mosque is their next favored destination. A surprising result to see that Al Khamis Mosque holds an attractive second position, likely in terms of intent to visit, as this did not materialize in the 2018 visitation records (Figure 4.46). This situation likely means that other factors may impact it but could not be justified through the survey. Shaikh Salman bin Ahmed Al Fateh Fort came next and in final position Bu Maher Fort and its visitor center as illustrated in Figure 4.48.

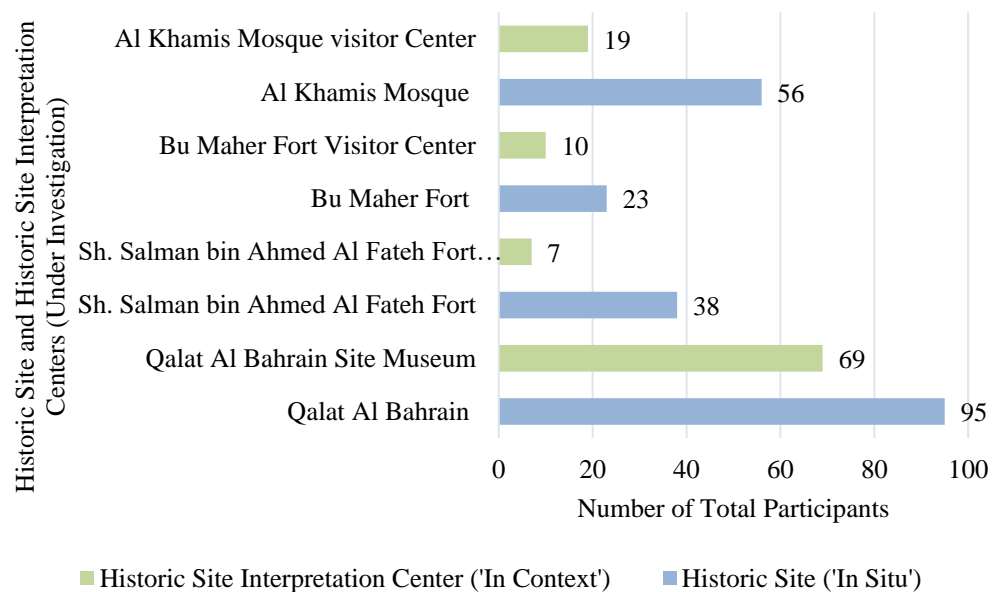


Figure 4.48: Number of participants who visited and/or intend to visit the historical sites and Historical Site Interpretation Centers ($n=113$)

Of relevance to the scope of this research, there is a marked preference for visits or intent to visit the historical site over the Historic Site Interpretation Center.

This outcome calls for further investigation of the role and contribution of the Historic Site Interpretation Center, through other methods such as observations and interviews to capture the gap between the online survey results and the number of visitors as documented in the visitors statistics.

In addition to the responses related directly to the considered case studies, 103 (91.7%) participants reported that they have visited or intend to visit other historical sites, visitors centers and museums such as Al Muharraq old houses district, Al Jasra House, Pearling path visitor center and Bahrain National Museum (Appendix B). Interestingly enough, only 9 (8.7%) participants reported that they did not visit or do not intend to visit any historical sites or Historical Sites Interpretation Centers, which means that only a minority may not be interested to visit historic sites, or their Historic Site Interpretation Centers.

4.3.2.3 Visitors' Preferences; Historic Site or Historic Site Interpretation Centers

Historic related attractions in Bahrain offer to visitors a wide range of alternatives, including house museums (i.e. old house that has been transformed to a museum), historic sites (i.e. 'in situ' or archeological site), historic museum (i.e. 'in context' or independent from the historic site), and an alternative that combines both 'in situ' and 'in context' settings; the Historic Site Interpretation Centers. The participants were asked to share their preferences among these four settings via the question: "Which type of historic interpretation setting you are most interested in? (Select all answers that apply)" thus, percentages do not totally 100%.

Their responses revealed that out of 113, 52 (46%) preferred the combined mode of visitation to both settings ('in situ' and 'in context'), which may well

indicate the importance of the Historic Site Interpretation Centers' role as an additional resource for historic site preservation and interpretation (Figure 4.49).

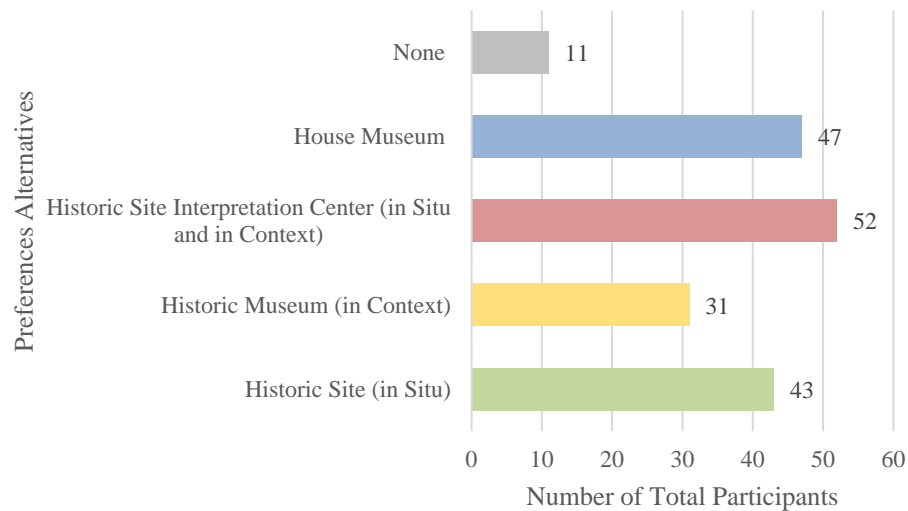


Figure 4.49: Participants preferences of historical attractions in Bahrain

Maintaining the role of a combined mode of interpretation at the historic site and the Historic Site Interpretation Center within a shared setting is an important aspect of this study, although the reasons for the preference cannot be derived from the online survey and, therefore, require further exploration.

House museums garnered approximately the same attraction with 41.5% of the participants responded positively to the concept. It is anticipated that this alternative is seen as an effective place to learn, not only about historical facts but also as a direct representation of the people's life in the past. The highly marked interest in Historic Site Interpretation Center and house museum indicates that historic related attractions should create an exploratory experience to convey meanings within or nearby the historic site. Furthermore, 38% of the participants demonstrated a high interest in historic sites, which complies with the number of

participants who visited or intend to visit historic sites over the Historical Site Interpretation Centers (Figure 4.48). This further strengthens the need to explore the role of Historic Site Interpretation Centers in conveying meanings from historic sites to visitors. The subjective nature of this parameter cannot be explored through this preliminary online survey, highlighting the need for an in-depth approach such as the interview to explore people's perception and emotional experiences.

4.3.2.4 Interpretation and Presentation: Participants' Preferences

As evidenced in Figure 4.46 and 4.48, Qal'at Al Bahrain historic site and Qal'at Al Bahrain site museum (i.e. Historic Site Interpretation Center) attract more visitors compared to the rest. Besides its historical significance, size, it is likely also linked to the multiple display and presentation techniques such as information panels, audio guides, joining a guided tour, visiting the Historic Site Interpretation Center as already documented (Section 4.2.2, c). Therefore, participants' preferences of interpretation and presentation techniques for meaning-making were addressed separately for each setting; first, in the historic site then in the Historic Site Interpretation Center of Qal'at Al Bahrain.

In response to the historic site, participants showed a slightly similar interest in walking around the historic site, reading the information panels, visiting the nearby Historic Site Interpretation Center and joining a guided tour to understand the historic site vestiges and untold stories (Figure 4.50). These results indicate that meanings are most likely best conveyed through a combination of different presentation techniques. However, visitors to Qal'at Al Bahrain indicated that conventional techniques and being on site are more likely preferred over the interactive applications.

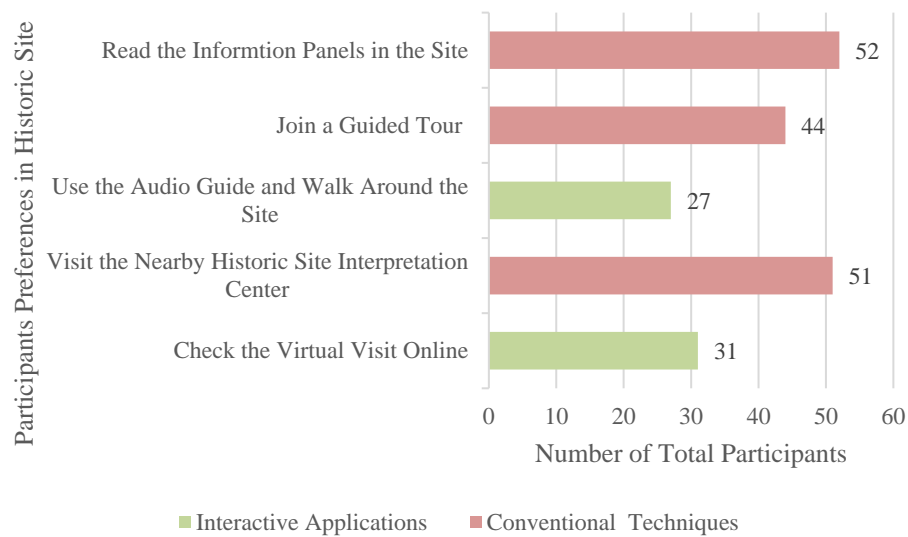


Figure 4.50: Preferred presentation techniques in historic sites

In addition to the previously mentioned presentation techniques, the Historic Site Interpretation Center also provides interactive events and workshops for educational and recreational purposes (Figure 4.51).

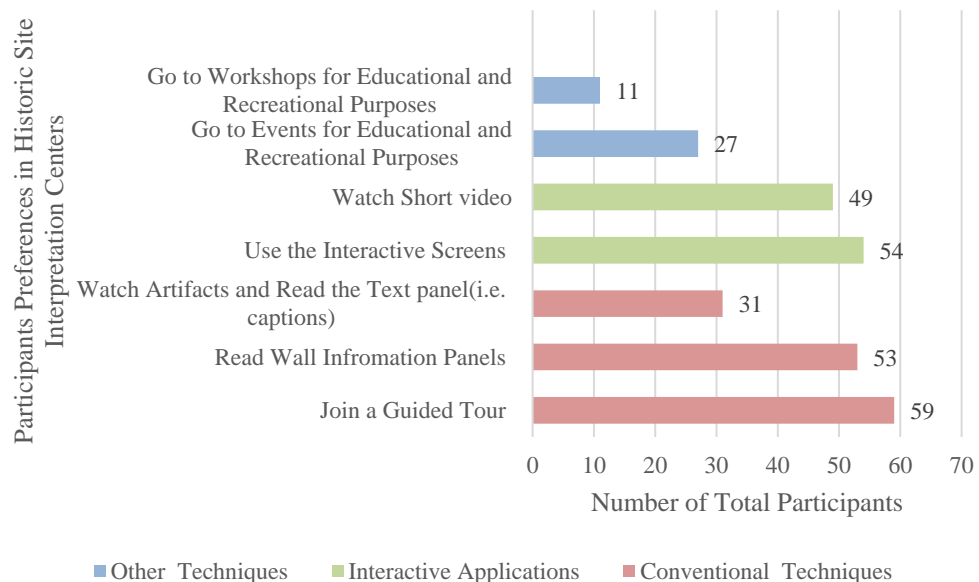


Figure 4.51: Preferred presentation techniques in Historical Site Interpretation Centers

A comparison of presentation techniques preferences in 'in situ' and in 'in context' settings highlights a contrasting result: Interactive applications were favored at both settings while other applications such as interactive screens in Historic Site Interpretation Centers were preferred over, for instance, audio-guides used in historic sites (Figure 4.50 and 4.51).

On the other hand, a similar mark was devoted to the use of conventional techniques at both settings. Nearly half (46%) of the historic sites visitors preferred to read information panels describing the original uses of the site they were visiting. Likewise, 52% of visitors to Historic Site Interpretation Centers preferred to join a guided tour to correlate the displays to their original uses in the adjacent site. Furthermore, the results indicate that respondents are more likely interested in history interpretation through social interaction, such as joining a guided tour instead of self-guided tour using an audio guide (Figure 4.50). Technology-based interactive applications are becoming highly important to the operations of historic sites (Piccialli and Chianese, 2017). However, it was observed that such devices were not favored by participants in 'in situ' settings. In contrast, participants were more interested on interactive applications to overcome the static nature of 'in context' settings (Figure 4.51). These results indicate that experiencing both 'in situ' and 'in context' settings may improve the overall visitors' experience, enhance their understanding of historic sites significance, and facilitate the process of meaning-making.

Surprisingly, only one third (33.6%) of the participants preferred going to events and attending workshops offered by the Historic Site Interpretation Centers. This result questions the effectiveness of these alternatives in relation to the historic

site interpretation. Therefore, an investigation of their role, effectiveness in meaning-making and their effects on visitors' experience remains to be undertaken.

4.3.2.5 Participants' Activities at Historic Sites and Historic Site Interpretation Centers

The combined context of historic sites and Historic Site Interpretation Centers offers the visitors various activities such as: sightseeing, walking for pleasure and exercise, taking photos, visiting the adjacent Historic Site Interpretation Center, going to support facilities such as the restaurant and the souvenir shop, or attending events, as also documented in the observations next. The participants were asked about their activities when visiting 'in situ' and 'in context' settings. Walking for pleasure and exercise emerged as the most common activity (77%). Other prominent activities included sightseeing (65.5%) and taking photos (61%) at both 'in situ' and 'in context' settings (Figure 4.52).

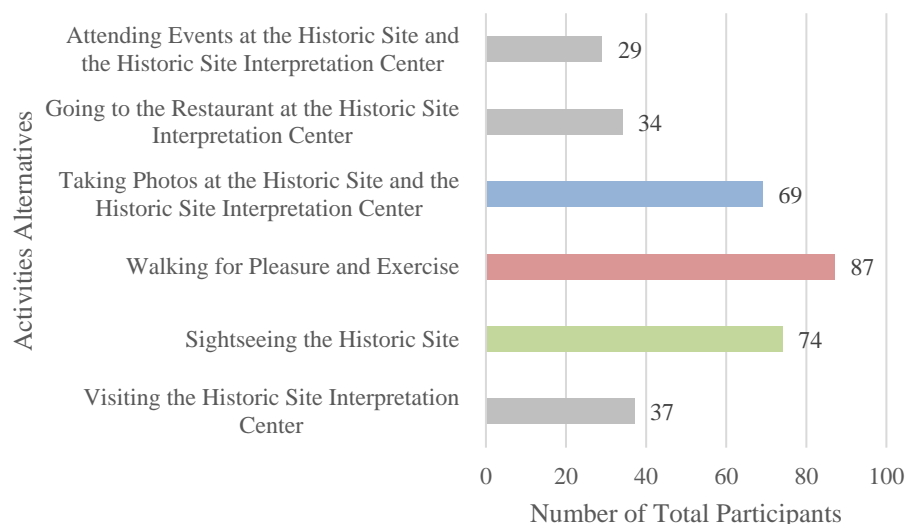


Figure 4.52: Participants activities and experience at 'in situ' and 'in context' settings

These findings confirm that the most popular activities are conducted in historic sites (i.e. in situ), which complies with the distribution of participants who

visited or intend to visit historic sites over Historic Site Interpretation Centers as presented in Figure 4.48.

Surprisingly, the survey results indicated that only 32% of the participants selected “visiting the Historic Site Interpretation Center” alternative (Figure 4.52), although intentionally built for interpreting the historic site and complement the sightseeing. Another unexpected result, in turn, shows that only 25% of the participants selected “attending events” as an alternative selected activity, although these were added for educational and recreational purposes (Figure 4.52).

4.3.2.6 Barriers to Visitation and Experience

This section aims to validate the visitation distribution at the four considered case studies, then to measure the participants’ satisfaction, and finally to identify the barriers foreseen by the participants to visit or plan a visit to the historic sites and Historic Site Interpretation Centers.

The participants were asked “which historic site interpretation center you did not visit?” The responses indicated that only 13% of the total participants did not visit Qal’at Al Bahrain (Figure 4.53), which complies with the visitation records, as it is the most approachable setting among the rest (Figure 4.44). This finding suggests that the three other case studies may have some barriers that explain the low visitation rate.

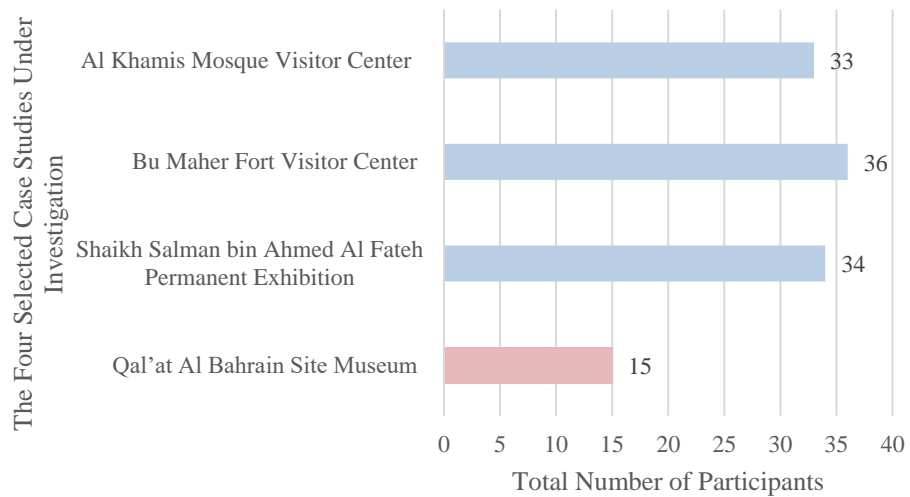


Figure 4.53: Historic Site Interpretation Centers that were not visited by the participants

Then the participants were asked “How satisfied are you with the presentation techniques used in the four listed Historic Site Interpretation Centers?” In response, 37.5% of the participants were neutral about the four interpretive centers, 25% were satisfied or very satisfied, and 10% were unsatisfied or very unsatisfied (Figure 4.54).

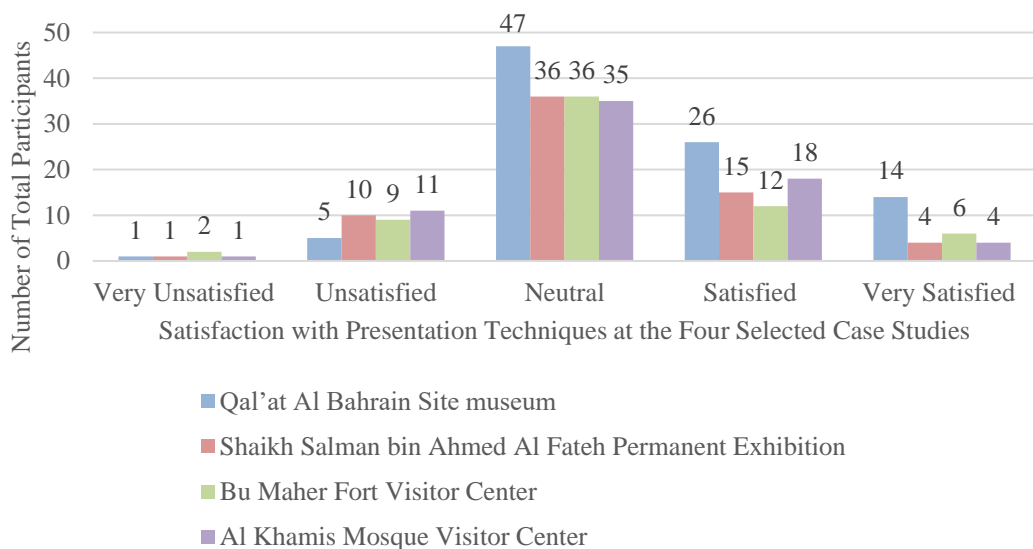


Figure 4.54: Participants satisfaction with the presentation techniques used in Historic Site Interpretation Centers

This result indicates that most of the participants did not express a clear opinion their opinion of the interpretive centers presentation techniques, or maybe it does not meet their expectations, interests, and needs. For other potential factors, as indicated in the literature, such as the weather condition, entry fee, access to food and drink facilities, provision of leisure, and access to other services such as toilets and special needs services, may also have impacted this outcome (Section 2.4.3).

In this regard, the participants were asked “When planning a visit to historic sites or historic site interpretation centers. What are your main concerns?” The main barrier for visiting the historic site or the Historic Site Interpretation Center, as expected, was first, the weather (69%), and then the entry fee and access to toilets accounted for almost 50%. Whereas only 35% stated that leisure activities and access to food/drink services were among the barriers that may affect their plans to visit (Figure 4.55). Bahrain’s climate is classified as desert, with extreme hot temperatures and high humidity and as such anticipated to be one of the main barriers that may impact a plan to visit an outdoor facility (i.e. historic site).

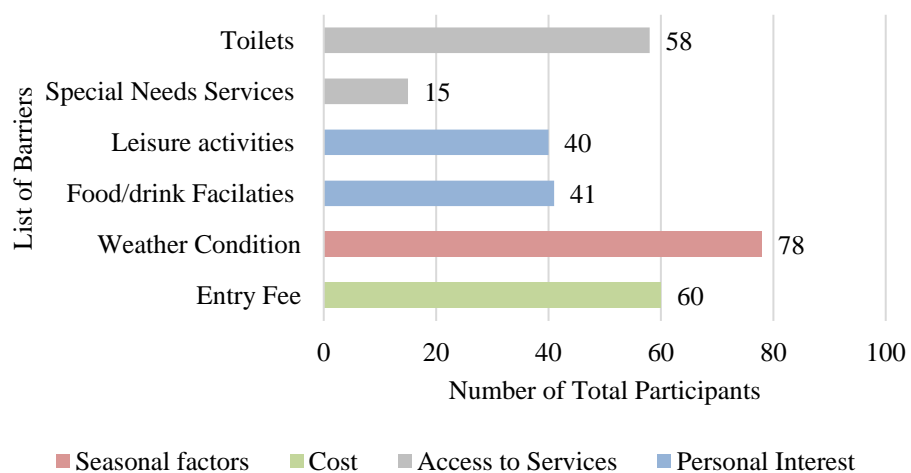


Figure 4.55: Participants identified barriers to plan a visit to historical site and Historic Site Interpretation Center

Regarding entry fees, it is anticipated that they may also deter low-income families from visiting museums and cultural settings as identified by (Cerquetti, 2016; Thorpe, 2018). For example, in the case of Qal'at Al Bahrain and Shaikh Salman bin Ahmed Al Fateh Fort, the entry fee is only applied for the historic Site Interpretation Center (i.e. site museum and permanent exhibition). Regarding Bu Maher Fort, the entry fee is applied for both 'in situ' and 'in context'. Finally, there is no entry fee for Al Khamis Mosque historic site or visitor center, yet it has a very low to non-existent visitation profile.

4.3.2.7 Preservation and Interpretation in Bahrain: Views and Opinions

This section attempts to assess the participants' views of the current initiatives offered by Bahrain Authority for Culture and Antiquities, using agree/disagree/maybe scale question, against a series of statements including range of possible phenomenon in the field of historic site interpretation. The participants were asked "What is your overall opinion of the following statements?", (a) The historical site is perfect (i.e. easy to navigate and useful to interpret the historic site), (b) The site museum is perfect (i.e. pleasing and meaningful) , (c) Demolish the historical site and move all the artifacts to the adjacent museum , (d) Cancel the site museum and leave all the artifacts in the site, (e) Create a living museum within the historical site, and (f) Keep the site museum and change the current interpretive strategies.

Most participants disagree on the act of demolishing the historic site and moving all the artifacts to the adjacent Historic Site Interpretation Center (statement (c), Figure 4.56). This finding indicates the participants' awareness of preserving the historic site vestiges for many reasons including, the fact that every historic site has a story to tell and represents the connection between the present and the past. These

reasons are further supported by their preference for the provision of a living museum within the historic site, as 64.6% of the participants reported “Agree” (statement (f), Figure 4.56). This result was expected as it has been documented that visitors seek an experiential interpretation of history (Pawlikowska-Piechotka et al., 2015; Shafernich, 1993).

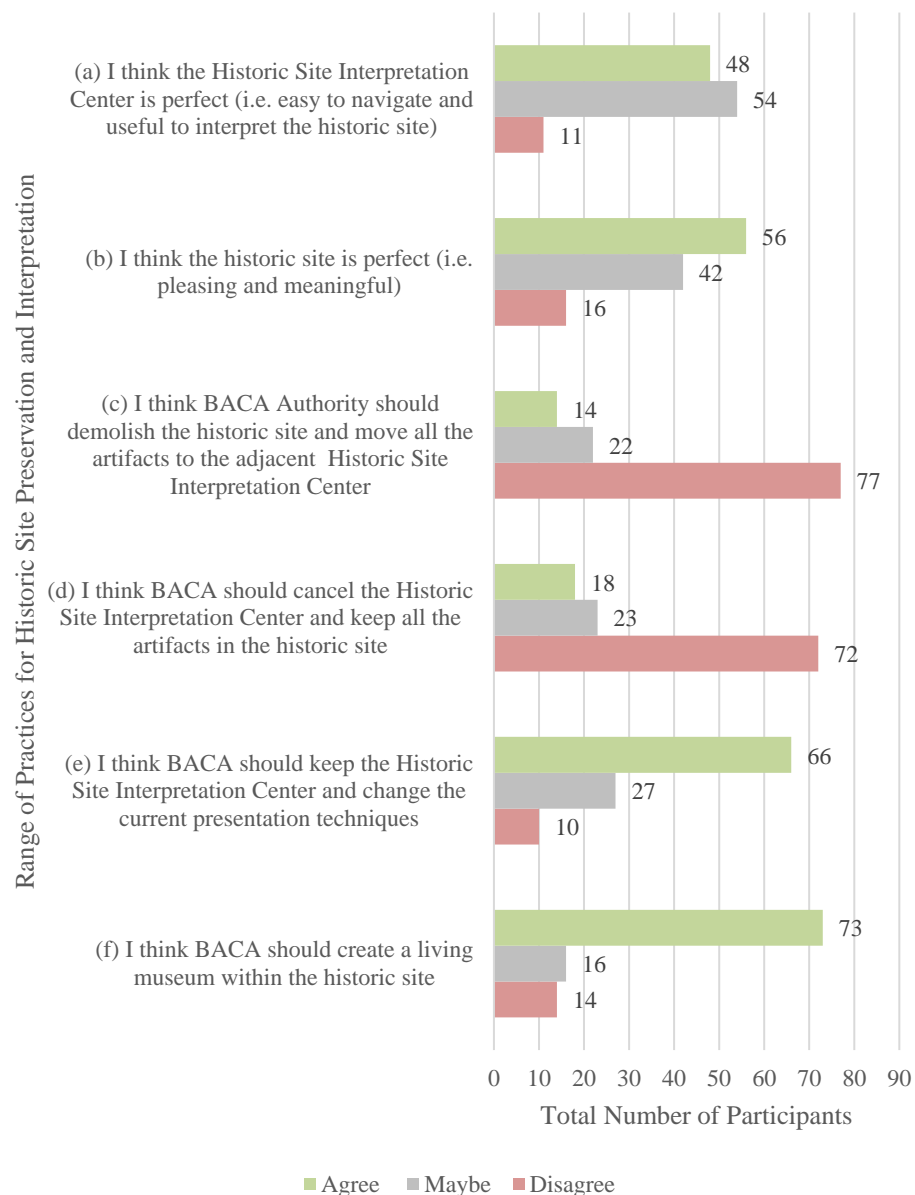


Figure 4.56: Participants opinion of a range of practices for historic site preservation and interpretation

There is a clear respondents' preference, for the artifacts to be in 'in context' instead of being in 'in situ' setting, as expressed by nearly 64% of the participants (statement (d), Figure 4.56). Moreover, 58% think that Historic Site Interpretation Center should remain but the current presentation techniques be improved (statement (e), Figure 4.56), which indicates their dissatisfaction of the current practices for possibly a number of reasons that may include, being conventional, less interactive or maybe fail to convey meanings to visitors.

These results indicate that the presentation techniques may well be a hindrance that impacts the visitation interest in the four case studies. This may well be behind the "neutral" (i.e. neither satisfied nor dissatisfied) in the current presentation techniques, which indicates that it does not meet the need maybe as presented in Figure 4.54.

4.3.2.8 Better Visiting Experience: Participants' Suggestions

The last part of the survey aimed to explore the participants' suggestions and expectations for better visiting experiences. In this regard, the participants were first asked to provide suggestions to enhance the visiting experience, and second, to share their experience in any historic site or Historic Site Interpretation Center they visited, and expect to have a similar experience in Bahrain. Unlike the other survey questions, which are based on closed-ended questions including multiple choices and feedback queries (i.e. satisfaction and agree/disagree), these open-ended questions allows the participants to share and express their insights in text (i.e. qualitative data). This approach lacks numerical significance and needs a conclusive research.

In terms of suggestions for a better experience, only around half of the respondents included their suggestions, which may well fit into five categories:

presentation techniques development, more advertisement, more events, better services, and facilities as well as other marginal suggestions.

Nearly 30% of the participants suggested “better presentation techniques”, such as providing more guided tours and more interactive techniques that support learning and entertainment (Figure 4.57). This result complies with the participants’ desire to change the current presentation techniques used in the Historic Site Interpretation Centers (statement (e), Figure 4.56). Hence, different presentation techniques such as interactive and multi-sensory approaches are anticipated to create a more appealing and possibly an entertaining learning experience (Harada et al., 2018).

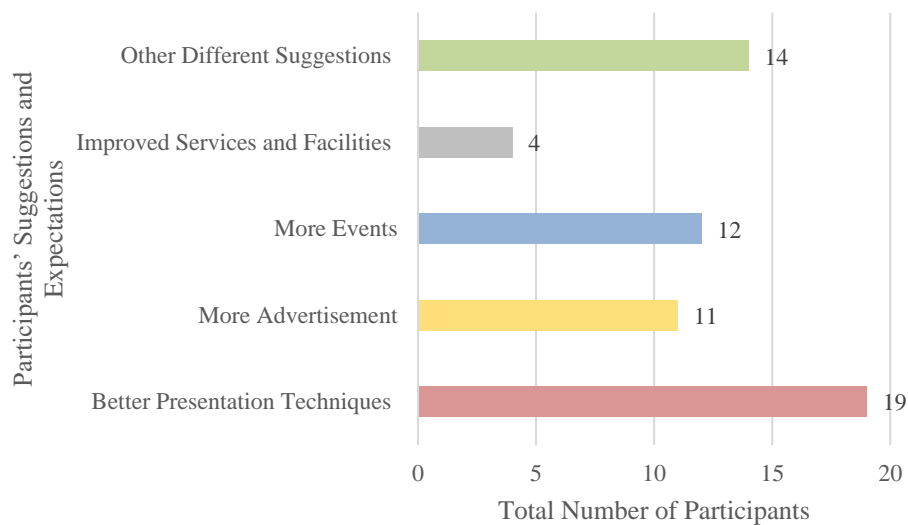


Figure 4.57: Participants’ suggestions and recommendations to enhance the visitor experience at ‘in situ’ and ‘in context’ settings

Despite the current social and cultural events hosted by Historic Site Interpretation Centers, 20% of the participants suggested adding “more events” such as three-dimensional animated shows and live performances (Figure 4.57). Additionally, “more advertisement” was suggested by nearly 18% of the participants

as they claimed that they were not aware of the existence of these Historic Site Interpretation Centers or their hosted events, which may justify the high number of the participants who did not visit the interpretive centers at the three sites; Shaikh Salman bin Ahmed Al Fateh, Bu Maher Fort, and Al Khamis Mosque (Figure 4.53). Some participants suggested to add more advertising and marketing through social media for promotional purposes, as social media platforms became an important channel to spread the word and engage the community (Thomas et al., 2020), and incidentally, these settings will attract more people. Only 6% suggested to have “improved services and facilities” such as adding toilets and food services at the historic site, enhancing the road signage and way finding around and within the historic site. Finally, keeping the historic site in its original format with no interference was suggested by 23.3% of the participants, which may indicate the participants’ attachment to the past and their support to the preservation efforts to keep the historic sites in good shape.

Experiences shared by participants about place they visited and expect to have a similar experience in Bahrain was less addressed (39%), and focused on two themes, namely (a) interactive and full body experience and (b) recreation of historic site.

Across the shared experiences reported by the participants, two scripts manifest rich content to illustrate the two identified themes. Participant X expressed a wide range of interactive approaches and full body experience used in a museum he/she visited when traveling.

Participant X: “A museum in Barcelona that makes you feel the real experience of being in the sea. The museum has a lot of high-tech activities that are interactive for children and adults. The activities are set in a smart screen with a fun way of Q and A so the person can have fun and still learn things about the history”

Participant Y provided more emphasis on the recreation of historic sites and approaches used to convey stories in such contexts. More interesting, the participant suggested ways of implementing a similar experience in Qal'at Al Bahrain.

Participant Y: "I have visited the Pharaonic village in Cairo and it's a memorable experience on a small traditional boat. The story was told in a completely artificial environment, but they provided a lot of historical information. We could have something like this in Bahrain specially that Qal'at Al Bahrain has a waterfront "

In fact, the interactive features such as touchscreen monitors and collaborative games encourage learning through entertainment in historic interpretive settings, as these can provide the visitors with sufficient information to ease their understanding, challenge them to think, explore and interact with the exhibits in display (Corey and Daniel, 2015; Haddad, 2014; Karaman et al., 2016). The recreation of artificial historic site (i.e. heritage village) is a powerful strategy to preserve, present and interpret aspects of cultural heritage, it also helps the visitor to connect and reflect on historical facts through experience (Biln and El Amrousi, 2014; Paardekooper, 2013; Pawlikowska-Piechotka et al., 2015). In conclusion, the results revealed that the majority is keen to have a memorable experience that is interesting and educational at the same time.

The online survey provided indications of preferences but limited insight of the reasons behind these choices that can only be further explored using other approaches.

4.3.3 Shapes and Forms of Visitors' Experiences at Historic Site Interpretation Centers and Historic Sites: As Observed

To complement and validate the data gathered from the visitors' records (4.3.1) and the online survey (4.3.2), the author conducted a series of observational visits to each case study under investigation. The field visits were conducted at

different times (i.e. morning and evening), different days (i.e. weekday and weekend), and different seasons (i.e. summer and winter) over a period of twelve months between 2018 and 2019. Table 4.1 presents the specific months, days, times, and seasons where the observations were carried, as well as, the total number of people observed, and the total number of observational visits.

Table 4.1: Number of field visits conducted between August 2018 and July 2019

	Month	Day	Time	Season	Total No. of people observed	Total No. of visits
Qal'at Bahrain (n = 333)	December 2018	Weekday	Morning	Winter	177	5
	January 2019	Weekday	Morning	Winter	70	
		Weekend	Evening	Winter	54	
	March 2019	Weekday	Morning	Summer	14	
		Weekend	Evening	Summer	18	
Shaikh Salman bin Ahmed Al Fateh fort (n = 149)	December 2018	Weekday	Morning	Winter	17	4
	January 2019	Weekday	Evening	Winter	22	
	March 2019	Weekday	Morning	Summer	2	
	July 2019	Weekend	Evening	Summer	104	
Bu Maher fort (n = 22)	August 2018	Weekday	Morning	Summer	2	4
	December 2018	Weekday	Morning	Winter	8	
	January 2019	Weekend	Morning	Winter	7	
	March 2019	Weekend	Evening	Summer	5	
Al Khamis Mosque (n = 0)	December 2018	Weekday	Morning	Winter	0	4
	January 2019	Weekend	Morning	Winter	0	
	March 2019	Weekday	Evening	Summer	0	
	July 2019	Weekend	Morning	Summer	0	

First, this section attempts to analyze and interpret the field observation data at each of the four settings and second, to provide an overview of the observational patterns across the four case studies.

The observations were documented using two methods: Unobtrusive field notes on visitors' behavior and activities with attention to visit time, gender split, age, individually or in group, present at 'in situ' or 'in context' settings. Second, a photographic record of visitors and events that occurred during the field visits was created.

4.3.3.1 Field Observation Analysis and Interpretation at the Four Case Studies

4.3.3.1.1 Qal'at Al Bahrain

The number of individuals observed at Qal'at Al Bahrain over a series of five visits in December 2018, January, and March 2019 were 333 (Table 4.1).

The first observation indicates that the number of visitors going to the historic site is remarkably higher than those heading to the site museum (261 versus 72). This observation coordinates with the visitation records (Figure 4.44) and the visit or intend to visit patterns reported by the survey participants (Figure 4.48). During the field visit in December 2018, where the weather is also more clement, it was manifest that many tourists were walking from the site museum parking lot towards the Qal'at Al Bahrain historic site, and not to its site museum (Figure 4.58), which confirms the popularity of Qal'at Al Bahrain as a tourist attraction. This destination is claimed as a must-see place when visiting Bahrain by many influential travel websites such as TripAdvisor and Lonely Planet.



Figure 4.58: Large number of visitors seen walking towards Qal'at Al Bahrain historic site

Second, the number of visitors relatively increases during the winter season and decreases during the warmer season (Figure 4.59). Further, confirming the significant impact of the weather on the visitation patterns and was reported as the main hinder to plan a visit to historic sites (Figure 4.55).

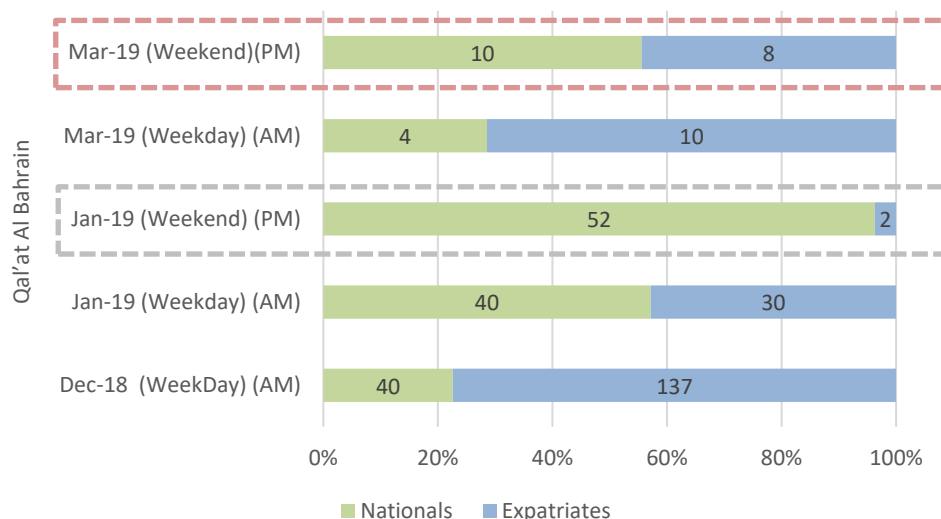


Figure 4.59: A comparison between nationals and expatriates visiting Qal'at Al Bahrain contextual setting

Third, the number of expatriates was slightly higher than the number of nationals representing a ratio 187 to 146 (Figure 4.59). The fourth and last observation reveals that most of the visitors are seen in small groups at the historic site for sightseeing, walking, and picture-taking. In addition to that, some visitors, mostly tourists, were engaged in a guided tour as illustrated in Figure 4.60.



Figure 4.60: Guided tour in Qal'at Al Bahrain

Figure 4.60 indicates the expatriates' visitors' engagement and interaction within the historic site settings, where most of them were reading the historic site information panels. In addition, some visitors were seen standing on the top of the fort roof, maybe to get an overview of the fort different levels, and others were just walking around. One of the main observed activity, as expected in such settings, was picture-taking of either the site features or the visitors themselves with the site as a background (Figure 4.61).



Figure 4.61: A visitor taking photograph of Qal'at Al Bahrain vestiges

In January 2019, the author observed a group of 41 teenage female students and 2 teachers at the historic site of Qal’at Al Bahrain and its site museum. During the visit, a tour guide was explaining the artifacts and engaging the students by different forms of questions and games in relation to the significance of Qal’at Al Bahrain. The students’ engagement was tangible as some were listening to the tour guide, some were taking notes, others were asking the tour guide questions, and some were touching the object in display (Figure 4.62). These gestures and actions can form the basis of “embodied interpretation”, as these movements contribute to mediating thinking, perception and meaning-making within the contexts of museums (Steier et al., 2015; Tzortzi, 2016).



Figure 4.62: Gestures and actions of students during the guided tour in Qal’at Al Bahrain site museum

In addition, the two teachers were seen taking photos of another large object positioned in the center of the second exhibition (Middle Dilmun civilization era) as shown in Figure 4.63. Original full-scale exhibits seem to attract more attention and interest than the static traditional presentation techniques such as the information wall panels.



Figure 4.63: A visitor taking photograph of Qal'at Al Bahrain vestiges displayed in Qal'at Al Bahrain Site Museum

Qal'at Al Bahrain site museum offers a free choice learning and entertaining environment, using different presentation techniques that stimulate visitors' feeling and promote curiosity. Van Winkle (2014) and McComas (2014) argued that museums settings should be non-sequential, self-paced and entertaining at the same time. In fact, these are often part of the visitors' learning experience at attractions such as museums and historic sites. For example, visitors can have different

scenarios of movement and learning such as following a guided tour to understand the museum's collection or being self-guided and interact with different presentation techniques, including touch screen monitors (Figure 4.64).



Figure 4.64: Visitors' different scenarios of movement and learning experience at museums settings

To this end, it is surprising that Qal'at Al Bahrain site museum does not enjoy a similar attention as Qal'at Al Bahrain historic site, as it does not have regular visitation patterns, except for school visits and official delegates (as observed by the author). Qal'at Al Bahrain site museum offered a wide range of presentation techniques, educational workshops, and recreational events to meet visitors' expectations and attracts more visitors.

4.3.3.1.2 Shaikh Salman Bin Ahmed Al Fateh Fort

At Shaikh Salman bin Ahmed Al Fateh Fort, 149 individuals were observed over a series of four visits in December 2018, January, March, and July 2019 (Table 4.1).

The first observation shows that Shaikh Salman bin Ahmed Al Fateh Fort historic site and interpretive centers did not attract a large number of visitors when

compared to Qal'at Al Bahrain. Instead, its supporting social facilities such as the café and restaurant, as well as the hosted events do. More nationals were observed at the traditional café and restaurant in small groups of friends and families; thus, this location with its facilities seems to be more attractive to nationals than expatriates (Figure 4.56).

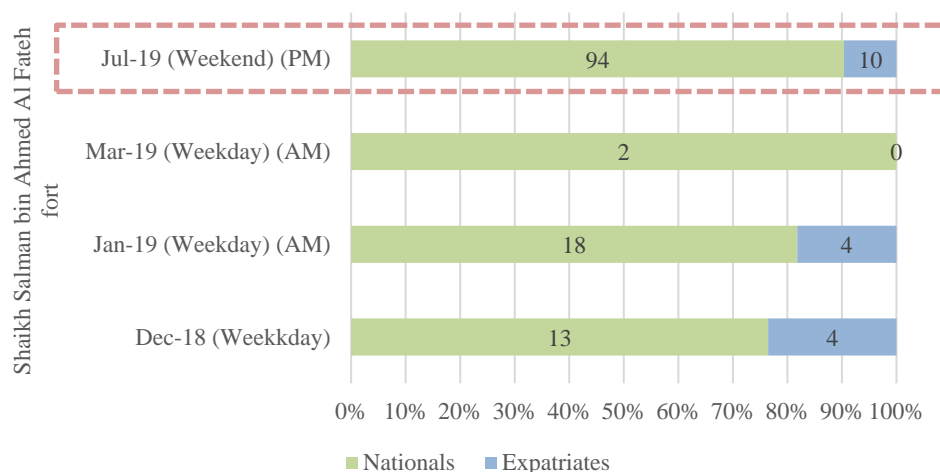


Figure 4.65: A comparison between nationals and expatriates visiting Shaikh Salman bin Ahmed Al Fateh contextual setting

Second, the historic site was mainly used as a connecting passage, as visitors were observed passing through the site and heading to the restaurant without visiting the interpretive center located within the fort (Figure 4.29 and 4.30). Third, few expatriates tourists or residents were seen alone or in duos sightseeing the historic site, exploring the narrow-shaded alleys, and taking photos, yet none were seen visiting the interpretive center. The lack of presentation and display techniques, as well as the applied entry fee, and the less advertised location may well be among the main hindrances that deter people from visiting the interpretive center, as reported by the online survey participants (Figure 4.55 and 4.57). These suggested reasons will benefit from an in-depth discussion with the visitors to clarify and validate them.

During July 2019 field visit, Shaikh Salman bin Ahmed Al Fateh Fort was hosting Khaimat Nakhool (i.e. Nakhool tent) part of the annual summer festival. This event symbolizes Bahrain's cultural heritage and the history of Dilmun, and it is coupled with a wide variety of educational and entertainment programs, mainly for children and young people. This single event accounted for 70% of the visitors observed during the 4 field visits. The visitors were mainly nationals including parents and children, as this event addresses cultural games, traditional music, and folkloric dance performances (Figure 4.66). In addition, such events are usually in the local Arabic language which may act as a barrier to non-Arabic speaking visitors.



Figure 4.66: Cultural event at Shaikh Salman Bin Ahmed Al Fateh Fort as observed

To sum up, the observational findings revealed that Shaikh Salman Al Fateh Fort and its interpretive center suffer from a lack of visitation and maybe interest, as the site is mainly used for entertaining events and not as intended for the historical site understanding, interpretation and meaning-making. Further insights directly from the visitors may shed light into the value and attractiveness of the historical site, its Historic Site Interpretation Center as well as its facilities.

4.3.3.1.3 Bu Maher Fort

Bu Maher Fort contextual setting is relatively small compared to the other case studies under investigation. It has three distinctive specificities in comparison to other cases, first a unique access, by means of water transportation via boat shuttles that has only eight seats and need to be booked in advance (Figure 4.67), then its time restricted, as each visit is approximately 15 minutes, and finally, it does not host public events.



Figure 4.67: Bu Maher Fort water transportation via boat shuttles

The observational visits witnessed only 22 visitors over the series of field visits, respectively in August and December 2018, then January and March 2019 (Table 4.1). First, there was an approximately equal split between nationals and expatriates' visitors to Bu Maher Fort historic site and interpretive center, (Figure

4.68). Although, limited in number of observational visits, the result indicates an equal attraction for both nationals and expatriates to this setting. This could be linked to the fact that it is relatively new, as it was built in 2013. Therefore, it is anticipated that many people are curious to check a new destination, and possibly experience its unique water transportation facility.

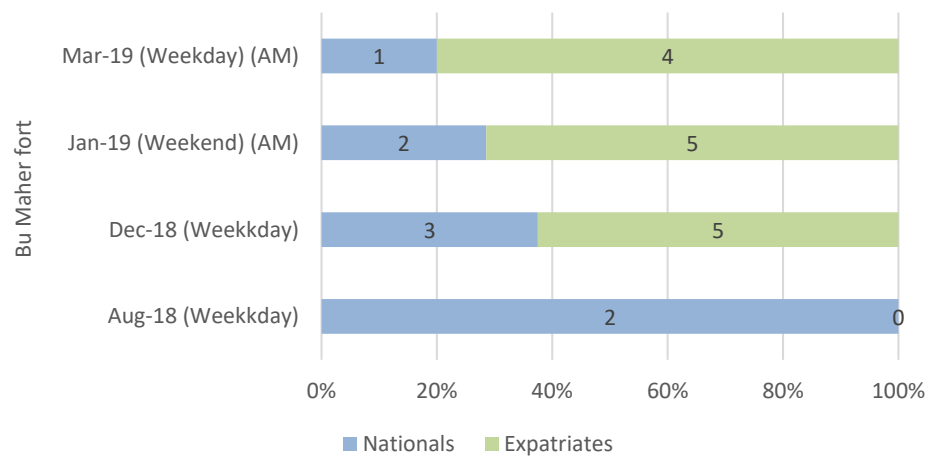


Figure 4.68: A comparison between nationals and expatriates visiting Bu Maher Fort contextual setting

Second, experiencing the contextual setting of Bu Maher Fort starts from the water shuttle, whereas people were observed socializing with family and friends, taking photos, or just enjoying the panoramic view (Figure 4.69). Following the boat ride, the visitors were seen walking the traditional wooden bridge, enjoying the panoramic views, some were taking photos, while they were heading to the historic site and the visitor center (Figure 4.70).



Figure 4.69: A photo taken to Bu Maher fort contextual setting while experiencing the boat ride



Figure 4.70: Visitors approaching Bu Maher Fort visitor center as observed

During the four field visits, 14 (63.6%) visitors were seen at the visitor center, 5 (22.7%) were at the historic site. and only 3 (13.6%) went to both the historic site and visitor the center. This result is remarkable, because unlike Qal'at Al Bahrain site museum, Bu Maher Fort visitor center relatively enjoyed most of the visitors compared to the historic site. This may be the result of the visitor center being the first encounter after the bridge walk, whereas the historic site comes next. It is also expected that the limited time of the overall trip (approximately 15 mins) is

not enough to explore both settings. Other suggested reasons might be related to the visitors' interests and expectations, as well as to the weather conditions, as people may prefer the visitor center because it is air-conditioned and more comfortable than the boat trip and the historic site.

Third, at the visitor center, walking around the central display, and looking at the historic site through the large, glazed façade was a common observed pattern among visitors. At the historic site, the visitors were looking at the canons, the huge boat, and the remaining tower; they also took photos of the historic site and the surrounding. However, given the rather small sample of visitors, it is not possible to generalize or even have an indication how the overall setting functions. Further understanding of the learned experience may be better reached through further interactions and discussion with visitors.

4.3.3.1.4 Al Khamis Mosque

Unfortunately, there were no visitors at Al Khamis Mosque historic site and its visitor center, as the place was totally empty during the four field visits conducted in in December 2018, January, March, and July 2019 (Table 4.1).

4.3.3.2 Observational Patterns among the Four Case Studies

In terms of site significance, Qal'at Al Bahrain is the most-visited historic contextual setting as documented through archives, reported by online survey respondents and observed on site. The visitors' records as archived in 2018 present a very similar pattern to the online survey feedback and to the field observational data, hence confirming the popularity of Qal'at Al Bahrain and the low to non-existent visitation to Al Khamis Mosque (Figure 4.71).

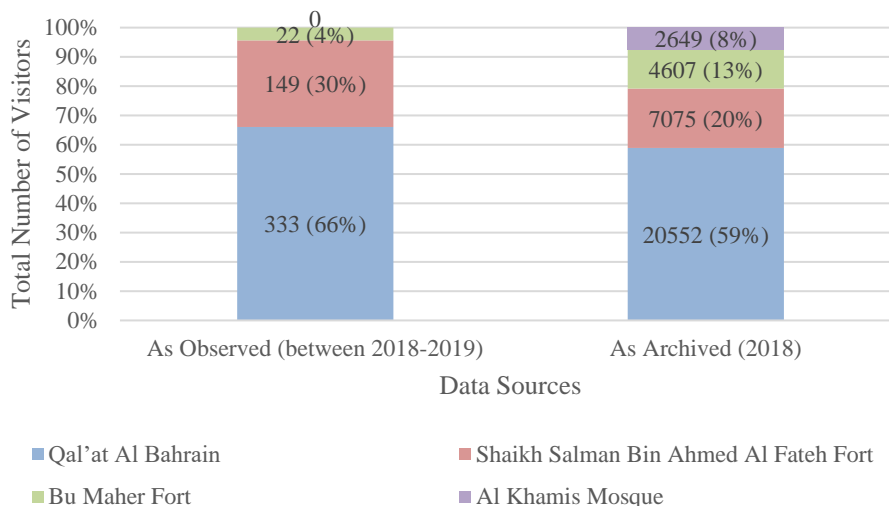


Figure 4.71: A comparison between the visitation records to the four case studies under investigation

Overall, the Historic sites are more popular and attractive than Historic Site Interpretation Centers. This fact is based on concurrent sets of data inclusive of data reported by the online participants and the observational data gathered over a series of field visits. A comparison between the visitation to ‘in situ’ and ‘in context’ as reported and as observed at the four case studies is presented in Figure 4.72.

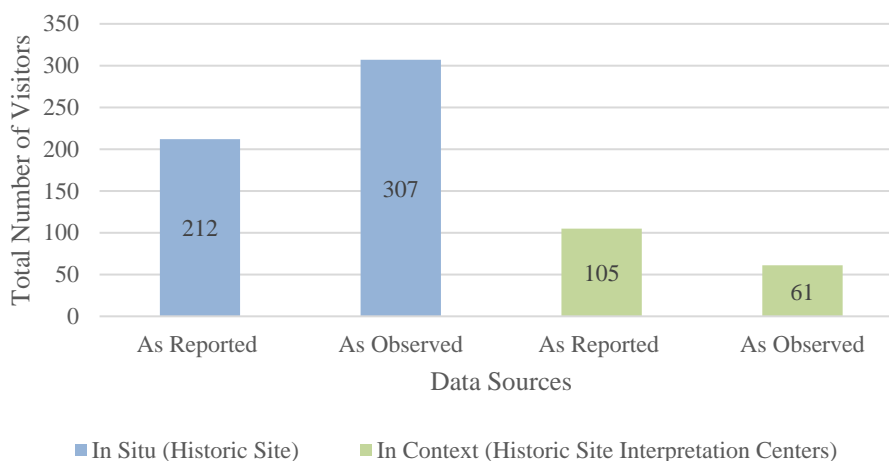


Figure 4.72: Comparison between the ‘in situ’ and ‘in context’ settings popularity and attractiveness

The presentation techniques in the Historic Site Interpretation Centers were considered negatively as reported in the online survey. Additionally, an interactive

learning and entertaining experience was sought, which the current centers lack. The static nature of the presentation techniques used in the interpretive centers seems to be among the reasons behind the low visitation pattern as reported and observed.

The predominant visitation intent seems to be triggered by two factors: sightseeing and entertainment. These activities are differently sought by nationals and expatriate visitors. It has been observed that expatriates show high levels of engagement and interaction at ‘in situ’ and ‘in context’ settings, compared to nationals, as expatriate visitors may be tourists or a one-time visitors for whom the historical site bears a higher weight in their visit to Bahrain. On the other hand, nationals show a high level of engagement at the historic site-hosted events (i.e. social and cultural), mainly for entertaining purposes, as well as for pleasure and exercise. This finding did not materialize in the data reported by national participants from the online survey, as attending events did not receive high marks compared to walking. It is anticipated that nationals are very familiar with their local heritage and may need more entertainment incentives to attract them, such as interactive exploratory settings to trigger their curiosity and interest.

The reported and observed data suggests that nationals often engage with the settings based on their personal interests, as well as the hosted events that provide them an interactive and entertaining experience. This was also evident in the reviewed literature; local attractions are not frequented by local people, unless an additional attraction is there such as exhibit rotation, temporary exhibitions, and events (Chapter 2, Section 2.5.1). Therefore, further investigation is required to address the nationals’ needs and interests to enhance their interests to historic sites and Historic Site Interpretation Centers.

4.4 Summary

This chapter presented first, a review of the Historic Site Interpretation Center's contextual relationship to the historic site, architectural design, and the interpretive strategies that may shape visitors' experience at the four selected case studies. Second, it explored the visitations records for the year 2018, the feedback of the residents of Bahrain through an online survey, and finally the visitors' experience in context as observed during 4 to 5 field visits to each site.

The four case studies architectural review and the visitors' multi-ethnographic study determined the following:

- The contextual relationships between the 'in situ' and 'in context' settings contributed differently to the visitors' perception and visitation patterns. The immediate relationship between the historic site and the historic site interpretation center highlighted the importance of the historic site, and hence preserved it as the main object of interpretation, as found in Qal'at Al Bahrain, Al Khamis Mosque, and Bu Maher Fort. In contrast, placing the interpretive center within the historic site may create an obstruction and reduce the appearance of both, as found in Shaikh Salman bin Ahmed Al Fateh Fort.
- The access and mobility between the 'in situ' and 'in context' settings were found to have impacts on the visitation patterns to either setting, yet provided a free choice learning experience to visit one or another for exploratory and sightseeing purposes. In this regard, it was found that the access and mobility between the two settings are determined by the location of the interpretive center in relation to the historic site as nearby, before, or within, and then by the visitors' interests. Locating the interpretive center nearby the historic site offers an equal visitation opportunity to both settings as observed in Qal'at Al Bahrain case study, while locating the

interpretive center as the first encounter or before the historic site translated into higher visitation levels to the center compared to the site, as seen in Bu Maher Fort case. Finally, locating the interpretive center within the historic site, which may be considered as an attraction and exploration invite, did not necessarily translate into visitations, as observed within Shaikh Salman bin Ahmed Al Fateh Fort.

- The relationship between a Historic Site Interpretation Center's architectural design and the immediate surroundings plays a critical role in providing the visitors with the first insights about the historic site and determining the contextual relationship between both settings. In this regard, it was found that the interpretive centers at Qal'at Al Bahrain and Bu Maher Fort settings have integrated locally-inspired attributes, colors, and building materials to create a blended and harmonious relationship with the surroundings, leaving the historic site as the focal attraction. On the other hand, the free-standing, mirror-like interpretive center at Shaikh Salman bin Ahmed Al Fateh Fort, created a sharp visual contrast within the more authentic fort architecture. Yet, this contrast reflected the whole site and created blended views within the overall contextual setting that allowed the visitors to enjoy uninterrupted views while passing through the fort. In combined 'in situ' and 'in context' settings, the spatial layout was found to play a storytelling role where objects were not only displayed but also the contextual relationship between both settings was established as found in Qal'at Al Bahrain site museum. In contrast, the other three centers display arrangements and spatial layout did not serve as such, instead they were only objects-oriented, focused mainly on preservation and exhibition purposes. The use of multiple presentation techniques including conventional, technology-based, and interactive was found very attractive to visitors as reported in the online survey and observed in some cases. The supporting social facilities such as restaurants, cafés,

and hosted cultural/ recreational events were found attractive to the general public, mainly used for networking, socializing and entertaining, as observed in Qal'at Al Bahrain and Shaikh Salman bin Ahmed Al Fateh Fort. Moreover, the unique access through a sea shuttle to Bu Maher Fort was also another interpretive dimension to engage its visitors beyond its contextual settings. The significance and popularity of an attraction seems to be a key driver to visitation. Qal'at Al Bahrain historic site was archived and reported as the most visited location compared to the other cases, for its popularity in Bahrain and in the region, as well as being a UNESCO world heritage site. This seems to be also the result of the interactive experience and the wide variety of presentation strategies found in the historical sites, which made them more attractive compared to the Historic Site Interpretation Centers.

- Finally, the visitors shape and form their experience based on their interests and needs, as sightseeing and entertainment were the main triggers to their visitation. As an evidence, some sites attracted more visitors than others, while others suffered from almost no visitation. Bahrain hot and humid climate, entry fee and presentation techniques were reported by survey participants as additional barriers.

To this end, the findings from the archived data, the online survey and the observational visits provided an indication of the existing situation. Notwithstanding the limited survey sample size and the smaller number of observations conducted, the reasons behind the visitors' preferences and behaviors remain unanswered and need further exploration. Therefore, further insight of visitors' views is sought through interviews in the next chapter, while also ensuring reliability and validity.

Chapter 5: Thematic Analysis and Discussion

5.1 Preface

This chapter presents, first, the findings and thematic analysis of the open-ended interviews conducted with 22 stakeholders (i.e. 11 service providers and 11 visitors), and second, an overall discussion of the findings of this study out of the concurrent consideration of the combined methods: multiple case study analysis, and multi-ethnographic research approaches. Hence, it attempts to provide a holistic understanding of the visitors' perception and emotional experience, as well as the contributing factors that shape and form their experience, and their role in the process of meaning-making when visiting historic contextual settings, 'in situ' and 'in context'.

5.2 Data Collection Procedure of the Open-Ended Interviews

The open-ended interviews were conducted in December 2018 and January 2019. Only 10 out of 22 interviews were tape-recorded with the permission of the interviewees, while the others were documented manually by taking notes during the interview. Subsequently, interviews were transcribed to capture essential information through data analysis. The researcher applied probing, follow-ups, and paraphrasing approaches to simplify the interview process and encourage the expression of participants' perceptions and emotions. The interviews were conducted randomly during the field observation sessions with visitors based on their own will to participate, while the service providers were selected according to their role as decision-makers, including archeologists, curators, visitors' guides, and receptionists and their willingness to participate.

Eighteen of these interviews were carried out onsite i.e. in the four Historic Site Interpretation Centers under investigation, while two were carried out in Bahrain Authority for Culture and Antiquities offices, and one was conducted via telephone and one via e-mail as participants were outside Bahrain during time of interview (Chapter 3, Table 3.5). Table 5.1 presents the number of service providers and visitors at each case study excluding the four off-site interviews.

Table 5.1: The number of service providers and visitors at the four case studies under investigation

Case study	Service providers		Visitors		Total
	Category	No.	Category	No.	
Qal'at Al Bahrain	Visitor guides	3	Nationals	1	7
	Receptionist	1	Expatriates	2	
Shaikh Salman bin Ahmed Al Fateh Fort	Supervisor	1	Nationals	3	4
Bu Maher Fort	Receptionist	1	Nationals	3	5
			Expatriates	1	
Al Khamis Mosque	Receptionist	1	Nationals	1	2
Total	7		11		18

The table shows that the number and distribution of interviewees (i.e. service providers and visitors) among the four sites with a note that the largest number of interviewees were associated with Qal'at Al Bahrain reflects its proportionally as archived, observed and reported by the survey participants (Chapter 4, Figure 4.48 and 4.71). The open-ended interviews thematic analysis is reviewed, codified, and interpreted next, following the interview data analysis procedures presented in Chapter 3 (Section 3.7.3).

5.3 Data Analysis of Open-Ended Interviews

All the interviews were transcribed, translated, and coded manually. The first 4 interviews were transcribed, reviewed, and analyzed for the dual purpose of identifying information gaps that will feed into follow-up and new interviews as well to reflect on initial findings before moving into the next interviews as recommended

by Kvale (2007a) and Saldana et al. (2011). During transcriptions, all data was reviewed for potential common codes and generative themes. Similarly, all the words that expressed similar subjects were underlined, tabulated, and traced through the first 4 transcripts to identify the emerging codes as recommended by Saldaña (2009). The same process was done for all the transcripts of the 22 interviews. The codified interviews transcripts shared similar generative themes and resulted in 29 codes, and 11 themes. An example of the data coding and thematizing process is illustrated in Figure 5.1.

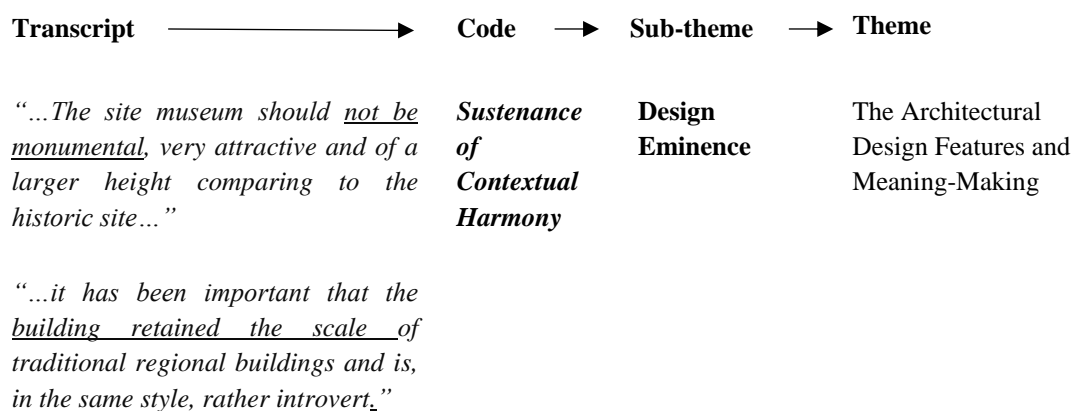


Figure 5.1: Example of the data coding and thematizing process

Then Excel spreadsheets were utilized to trace all the narratives against the codes, subthemes, and themes to finally group them into 4 holistic organizing categories based on the relationships between the physical context, the visitors experience, aspects of meaning making and suggestions for better visiting experience. The codes were graphically coded to highlight the recurrence of the resulting 29 codes, considering the identified concepts that emerged from the interview analysis (Figure 5.2). This step was carried out to emphasize the key points that shape the visitors' experience and affect the meaning-making process explored

in this research. A correlation count of the emerging themes and findings is presented in Table 5.2.



Figure 5.2: Frequency codes and emerging categories from the 22 narrative interviewees

Table 5.2: The generative emerging themes across the 22 narratives

(* indicates expatriates)

Categories	Participants Themes	Service Providers										Visitors										Total Frequency		
		Sh. M. Al Khalifa	Dr. S. Al Mahari	Dr. N. Fattouh	Mr. C. Wohler*	Mrs. Layla	Mrs. Noora	Mrs. Sameera	Mr. Mohammed	Mr. M. Al Binkhalil	Mr. Aziz	Mr. Jassim	Ms. Emile*	Mr. Salem	Ms. Dalal	Mr. Saleh	Mrs. Sonia*	Mr. Ahmed	Mr. Khalid	Mr. Osama	Mr. Bassam		Ms. Fatima	Mrs. Amal
1	Importance and Functionality of The Historic Site Interpretation Centers																							12
	Architectural Design Features in Relationship to Meaning-Making																							20
	Presentation Techniques Qualities and Challenges of Meaning-Making																							19
2	The Visitors' Experience Between 'In Situ' and 'In Context'																							15
	The Visitors' Experience Between Opportunities and Changers																							15
3	Meaning-Making Happens Within a Specific Physical Context																							6
	Meaning-Making is a Whole-Body Experience																							7
4	Artifacts Repatriation and Other Alternatives																							5
	Alternative Presentation and Deliverable Techniques																							5
	Free Admission Really Affects Attendance																							4
	Other Untitled Suggestions																							4

In the next analysis phase, the emergent similarities between the themes were checked first, then grouped into four organizing themes. The first three organizing themes represent the key factors affecting the shape and form of visiting experiences in Historic Site Interpretation Centers, namely:

- 1) the role of Physical Context in shaping the visitors' experience and meaning-making,
- 2) the dynamics of Visitors' Experience and meaning-making process: opportunities and challenges, and
- 3) the aspects of Meaning-Making Process, while

While the fourth organizing theme represents

- 4) the participants Suggestions and Recommendations: towards a better visitors' experience (Figure 5.3).

Combined, the themes would answer the research objectives, and consequently could contribute to the overall meaning-making process that occurs between 'in situ' and 'in context' settings.

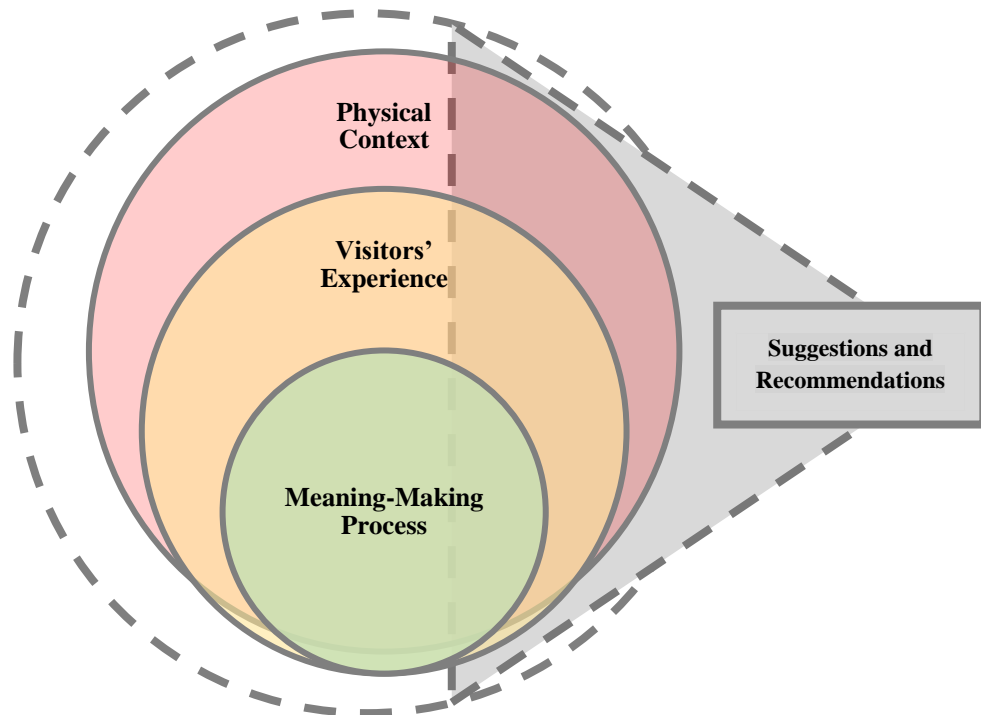


Figure 5.3: The relationship between the four emergent categories (i.e. factors).

The next section attempts to present and discuss the findings along with evidence from the participants (i.e. service providers and visitors).

5.4 Open-Ended Interview: Results and Analysis

5.4.1 The Role of Physical Context in Shaping the Visitors' Experience and Meaning-Making

For most of the participants, the physical context of historic sites and Historic Site Interpretation Centers emerged as an important factor that can shape and influence the visiting experience. Three themes emerged, addressed almost equally by visitors and service providers, and stand as:

- a) the importance and functionality of the Historic Site Interpretation Center,
- b) the architectural design features in relationship to meaning-making, and
- c) the presentation strategies qualities and challenges of meaning-making.

Figure 5.4 presents the number of participants input on each sub-theme.

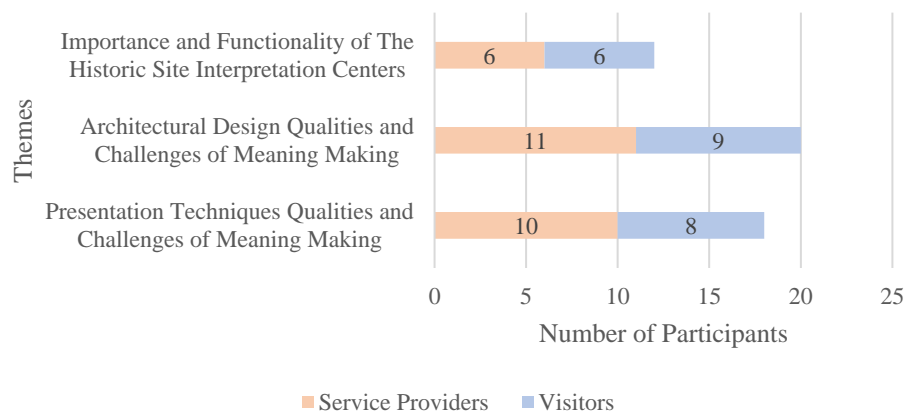


Figure 5.4: Number of participants input to the three themes under “The Role of Physical Context in Shaping the Visitor Experience and Meaning Making” organizing theme

These themes were largely reflected in the participants’ responses and highlighted the importance of Historic Site Interpretation Centers’ physical configuration and its applied strategies, and how these features contributed to the meaning-making process. The physical attributes play a critical role in reflecting culture through a harmony between the architectural style of the Historic Site Interpretation Center in relation to its immediate surroundings, as well as the role of communicating historical facts through the spatial layout and interpretive strategies

Figure 5.5 illustrates the themes, sub-themes, and codes pertaining to about the role of the physical context in shaping the visitors’ experience and meaning-making process.

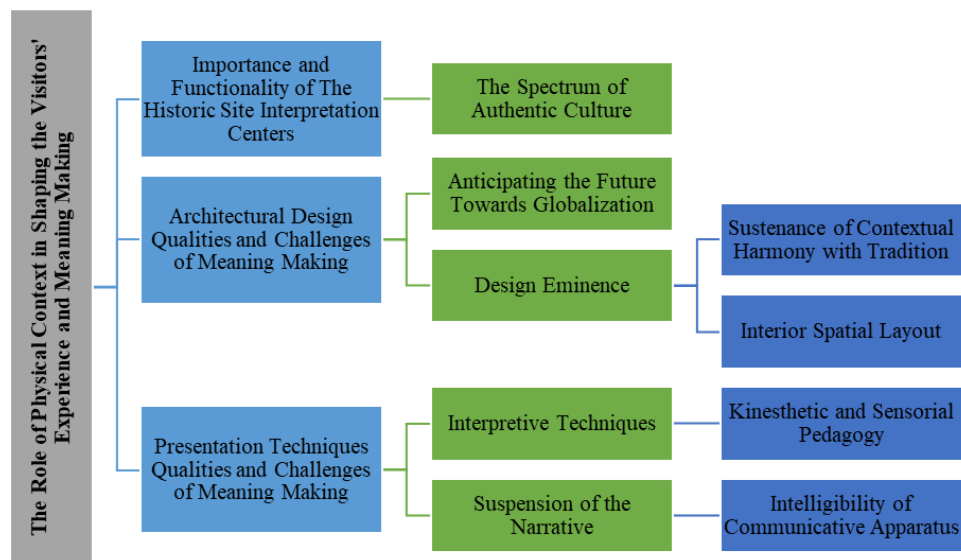


Figure 5.5: Themes, sub-themes, and codes about the roles of the physical context in shaping the visitors' experience and meaning-making

5.4.1.1 The Importance and Functionality of the Historic Site Interpretation Centers

The importance and functionality of interpretive centers was expressed, by all participants, in relation to the core task of Historic Site Interpretation Centers as a place to interpret meanings and mediate hidden stories as form of literacy (i.e. communication).

For example, Mrs. Sameera, a visitor guide at Qal'at Al Bahrain site museum states:

"I see the exhibition as a history book and every hall is another chapter."

This was concurred by Ms. Emile, a visitor at the same museum, and she stated:

"Site museum is like an information post."

The importance of Historic Site Interpretation Centers as a place that can blend personal, local, and global cultural history in the same receptacle was

recognized by some participants For example, Mrs. Layla, a visitor guide at Qal'at Al Bahrain site museum shared the following thought:

“...It is a place that represents individual’s personalities...it is the place where someone can understand other culture and history...”

The need of Historic Site Interpretation Centers as places that enable people (i.e. locals) to explore their own history, cultural lifestyle, and social values in relation to the bigger world, a need for all was also mentioned. For example, Mr. Salem, a visitor at Shaikh Salman bin Ahmed Al Fateh fort stated:

“...Locals need museums to know about their history and culture because it refers to their origins...”

These comments seem to provide evidence that Historic Site Interpretation Centers are important places for two reasons. First, their ability to act as a source for authenticity. For instance, the excerpt of Mrs. Sameera is a pure reflection on her practice, because any visitor guide should have a systematic way to explain the exhibits. Second, Historic Site Interpretation Centers are identified as places that connect the past and present, to forecast and build the future.

Dal Falco and Vassos (2017) has a similar thought of recognizing the Historic Site Interpretation Centers as a stage to provide the visitors the concept of combined experience (i.e. ‘in situ’ and ‘in context’) which increases their cultural accessibility and enhance their understanding, therefore stressing the importance of museums to nationals as these institutions are seen as a source of reference to their authentic cultural heritage and history. As a result, the Spectrum of Authentic Culture sub-theme is developed next to present the wide range of tangible and intangible aspects found within the museum from which it derived its importance and functionality.

5.4.1.1.1 The Spectrum of Authentic Culture

All participants expected the Historic Site Interpretation Centers to act as a place for knowledge acquisition. Mr. Salem, a visitor to Shaikh Salman bin Ahmed Al Fateh Fort recognizes the need of knowledge acquisition to locals because cultural heritage is a collective ownership and need to be preserved and kept for all. However, some visitors such as Ms. Fatima, a visitor at Qal'at Al Bahrain site museum characterized the Historic Site Interpretation Center as a typical institution of which the main role is to preserve and exhibit historical artifacts in general, as highlighted in the next quote:

“Keeping and presenting the treasured artifacts safe and in good condition...”

Ms. Fatima's statement confirms that, regardless of the museum typology, all are meant to preserve and present authentic objects mainly for preservation and educational purposes.

In summary, the participants linked their views of importance and functionality to literacy; as a source of knowledge, a place to learn about themselves, their origins and additionally to preserve and protect the historical treasure for future generations, or in other words a place that provides a spectrum of authentic culture on emotional and practical aspects. These results are in agreement with many scholars (Dogan, 2015; Günay, 2012; Van Os et al., 2016; Wakefield, 2015).

The architectural design features, the second theme, emerged as another factor related to meaning making.

5.4.1.2 Relationship between Architectural Design Features and Meaning-Making

Architectural design was identified as a critical player in mediating and communicating stories to people (i.e. visitors') by many scholars including

(Anderson, 2007; Barranha et al., 2017; Farahat and Osman, 2018). In addition, architectural features such as exterior appearance, interior spatial layout and presentation techniques applied from within could enhance or diminish the visitors' ability to read and understand the intended message (i.e. story). This theme captures the importance of architectural design from Frampton's (1998) critical regionalism perspective, as it accepts the adoption of modern architecture's progressive qualities, but at the same time responds to the specificities of a given context.

Architectural design was considered, by some service providers, decision makers, as a powerful asset for global recognition. Accordingly, The Exploration of Localization Aspects through Globalization Approach sub-theme is developed next.

5.4.1.2.1 The Exploration of Localization Aspects through Globalization Approach

An earlier interview, carried in 2011, with Bahrain Authority for Culture and Antiquities president Shaikha Mai bint Mohammed Al Khalifa (2011) announced that Bahrain is currently witnessing a large development of Historic Site Interpretation Centers and more are planned in the future for preservation and cultural promotion purposes as further highlighted in the archeologist Dr. Salman Al Mahari's excerpt below;

"...We currently have different site related museums such as Bahrain Fort site museum, Al Khamis mosque visitor center, tree of life visitor center, Shaikh Salman bin Ahmed Al Fateh fort permanent exhibition; Barbar temple has also a temporary exhibition...etc. and others are in progress..."

In addition, Shaikha Mai bint Mohammed Al Khalifa stated that:

"...We are currently dealing with some international specialists in design and curating to develop the museums..."

Bahrain has a strategic plan towards global recognition by engaging international architectural firms and exhibition curators. It is likely that international architectural appearance and style afford to communicate architectural qualities on local and global levels (i.e. glocal level) and may enhance the familiarity of the buildings to locals, regional and international tourists. Moreover, they promoted the collaboration between local and international architectural firms to ensure the preservation of local identity and cultural values. Glocalization between traditional and contemporary architectural styles has been indicated to uncover various roles and functions within the museum institution for the creation of interpretive environment (Macleod et al., 2012). In addition to this premise, some scholars argued that architectural development should be in harmony with the context and somehow linked to the local cultural values (Biln and El Amrousi, 2014; Farahat and Osman, 2018; Frampton, 1998).

With such considerations in mind, Bahrain appears to be seeking Design Eminence, as an internationally recognized cultural destination that is also accepted locally. Therefore, Design Eminence, the second sub-theme in Architectural Design theme realm, is developed next focusing on the exterior appearance, interior spatial layout, and contextual setting between ‘in situ’ and ‘in context’ because these elements may impact visitors’ experience and engagement within the Historic Site Interpretation Centers under investigation.

5.4.1.2.2 Design Eminence

Service providers, including an archeologist, an architect, and a curator, as well as most visitors identified the role of architectural design in communication and meaning-making, although they were differences approached between the two were identified. The data collected from service providers reveal that they were seeking

ways to preserve the vestiges and keep them as the center of attraction. By contrast, data collected from visitors was limited to a mere description of being modern and harmonious to the surroundings or not. For example, the archeologist Dr. Salman Al Mahari stated:

“...The site museum should not be monumental, very attractive and of a larger height comparing to the historic site...it shouldn't take the visitor attention from the historic site, which the museum is interpreting...”

The archeologist statement above emphasizes the importance of Sustenance of Contextual Harmony with Tradition, a derived code within the Design Eminence sub-theme.

- **Sustenance of Contextual Harmony with Tradition**

For example, Mr. Claus Wohlert, the architect of Qal'at Al Bahrain site museum, shared the following view:

“...It has been important that the building retained the scale of traditional regional buildings and is, in the same style, rather introvert.”

In agreement with Dr. Salman Al Mehari's comment, Mr. Clause, shed light on the importance of contextualization when designing museums within historic contexts and considered that harmony creates a seamless transition for the museum setting with its surrounding. However, curator and archeologist Dr. Nadine Boksmati-Fattouh had a different view:

“...Site museums are additional interpretation tools; they are not a substitute to the site visit they rather complement the visit by providing additional information...”

To this study's author, these findings represents the Heidegger (1995) hermeneutics circle theory that illustrates the relationship between the whole and the part, in this research between the 'in situ' and the 'in context' settings. Service providers are more likely concerned about the historic site than the interpretive

museums. Similarly, from an architectural point of view, the exterior appearance is derived from the historic site and surroundings, which does not necessarily imply the use of vernacular architectural features, but more of a blend with the surroundings, as well as being deeply rooted in local conditions as suggested by Frampton (1998). Another form of blending with the surroundings was seen in the excerpt of Mr. Mahmoud Al Binkhalil, the supervisor of Shaikh Salman bin Ahmed Al Fateh Fort. He stated:

“...The permanent exhibition has a very simple and modern design...it’s pure glassy structure with no details but works to reflect the whole site...which is again another benefit of the building material quality.”

In fact, the reflective glass quality contributes to blending the modernized architectural structure within the authentic atmosphere in the fort. Other participants such as Mr. Khalid, a visitor at Bu Maher Fort visitor center mentioned the glass quality differently, he said:

“...I think that Bu Maher Fort visitor center is very modern and simple but small ... from the exterior the brownish façade borrows its beauty from the sand and the fort wall ... I liked the large glass windows; it connects me to the historical site...”

The script above shows that the glazed façade creates a connection and establish a dialogue between ‘in situ’ and ‘in context’ settings. Other participants indicated architectural elements as a manifestation of this blend. For example, Ms. Emile, a visitor at Qal’at Al Bahrain site museum stated:

“The museum is nice and simple...it’s neither modern nor traditional, but in between...I think inspired by traditional Bahraini architecture found in Manama and Muharraq... colors, plain façade and small windows...it just blends smartly with the surrounding and acts as a silent person that allows you to enjoy and reflect.”

Ms. Emile's background as an architect positively influenced her explanation and indirectly responded to Dr. Salman Al Mahari's advice to keep the historic site as the main object of interpretation instead of the Historic Site Interpretation Center. Her pertinent reference to it as the "*silent person*" indicates that the site museum architectural features may offer the users (i.e. visitors) a free choice between going to the museum 'in context' or to the historic site 'in situ' without restriction or imposition.

From the excerpts, it appears that the free choice learning may transform the overall visiting experience and give visitors control of their itinerary with the choice of what to explore first and maybe even nothing else. Similar research carried out by McComas (2014) indicated that free-choice learning should be non-sequential, self-paced, and voluntary, which consequently supports the self-meaning making process at any given context (i.e. 'in situ' and 'in context'). The free choice learning happens between the two mentioned settings and separately within each as the 'in context' setting contains artifacts that were originally found in 'in situ', which again represents the hermeneutics circle theory dealing with the parts (i.e. artifacts) and the whole (i.e. historic site). This relationship was presented in Mr. Claus Wohlert's Qal'at Al Bahrain site museum architect as he stressed the link between architectural design and the historic site narrative, expressing as:

"...The exhibition space is laid out around a dramatic central display on levels corresponding to archeological sediments ...during the design stage we tried to find the best way to communicate the history and the archaeological findings underneath and around the fort of Qal'at al-Bahrain from 2500 BC up till today with the visitors...Our main goal was to tell the visitor from the very first step in the museum that the story was about the different stages of the Dilmun Culture up till the Islamic period..."

Likewise, Lu (2017) and Tzortzi (2016) emphasize the ability of museum spatial layout and circulation pattern in implementing storytelling and meaning making. Hence, the Interior Spatial Layout code, part of the Design Eminence sub-theme is addressed next to appraise the contribution of the four case studies current spatial layout in conveying meanings from the historic site to the visitors through the displayed artifacts.

- **Interior Spatial Layout**

The visitor guides and visitors of Qal'at Al Bahrain site museum acknowledged the ability of the spatial layout in complementing the meaning-making process. For example, the visitor guide, Mrs. Layla shared that:

“...Qal'at Al Bahrain site museum exhibition halls are organized on different levels and every level presents a different era...to me changing levels is seen as an alert tool for the visitor, the more you climb up the more you move towards the present...”

Interestingly enough, she expressed the impact of the spatial layout on the visitor movement pattern. She used the word “alert” to convey how it might be felt by the visitor and how it can contribute to transmitting the different historical phases of Qal'at Al Bahrain. Another example comes from Ms. Emile, a visitor of the same location who stated that:

“...To me, the courtyard is the most beautiful part in the museum, because I like how it creates a kind of passage through...It is almost like you are entering and seeing a window to what you are going to see...it makes the visitor neither inside nor outside but within in the surroundings...it kind of reminds me of the courtyard experience...”

Ms. Emile recognized the importance of architectural elements in the museum's design as welcoming and introductory features. She identified the courtyard as a visual pathway to the site museum topic of interpretation, and as a

physical transition point between ‘in situ’ and ‘in context’. Ms. Emile also used the term “reminds” which emphasizes the role of her own memory in understanding spaces and deriving meanings.

It is very probable, that Qal’at Al Bahrain site museum architectural features (i.e. exterior appearance and spatial layout) established a strong physical and visual relationship between ‘in situ’ and ‘in context’, as well as in conveying key points about the history of Qal’at Al Bahrain (i.e. different phases and continuous human occupation). In total contrast, the spatial layouts of Shaikh Salman bin Ahmed Al Fateh Fort, Bu Maher Fort and Al Khamis Mosque interpretive centers were object-centered and did not establish a tight relationship to the narrative of the adjacent historic sites. Instead, they were limited to physical and visual relationships only (i.e. not emotional). This was evident in the excerpts of all participants including service providers and visitors, as presented next.

Example 1, Mr. Mahmoud Al Bin Khalil, Shaikh Salman bin Ahmed Al Fateh Fort supervisor stated:

“...The exhibits are arranged in a linear arrangement...the layout is good to impose a specific movement pattern...the visitor can go through the entire exhibition from the entrance to the exit as these points are not the same...”

Example 2, Mr. Khalid, a visitor at Bu Maher Fort visitor center shared:

“...The layout is very simple and easy to follow; you just go around the central table, see the architectural models on the map, view the archeological site from the large windows, and then leave.”

Example 3, Mr. Jassim, a receptionist at Al Khamis Mosque visitor center said:

“...The exhibition has different topics to share and each topic is positioned in different standpoint...the visitor can choose what to start with...I think it depends on their interest and preferences.”

The three representative examples indicated that the spatial layout at the three case studies is easy to follow and may provide free choice learning venues as stated by Mr. Jassim, but still seems to be not very supportive to the meaning-making process due to the object-oriented exhibition design and independently arranged regardless of the historic site narrative (Chapter 4, Section 4.2.1, Figure 4.6). In addition to this issue, Mr. Mahmood's statement indicated another aspect of the layout, which materializes the fact that a linear layout affords to control and guide the visitor's circulation pattern within the exhibition halls as observed by Zhou et al. (2013). This aspect may help the visitors to be more focused and have a clear movement pattern and transition between the different topics as in Shaikh Salman bin Ahmed Al Fateh Fort permanent exhibition (i.e. interpretive center) as presented in Chapter 4 (Section 4.2.3, Figure 4.32). On the other hand, Bu Maher fort visitor center demonstrates a free choice movement around the central display, which may not be very helpful as the visitor can start from any point and cannot focus on the whole display due to its large scale, but still provides a strong connection to the Bu Maher Fort's vestiges (Chapter 4, Section 4.2.4, Figure 4.42).

In fact, each interpretive center offered different presentation techniques; therefore, the third and last theme in the role of the physical context in shaping the visitors' experience and meaning-making, called presentation techniques qualities and challenges of meaning-making with its two sub-themes and two codes and their impacts on the visitors' experience is presented next:

5.4.1.3 Presentation Strategies; Qualities and Challenges of Meaning-Making

This theme demonstrates the impacts of the presentation techniques used at historic sites interpretative centers and their contributions to the meaning making. For example, the archeologist Dr. Salman Al Mahari stated:

“...Qal’at Al Bahrain site museum and Al Khamis Mosque visitor center are enough to give the visitor brief information about the site...”

Similarly, Mr. Bassam a visitor at Bu Maher Fort visitor center shared:

“...The information at Bu Maher visitor center is brief and for a person that does not know anything about the fort can be seen as a quick introduction...”

While, Mr. Mahmoud Al Bin Khalil, the supervisor of Shaikh Salman bin Ahmed Al Fateh fort stated his view below and specifically identified its usefulness limits:

“...Shaikh Salman bin Ahmed Al Fateh fort permanent exhibition hall gives an overview about the fort history; ruling family history and it reflects the site history in a very general way but maybe it’s not enough for academic research purposes...”

The three representative excerpts are in agreement with Ripp (2016) and Filippopoulou (2017) as the study recognized the effectiveness of site-related museums in providing a general overview about the site in question but cannot be its substitute. This means that the site experience must allow the visitor to reflect and interact to generate meanings. The same point of view is expressed by the archeologist Dr. Salman Al Mahari:

“...Historic site interpretation center gives the opportunity to the visitor to check the site museum before visiting the historical site to get all its related information...”

Also, in agreement, Dr. Nadine Boksmati-Fattouh, an archeologist and a curator at Qal’at Al Bahrain site museum stated:

“...Site museums are additional interpretation tools; they are not a substitute to the site visit they rather complement the visit by providing additional information and a different visiting experience.”

Therefore, under the general theme of Presentation Strategies Qualities and Challenges of Meaning-Making, two sub-themes were developed. The first one highlights the different Interpretive Techniques used in the four Historic Site Interpretation Centers under investigation while the second addresses Suspension of the Narrative caused by the mis-interpretation of objects when isolated from their original context

5.4.1.3.1 Interpretive Techniques

It can be summarized that the Historic Site Interpretation Centers relied upon three types of interpretive techniques; (1) graphics: text, wall panels, digital touch screens and photographs, (2) special services: guided tour, lectures and workshops, and (3) audio-visual and interactive mainly to explain an object or group of objects and to draw the visitors' attention to a particular topic as presented in Chapter 4 (Section 4.2 and Section 4.3.3). This was similar to the findings of another study conducted in-situ by Stamatopoulou (2016) which highlights that a combination of different presentation techniques was used in similar site museum and archeological museums in Greece. In line with such widely accepted approach, service providers and visitors acknowledged the wide variety of presentation techniques used in the four historic sites and their interpretive centers. For example, Ms. Fatima, a visitor at Qal'at Al Bahrain shared the following thought:

“...Artifacts are explained by text, wall panels, and touch screens...audio guides were used to explain fort...the fort itself...”

While Mrs. Noora, a visitor guide at the same location described the presentation techniques in relation to full sensorial experience as:

“...There are many presentation strategies used to present our unique collection...techniques that deal with listening, looking, and touching...”

Mrs. Noora emphasized the engagement of a visitor’s full body sensorial experience, which is seen as an indication of the success of the current presentation techniques in providing a unique and engaging visiting experience. Therefore, a single code of Kinesthetic and Sensorial Pedagogy, derived from the Interpretive Techniques sub-theme is further developed next.

- **Kinesthetic and Sensorial Pedagogy**

There is clear indication that every interpretive center involved a different form of sensorial pedagogy. For example, Mr. Mahmoud Al Binkhalil, the supervisor of Shaikh Salman bin Ahmed Al Fateh fort stated:

“...The permanent exhibition is equipped with digital presentation techniques, based on light projection, information smart panels and touch screens to overcome the boredom associated in other museums...”

A similar explanation, emphasizing the multiplicity of the presentation techniques used in Al Khamis Mosque was given by its receptionist Mr. Jassim:

“...Besides the text captions, maps and others...Al Khamis Mosque visitor center have hearing stages in the form of old telephone that allow the visitors to hear some audio recordings of the conversations happened in Al Khamis Mosque in the past...”

Both excerpts underlined the engagement of visitors’ senses. It is clear from Mr. Mahmood’s quote that providing multiple presentation techniques is beneficial to meet different users’ needs, especially the young generation as they are more attracted by interactive experiences. In this regard, Ms. Dalal, a visitor at Shaikh

Salman bin Ahmed Al Fateh Fort permanent exhibition shared the following thought on technology:

“...The technological based permanent exhibition is basically good for reading and looking ...that I can do anywhere and anytime, even at home...in general I do not really like technology base exhibitions, but it gives me the sense of personal control...”

This finding is in line with similar studies conducted by Farhana et al. (2014) and Kaptelinin (2011) which proved that using technology in museums provides an interactive learning environment and offers the visitor a sense of control over the self-directed visit. Since this exhibition does not enjoy large visitation level as reported by the online survey participants (Chapter 4, Section 4.3.2, Figure 4.48) and as observed (Chapter 4, Section 4.3.3, a), this finding cannot be generalized and more field visits are required to increase the probability of meeting users to share their experience. Similarly, the statement of Mr. Jassim, as an employee, cannot be evaluated against visitors' feedback given that none were present during the field visits.

About Qal'at Al Bahrain site museum, Dr. Nadine Boksmati-Fattouh, an archeologist and a curator at the same museum stated a criticism of present techniques at one of the sites:

“...Qal'at Al Bahrain Site museum should use different interpretive techniques in order to reach a wider audience...”

Despite the efforts of the Historic Site Interpretation Centers in providing kinesthetic and sensorial pedagogy environment with an attempt to meet different visitors' needs, there is still a lack of visitation to interpretive centers compared to historic sites (Chapter 4, Section 4.3.2, and Figure 4.46). To identify the limitations of the presentation techniques used to explain objects moved from the nearby historic

site and presented in the Historic Site Interpretation Centers, the second sub-theme ‘Suspension of the Narrative’ is developed.

5.4.1.3.2 Suspension of the Narrative

The review of reflections by service providers and visitors alike lead to acknowledge the different types of artifacts that may enhance the delivery of the story. For example, Mrs. Sameera, a visitor guide in Qal’at Al Bahrain site museum shared the sequencing involved in story-building:

“...Anything in the museum was originally in the fort...in the fort we can explain to the visitors about the age, scale and other stories, and then show the related collection showcased within the museum exhibition halls...the curators are in charge to sequence the artifacts and creates the story...”

Likewise, Mr. Jassim, a receptionist at Al Khamis Mosque visitor center stated:

“...Al Khamis Mosque visitor center has artifacts and documents to display... artifacts on display were founded in the historic site...also, some old documents from the archive is displayed...altogether will give a summary about the site.”

Mrs. Sameera and Mr. Jassim, both employees emphasized the importance of artifacts originality; their statements reveal a strong belief that this aspect is important in delivering the narrative. For instance, Mrs. Sameera underlined the synthesis between ‘in situ’ and ‘in context’ settings, which recalls the value to interlocking the ‘whole’ and the ‘part’ found in the Heidegger (1995) hermeneutics circle theory. Yet Qal’at Al Bahrain site museum and Al Khamis Mosque visitor center are more likely repeating the practices of classical museums by moving the artifacts from the historic sites to their related Historic Site Interpretation Centers, move that makes them common and not exceptional museums. In line with this shortcoming, all participants (i.e. service providers and visitors) expressed the

limited knowledge input of Historic Site Interpretation Centers. Similarly, a previous study found that collections, artifacts and objects are key components that link the people to the nearby historic site (Foster and Jones, 2019), and another study concluded that the absence of objects and artifacts within their original context (i.e. historic site) may also cut off the intended narrative and interrupt the meaning-making process (Lending, 2018). The findings of these studies match the view of Ms. Dalal, a visitor at Shaikh Salman bin Ahmed Al Fateh fort permanent exhibition who expressed difficulty in personally relating to the collections:

“...The permanent exhibition has no collections from the fort...it represents the story of the place and its past function...but I cannot relate!”

Based on Ms. Dalal’s excerpt, it seems that she questions the presence of the Shaikh Salman bin Ahmed Al Fateh Fort permanent exhibition within the historic site, as it is limited to digital presentation about the fort that can be presented anywhere and not necessary within the fort. The absence of artifacts lowers the visitors’ emotional engagement and their opportunity of understanding the historic site narratives, as it is limited to physical and visual connection only.

In the same regard, Ms. Emile, a visitor at Qal’at Al Bahrain site museum shared her thoughts differently:

“...I don’t think it matters if the artifacts are original or replicas, but I think it’s more about how the story is being told and how are the objects or whatever it is that is display is contributing to a general overview of the story that you want to tell...”

The excerpt of Ms. Emile is in alignment with Geertz (1973), Moscardo and Pearce (1986), and Greenhill (1999), as they all agreed that museum artifacts can be more interpretive instead of informative not by what you say, but rather how you say it. This may explain the importance of presentation techniques in conveying ‘in situ’

narratives through artifacts within ‘in context’ settings to enhance the visitors experience and help them to understand the intended story that these interpretive centers were built for.

A recent study done by Foster and Jones (2019) showed that some historic sites and site-related museums depended on replicas to generate relationships between people, place and objects along with the original historical vestiges. In line with that, the archeologist Dr. Salman Al Mahari stated:

“... Maybe adding models or sculptures will reflect the lifestyle in the past as a storytelling board. These sculptures can be made of iron or wood with reference to the environmental conditions. I think this strategy might be good to express the site story...”

It is possible that adding models and sculptures within the historic site will enhance the visitor’s understanding; an intent clearly expressed by Shaikha Mai bint Mohamed Al Khalifa in the excerpt below:

“We are trying to propose alternative presentation techniques to enhance the visitors’ experience.”

Also, the archeologist Dr. Salman Al Mahari, stated:

“... There are many alternative presentation techniques mostly used in Bahrain fort such as the light and sound show, guided tours, social and cultural events...”

This may explain the high percentage of visitation of Qal’at Al Bahrain among the other case studies as shown in the archival data of 2018 (Chapter 4, Section 4.3.1, Figure 4.44). Similarly, the number of participants who reported visiting Qal’at Al Bahrain and its site museum is the highest compared to the other sites (Chapter 4, Section 4.3.2, Figure 4.48). The cultural events are announced using social media with an attempt to attract a larger number of visitors and enhance their

engagement. A sample of the events marketing approach through the Authority official Instagram account is illustrated in (Figure 5.6).

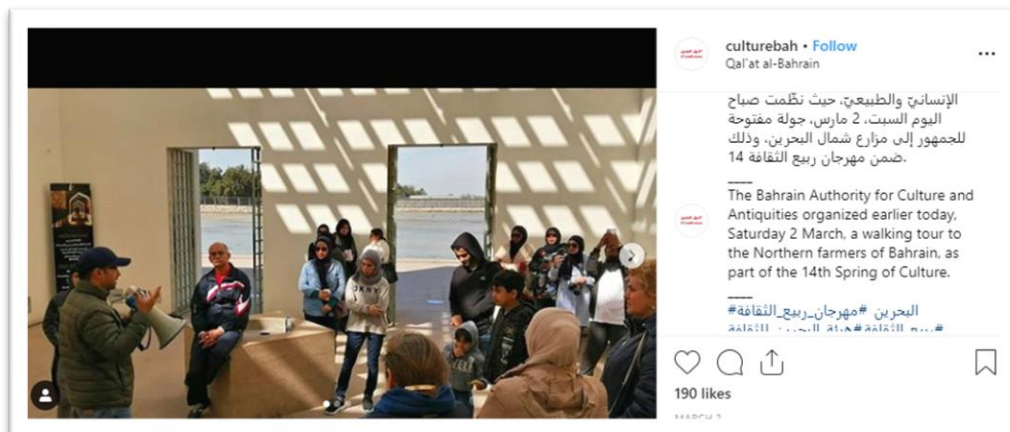


Figure 5.6: Walking tour organized by Qal'at Al Bahrain site museum

(Source: Instagram)

In the other hand, there was very limited to no existent events at Al Khamis Mosque visitor center as observed. Shaikha Mai Bint Mohamed Al Khalifa, the president of Bahrain Authority for Culture and Antiquities indicated the impact of the nature of the site on visitation:

“...Some historical sites have a very religious nature such as Al Khamis Mosque that restrict the types of events and limit them to walking tours only.”

Furthermore, the Historic Site Interpretation Centers provided additional venues for experience, interpretation, and engagement beyond the exhibition halls and its collection through its offered. Intelligibility of Communicative Apparatus. Accordingly, this code was developed to assess the contribution of such venues to the meaning-making.

- **Intelligibility of Communicative Apparatus**

The findings revealed that exhibition halls are not the core of the museum practice, which means that meaning-making and emotional engagement can happen beyond their premises. It can be summarized that most visitors expressed their emotional experiences beyond the exhibition halls. This trend was very much expected as most of the people were observed in the historic site or in the other ancillary facilities (i.e. restaurants). Three representative examples explain the phenomenon described above:

Example 1: Ms. Emile, a visitor at Qal'at Al Bahrain site shared:

“...I like the freedom feeling of the site...I can feel the scale, touch the walls, the thing that I am forbidden to do in the museum...the museum is good too, it gives me a form of direct knowledge...I didn't like the restaurant; it is not related to the fort or to the museum.”

It is certain that Ms. Emile enjoyed the historic site more than the museum as it gave her the opportunity to have a tight physical, visual, and emotional relationship with the vestiges. It refers to the idea that someone could be understanding of each part such as component (i.e. arch and walls) and feeling the characteristics (i.e. scale and texture) in reference to the whole (i.e. historic site) as found in Heidegger's (1995) concept of hermeneutically understanding.

Example 2: Mr. Osama, a visitor at Bu Maher fort.

“...I really enjoyed the boat rides, it's the most interesting experience when going to Bu Maher Fort, it feels like traveling...”

The findings in Bu Maher Fort have shown that most of the visitors were very interested in experiencing a new mode of accessibility for fun and leisure purposes. Indirect meanings could be revealed from such experience, most likely experiencing the traditional mode of transportation used in the past for pearl diving.

Example 3, Mr. Salem, a visitor at Shaikha Salman bin Ahmed Al Fateh Fort.

“...The fort and the cafe give me a special feeling...I like the architecture, calmness, and coziness of the place...reminds me with my grandfather house...”

It seems that the café’s traditional architectural features provoke nostalgic feelings and activates the visitors’ collective memory. This finding materializes the semiotic perspective of collective memory, which represents how past events are transformed and transmitted into the present as suggested by French (2012).

These findings showed that Historic Site Interpretation Centers in Bahrain manifested their ability to present an exceptional typology of museums that used dual modes of interpretation labeled as ‘in situ’ and ‘in context’. The exceptionality was seen differently through the participants’ responses about the architectural features in each Historic Site Interpretation Center. Some examples were more successful than others in terms of their appearance, spatial layout and presentation techniques that have significantly influenced the number of visitors at each site differently. The visitors’ interest, needs, and collective memory are better served in original sites; ‘in situ’ and places of memory instead of an artificial setting; ‘in context’. Therefore, it is essential to identify the dynamics between the opportunities and challenges contributing to meaning-making as experienced by the visitors and anticipated by the service providers, leading to the next organizing theme.

5.4.2 The Dynamics of Visitors’ Experience and Meaning-Making Process: Opportunities and Challenges

The visitors’ experience is often influenced by space, time, and performance as presented in Table 5.2. This section attempts to bring together the visitors’ experience and the museological practice ‘in situ’ and ‘in context’, as well as the visitors’ needs and their role in meaning-making process. Two themes emerged from

the interview analysis: a) the visitors' experience between 'in situ' and 'in context', and b) the visitors' experiences between opportunities and challenges to meaning-making when visiting Historic Site Interpretation Centers. For many participants (i.e. service providers and visitors), the visiting experience was affected by their own needs and motivations as well as any hindrance. The number of participants input to each sub-theme is presented in Figure 5.7, while the themes, sub-themes, and codes about the dynamic of visitors' experience and meaning-making process: opportunities and challenges are presented in Figure 5.8.

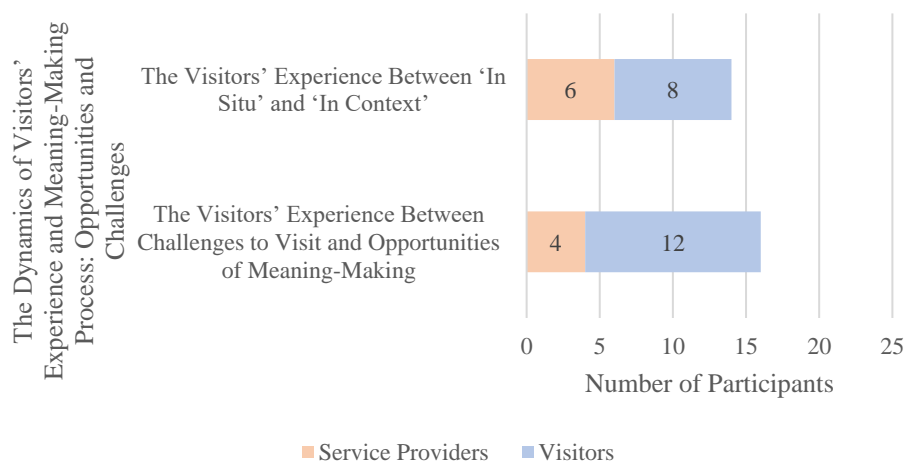


Figure 5.7: Number of participants input to the two themes under “The Dynamics of Visitors' Experience and Meaning-Making Process: Opportunities and Challenges” organizing theme

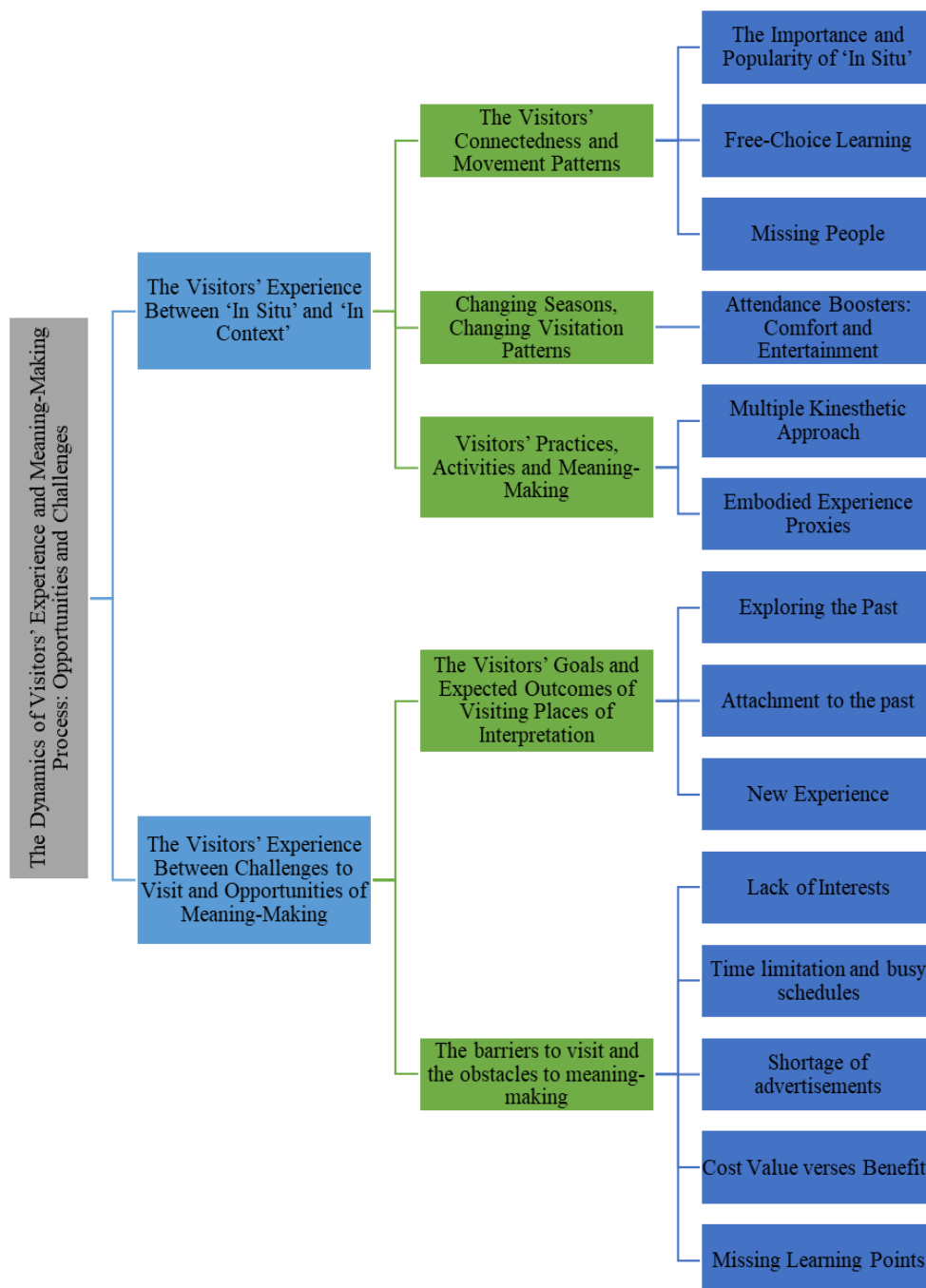


Figure 5.8: Themes, sub-themes, and codes about the roles of The Dynamics of Visitors' Experience and Meaning-Making Process: Opportunities and Challenges

5.4.2.1 The Visitors' Experience between 'In Situ' and 'In Context'

The findings show that most participants preferred to go to the historic site (i.e. 'in situ') over the museum itself. This preference was also evident in the online survey findings, as 71% of its participants reported visiting or intending to visit

historic sites (Chapter 4, Section 4.3.2, Figure 4.48). There are many factors that make the historic sites more popular than the Historic Site Interpretation Centers. Therefore, this theme attempts to explore the reasons behind this preference that may affect the visitation patterns and mobility between ‘in situ’ and ‘in context’. The visitors’ interests, motivations and expectations are the main driver for visiting such contextual setting, yet their visitation patterns and mobility seem to be affected by external factors such as the weather conditions and social facilities, as well as the type of events and activities hosted in ‘in situ’ and ‘in context’. Accordingly, a) the visitors’ connectedness and movement patterns, b) changing seasons, changing visitation patterns, and c) visitors’ practices and activities emerged as the most representative sub-themes describing the visitors’ experience in a shared contextual setting.

5.4.2.1.1 The Visitors’ Connectedness and Movement Patterns

A significant number of participants (i.e. service providers and visitors) was found to connect their preference to entertainment and social interaction. This may explain the high percentage of low number of visitors approaching the Historic Site Interpretation Centers as they are empty most of the time as observed (Chapter 4, Section 4.3.3).

For example, Mrs. Layal, a visitor guide in Qal’at Al Bahrain site museum said:

“Look at the touristic buses...all of them is going to the fort and not the museum...few visitors approach the museum...”

The visitor guide above expressed the importance and popularity of ‘the historic site as the one of the main factors that affects the visitation patterns at ‘in situ’ and in ‘in context’’. Therefore, The Importance and Popularity of ‘In Situ’

emerged as a first subtheme under The Visitor Connectedness and Movement Patterns theme. In line with that, the Free Choice-Learning opportunity and Missing Visitors challenge emerged as sub-themes identifying the other impacting factors that may affect the visitation patterns.

- **The Importance and Popularity of ‘In Situ’**

Mrs. Layla’s script confirms the popularity of historic sites in general and Qal’at Al Bahrain historic site in particular for this study. A photograph presenting large number of people approaching the Qal’at Al Bahrain historic was taken during the field visits (Chapter 4, Section 4.3.3, and Figure 4.58).

Another example, Ms. Emile, a visitor in the same museum stated:

“...I always prefer the site itself and information within the site...It is more like giving the option to go to the fort and if you want to know a little bit more about it go there (i.e. site museum)...I think museum should be a place that keeps you entertained, and most museums are not...”

Therefore, the second code, Free-Choice Learning become clearer to consider, as the ‘in situ’ and ‘in context’ settings at a shared location provide the visitor with a wide spectrum of learning opportunities.

- **Free-Choice Learning**

It is certain that Ms. Emile is putting the historic site ahead and very likely keeping the Historic Site Interpretation Center as an option, which matches Dr. Nadine Boksmati-Fattouh’s comment *“...Site museums are additional interpretation tools...”*. In addition, this finding complies with Falk’s study (2016) about the notion of free-choice leaning that is often guided by the person’s needs and interests. In her statement, Ms. Emile believes that the multiple tactile features of the ‘in situ’ settings keep the visitor entertained compared to the static environment offered in ‘in context’ settings.

In terms of entertainment, Mr. Salem, a visitor at Shaikh Salman bin Ahmed Al Fateh shared the following personal preference:

“...to explain the historical site in a very interesting way because myself and many others are not fan of history...”

Dr. Nadine Boksmati-Fattouh shared a personal opinion stating that:

“museums are not part of daily life in the Arab world”

The lack of understanding of the value of historic contents was highlighted as the main element that deter people from visiting Historic Site Interpretation Centers as acknowledged in the scripts of Ms. Emile, Mr. Salem, and Dr. Nadine. Yet, the generalization of this finding is contingent to the small number of participants in this study.

Another interesting view from Mr. Osama, a visitor at Bu Maher Fort visitor center and historic site highlighted:

“...I think visiting visitor center is important but also visiting the site will complete the popped questions that a visitor cannot get when reading captions...”

Most of the visitors at Bu Maher fort reinforced the value of the historic site. This is not surprising, because Bu Maher fort visitor center is the first encounter point after the boat ride. In addition, the exhibits and captions in Bu Maher Fort are distinct as the visitor center explains the pearling trail including the fort and provides views of Bu Maher fort vestiges through the wide glazed façade (Chapter 4, Section 4.2.4, and Figure 4.42).

In contrast, Ms. Fatima, a visitor in Qal’at Al Bahrain site museum expressed concern for lack of fellow visitors:

“...I had a good experience at the museums but having people around will even give me better experience...”

Accordingly, the third and final code for Visitors Connectedness and Movement Patterns, called Missing People emerged to underline the importance of social interaction in museums and interpretive settings.

- **Missing Visitors**

Having a good experience in the museum is an indication of a success, due maybe to the presentation techniques used there, the supportive and ancillary facilities (i.e. restaurant). Yet, missing the social dimension that may set the stage for better engagement and interaction opportunities is apparent in the interview responses. This finding is totally reflecting the need for visitor engagement as presented in the museum visitor experience model by Falk and Semmel (2012). This model hypothesized that a successful visiting experience is only possible by having a balanced relationship between the physical context, effective presentation techniques and the visitors' interaction.

Another pivotal sub-theme in the Visitors' Experience between 'in situ' and 'in context' theme with its single resolution code is highlighted here to explain the impact of variations in climate and visitation.

5.4.2.1.2 Changing Seasons, Changing Visitation Patterns

From the field observations, it was evident that the number of visitors in historic sites (i.e. 'in situ) was influenced by the weather condition, type of day (i.e. weekday or weekend), and time of the day (i.e. morning and evening). Likewise, Mrs. Layla, a visitor guide in Qal'at Al Bahrain site museum stated:

“...Actually, we have 2 Main seasons and the highest visiting rate spreads between October or November till March...I believe that’s because of the good weather condition...during the summer we have very low rate of visitors...”

It is very probable that Mrs. Layla was referring to the historic site and not to the Historic Site Interpretation Center, considering that Bahrain weather condition affect outdoor activities.

Similarly, Mr. Aziz, a receptionist in Bu Maher Fort visitor center linked the visitors’ number to the weather condition in the next excerpt.

“...The number of visitors varies depending on the weather condition...and restricted with the availability of the boat trips...Sometimes we have many visitors and sometimes we have no visitors at all...”

Another supporting example was shared by Ms. Dalal, a visitor in Shaikh Salman bin Ahmed Al Fateh fort.

“...I went in a weekday between around 11:30 am, and there was no one there...I think because it was extremely hot and as you know, no one can stand Bahrain summers.”

From the data, the weather condition is recognized as significant factor that influences the visitors’ experience. However, there is not direct connection between the weather condition and the meaning-making process, but based on the visitors’ experience model by Falk and Semmel (2012) as the interaction with environment and physical context is essential in the meaning-making process. This was evident in Ms. Emile’s script on Qal’at Al Bahrain.

“...In July (2018), the site was empty most of the time...there was no visitors maybe 5 to 10 people...and in the museum there was no one...but surprisingly, when I visited Qal’at Al Bahrain in August 2015...the site was very active and so many tourists and locals were there ...I can’t even count the people...”

Ms. Emile had a contrasting experience of Qal'at Al Bahrain during the summers of 2015 and 2018. This finding underline that regardless of the weather conditions, there are other factors that may influence visitors' attendance. This was also seen in the archival data (Chapter 4, Section 4.3.1, Figure 4.5) and it is more likely connected to the Bahrain's international participation in the 2015 Milan World Expo, and their local initiative of launching the first edition of "Cultural Tourism Passport" in the same year. As such initiatives developed, a resolution code, called Attendance Boosters: Comfort and Entertainment was developed.

- **Attendance Boosters: Comfort and Entertainment**

It is very probable that increasing the events and entertainment prospects increases the chances of visitors' occurrence. This was evident in the following excerpts:

Example 1, Mr. Mahmoud Al Binkhalil, the supervisor in Shaikh Salman bin Ahmed Al Fateh fort stated:

"...Shaikh Salman bin Ahmed Al Fateh Fort gets very busy during the national occasions and other evening events..."

Example 2, Mrs. Sameera, a visitor guide in Qal'at Al Bahrain site museums stated:

"...We have noticed that the demand on our events has increased and we start receiving large number of school students' through pre-scheduled visits...in fact the number of visitors has increased since 2008 until today..."

The service providers believe that events and entertainment attract people to visit the historic sites and Historic Site Interpretation Centers. Van Winkle (2014) found that fun and entertainment plays a critical role in shaping the visitors' free

choice leaning experience. Although, this result did not materialize in the collected data from the online survey, as attending events and workshops was the least of their choices (Chapter 4, Section 4.3.2, Figure 4.52), but at the same time, leisure activities were identified as a hindrance to plan a visit to historic attractions (Chapter 4, Section 4.3.2, Figure 4.55). This may indicate a conflict in the nature of the events, or maybe in the delivery approach that appears as another form of learning and entertainment, which leads to the third and last sub-theme of the Visitors' Experience 'Visitors' Practices Activities and Meaning-Making', with its two subsequent codes to identify the Multiple Kinesthetic Approach and the Embodied Experience Proxies.

5.4.2.1.3 Visitors' Practices, Activities and Meaning-Making

The collected data suggests that there is a variation between nationals and expatriates (i.e. expatriates and tourists) practices, as the locals used the site for walking and the non-locals used the site for exploration, yet both were seeking leisure and entertainment. This was seen in the scripts of many visitors. Two representative examples are next.

Example 1: Ms. Fatima, a local visitor in the historic site of Qal'at Al Bahrain historic stated:

"...I just like to do my daily workout around Qal'at Al Bahrain...I really enjoy the horizon, look and the old and new parts of Bahrain...I feel closer to the sea...hmmm, I don't have a particular phrase to describe my feelings, it depends on how that day went..."

Example 2: Mrs. Sonia, a non-local visitor to Qal'at Al Bahrain shared:

"...To me Qal'at Al Bahrain is my escape from reality...this site is very large...sightseeing never ends, every time I discover something new... for my children, it is a place that they can run and play freely and safely..."

Previous studies by Steier et al. (2015), and Christidou and Pierroux (2019) examined the notion of “embodied interpretation” in art museums and discovered that visitors use gesture and movement in different ways to bring together personal and social needs, as well as mediate thinking and experience in the interpretation of events. Although the mentioned study is about ‘in context’, the same can be applied in ‘in situ’ because in this study, the historic site is part of the museum experience. Accordingly, Multiple Kinesthetic Approach emerged as the first code of the two codes related to Visitors’ Practices, Activities and Meaning-Making.

- **Multiple Kinesthetic Approach**

Multiple approach of using the historic site means that it is supporting different needs and expectations. The archaeologist Dr. Salman Al Mahari claimed that using the site is all what matters.

“...I know that some of the sites such Qal’at Al Bahrain is being used for walking and exercising and honestly I’m very happy that the historical site is being used and at least for walking, which means that the site is and will remain in the memory of the people and walking there every day gives the user a daily experience of the place...”

Dr. Salman’s script complies with Steier et al. (2015), and Christidou and Pierroux (2019) as he believes that using the site in any way (i.e. exploring, entertaining and walking) is a success in its own, at least the site is being used and unconsciously impacts the process of meaning-making in historic sites context. In addition, his point of view fulfills Ricœur’s (1976) statement “the symbol gives rise to thought”, as being around these vestiges contributes to the meaning-making process differently beyond their intended tasks. In other words, the experience can be personalized to the visitors targeting specific interests as expressed by Dr. Salman

and in line with other scholars (Ahmed, 2019; Tzortzi, 2017). Therefore, the second code, Embodied Experience Proxies, can be proposed next.

- **Embodied Experience Proxies**

This study has shown that experience has a multiple representation. Some visitors stated that they often take photographs to document their visits and share them on social media channels, while others stated their interest in walking around or using the ancillary facilities (i.e. restaurant) because it reinforces their sense of belonging and affinity to a place. This was evident in most of the visitors' scripts. For example, Ms. Emile, a Portuguese visitor in Qal'at Al Bahrain historic site reported her experience:

"I visited the site with my parents...we took a lot of selfies to share with some friends...and indirectly telling them that my parents crossed half of the world to visit me...on the other hand, my parents were taking photos of ruins as we have similar sites in Portugal"

It is very probable that Ms. Emile's parents are very curious to learn about new culture or seemed interested in Portuguese vestiges as they came "from the other part of the world" and the experience of visiting historic sites in Bahrain may be different than those in Europe (i.e. Portugal), due to many factors such as the weather, people and the language. This finding reflects the Silverman (2010) study which stressed that meaning-making happens between the needs of people and the purpose of the museum in society. Documenting personal photographs to share on social media channels (i.e. Instagram) is the trend of everyone these days as presented in the recent study of Thomas et al. (2020). Another example, Ms. Dalal, a visitor in Shaikh Salman bin Ahmed Al Fateh Fort stated:

“...The fort has a different feeling that I cannot express, the amount of authenticity attracts me a lot...you pass by it and feel that there is something inside...I am so proud to introduce it to my non-Bahraini friends...”

The third example, Mr. Salem, a visitor of the same place shared:

“...To me Safforan Café is the aroma of the past, I love the architectural style, it feels that you are in another era...the food is great too, it gives me the flavor of the food served in my grandfather house.”

Ms. Dalal’s and Mr. Salem’s scripts showed the self-awareness capacity of own identity, roots, and origins that engender different intangible meanings to the experience. In line with such contention, a study conducted by Gamer et al. (2016) anticipated that visitors’ background and cultural identity affect the meaning-making process and consequently promote a better learning experience. Within the context of Ms. Dalal’s and Mr. Salem’s, tangibility is related to traditional architectural and food that are part of the collective memory of the group. It is very plausible that the reflection of a non-local on the same phenomenon will be different, and maybe will be more of an exploratory experience to learn about new things as presented in Ms. Emile’s script.

The factors that affected visitation and mobility in a shared contextual setting were presented and explained, conclude the first theme; the visitors experience between ‘in situ and ‘in context within the Dynamics of Visitors’ Experience and Meaning-Making Process: Opportunities and Challenges as the organizing theme (Figure 5.8).

Yet, the creation of meaning-making is only possible when the visit is conducted; therefore, the next theme is focusing on the visitors’ experience between challenges to visit and opportunities of meaning-making.

5.4.2.2 The Visitors' Experience between Challenges to Visit and Opportunities of Meaning-Making

This theme demonstrates first, the challenges to visit historic sites and Historic Sites Interpretation Centers, and second, the opportunities of meaning-making derived from needs, expectations, and collective memory. Based on Falk and Semmel (2012) explanation of visitor experience model, visiting experience and meaning-making are derived from the visitor's goals and motivations. Therefore, this section discusses two sub-themes: first, the visitor's goals and expected outcomes of visiting places of interpretation, and second, the barriers to their visits and obstacles to meaning-making process. The first sub-theme focused on the visitors' goals when visiting places of past interpretation and includes three codes, while the second focused on the visitation hindrances and generated five codes.

5.4.2.2.1 The Visitors' Goals and Expected Outcomes of Visiting Places of Interpretation

The thematic analysis indicated three emerging goals of visiting 'in situ' and 'in context' settings: first Exploring the Past, second Attachment to the Past, and third New Experience from the past.

- **Exploring the Past**

Few visitors identified that exploring cultures is their goal from visiting historic sites and Historic Site Interpretation Centers. For example, Ms. Emile, a visitor in Qal'at Al Bahrain site museum stated:

"...From the point of view of Portuguese...I think that many people are curious to know about the past..."

This finding indicates that appreciation of history is not limited to nationals and many people are interested to know about other cultures, in this case, Bahrain cultural heritage. This assertion seemed to have found its basis only for expatriates.

However, there is no way to verify it as there were only two expatriates among the participants of this study (i.e. Ms. Emile and Mrs. Sonia). As such, the feedback from more non-locals is still needed to produce a more significant finding. Furthermore, Mr. Salem, a visitor in Shaikh Salman bin Ahmed Al Fateh Fort remarked:

“...Locals need to know about their history and culture because it’s their origin...in the weekend Riffa Fort is packed and many tourists are around; they are so eager to learn about the place...”

Mr. Salem attributed the need for locals to explore their past because it is at the crossroad of self-development and the notion of belongingness. It is anticipated that locals need to know their past to build their present and maybe learn how to tailor their future. However, Ripp (2016) reduced this view by claiming that visitors centers are good for a fast perception with a limited possibility for in-depth information.

- **Attachment to the past**

Most of the visitors showed their attachment to the past and it was their main reason to visit such places. For example, Mr. Saleh, a visitor to Shaikh Salman bin Ahmed Al Fateh Fort shared the following interest:

“...I like this place because it reminds me with my childhood...I usually come here with my daughter because when she was a kid, I used to come with my wife (RIP) a walk her all down the valley...to me this place is full of memories...”

Another example, from Mrs. Amal, a visitor at Al Khamis Mosque:

“Every time I walk around the Mosque, I remember the paintings of my dad who lived in that era...I wish to see the old market again.”

Mr. Saleh’s and Mrs. Amal’s scripts illustrated their direct and strong ties to the past. This idea was not evident in other scripts as it was mainly about fun and

entertainment as explained in the previous theme under “changing seasons, changing visitation patterns” sub-theme. Considering their age between 50 and 60 years old, it is anticipated that such result will not be prevalent as most of the visitors’ age is between 25 and 45.

- **New Experience**

This code was very clear in the scripts of Bu Maher Fort visitors, as most of the participants acknowledge that their main purpose of the visit was to try the sea shuttles. For example, Mr. Ahmed stated:

“...To be honest we heard about the boat trips and it was our first motivation to make the visit and try it, secondly it’s nice to know about the history...”

Trying new experiences is often related to entertainment purposes and it is certain that the boat ride experience is a fun boosting factor for many people. In his article, Ripp (2016) stated that such experiences afford providing knowledge in a new format based on fun and entertainment.

To this end, the visitors’ experience is always grounded in people’s interests and goals. Learning opportunities is always possible as Fish (2001) assumes that experience of reading texts is subjective to the readers and different readers can interpret the same text in a similar way if they belong to the same community as seen in Mr. Saleh’s and Mrs. Amal’s scripts. Visits to historic sites do have their own challenges and meaning-making faces obstacles. The next section addresses the barriers to visitation and obstacles to meaning-making, which generated five codes.

5.4.2.2.2 The Barriers to Visit and the Obstacles to Meaning-Making

In addition to the weather condition and personal interests that may change the visitation patterns to historic sites and Historic Site Interpretation Centers, the collected data showed that visitors have listed five barriers that impact visitation.

These are: Lack of Interest, Time Limitation and Busy Schedules, Shortage of Limited Advertisements, Cost Value versus Benefits and Missing Learning Points. These represent the related emerging codes and are presented next.

- **Lack of Interest**

Most of the participants confirmed that lack of interest and awareness is one of highly marked barriers that deter people from visitation, as mentioned under 'The Visitors' Experience Between 'In Situ' and 'In Context'. It was obvious in the scripts of some visitors that were discussed earlier in this Section (5.4.2, a). For example, Mr. Salem, a visitor to Shaikh Salman bin Ahmed Al Fateh fort clearly stated: "*...me and many others are not fan of history...*", Ms. Emile, who is a visitor to Qal'at Al Bahrain shared a common thought about museums: "*...I think museum should be a place that keeps you entertained, and most museums are not...*", and Mr. Ahmed, who is visitor to Bu Maher Fort who stated first the boat experience as motivational trigger while history was expressed as a second reason as stated "*... secondly it's nice to know about the history...*". This seemingly limited interests in historical phenomenon and puts a pressure on Bahrain Authority for Culture and Antiquities as Mrs. Sameera, a visitor guide in Qal'at Al Bahrain site museum summarized it:

"...There is limited number of visitors due to the lack of awareness and interest, as well as the locals' ignorance of the value of history and more interested in fun learning opportunity..."

Also, Shaikha Mai bint Mohammed Al Khalifa, the president of Bahrain Authority for Culture and Antiquities acknowledged similarly that:

"...Lack of interest is our problem; we are looking for ways to make museums more approachable..."

Abounding in the same concern, the archeologist Dr. Salman Al Mahari explained:

“...I think it is all about people interest and awareness...in our society we are not trained to be attached to historical inheritance, especially the new generations are more attracted to leisure activities and entertainment programs...and that’s why the Authority is introducing different events that are suitable for all.”

Moreover, the visitors’ reflections, expectations, experiences, and the type of activities undertaken within the premises documented in the visitor’s commentary books of Bu Maher Fort and Qal’at Al Bahrain interpretive centers underlined the lack of interest of people where the main stated reasons were linked to the limited fun learning opportunities (2019).

- **Time Limitation and Busy Schedules**

Service providers assumed that time limitation and busy schedules may also be another reason to deter people from visiting historic sites and historic site interpretation centers. For example, Mr. Mohamed, a receptionist in Qal’at Al Bahrain site museum observed:

“...People are very busy, and they don’t have the time to visit the museum and the museum closes at 8:00pm...”

This was complemented by Mr. Bassam, a visitor to Bu Maher fort visitor center as he confirmed:

“...I’m working abroad (in Khobar, Saudi Arabia) and only see my family on the weekend ...so it is not possible to visit these places on a regular basis...”

While Mrs. Sameera, a visitor guide in the same museum provided another crucial observation:

“...During Ramadan, the place is almost dead...”

Considering that Bahrain is an Islamic country, it is anticipated that the holy month of Ramadan may affect the day activities, especially in outdoor places as the people are fasting from sunrise to sunset. Further, museum facilities close earlier than other facilities such as malls and parks, thus preventing and restricting evening visits and interactions when people are not fasting.

- **Shortage of Limited Advertisement**

The limited advertisement and announcements about these attractions may also have contributed to the lack of visitations. For example, Ms. Dalal, a visitor Shaikh Salman bin Ahmed Al Fateh stated:

“...If the attraction is hidden within a site, how will people know about it, so maybe they plan to visit the fort or the café, but not for the exhibition?”

Likewise, archeologist Dr. Salman Al Mahari, believed that the lack of advertisement and promotion contributed negatively by reducing the number of visitors in some Historical Sites Interpretation Centers. In this regard, the author asked Dr. Salman *“Why are Qal’at Al Bahrain historic site and site museum more approachable than other historical sites and their related museums?”*. He answered:

“...I don’t think we are promoting the sites well and make it known to the public...”

Although, the official social media channels such as “Instagram” is mainly focused on various cultural events such as “the spring of culture”, “annual heritage festivals” and other programs that are hosted by Bahrain National Museum, Qal’at Al Bahrain, Shaikh Ebrahim cultural center, Mohammed Bin Fares musical hall and other house museums, but absent at Al Khamis Mosque. In this regard, the curator and archeologist Dr. Nadine Boksmati-Fattouh, shared the following thought:

“the reason why these two (Shaikh Salman bin Ahmed Al Fateh fort and Al Khamis Mosque) are not very popular is due to the lack of promotion and don’t forget the cultural element”

Dr. Nadine ended her script by raising the “cultural element” as the main hinder to visitation, which is very probable referring to the lack of interest introduced above.

- **Cost Value versus Benefits**

Bahrain Authority for Culture and Antiquities has given free access to all historic sites and applied entry fees on Historic Site Interpretation Centers. This fact justifies the popularity of historic sites, as people like to enjoy attractions that are free of charge. This was evident in the scripts of Ms. Fatima, a visitor in Qal’at Al Bahrain:

“...visiting the historic site with my family is more feasible than going to the museum because we already visited the museum sometime before and there is nothing to new to see in the museum...”

Ms. Fatima highlighted another issue in her script that museums have nothing new to show, which indicates the static nature of the museum content. Another participant, Ms. Dalal, a visitor in Shaikha Salman bin Ahmed Al Fateh Fort permanent exhibitions described in detail her concerns on the benefits she believed she should have been given:

“...One of the exhibits looks like interactive family tree that works with lighting sensors, which are not working, so I just pass. Then the second exhibit has a touch screen displaying the fort and you can zoom in and explore each room and its history...but I cannot identify the rooms when I’m in site again...so why do I pay for something that is not working...If they cannot support technology just keep it simple...”

Ms. Dalal explained some issues that she faced when visiting the permanent exhibition, which underlines the cost value versus the benefits of visiting interpretive centers. In fact, such issues may hinder the meaning-making process because the delivered information is disconnected.

- **Missing Learning Points**

The data showed that the presentation techniques and the amount of information exhibited form a hindrance to the visitors' understating. This was evident in the excerpts of many visitors. For example, Ms. Emile, a visitor in Qal'at Al Bahrain site museum shared the following complaint on information load:

"...I personally complain about is the amount of information...I think the amount of information should really be focused..."

Ms. Emile showed her dissatisfaction about the amount of information found in Qal'at Al Bahrain site museum. Although these captions are very important to support the objects in display, yet they should be summarized and focused to give brief rather than elaborate information. This was explained by Ripp (2016) as he illustrated the differences between the role of visitor centers and museums and the amount of information that should be presented. This is also an indication that the site museums sometimes overwhelm the visitors with heavy-loaded information that may distract them from the main subject.

Another example, Mr. Salem, a visitor in Shaikh Salman bin Ahmed Al Fateh Fort permanent exhibition said:

"...There are too many exhibits in one place so people will get confused...people don't like to read..."

Mr. Salem's excerpt agrees with Ms. Emile's. They both underlined the too many exhibits in the permanent exhibition. Considering the linear spatial layout of

this interpretive center and the fact that it is representing a story of the place without any object from the same place creates another form of disconnection between the ‘in situ’ and ‘in context’ settings.

The last example illustrates the opinion of Ms. Dalal, a visitor in the same location:

“...The historic site has no tour guide to explain the fort qualities...not even a map or a leaflet for self-navigation.”

Ms. Dalal agrees with Mr. Salem who visited the same place, that there is a wide gap between the ‘in situ’ and ‘in context’ settings. In fact, the absence of conventional presentation techniques taken from the old museology (i.e. tour guide and maps) puts another hinder for understanding the historic site. Considering that the technological features used in this museum were not very functional. However, many studies, Kelly (2019) highlighted the visitors’ active role in creating meanings within sites of interpretations (i.e. museums and historic sites). The data showed that each visitor had an agenda, identity, motivations, and interests that may have affected their practices and engagement in ‘in situ’ and ‘in context’, and considering the limited clarity, as well as the contribution of the exhibited display and presentation techniques in some cases as expressed by many visitors, the next organizing theme aims to shed light on The Aspects of Meaning-Making Process.

5.4.3 The Aspects of Meaning-Making Process

The findings showed that every visitor has different ways in understating the ‘in situ’ and ‘in context’ narratives. It is probable that meanings are grounded in the physical context, and visitors’ minds. They might have been also influenced by their motivations and interests. Two themes emerged from the analysis of the interview transcripts; a) meaning-making happens within a specific physical context, and b)

meaning-making is a whole-body experience. Figure 5.9 presents the number of participants input on each sub-theme and Figure 5.10 illustrates the themes, sub-themes, and codes about the Aspects of Meaning-Making Process.

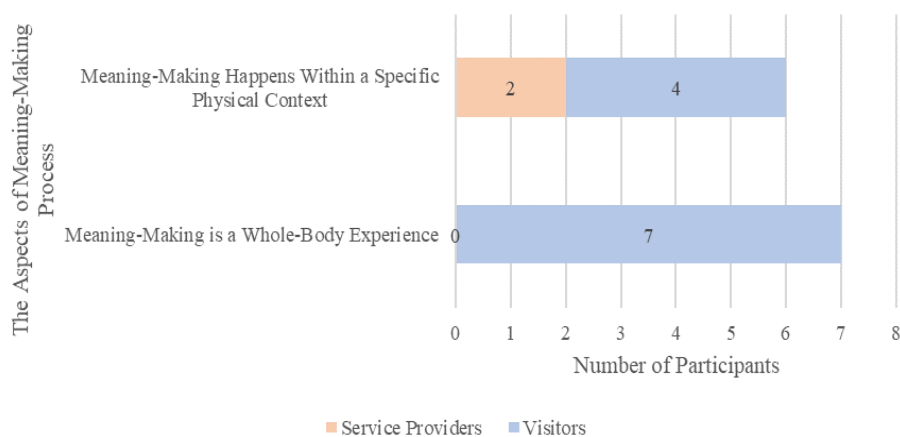


Figure 5.9: Number of participants input to the two themes under “The Aspects of Meaning-Making Process” organizing theme

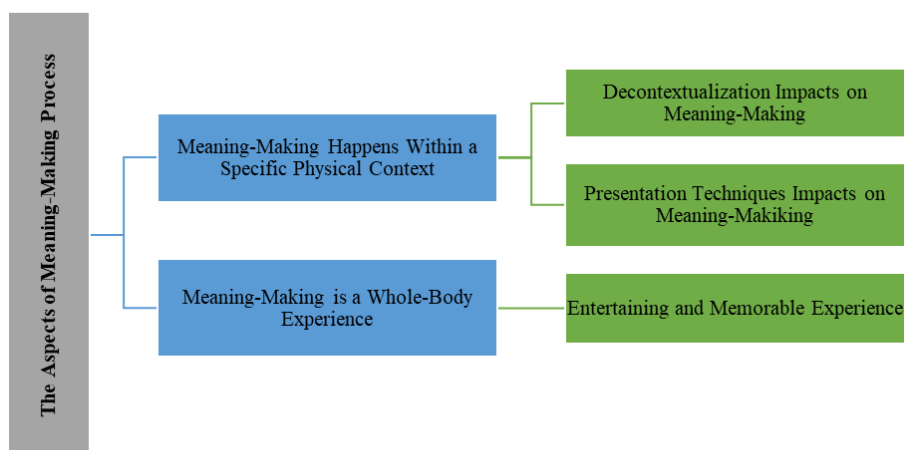


Figure 5.10: Themes and sub-themes about the aspects of meaning-making process

5.4.3.1 Meaning-Making Happens Within a Specific Physical Context

Based on the case study analysis conducted in 2018 and presented in Chapter 4 (Section 4.2), the four selected interpretive centers showed a different relationship

to the interpreted historic site (i.e. nearby or within), as well as different layouts (i.e. sequential, linear, central and hall layouts). In this regard, the collected data revealed that some physical configurations were more successful than others. For instance, Ms. Emile, a visitor in Qal'at AL Bahrain site museum described its spatial layout as follows:

“...It is very straightforward and easy to follow and not very big...It is a quite linear and the information is not that much so you reach the end with a kind of an overview that you've memorized...but I think it has very limited variety of mediums to provide experience unlike the historic site...In addition to that I find it difficult to relate the artifacts in display (in the site museum) to the historic site...I do not know what is where?”

Most of the visitors and service providers confirmed that Qal'at Al Bahrain site museum spatial layout is simple, straightforward, and highly probable to contribute to convey meaning about the adjacent historic site. However, Ms. Emile indicated her difficulty in relating the objects in display to the historic site.

Regardless of the museum typology (i.e. classical museums or site-related museum), the isolation of artifacts and objects from their original context happens very often in museology practices for protection and preservation purposes. But it seems that it is very critical when both interpretive settings ‘in situ’ and ‘in context’ are shared in the same location, because visitors expect to draw a closer connection between both settings. Hence, Decontextualization and its Impacts on Meaning-Making emerged as a sub-theme to describe the relationship between the context, the visitors, and the process of understanding the historic site story.

5.4.3.1.1 Decontextualization Impacts on Meaning-Making

It is very probable that “decontextualization” forms another difficulty to the visitors’ understanding of the context. This result complies with the notion of

fragments highlighted by Kirshenblatt-Gimblett (1991) because taking the artifacts out of their original context may reduce their meaning to a piece of art, and consequently cuts a lot of their hidden stories, and change the original meaning. In this regard, some visitors including Ms. Emile, Mrs. Sonia, and Mr. Salem suggested adding replicas to the historic site to complement the story. The archeologist and curator Dr. Nadine Boksmati-Fattouh proposed the following explanation:

“...If you want to protect the objects you cannot just leave them out there unless you bury them again! There are some objects that are more resistant to climate but even those need conservations. Even architectural features will not remain the same without regular restoration and conservation. I am just stating the obvious here.”

Likewise, when the author asked the archeologist Dr. Salman Al Mahari about his opinion in this regard, he argued:

“Yes, detachment act may cut part of the story but yet it’s the best act to keep these artifacts in good condition”

In response to that, Ms. Emile, a visitor in Qal’at Al Bahrain site museum underlined:

“...I do understand that the objects displayed there represent a time and place, definitely related to that place [Qal’at Al Bahrain], but I don’t understand what is (the) message or the story that the museum is trying to pass to me...”

Ms. Emile shed light on the gap between the visitors and the museum’s collection that is exemplified by different time and place as she mentioned. Similarly, Cerquetti (2016) and Antón et al. (2018) found that the time, place, and language differences between the museum content and visitors are obstacles to their understanding and emotional engagement as explained in chapter 2 (Section 2.5.1).

Another view was shared from Ms. Dalal, a visitor in Shaikh Salman bin Ahmed Al Fateh Fort:

“Although this exhibition does not contain artifacts from the site its representing...meanings are attributed by the way and approach of telling the story.”

Ms. Dalal emphasized the importance of the presentation techniques and interpretation approaches used in explaining the museums exhibits, because these are recognized as the interface between the service providers (i.e. curators and visitors guides) and the visitors. Accordingly, the second and last sub-theme for Meaning-Making happens within a Specific Physical Context, called Presentation Techniques Impacts on Meaning-Making was developed.

5.4.3.1.2 Presentation Techniques Impacts on Meaning-Making

The presentation techniques in Historic Site Interpretation Centers are anticipated to convey significant information about the adjacent historic site as well as its uses. Ms. Dalal and other visitors shared some difficulties in understanding the historic site significance because of the existing presentation techniques. For example, Mr. Salem, a visitor in Shaikha Salman bin Ahmed Al Fateh Fort stated:

“...Shaikh Salman bin Ahmed Al Fateh Fort is free of any information panels to know what was the function of the many rooms seen there... although a brief information is available at the permanent exhibition, yet I cannot relate because I don't have a map to follow”

Mr. Salem highlighted the importance of using a combination between old and new museology methods, because it is difficult to relate digital information found through the interactive screen in ‘in context’ setting to the nearby reality in ‘in situ’ setting. Similarly, Mr. Ahmed, a visitor in Bu Maher Fort visitor center seconded the same concern:

“...The visitor center is very easy to follow but it did not answer my questions...I still do not know who is Abu Maher? Why the fort carries this name and what was its function?”

Mr. Ahmed indicated his lack of awareness and it is very probable that he did not even read the existing captions that could answer his question, an indication of lack of interest. This behavior is related to Fish's (2001) theoretical concept that recognizes the subjectivity of interpretation and explanation of a narrative to the context of interpretation. It is anticipated that meanings will not be alike, and will be influenced by visitors' awareness, personal experience, and cultural values. In reality, meaning-making is not just happening within a specific physical context, but is in itself, a whole-body experience.

5.4.3.2 Meaning-Making as a Whole-Body Experience

In this regard, Ms. Emile a visitor in Qal'at Al Bahrain site museum highlighted.

“Meaning making is a personalized thing...It's you who construct meaning by exploring and choosing what you want to see.”

This finding materializes the works of Steier et al. (2015) as the analysis found that visitors used gestures and intellectuality to arbitrate meanings of an artifact or event. Likewise, Ms. Fatima, a visitor to the same place shared her opinion on meaning-generation:

“...Meanings can be generated through full body experience (see, touch, hear) ...”

It is possible that Ms. Fatima is explaining her experience in the historic site because 'touch' is a significant feature of visiting historic sites as it is forbidden in museums including Historic Site Interpretation Centers. In fact, the touch experience is anticipated to have another leaning dimension. With no doubt, touching artifacts in

‘in context’ setting may leave damaging effects as they are kept in a controlled environment for conservation and preservation purposes (Blake, 2015).

In ‘in situ’ settings, vestiges are kept and preserved in their original context; therefore, it is likely to be more resistant for touching and human interference. In most of the visitors’ responses, touching artifacts increases their emotional connection to the museum content (i.e. artifacts). For instance, Ms. Emile highlighted:

“...the ‘please do not touch’ signs everywhere are just annoying...to be honest I touch things when no one is watching especially in the historic sites...it is very entertaining (laughs)...In addition, we need to feel the material, its texture, maybe temperature...it says a lot about the place and creates a memorable experience that once cannot forget...”

It is certain that touching contributes to meaning, enhances the visitors’ accessibility to full body experience, and creates a more surprising experience that might be memorable and entertaining. Accordingly, a positive memory-building may well be represented by the emerging sub-theme Entertaining and Memorable Experience.

5.4.3.2.1 Entertaining and Memorable Experience

Historic sites and Historic Site Interpretation Centers can entertain their visitors by providing suitable interactive techniques such as personalized guided tours, storytelling, and social events. For example, Ms. Emile visited Qal’at Al Bahrain with her parents and used the multi-language audio guides to navigate the site, as her parents are non-English speakers. She described their experience as follows:

“...my parents and I really enjoyed the audio guide and were carefully listening to the narration...afterwards my parents were wondering and trying to verify their

knowledge about Portuguese colonialism...they were thinking about the arches, building materials and other stuff..”

It is certain that guided tours offer a personalized visit to a given attraction, provide a better reading of the historic site hidden stories, but at the same time limit the social interaction. Personalized tours contribute to the quality of museum or historic site visit. In Qal’at Al Bahrain, the audio guides allow the visitor to choose the preferred length of the visit (45 or 90 minutes) based on how much time, preferences of subjects and possible restrictions (i.e. freedom of movement) by following the given map (Figure 5.11).

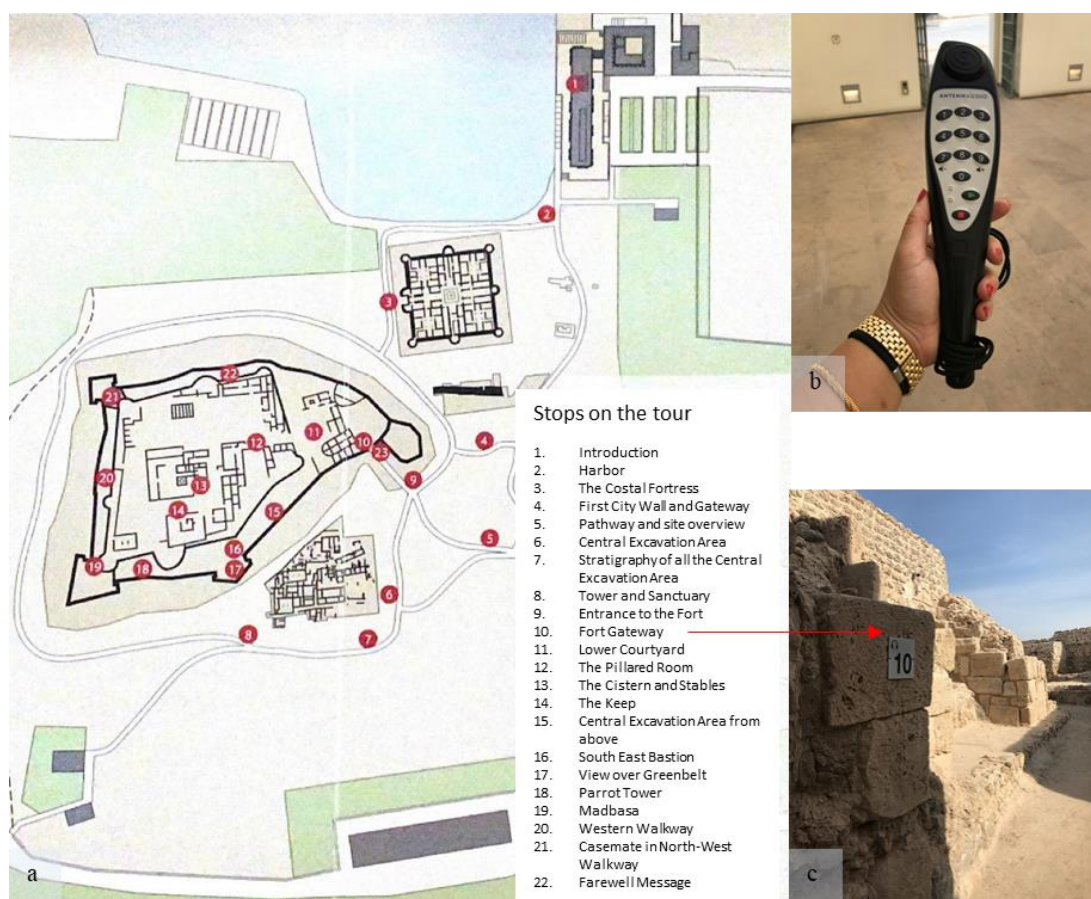


Figure 5.11: Qal'at Al Bahrain self- audio guide tour. a) audio guide tour brochure, b) audio guide device, and c) numbered stops

In fact, personalized tours are also influenced by people’s collective memory, as it is seen as the primary resources for visitors’ pedagogy and experience, as stated

by Edge and Weiner (2006), “Life without memory is no life at all”, which was earlier relayed by Ricœur (1976) that self-meaning making is derived through the understanding of the relationships between our own world and that of the others.

Another example of memorable and entertaining experience expressed by Mrs. Sonia, who visited Qal’at Al Bahrain with her children and shared the following experience:

“...Qal’at al Bahrain is so big...it has a very complex layout that involves underground chambers, tunnels and shafts...I usually visit Qal’at Al Bahrain with my children...we even play hide and seek there...”

The complex layout indicates Qal’at Al Bahrain’s function in the past as interpreted in the adjacent site museums (Chapter 4, Section 4.2.2), as observed, and as stated by many visitors. These findings confirm the connection between the historic site and the Historic Site Interpretation Center. Following that, the author asked Mrs. Sonia if she visited Qal’at Al Bahrain site museum. She replied:

“...Unfortunately, we never visited the museum (laughs)...we were planning to visit since that last three years but...actually we like the site more it’s a place to learn and have fun.”

Mrs. Sonia’s script confirms the popularity of historic sites compared to historic site interpretation centers; an observation also reflected in other visitors’ scripts who were interviewed in Shaikh Salman bin Ahmed Al Fateh fort.

For example, Mr. Saleh stated:

“I didn’t visit the exhibition and I don’t think I will visit it...I just prefer the freedom feeling in the historic site.”

While Mr. Salem volunteered his true experience:

“...I visited the exhibition twice and it was very boring, no people around...So, I don't think I will visit it again unless they change their strategies and make it more entertaining...”

To this end, a previous research carried out in 2010 by Silverman found that meaning-making in museums and historic sites fits between two critical areas; 1) the visitors' meaning-making and the provided presentation techniques and, 2) the visitors' needs and the purpose of the museum, which summarizes the whole aspects of meaning making found in this study.

As a follow up, the author asked the participants (i.e. service providers and visitors alike) to share their suggestions and recommendations to enhance the whole visiting experience and its contribution to meaning-making process. Accordingly, the following section presents the next organizing argument, with its four themes and five sub-themes.

5.4.4 Suggestions and Recommendations: Towards a Better Visitors' Experience

Suggestions for improvement of the visitors' experience from both service providers and visitors indicated four emerging themes; a) artifacts repatriation and other alternatives, b) alternative presentation and deliverable techniques, c) free Admission really affects attendance, and d) other untitled suggestions. Figure 5.12 presents the number of participants input on each sub-theme and Figure 5.13 illustrates the themes, sub-themes, and codes about the stakeholders' suggestions and recommendations.

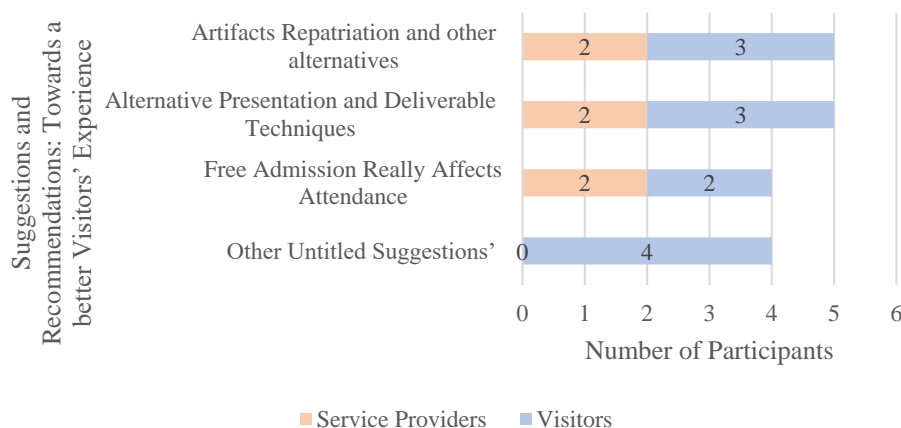


Figure 5.12: Number of participants input to the four themes under “Suggestions and Recommendations: Towards a better Visitors’ Experience” organizing theme

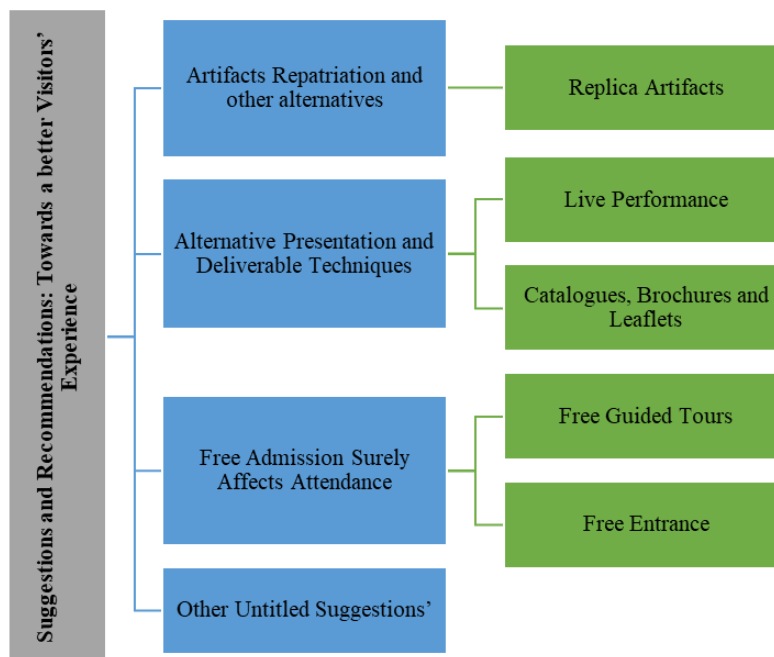


Figure 5.13: Themes and sub-themes about the Suggestions and Recommendations: Towards a better Visitors’ Experience

5.4.4.1 Artifacts Repatriation and Other Alternatives

Having artifacts in their original setting is an important medium to deliver substantial information about historical heritage and ancient ways of life. Within this

discourse, the author asked the archeologist Dr. Salman Al Mahari “*how about moving the artifacts back to their original context?*” He replied:

“... I think this is very crucial point, especially if you are able to protect the artifacts on the site, it will be just great to give a full picture of the site narrative in one place (i.e. the site and its content) and I ‘m sure the picture will be more clear and meaningful for local visitors and tourists...”

Dr. Salman agreed that moving the artifacts back to their original context is a helpful strategy to provide visitors with a meaningful experience. However, this conflicts with conservation and preservation needs. Dr. Salman started his response with a conditional argument “*if you are able to protect the artifacts on the site*”, which without a doubt is impossible in uncontrolled environment (i.e. heat and humidity, vandalism) and indeed requires excessive costs. Then, the author asked Dr. Salman “*what do you suggest?*” and he proposed “*adding some sculptures will reflect the lifestyle in the past as a storytelling board*” as extended previously in the “Suspension of the Narrative” sub-theme (Section 5.4.1, c), suggesting inclusion of replicate artifacts.

5.4.4.1.1 Replica Artifacts

Dr. Salman confirmed that artifacts replication will positively contribute to the meaning-making process and will make it easy for visitors to reveal historical facts and get entertained at the same time. Likewise, Dogan (2015) indicated that adding models and sculptures in heritage villages in Turkey positively contributed to the meaning-making process and helped the visitors to have a unique experience in ‘in situ’ settings.

5.4.4.2 Alternative Presentation and Deliverable Techniques

Multiple presentation techniques are recognized as an important strategy to reach, connect, and engage with wider audiences. The service providers and visitors suggested different presentation techniques to provide a better experience and to attract a wide range of visitors including nationals and expatriates as well as adults and children to the historic sites and their related Historic Site Interpretation Centers. Experiential enhancement suggestions fell into the following two sub-themes:

5.4.4.2.1 Live Performance

Adding live performances is one of the top suggestions that both service providers and visitors have recommended. For example, Ms. Emile, a visitor at Qal'at Al Bahrain site stated:

“...Common people want to know the story of the fort and they cannot simply link those objects to a story by reading a small paragraph...So adding living objects will create a better understanding for the visitor...”

Therefore, adding live performances to represent a narrative will add more historic value to the place. This may compensate the lack of interest to read written captions, identified as one of the barriers to visitation.

5.4.4.2.2 Catalogues, Brochures and Leaflets

The presence of catalogues, brochures and leaflets are important in the historic site to ease the visitor's self-directed sightseeing. These media often contain brief information about the contextual setting, maps, and figures. But unfortunately, this feature is absent today and replaced by online resources. While a lot of information may be conveyed digitally nowadays, for many people there is still nothing quite like a piece of printed material. In this regard, Mr. Mahmoud Al Binkhalil, supervisor of Shaikh Salman bin Ahmed Fort suggested:

“...Leaflets and maps may be important although these strategies are traditional, but they are still useful...”

Mr. Mahmoud stated the reminiscent usefulness of maintaining such traditional strategies in the era of technology, and abundant online resources.

5.4.4.3 Free Admission Surely Affects Attendance

Previous studies argued that museums should be free as the entrance fees subjectively affect visiting attendance (Kirchberg, 1998; Sharifi-Tehrani et al., 2013). Within the context of this study, service providers and visitors indicated that free guided tours and free entrance fee substantially affect the visitor’s occurrence at historic sites and Historic Site Interpretation Centers. These two sub-theme suggestions are detailed below:

5.4.4.3.1 Free Guided Tours

The archeologist Dr. Salman Al Mahari stated that free guided tours to locals and nonlocals during national celebrations are important to boost visitation.

“...Away from the known events, I think the authority should provide a free of charge guided visits to historical sites when the weather is comfortable...Also to take advantage of the national occasions and international occasions such as Heritage sites day on 18th April, or the museum day on 18th May or the national day or other occasions to attract the local visitors or tourists to visit these places...”

5.4.4.3.2 Free Entry

In agreement with Dr. Salman’s opinion, free admission to Historic Site Interpretation Centers was suggested by Ms. Fatima, a visitor to Qal’at Al Bahrain contextual setting.

“...Make the museum free for all and this will motivate them to visit the museum...” Additionally, it was claimed by Kirchberg (1998) that the entrance fee is seen as subjective barrier to visiting museums.

In contrast, Mrs. Layla, a visitor guide in Qal'at Al Bahrain site museum was of a different opinion:

“... Tickets should be activated for both (Fort and Museum)”

It is naturally anticipated that people will tend to go to free activities if the option is available. Therefore, if entrance fees are applied, then, it should be for the whole contextual setting. Remarkably, expatriates, especially tourists, are willing to pay significantly higher entrance fees than locals for exploration and education purposes, which materializes the findings of Sharifi-Tehrani et al. (2013) who highlighted foreign tourists' willingness to pay compared to nationals and domestic tourists, likely part of an exploratory vacation program.

5.4.4.4 Other Additional Suggestions

The experience in historic sites and their related Historic Site Interpretation Centers is not limited to presentation techniques and hosted activities and may offer opportunities to travel back in time. For instance, some of the participants suggested a new dimension to experience the given contextual setting. For instance, Mr. Salem, a visitor at Shaikh Salman bin Ahmed Al Fateh Fort suggested.

“...Add a photo booth and let people wear traditional customs used by people in the past”

In fact, adding a photo booth in the historical site offers the visitors an opportunity to be part of the presented historical era and consequently it may contribute to reducing the time and place gap that was highlighted as a hinder to visitation. In this sense, Ms. Emile, suggested another form of living experience.

“...I think we could have a cafeteria that it's much more related to an experience of a traditional Cafe...which does not mean it should have a traditional design but it

could relate more with what how people sit here, and what do they do when they go to a cafe because after all this is where you are... ”

By the end of her excerpt, Ms. Emile reinforced the important links between the ‘in situ’ and ‘in context’ ethnographic objects to create a full realistic experience via the way of seating and other traditional heritage practices. Moreover, Mr. Khalid drew the author’s attention to a very interesting fact about the boat shuttle to Bu Maher Fort visitor center. He suggested a full body experience.

“...The boat should be changed to a traditional boat “banoosh” with the once in Muharraq and add some “nahham songs” to complete the experience of boat riding in its original cultural atmosphere... “

Using the “banoosh” (i.e. the traditional name of boats used in the past) instead of the current yachts, and adding the “nahham songs” (i.e. the songs and rhythms that were performed during boats ride in the past) are anticipated to create a new and better visiting experience that may better convey past experiences.

To this end, this section presented, explained, and discussed the emergent findings from the open-ended interviews thematic analysis. The next section discusses the findings that emerged from a combination of two research approaches: first, the case study research tool and second, the multiple ethnographic tools (i.e. visitors records, observation, online survey, and open-ended interviews) with an attempt to fill the knowledge gap of understanding the relationships between ‘in situ’ and ‘in context’ settings, and the meaning-making process as raised initially in the problem statement (Chapter 1, Section 1.3).

5.5. Discussion

The purpose of this section is to interpret, discuss, and then align the data analysis with the research objectives, to finally, highlight the contribution and

significance of this study. Specifically, the study aimed to identify the role and contribution of Historic Site Interpretation Centers in the construction of meaning and investigate their capacity to serve as interpretive tools and meaning generators from historic sites to visitors, using Bahrain's historic sites as case studies.

The study revealed that the meaning-making is a balanced process derived from the physical quality and attributes of a given setting, combined with the visitors' self-exploration and reflections upon the same setting. This discussion, derived from the multiple case study analysis and the multi-ethnographic approach adopted in this study, is driven by two interrogations and cross-examinations to connect the findings to the research objectives.

The first inquiry aims to uncover the question of "what makes a Historic Site Interpretation Center an interpretive tool?" This question explores the ability of site interpretive centers to convey and mediate meanings from historic sites to visitors. This first inquiry discusses the following emerging three claims:

1. The physical attributes of a setting contribute to meaning-making.
2. The meaning-making from place to people is semiological.
3. The Critical reconsideration of the relationship between place, people, and culture in the meaning-making process is essential.

The second inquiry attempts to unveil the following question: "why the Historic Site Interpretation Center should be a unique museum typology?" It underlines the specificity of Historic Site Interpretation Centers' relation to context and its dual interpretation strategies, that would justify classifying them as a new typology.

These interrelationships between the context and the visitors in relation to the meaning-making process at Historic Site Interpretation Centers are summarized in Figure 5.14.

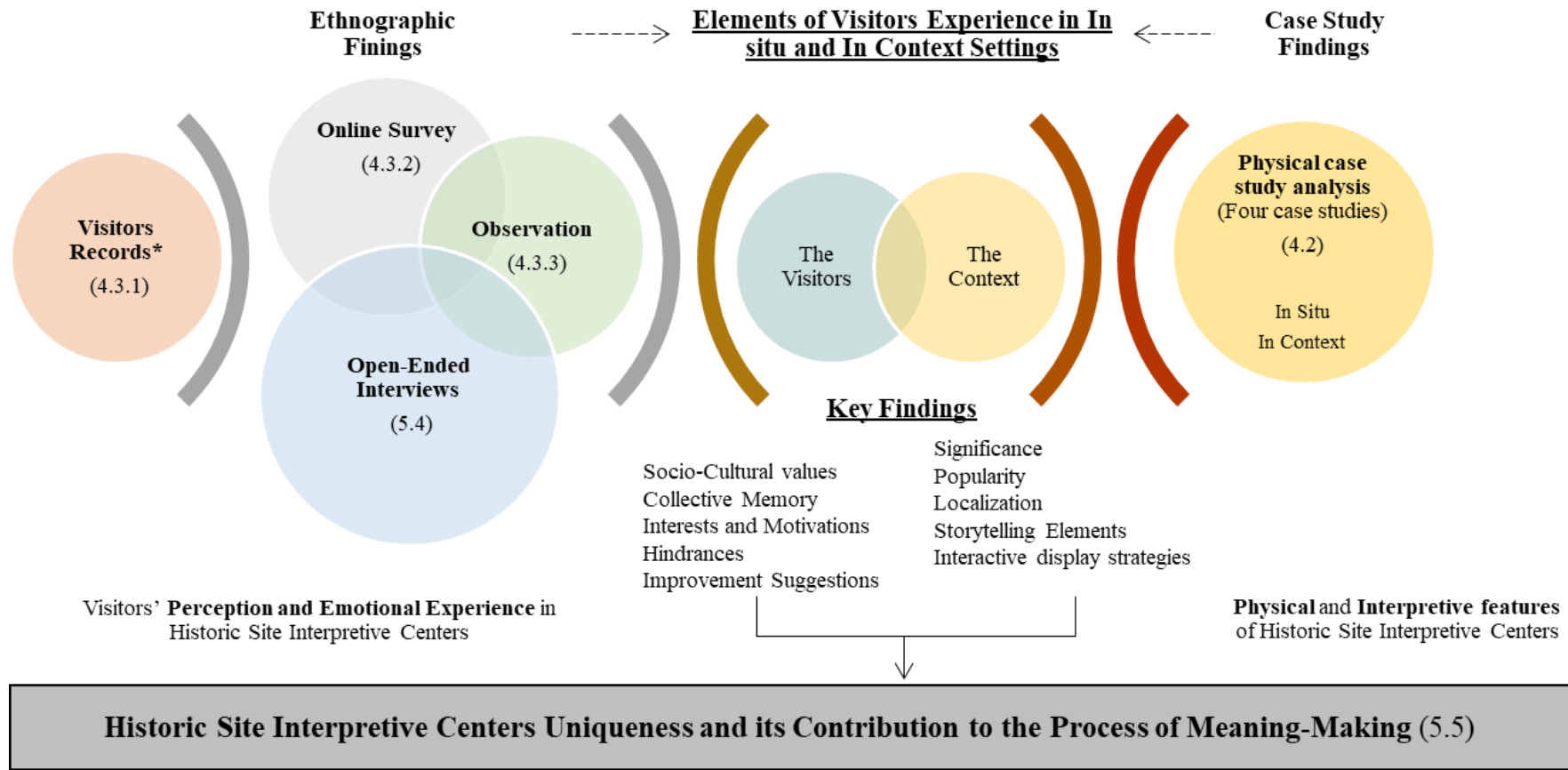


Figure 5.14: The thesis key findings and the basis for the discussion section

* indicates secondary data source

5.5.1 Inquiry 1: How Does a Historic Site Interpretation Center Contribute to the Meaning-Making Process?

5.5.1.1 Claim 1: The Contribution of a Setting's Physical Attributes to Meaning-Making

The factors influencing visitors while touring Bahrain's Historic Site Interpretation Centers are first, the significance of the historic site itself, and second, the ability of the interpretive center to effectively communicate its significance. Each of these two factors is further defined in relation to its contribution to the meaning-making process.

5.5.1.1.1 The Historic Site

The pertinence of Bahrain's historic sites is that they represent a unique place in the Persian Gulf. They are a testimony and the home of ethnically multi-cultural human settlements which makes them an attractive destination, where visitors can find ancient vestiges that have left their mark-

The multi-ethnographic approach revealed that a large number of nationals and expatriates prefer and visit, in general, more the historic sites compared to the nearby or within Historic Site Interpretation Centers. These findings tie well with previous studies wherein Kirshenblatt-Gimblett (1991), Flexner (2016), and Dastgerdi and De Luca (2019) equally agreed that a historic site holds a significant value beyond its physical environment and focuses on the entire human sociocultural environment with all its tangible and intangible attributes. Similarly, Bahrain's historical sites, as investigated in this study, confirmed that the significance of a site translates into a higher number of visitors attracted by vestiges which illustrate ancient everyday life and contribute in the development of the present-day national culture. The sites also contain dimensions such as space and time which provide tangible and intangible meanings about a specific place. Consistency between the

study findings and the literature confirms and reinforces the popularity of historic sites as a method of interpretation and not as a mere product of display. Yet, the circumstances in which these historic sites were built, used, and reshaped overtime remain disguised. For these reasons, building Historic Site Interpretation Centers nearby the historic sites in Bahrain and in other rich historical contexts may well be a necessity to convey and mediate meanings from historic sites to visitors.

5.5.1.1.2 The Historic Site Interpretation Centers

A Historic Site Interpretation Center's location and architectural configuration play a key role in mediating meanings from historic sites to visitors through physical, visual, and emotional connections between the 'in situ' and 'in context'. In this study, (a) the contextual relationship between the historic site and the Historic Site Interpretation Center, (b) the Historic Site Interpretation Center's architectural appearance, and (c) the spatial layout and objects in display were identified as the main connections, each defined by multiple barriers and drivers.

- **Contextual Relationship**

The Historic Site Interpretation Centers investigated in this study exhibited 3 types of contextual relationships to the historic site; first, located nearby the historical site (Qal'at Al Bahrain and Al Khamis Mosque), second, also located nearby the historical but with an access contingent to a public sea shuttle (Bu Maher Fort), and finally, located within the historic site (Shaikh Salman bin Ahmed Al Fateh Fort) (Chapter 3, Figure 3.6).

The nearby contextual setting provided an interchangeable mobility and visual connection between the historic site and the site museum, and matches the relationship found in the New Acropolis Museum in Athens (Caskey, 2011; Jakobsen, 2012) that represents a physical and visual connection to the Greek

Acropolis monument. Such relationships carry a potential weight to transform the mobility and the visual connection to a meaningful learning opportunity that occurs in relation to the sociocultural surroundings and stimulate the visitors curiosity through informal free-choice learning and access to museum resources (Androniki and Evgenia, 2013; Grenier, 2010). In addition to the importance and benefits of the nearby relationships between the 'in situ' and 'in context' settings, this study encountered in Bu Maher Fort a unique mode of accessibility, using the sea shuttles, which translated into an additional positive opportunity of meaning-making happening within a shared contextual setting. Such experience added to the Bu Maher Fort's visitors another dimension to their experience and provided them with an added fun-learning opportunity, as well as a full body experience (i.e. physical, visual, and emotional). This suggests that indirect meanings could be revealed from entertainment experiences, like experiencing the traditional mode of transportation used in the past for pearl diving ahead of visiting the site. Similarly, hosting national and international events, as observed and expressed by participants, resulted in increased visitation. Overall, these findings are in accordance with outcomes reported by Van Winkle in (2014) who highlighted that integrating entertainment has positive impacts on the learning outcome and the meaning-making process in museums and historic sites.

On the other hand, placing the interpretive center within the historic site, although in close connection, may create an obstruction and reduce the visibility of both, as found in Shaikh Salman bin Ahmed Al Fateh Fort. Hence, the French philosopher Ricœur's (1976, p. 79) quote that "it is not true that all interpretations are equal" would be quite valid in this scenario. It is therefore necessary to emphasize the potential strengths and limitations of the Historic Site Interpretation

Centers' location and architectural design—in relation to the historic site and their impact on meaning making.

Overall, the historic site experience is always sought by visitors when visiting a Historic Site Interpretation Center for visual, tactile, and emotional experience opportunities. This was evidenced by the large number of visitors documented at historic sites compared to the interpretive centers. In fact, the museum specialists believed that interpretive centers are not a substitution to the site visit; instead they complement the visit by providing additional information about the objects originally found on site. By such consideration, it is anticipated that the considered interpretive centres in this study will exhibit another form of objects-oriented museums located nearby the historic sites, presenting and interpreting objects out of their context. Barry and Robert (2015) and Stewart (2016) highlighted that this practice ultimately generates inconsistent meanings, and certainly reduce the visitors' involvement and emotional engagement within the museum setting.

- **The Architectural Appearance**

The architectural appearance being harmoniously integrated or in contrast with the surrounding may have an impact on the process of meaning making. Scale, proportion, colors and materials, as well as the integration of locally inspired elements create a consistent visual image to the museums in relation to the context (Barranha et al., 2017; Farahat and Osman, 2018; Lu, 2017; Tabarsa and Naseri, 2017). Jashari-Kajtazi and Jakupi (2017) claimed that the building façade is the first step of experiencing buildings, even before entering them, as it symbolizes their local or global architectural identity. Likewise, architects and archeologists in Bahrain, suggested that even if the Historic Site Interpretation Centers could be modern, they should remain humble, introvert, and not distractive to keep the visitors' mind and

emotions focused on the historic site, focal point of interpretation. This finding is consistent with The New Acropolis Museum in Athens design approach of being modern, simple and not monumental to manifest the architectural attributes of the Acropolis (Arvanitakis, 2010; Caskey, 2011; Lending, 2018). The agreement between the findings of this study and a well-known case like The New Acropolis Museum indicates that Bahrain's Historic Site Interpretation Centers offer a variety of architectural expressions nearby and within historic sites, constituting a case to understand how different architectural compositions may convey meanings and manifest itself as a metaphor of culture, identity, and maybe knowledge as seen in Qal'at Al Bahrain and Bu Maher Fort interpretive centers.

On the other hand, the use of contrasting building materials such as glass and steel in Historic Site Interpretation Centers has created a contrasting architectural appearance compared to the interpreted authentic historic site. Although, sensed as architecturally intrusive, in fact, such design may have benefits, in particular with extensive use of glass, creating blended views within the overall contextual setting, as seen and reported by visitors in Shaikh Salman bin Ahmed Al Fateh Fort, which allowed the visitors to enjoy uninterrupted views while passing through the fort. Moreover, the glazed façade was also helpful in providing the visitors with a continuous visual connection to the historic site while touring its exhibits. This was also evident in Bu Maher Fort visitor center that provided views to its nearby historic site, similar in its approach to the New Acropolis Museum that provided its visitors with a panoramic views of the Parthenon remains and the city of Athens while enjoying the sculptures of the Acropolis (Archdaily, 2010; Filippopoulou, 2017; Jakobsen, 2012; Zakakis et al., 2015).

Regardless of the interpretive center's architectural style, the interpretation of historical facts through the objects in display, and its cultural identity remain its main function, as it is responsible for shaping the visitors' collective memory, and lead to the creation of new meaning and approaches of sensing the place.

- **Spatial Layout and Display Strategies**

The second step of maximizing the meaning-making opportunities at the interpretive centers is through relating the display arrangements, and exhibition hall spatial layout to the related historic site narratives and facts. Spatial layout may positively enhance the storytelling and mediation of meanings and reflect the different phases of its related historic site, as seen in Qal'at Al Bahrain, and as agreed by its visitors' guides and visitors. Hence, the finding verifies and confirms Lu's claim (2017) that museums' architectural, spatial layout, and circulation patterns afford to create a specific engagement with the past and symbolize the key historical narratives and facts.

However, the issue of isolating the objects from their original context (i.e. de-contextualization), lead objects to lose their intended meanings, was expressed by some visitors, supporting the claims of Kirshenblatt-Gimblett (1991) who shed light on the conflicted meanings when objects are displayed out of their original context, as it is difficult for visitors to understand the intrinsic values of objects whose meaning surpasses their appearance.

In practice, objects are often moved from 'in situ' to 'in context' settings for preservation and exhibition purposes, a non-debatable intent, but the current de-contextualization issue found in Historic Site Interpretation Centers might be driven by a number of considerations including, the limited impact of the presentation techniques explaining the objects in display, or the nature of objects, or the lack of a

continuous visual connection to the historic site during the visit, or the limited visual-tactile experience within the 'in context' setting.

The direct visual connection may overcome these limitations but may not be enough to connect the visitors emotionally and sensually with the vestiges. Additional strategies, such as reproducing an outside environment internally using original sculptures and replicas (Arvanitakis, 2010; Jakobsen, 2012), in order to potentially overcome the issue of de-contextualization and increase the visual-tactile experience opportunities would become necessary

In fact, the limited contribution of presentation techniques at the considered cases was expressed through the interviewees and through the online survey responses, while the limited engagement was observed during the field visits. Therefore, a concurrent consideration of the contextual relationship between 'in situ' and 'in context' settings, the architectural appearance, and presentation techniques should be considered to enhance visitors' experience. On top of that, the objects arrangement and the spatial layout should reflect the interpreted historic site; as well as afford a continuous visual connection to the historic site should be maintained to ensure the role and contribution of such museums to the visitors understanding.

Accordingly, a critical exploration of the semiological meaning making from place to people is needed to understand the visitors' physical involvement and emotional engagements in a shared exploratory setting, aiming to catalyze the relationship between the 'object' and the 'whole' as exemplified in the hermeneutics circle theory by Heidegger (1995), as sensing the place mainly has three components, (1) the physical context, (2) meaning, and (3) activity (Parsaee et al., 2015).

5.5.1.2 Claim 2: The Meaning-Making from Place to People is Semiological

The aspects of meaning-making in historic sites and Historic Site Interpretation Centers are first generated by the architectural elements that symbolize the identity of a place, its culture, and climatic features. Second, by the communication between the place and people, and third, by the social and cultural background of the people who applied that architecture and who perceive it. Each of these aspects is determined in relation to the semiological meaning-making as an image and the relationship between the 'object' and the 'whole' from a hermeneutics perspective.

5.5.1.2.1 The Architectural Contribution to Meaning-Making

Architectural elements are symbols that represent and communicate relevant cultural and contextual meanings (French, 2012; Jashari-Kajtazi and Jakupi, 2017; Snodgrass and Coyne, 2006). Therefore, the integration of locally inspired architectural elements into the Historic Site Interpretation Centers generally afford to communicate cultural values about the place, and specifically enhance the familiarity and acceptance by local population, as expressed by the interviewee in this study. For example, the use of the courtyard and minimal openings in Qal'at Al Bahrain was a direct reminder of some of the important architectural elements found in old traditional houses in Bahrain and in the region, a reminiscent of the harmonious integration of cultural, social, and climatic factors. Although these elements do not reflect the historic site narrative, they, however, do respond to its context specificities, and relate some interpretations to the context and its people.

On the other hand, this feeling was missing in the other cases under investigation as the interpretive centers only maintained the proportion and scale, as well as the use of local materials and colors. One possible reason for that is not every

culture can support and comprehend the stun of the rapid growth of global architecture. Therefore, the meaning-making is a self-exploratory experience derived by individuals cultural background at a given context, which underlines the need to consider the specificity of place, culture and people when designing Historic Site Interpretation Centers (Rémi et al., 2010). According to Ricoeur's metaphor and narrative theories (1988) understanding is made possible by the dialectics of belonging, while experience happens through temporary dynamics. This was also evident in The National Museum of Roman Arts in Merida where the Spanish architect Rafael Moneo maintained a sensitive relationship to the context and the collection by elevating the museum structure over the vestiges and using a similar building materials and construction techniques used in ancient Roman period (Langdon, 2015).

This means that the Historic Site Interpretation Center architectural design may endorse different communication levels and stimulate visitors' feelings and cultural belonging. In fact, the meaning-making process is not limited to the physical qualities of 'in situ' and 'in context' settings, but also tackles the specificities of the place, the relationship to the surrounding, and the objects in display, which form another layer of the meaning- making process at historic site interpretation centers.

5.5.1.2.2 Objects in Display Contribution to Meaning-Making

Objects in display hold significant cultural and historic value, as they contain information about their materiality and usability. In Historic Site Interpretation Centers original artifacts and historic documents were used to communicate the value of the historic site to people, as found in Qal'at Al Bahrain and Al Khamis Mosque interpretive centers. In line with that, Filippopoulou (2017) asserted that the interpretation and presentation strategies in The New Acropolis Museum were

mainly used to identify the artifacts instead of explaining them, which raised the issue of de-contextualization and detachment from the original meaning. Similarly, the participants in this study were not very satisfied with the presentation techniques at the four cases as reported in the online survey. This finding suggests that there is a gap between the museum mission and visitors' expectations that need to be bridged using other presentation techniques. Moreover, in the case of Athens and Merida, visitors were able to enjoy seeing the sculptures from all angles to fully appreciate the qualitative differences and fine art skills that went into their creation (Arvanitakis, 2010). These are recognized as an indirect learning opportunity that visitors can learn when visiting Historic Site Interpretation Centers. It could also represent a free choice learning, as visitors may perceive the same object differently based on motivations and cultural backgrounds (Falk, 2016; McComas, 2014).

On the other hand, this study showed that two Historic Site Interpretation Centers depended merely on objects that were not originated from their related historic site, which were identified by as 'heritage' by Kirshenblatt-Gimblett (1998) as these objects are created through detachment of fragments, a mere act of display. This phenomenon seems to create another gap between the objects in display and the place itself, and more importantly, questions the presence of the newly added structure within or nearby an authentic place, if it is not directly interpreting the same place, as seen in Shaikh Salman bin Ahmed Al Fateh Fort. In fact, this situation conflicts with Heidegger's (1995) argument about the importance of the relationship between the 'object' and 'whole' as components of meaning-making process since the relationship between the interpretive contents and the historic site did not match.

The findings showed that the Historic Site Interpretation Centers architectural design had no clear input in the interpretation, except in one case, Qal'at Al Bahrain.

Therefore, claim 1 appears to reinforce Tafuri's (1999) theory that architecture should be a product of culture instead of an abstract architectural form intensified by technology and new building materials. In other words, the architecture of Historic Site Interpretation Centers should be a product that raises interpretation in its own, as it is the first step of any visitor's experience. Following that, claim 2 seems to strengthen Greenhill (1994) and Falk (2016) argument that visitors often shape their experience according to socio-cultural and personal contexts. Therefore, a critical reconsideration of the place, people and culture is essential in the context of meaning-making process in a setting that involves a dual mode of interpretation, 'in situ' and 'in context' to overcome the recurrent issue of de-contextualization.

5.5.1.3 Claim 3: The Critical Reconsideration of Relationship between Place, People, and Culture in the Meaning-Making Process is Essential

Reconsideration of the relationship between place, people and culture emerges as important, as they are the main domains that form the drivers and barriers to the meaning-making process, as demonstrated in this study and in the specialized literature. Moreover, from a Heideggerian hermeneutic phenomenological approach (1995), it can be used as an approach to understand how meanings in Historic Site Interpretation Centers is context-dependent, and is derived by its own visitors' needs, cultural backgrounds and collective memory.

The four-case studies analysis and the reviewed case studies revealed that the relationship between the historic site and the Historic Site Interpretation Centers involves an outdoor experience, to provide the visitor with a glimpse of how the place was experienced in the past. This experience might be an issue with the extreme hot and humid climatic conditions in Bahrain, which could limit the experience output, and be a burden to many visitors, as reported by the online survey

participants. In fact, the climatic condition is an issue in many regions including the reference case studies in Athens and Merida. To overcome this issue, The New Acropolis Museum and The National Museum of Roman Arts have integrated large glazed surfaces to ensure the entry of light within the artificially controlled environment, aiming to maintain the natural shade and shadows on the objects to exhibit their artistic qualities differently throughout the day (Arvanitakis, 2010; Moneo, 2019). This quality was not very visible in the cases covered in this study, as the interpretive centers, acted as a typical museum for preservation, exhibition, and educational purposes, but located nearby their related historic sites. On the other hand, The New Acropolis Museum and The National Museum of Roman Arts illustrated two critical relationships to context and interpretation approaches. The first showed a mere focus on the artifact preservation and display, while maintaining visual and physical accessibility to historic site, whereas the second museum, proposed a balanced relationship between the artifacts preservation and display, and conserved a relationship to the historic site. Therefore, a critical consideration to the current mission of preservation, exhibition, and education, as well as the creation of experience and meaning-making through a better sensitivity to the context is necessary.

From this point, this study suggests that the Historic Site Interpretation Centers should consider Frampton (1998) critical regionalism perspective that recalls Ricœur (1976, p. 277) paradox of "how to become modern and to return to sources; how to revive an old, dormant civilization and take part in universal civilization". According to Frampton's basic principles, a building should adopt modern architectural qualities with a mere sensitivity to the geographical location qualities, including climate, light, and culture on tectonic form rather than on scenography,

while aligning it to its contemporary critical readings in the light of new economic, environmental, political concerns and design challenges (Patteeuw and Szacka, 2019). This research aims to remain close to the essence of critical regionalism, which is to effectively understand the importance of a context while designing appropriate structures easily interpreted by visitors, and capable to generate coherent meaning-making within a specific setting.

By considering the essence of critical regionalism design perspective, the Historic Site Interpretation Centers are anticipated to have an architectural composition that has a better fit to the context, better acceptance and familiarity with the local population, and better respondent to the climatic condition. Consequently, it may interpret the qualities of the place, people, culture, and objects in display as the whole composition will be part of the context and not an odd abstractive building that lacks the specificities and the identity of a place. To this end, the Historic Site Interpretation Centers seems to be a type of museum that deserves to be a unique museum typology.

5.5.2 Inquiry 2: Historic Site Interpretation Center: A Unique Museum Typology?

The relationships between ‘in situ’ and ‘in context’ settings, and the meaning-making process, as well as the problem of presenting objects in isolation from their original contextual setting has been widely questioned by many scholars (Androniki and Evgenia, 2013; Biln and El Amrousi, 2014; Carvalho et al., 2013; Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, 1991; Mehari et al., 2014; Mgonezulu, 2004). In the last two decades, Historic Site Interpretation Centers were developed as a tool for history conservation purposes, dual interpretation and informal learning settings, aiming to enhance the visitors’ exploration and interaction with heritage (Baeyens et al., 2005; Brody,

2014; Continenza et al., 2017; Ripp, 2016). Further, Historic Site Interpretation Centers became an overlapping term for outdoor museums such as open-air museums, museums of living history, interpretive centers, and visitor centers that underlines the specificity and practice of this museum typology, with an emphasis on the relationships between the site and the museum (Frankenberg, 2014).

Based on this study findings and the existing literature, the Historic Site Interpretation Centers revealed that it has a unique set of physical, visual and emotional relationships to the context, and a unique relationship between the context and the content, as well as a dual mode of interpretation known as ‘in situ’ or ‘in context’. Taken together, the findings of this study recommend that Historic Site Interpretation Center should be classified as unique museum typology. Therefore, a new classification of museums in relation to their context and dual interpretation strategies is essential to elude the overlapping terminologies used to describe this museum typology.

The need for a new museum classification, as hypothesized in Chapter 2, is proposed to include three different typologies. The first type is site-independent museums (i.e. classical museum, private collections, and archives), which depends on ‘in context’ mode of interpretation. Such museums are object-oriented and considered to have a “loose fit” and obstruction relation to context, with minimal physical and experiential engagement. The second type is site-connected museums (i.e. site museums, visitor centers, house museums, and heritage villages), that depends on an ‘in situ’ mode of interpretation. These types of museums are considered to have a “tight fit”, as seen in the house museum where the whole site is essentially cleared and occupied by the museum, which therefore loose the sense of specific meaning. Finally, the third type is suggested to be a “Historic Site

Interpretation Center” involving a dual mode of interpretation ‘in situ’ and ‘in context’, which is hypothesized to act as a mediator or a bridging instrument between the historic site and the visitors, using a combination of ‘in context’ and ‘in situ’ modes of interpretation at shared location (Figure 2.1).

5.6 Summary

This chapter presents the findings of the thematic analysis from the open-ended interviews conducted with 22 stakeholders (i.e. 11 service providers and 11 visitors). Next, it discussed findings that emerged from a combination of two research approaches: first, the case study analysis, and second the multiple ethnographic tools (i.e. archival documents, observation, survey and semi-structures open-ended interviews), that were presented and explained in this Chapter (Section 5.4) and in Chapter 4 (Section 4.2 and 4.3) as presented in Figure 5.14.

The thematic analysis facilitated the identification of four organizing themes comprising of 11 sub-themes and 29 codes. The four organizing themes focused first, on the role of physical context in shaping the visitors’ experience and meaning-making in terms of contextual relationships between ‘in situ’ and ‘in context’ settings, the Historic Site Interpretation Centers architectural design, spatial layout and presentation techniques. Second, it highlighted the dynamics of visitors’ experience and meaning-making process at the considered case studies, with a specific focus on their visitation preferences, goals, and expectations, along with the challenges they faced when visiting ‘in situ’ and ‘in context’ settings. Then, the aspects of meaning-making process were determined by the specificities of the given physical context and full body experience opportunities, and finally the stakeholders’ suggestions and recommendations towards a better visitors’ experience were

gathered to compute their interests and expectations in future similar developments (Figure 5.15).

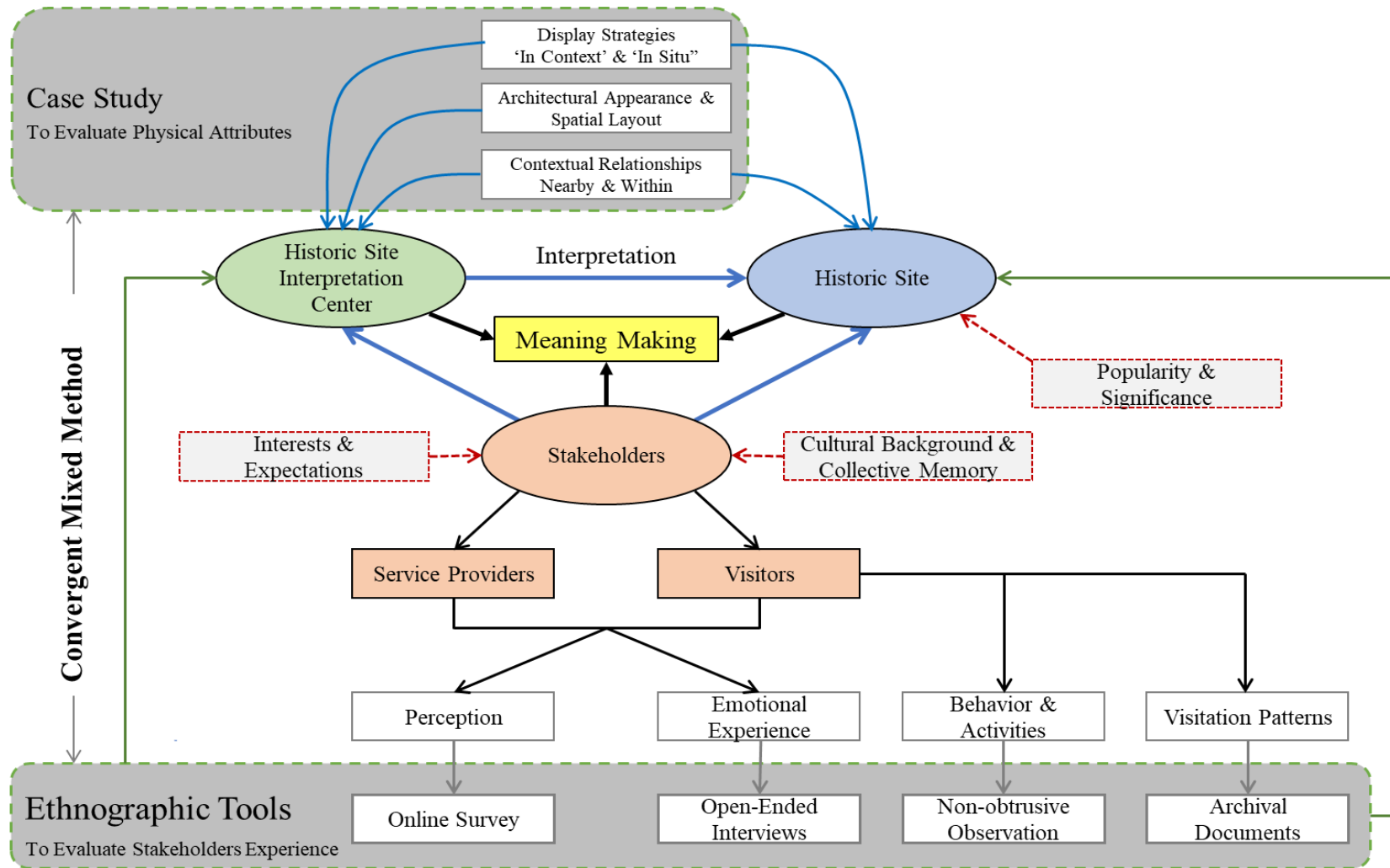


Figure 5.15: Conceptual framework of the convergent mixed method

The discussion focused on two inquiries. The first inquiry revealed that a Historic Site Interpretation Center can be an interpretive tool by considering the contribution of a setting's physical attributes to meaning-making, accounting the semiological meanings mediated from a place to people, and finally considering the essence of critical regionalism, with an attempt to create a balanced relationship between place, people, and cultural specificities, as these had a significant influences on the visitors' perception and emotional experience. The second inquiry suggested that Historic Site Interpretation Center is a unique museum typology based on its particular relationship to the context, the relationship between the context and the content, as well as adopting a dual mode of interpretation known as 'in situ' or 'in context'.

The next chapter presents the general conclusion and synthesis of this thesis, with a presentation of the present study limitations and potential venues for further research directions.

Chapter 6: Conclusion

6.1 Introduction

The identification of the role and contribution of Historic Site Interpretation Centers in the construction of meaning and their capacity to serve as interpretive tools and meaning generators from historic sites to visitors form the core of this study. In this regard, the physical attributes and applied display strategies in conveying meaning from historic site to visitors were explored, alongside the resulting stakeholders' (i.e. service providers and visitors) sensitivity to the place and its derived emotional experience.

The findings of this exploratory ethnographic research indicate a range of different contextual relationships between the Historic Site Interpretation Centers and their historic sites, physical attributes and display strategies used to optimize the meaning-making process. Visitors' interests, cultural background, collective memory were recognized as influential factors in the process of meaning-making.

In this concluding chapter, a synthesis of the main findings is presented as a contribution to the related museology discourse as well as potentially to afford designers and curators with insights on the optimum architectural and curatorship practices, examined and proven in this research, to provide the visitors with a meaningful visiting experience at Historic Site Interpretation Centers. These outcomes are by no means exhaustive, as this study is only another step into the quest for the role and contribution of site museums and more comprehensive research is needed to further evaluate all the influential parameters before any generalization could be firmly established.

Before summing up the main findings of this exploratory study, it is relevant to consider first, the limitations of the study and therefore, the constraints imposed upon the results.

6.2 Limitations of the Research

The results presented here are contingent on the study characteristics and research methods considered. These may have influenced the outcomes, and as such, it should be stressed that until such characteristics are further studied, the findings should be taken with the following considerations in mind:

First, the study findings remain contingent upon the considered four case studies corpus, as their evaluation was limited to their contextual relationship to the historic sites, physical attributes, and display strategies. Yet, including other case studies in Bahrain or elsewhere could involve other parameters than those mentioned above, and these may affect the overall research outcomes.

Second, the visitation records were based on 1-year timeframe visitors' data (2018). A longer period may exhibit different patterns. The visitors' records can be no more valid than the assumptions that the visitation pattern in the three cases (Shaikh Salman bin Ahmed Al Fateh fort, Bu Maher Fort, and Al Khamis Mosque) will remain unchanged, if compared to Qal'at Al Bahrain's example which has records since 2010 yielded a constant visitation pattern over the years.

Third, the participants in the online survey, semi-structured open-ended interviews, and the observation field visits may not be as inclusive and representative as desired; hence generalization cannot be made with firm certainty considering this limitation. The online survey participants were derived from the author's personal network, and the survey was made available for a short period of time. In addition, the interviews were limited to stakeholders who were available at time of field visits

and to those who accepted to participate in this study, among them service providers and visitors. For example, the service providers were limited to 2 decision makers, 1 supervisor, 3 visitor guides, 3 receptionists, 1 architect and 1 curator that have been interviewed, yet including a larger number of stakeholders, could may have enriched the outcomes of this research. The interviewed visitors were 9 nationals and 2 expatriates. The visitors' feedback may not have accurately represented the expatriates' group in particular, while in fact they represent around 45% of the entire Bahraini population (CIO, 2017). Finally, the number of visitors recorded during observation field visits was restricted by the number and duration of visits conducted, hence this may not represent the full range of visitors' availability, activities, and engagement in the given setting.

Finally, this research relied on a multiple case study research and multi-ethnographic method approaches as presented in Chapters 4 and 5 and as such, may not fully cover the physical attributes of the Historic Site Interpretation Centers, and the stakeholders' resulting perception and emotional experience of the same settings. To improve upon this approach, the data may well be enriched by including other data sources that were not considered in this research. When included in future research venues, the limitations highlighted above will reinforce the present research methodology by proposing a more comprehensive analysis of all potential aspects surrounding the theme of this study.

6.3 Main Findings of the Study

In the process of assessing the meaning-making from Historic Site Interpretation Centers to visitors and exploring the resulting stakeholders' perception and emotional experience of the considered case studies, several factors related to the

physical attributes of the historic site and the Historic Site Interpretation Centers, as well as the visitors characteristics, appeared to have a predominant effect on the process of meaning-making and the visiting experience. The factors related to the physical attributes are best described as, the contextual relationship between the historic site and the Historic Site Interpretation Centers and their accessibility, the mobility and visual connection, the architectural design of these centers inclusive of the exhibition spatial layout and the interpretive strategies, but yet the significance and popularity of historic sites remain the main attraction within a shared contextual setting. While the factors related to the visitors are mainly grounded in their interests, cultural background, and collective memory, other external factors related to climate may also affect the meaning-making process and the visiting experience. The finding suggested that the physical attributes and visitors' characteristics have an influential relationship upon the process of understanding the emerging meanings and emotional experience when visiting historical settings that involves dual modes of interpretation labeled as 'in situ' and 'in context'. To this end, the issue of decontextualization appeared to be the main challenge to the meaning making process and the visiting experience in the presence of these factors.

6.3.1 The Contextual Relationship and Modes of Accessibility: A New Learning Experience

Different contextual relationships between 'in situ' and 'in context' settings were analyzed at the four considered case studies. These relationships are described as nearby, within, and with a restricted accessibility through sea shuttle (Chapter 3, Figure 3.6). The process of meaning-making and visiting experience has been impacted differently by these relationships as stated by the stakeholders interviewed in this study. For instance, while the nearby relationship between the historic site and

the site museum offered Qal'at Al Bahrain visitors a free choice learning experience to start with either setting, it also highlighted the function of historic site interpretation center as an explanatory setting dedicated to the nearby historic site, and sheds light on the historic site as the main topic of interpretation. The “within” site relationship appeared to be an obstruction within the Shaikh Salman bin Ahmed Al Fateh fort as seen by some visitors and had no visitors during the field observational visits. Last but not least, the unique mode of accessibility using sea shuttles to Bu Maher Fort appeared to extend the visiting experience beyond its contextual setting, and emerged as a new visiting experience that offers learning, entertainment and panoramic sightseeing at the same time.

6.3.2 The Mobility and Visual Connection within the Context: A Driver to Visitation

The four historic site interpretation centers were designed to provide mobility and visual connection to their related historic site. Qal'at Al Bahrain's visitors were observed walking from the site museum car park to the historic site. The visitors at Shaikh Salman bin Ahmed Al Fateh Fort were seen passing through the site and going to the traditional restaurant, while the visitors at Bu Maher Fort were observed heading to the visitor center first, and then to the historic site for those visitors who appeared to have more time to spend on site, considering the restricted access and allowable visit duration (approximately 15 minutes), however, it enjoyed more visitation due to its location as the midpoint between the boat trip and the historic site. The flexible mobility patterns at a shared contextual setting support the idea of free choice learning and experience. Yet, such attractive experience could be hindered by the non-provision of shaded pathways since all historic sites are outdoors.

6.3.3 The Historic Site Interpretation Center Architectural Design: A Storyteller and a Meaning Generator

The harmony between the architectural appearance and the immediate surroundings, through the use of locally inspired architectural elements such as the courtyard and the local building materials as seen in Qal'at Al Bahrain site museum and Bu Maher visitor center (Chapter 4, Figure 4.16 and 4.41), as well as the spatial layout found in Qal'at Al Bahrain site museum (Chapter 4, Figure 4.19) has impacted the process of storytelling through displays. By sheer contrast, the other three cases implemented a pure object-oriented approach, a typical act by classical museums (i.e. site independent). These are recognized to be the main factors that affect the Historic Site Interpretation Centers' contribution to convey meanings from historic sites to visitors. Nevertheless, historic sites remain the main attraction within a shared contextual setting.

6.3.4 The Historic Site is the Main Attraction within a Shared Contextual Setting

The study demonstrated that historic sites hold a higher attraction power than the Historic Site Interpretation Centers, because 'in situ' settings provide the visitors with an interactive environment and full body experience instead of the static atmosphere offered by the 'in context' settings. In fact, some service providers recognized the site related museums as additional interpretive tools and not substitutes to the historic site as reported in Chapter 5 (Section 5.4.1).

This demonstrates that historic sites are a method of interpretation and not a mere product of display. In this regard, Qal'at Al Bahrain proves to be a rich interpretive site, as it testifies of the presence of multi-ethnic human layers through a variety of architectural styles and construction techniques all grouped in one single location (Chapter 4, Figure 4.23). Accordingly, and compared to the other three sites

under exploration, the same site remains the most attractive in terms of significance as a UNESCO World heritage site since 2005, and on being at the top of the list of touristic sights and historic landmarks in Bahrain. In addition to such distinction, it met the visitors' motivations, interests, and expectations through the provision of a rich interactive presentation technique in both 'in situ' and 'in context' settings that combines old and new museology approaches (i.e. object-oriented and visitor-oriented).

6.3.5 Visitors' Interests, Cultural Backgrounds and Collective Memory: Drivers and Barriers

The thematic analysis of the interview transcripts indicated that the visitors' interaction and meaning-making processes are shaped by the visitors' background and interests which are grounded in their motivations to visit and expectations from the visit, as well as on the effectiveness of the presentation techniques used to mediate meaning from the physical context to the visitors either through self or guided experiences (Chapter 5, Section 5.4.2, b). In fact, some service providers acknowledged that visiting museums is not part of the regional daily life and this cultural issue may critically affect the visitation levels, thus limiting contribution to meaning making process (Chapter 5, Section 5.4.2, a). In addition, the online survey and field observations findings established the existence of several external drivers that affect the visitation patterns in the Historic Site Interpretation Centers. Some of these factors are socio-cultural, such as conducting a solo or a group visit (Chapter 4, Section 4.3.3), while others are recognized as hindrances to the visit such as climate, accessibility, and entry fee (Chapter 4, Figure 4.55).

6.3.6 Decontextualization: Core Problem of Dual Modes of Interpretation

The issue of decontextualization between the objects in display and the historic site was recognized as a drawback to the meaning-making goal (Chapter 5, 5.4.3, a), yet the results showed that meaning-making can happen beyond the exhibition halls and the objects in display. In fact, it was acknowledged by the service providers that using the site for any purpose that meets the visitors' interests (i.e. physical exercise) is in itself a success, because it is anticipated that residents will have a stronger physical and emotional relationship to the past, and it will continue to be part of their collective memory (Chapter 5, 5.4.2, a). In contrast, the other case studies did not enjoy a similar attention as Qal'at Al Bahrain due to their popularity, size, accessibility and the type of events they offer that acted as a barrier to the visitors' experience and the process of meaning-making.

6.4 Thesis Contribution

This thesis may claim two main contributions. First, it is anticipated to produce a general conceptualization of the Historic Site Interpretation Centers' contribution to the meaning-making process from the historic sites to the visitors. Its second contribution is to the existing body of knowledge through the proposition of a new museum classification based on contextual relationships and modes of interpretation. These two contributions are built on multiple case study analysis, the multi-ethnographic qualitative and quantitative analysis of the visitors' perceptual and emotional experience of Historic Site Interpretation Centers.

6.4.1 A General Conceptualization of the Historic Site Interpretation Centers Contribution to the Meaning-Making Process

The dynamics of the meaning-making process stress the importance of creating a meaningful 'fit' between the historic sites, Historic Site Interpretation

Centers, and the visitors. Therefore, this study indorses that Historic Site Interpretation Centers can convey and mediate meanings from historic sites to visitors when considering the essence of the critical regionalism discourse , including its current debates (Patteeuw and Szacka, 2019), that still emphasizes the effective understanding and the importance of a context while designing appropriate structures with more sensitivity to the geographical location assets, including climate, light, and culture on tectonic architecture rather than on scenography. Thus, easily interpreted by visitors, and capable to generate coherent meaning-making within a specific setting. This approach is anticipated to prove itself useful as it expands the understanding of how a Historic Site Interpretation Center can have a better fit to its context, and consequently, interprets the qualities of the place when they relate positively to people and culture. These findings contribute in several ways to the understanding of Historic Site Interpretation Centers' architectural appearance and spatial layouts' impacts on the process of meaning-making from the historic site to the visitors. In addition, they may provide some design and curatorship directions for architects and museography practitioners in Bahrain and abroad.

6.4.2 A Proposition of a New Museum Classification Based on Contextual Relationships and Modes of Interpretation

This study indicated that the Historic Site Interpretation Centers' relationship to the context and the involvement of the dual modes of interpretation, 'in situ' and 'in context', contribute significantly in providing an approach to understanding the meaning-making process in such settings, and thus deservedly calls for its recognition as a unique museum typology. Accordingly, this study complements the existing knowledge of museum typologies presented in Chapter 2 (2.2.3) by suggesting a new museum classification based on contextual relationships and

implemented modes of interpretations. The classification includes three different typologies labeled as (1) site independent “loose fit” involving ‘in context’ mode of interpretation, (2) site connected “tight fit” involving ‘in situ’ mode of interpretation, and (3) Historic Site Interpretation Centers involving a dual mode of interpretation ‘in context’ and ‘in situ’ at a shared location (Chapter 2, Figure 2.1).

This study appears to be the first attempt to classify museums based on their contextual relationships and modes of interpretations as ‘in situ’ or ‘in context’ or both at a shared location. In addition, this study contributes to the existing discourse held by Kirshenblatt-Gimblett (1991), Androniki and Evgenia (2013), as well as Biln and El Amrousi (2014) about the relationships between ‘in situ’ and ‘in context’ settings, and the meaning-making process, as well as the problem of presenting objects in isolation from their original contextual setting, setting it as post critical regionalism discourse that not only overcomes the physical detachment of the building from the context, but to also to obtain a better relationship between the objects in display and the context in which they occur.

Finally, this study provided a deeper insight into the specificities of Historic Site Interpretation Centers as a unique museum typology.

6.5 Indications for Further Research Works

This study does not provide a single solution to evaluate the site interpretive centers contribution to the process of meaning-making, but it indicates the important physical features and opens new ways for exploration. A number of closely related aspects need to be further investigated to refine and extend the applicability of the present study. They are following:

1. A broader range of case studies

2. A comprehensive and refined investigation of visitors' experience during the visit
3. Visitors' feedback after the visit
4. The meaning-making process in context

For each, an attempt is made to highlight specific points of further research, while discussing their relevance to the subject and suggesting new ways to approach them.

6.5.1 Broader Range of Case Studies

Evaluating other case studies with different architectural configurations and relationships between the interpretive center and the related historic site is important in order to uncover new facets that may influence the meaning-making process and the overall visiting experience. These may include the existing house museums such as the ones in the City of Muharraq and Manama. In addition, and still within the context of Bahrain, the recent Pearling Path Visitor Center (2018) designed by the local architectural firm Emaar Architects, ought to be studied for its use of a bold, modern vocabulary of architectural elements such as a high concrete open canopy covering the entire center, accompanied by a judicious location within the historic district of Muharraq City. Such powerful physical presence and contextual relationship to the surroundings are anticipated to reveal different approaches to the meaning-making process and other forms of visiting experience.

6.5.2 The Visitors' Experience during the Visit

Exploring the visitors' experience during the visit is important to capture detailed observations about their movement patterns, points of attraction, and total time spent in 'in situ' or 'in context' settings. Considering the limited number of observation sessions conducted in this research, accurate and time efficient visitor

tracking technologies such as LIDARs can be used to evaluate and analyze the visitors' activities, behaviors, and experience in a short timeframe. Such apparatus is also thought to determine the main attraction points and provide an accurate calculation of the overall time spent in the interpretive center. This approach can enrich the collected data and provide a better insight on visitors' interest, behavior and needs.

6.5.3 The Visitors' Feedback after the Visit

This study would be reinforced when coupled with a much broader range of ethnographic data collection tools that could shed more light on the eminence of Bahrain's Historic Site Interpretation Centers' and their ability to provide a meaningful and memorable visiting experience. Geo-tagged photos are often shared by visitors on social media (i.e. Instagram). An analysis of these photos can reveal important information about the visit, location, time, weather and other visitors' tags, that may help service providers to obtain additional information about visitors' interests, motivations, and expectations as well as their profiles.

Additionally, the visitors' comment books and the travelers' comments on travel websites may present a rich source of feedback and may well reflect the visitors' overall and detailed experience. In this regard, a recent study confirmed that the visitors' comment books in Bahrain contain a large amount of information about the visitors' reflections on the experience (Al-Saffar and Tabet Aoul, 2019). These reflections can be thematically used to identify how visitors relate and interpret the exhibits in display, as well as the positive and negative aspects of the overall experience. This is anticipated to strengthen and validate this study's findings.

Similarly, the travel webpages such as TripAdvisor hold broader information about global travelers who visited Bahrain cultural destinations; hence their visiting

reflections are important for Bahrain's decision-makers to maintain a continuous tourism industry. Analysis of such data may validate and/or add to the existing information on visitors, visitation patterns, and feedbacks that may explain why some interpretive centers in Bahrain suffer from lack of visitation compared to others.

6.5.4 Historic Site Interpretation Centers, and the Meaning-Making Process in Context

The relationship between the place, people, and culture is an essential element in the Historic Site Interpretation Centers. Hence, grounded in the essence of Critical Regionalism attributes, it was considered as an architectural design that aims to counterbalance the place-lessness and the lack of identity. As an expansion to this, it would be insightful to carry a cross-cultural comparative study, to explore perceptions of visitors from the different nationalities and cultural backgrounds that make up most of the Bahraini population, in order to identify the differences between them and acknowledge the impacts of their culture and collective memory on the meaning-making process. For further knowledge development, these new aspects can be researched in the same four case studies examined in this study.

Moreover, other potential case studies could be investigated in Bahrain, this region or beyond to evaluate if they adhere to the ideas of the past and current discourse on critical regionalism with an attempt to identify the similarities and differences of approaches and factors that may impact the process of meaning making.

6.6 Closure Statement

It is hoped that this research contributes to the general discourse of Historic Site Interpretation Centers' role and contribution to meaning-making and meaning conveyance from historic site to visitors. Specifically, it is believed that the current

research gives a clearer insight on visitors' interests, motivations, and hindrances to plan a visit to a historic site or Historic Site Interpretation Centers, as well as their role in creating meaning based on their interests, cultural backgrounds and collective memory.

With the large number of museum projects under design or construction, this study outcomes are anticipated to provide relevant authority agencies such as, Bahrain Authority for Culture and Antiquities, and to practitioners involved in the field of museology and museum architecture a consistent and sustained body of knowledge to develop effective and attractive Historic Site Interpretation Centers that support a meaningful learning and entertaining visiting experience in Bahrain and beyond.

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List of Publications

Al-Saffar, M., & Tabet, A. (2019). Visitors Voice in Historic Sites Interpretation Centers in Bahrain. IOP Conference Series: Materials Science and Engineering, 603, 052006. <https://doi.org/10.1088/1757-899x/603/5/052006>

Appendix A

Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee -Approval-

Proposal number: ERS_2018_5728

Title of Project: Interpretation Centres for historic sites in Bahrain

PI: May Al-Saffar

Co-PI: _____

The above proposal has been reviewed by:

- one member of the Social Sciences REC
 two members of the *Social Sciences REC*

And the decision is:

- Favourable
 Favourable with Additional Conditions
 Provisional Opinion
 Unfavourable Opinion
 No Opinion (Proportionate Review* only)

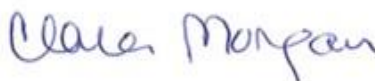
Reason

After evaluating this proposal, we see no major ethical concerns. Therefore, the proposal is approved for one year.

Please ensure that you indicate to research participants that your study has received ethical approval from UAE University by referring to the proposal number.

Name Clara Morgan

(Chair or designee):



March 31, 2018

Signature

Date

Appendix B

Online Survey Questions – Prepared by **Google** Forms -English-

Dear respondents,

I am conducting a research about the meaning-making process from historic sites to visitors through Historic Site Interpretation Centres (i.e. site-related museums) in Bahrain.

In connection to this, I would like you to take part in this survey that aims to measure Bahrain's residents' visitation patterns and perceptions of historic sites and Historic Site Interpretation Centres (i.e. site related museums) contribution to the process of meaning-making. Your feedback is highly appreciated.

This survey should only take 5-7 minutes to complete. Thank you for agreeing to take part in it.

* Required

1. Gender*

- Male
 Female

2. Age*

- 20-29
 30-30
 40-49
 50+

3. Do you think that museums and Historic Site Interpretation Centres are still important compared to virtual museums? *

- Yes
 No
 Maybe

4. Which historic site or Historic Site Interpretation Centre have you visited or intend to visit? (Select all answers that apply) *

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Qal'at Al Bahrain | <input type="checkbox"/> Qal'at Al Bahrain site museum |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Sh. Salman bin Ahmed Al Fateh Fort | <input type="checkbox"/> Sh. Salman bin Ahmed Al Fateh Fort permanent exhibition |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Bu Maher Fort | <input type="checkbox"/> Bu Maher Fort visitor center |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Al Khamis Mosque | <input type="checkbox"/> Al Khamis Mosque visitor centre |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Pearl path visitor center | <input type="checkbox"/> Muharraq old houses district |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Al Jasra House | <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ |

5. Which type of historic interpretation setting you are most interested in? (Select all answers that apply) *

- | | |
|--|---------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Historic site | <input type="checkbox"/> House Museum |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Historical site museum | <input type="checkbox"/> None |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Historic site and its site museum | |

6. Which presentation techniques do you prefer in historic sites? Example: Qal'at Al Bahrain historic site (Select all answers that apply) *

- Go to the site museum exhibition halls
- Grab the audio guide from the site museum and walk around the site
- Join a guided tour
- Just walk around
- Check the virtual visit online
- None

7. Which presentation techniques do you prefer in *Historic Site Interpretation Centres*? (Example: Qal'at Al Bahrain site museum (Select all answers that apply) *

- Join a guided tour
- Wall panels and text information
- Informative interactive screens
- Short informative videos
- Artifacts and text captions
- None

8. When visiting historic sites. What activities have you participated in? (Select all answers that apply) *

- Visit the museum exhibition halls
- Sightseeing
- Walking for pleasure
- Taking photos
- Go to the museum café
- Go to events and workshops
- None

9. How satisfied are you with the presentation techniques used in the four listed *Historic Site Interpretation Centres*? *

	1	2	3	4	5
Qal'at Al Bahrain	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Shaikh Salman bin Ahmed Al Fateh Fort	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Bu Maher Fort	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Al Khamis Mosque	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

1: Very Unsatisfied, 2: Unsatisfied, 3: Neutral, 4: Satisfied, and 5: Very satisfied

10. What is your overall opinion of the following statements? *

	A	D	M
The site museum is perfect	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The historical site is perfect	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Demolish the historical site and move all the artifacts to the adjacent museum	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Cancel the site museum and leave all the artifacts in the site	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Create a living museum within the historical site	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Keep the site museum and change the current interpretive strategies	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

A: Agree, D: Disagree, and M: Maybe

11. When planning a visit to historic sites or *Historic Site Interpretation Centres*. What are your main concerns? (Select all answers that apply) *

- Entry fee
- Weather condition
- Food/drink facilities
- Leisure activities
- Special need services
- Toilets

12. What do you suggest improving the visitors' experience in historic sites and *Historic Site Interpretation Centres*? *

13. Share your experience in any historical site/ site museum that you liked in Bahrain or the World. Let us learn from the others and make our museums' better places.

Thank you for your participation

Forms Google نموذج استبيان – منشى علي

-اللغة العربية-

السلام عليكم ورحمة الله وبركاته
عزيمي المشارك/ أنا طالبه في برنامج دكتوراه الهندسه المعماريه (تاريخ و نظريات العماره). اطلب من جميع البحرينيين و المقيمين مساعدي بتعبئة هذا الاستبيان و الذي يعتبر جزء هام من دراستي .
عنوان البحث هو "المتاحف المختصة بالمواع التاريخية في البحرين" . و الغرض من هذه الدراسه هو جمع البيانات المختصة بمعرفه شعب البحرين بتاريخها عن طريق المتاحف عموما و متاحف المواقع و مراكز الزوار بشكل خاص و قدرتها على تفسير و شرح المواقع التاريخية المجاورة .

الفئة المستهدفة من هذه الدراسه هم جميع البحرينيين او المقيمين في البحرين من عمر 20 فما فوق .

اجابتك سوف تستغرق 5-7 دقائق

شكرا على مشاركتكم .

* مطلوب

1. الجنس *

نكر

انثى

2. العمر *

20-29

30-30

40-49

50+

3. هل تعتقد أن المتاحف ومراكز الترجمة الفورية للمواقع التاريخية لا تزال مهمة مقارنة بالمتاحف الافتراضية؟*

نعم

لا

غير متأكد

4. اختر المواقع الأثرية او المتاحف المتعلقة بالمواع الأثرية التي قمت بزيارتها او تنوي زيارتها قريباً. (اختر الإجابات التي تنطبق) *

<input type="checkbox"/>	متحف موقع قلعة البحرين	<input type="checkbox"/>	قلعة البحرين
<input type="checkbox"/>	المعرض الدائم ب قلعة الشيخ سلمان بن أحمد الفاتح	<input type="checkbox"/>	قلعة الشيخ سلمان بن أحمد الفاتح (قلعة الرفاع)
<input type="checkbox"/>	مركز زوار قلعة بو ماهر	<input type="checkbox"/>	قلعة بو ماهر
<input type="checkbox"/>	مركز زوار مسجد الخميس	<input type="checkbox"/>	مسجد الخميس التاريخي
<input type="checkbox"/>	مركز زوار مسار اللؤلؤ	<input type="checkbox"/>	بيوت المحرق التاريخيه
<input type="checkbox"/>	بيت الجسرة التاريخي	<input type="checkbox"/>	مواقع أخرى : _____

5. من خلال وجهه نظركم : ما هي خياراتكم المفضله ؟ (أختار الإجابات التي تنطبق) *

<input type="checkbox"/>	البيوت القديمه المحولة الى متاحف	<input type="checkbox"/>	المواقع التاريخيه
<input type="checkbox"/>	لا شيء	<input type="checkbox"/>	المتاحف المتعلقة بالمواع التاريخيه
<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	الموقع التاريخي و المتحف الخاص به

6. بشكل عام: مالذي تفعله لفهم الأطلال و البقايا الموروثة من الموقع التاريخي . على سبيل المثال موقع قلعة البحرين (اختر

الإجابات التي تنطبق) *

- الذهاب الى المتحف المتعلق بالموقع التاريخي
- استخدام اجهزة التعريف السمعية
- الانضمام الى جوله تعريفيه
- المشي داخل الموقع
- غير متحمس للذهاب للموقع الأثري

7. من وجهه نظركم ما هي الوسائط المفضل استخدامها في المتحف للتعرف على الموقع الأثري . على سبيل المثال متحف موقع

قلعة البحرين (اختر الإجابات التي تنطبق) *

- الانضمام الى جوله تعريفيه
- اللوحات التعريفية الحائطية
- شاشات التفاعل المرئي
- مشاهدة فيديو قصير
- المعارضات والنص التعريفي الخاص بها
- ورش عمل و الأنشطة و الفعاليات
- غير متحمس للذهاب لمتحف الموقع الأثري

8. اذا زرت/ تنوي زياره موقع قلعة البحرين او المتحف المجاور لها. ما هي الأنشطة التي التي قمت / سوف تقوم بها (اختر الإجابات التي تنطبق) *

- زيارة صالات العرض غير المتحف
- رؤية الموقع
- المشي و التجول في الموقع وحوله
- اتخاذ بعض الصور التذكارية
- الذهاب الى مقهى المتحف
- حضور الفعاليات و الورش التعليمية التي يقدمها المتحف
- لا شيء

9. ما هو مدى رضائكم عن الوسائط المستخدمة في متاحف المواقع التاريخيه /مراكز الزوار كوسيلة تعريفيه لشرح المواقع التاريخيه المجاور لها (اختر لم تتم الزياره في حال عدم زيارة متحف الموقع/مركز الزوار) *

	1	2	3	4	5
قلعة البحرين	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
قلعة الشيخ سلمان بن أحمد الفاتح (قلعة الرفاع)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
قلعة بو ماهر	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
مسجد الخميس التاريخي	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

1: غير راضي جداً, 2: غير راضي, 3: محايد, 4: راضي و 5: راضي جداً

10. هل انت موافق/غير موافق على العبارات التالية؟*

	A	D	M
متاحف المواقع التاريخيه في حاله جيده	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
المواقع التاريخيه في حاله جيده	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
هدم الموقع التاريخي و نقل جميع مقتنياته الى متحف مختص بالموقع	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
غلق متحف الموقع المختص و ترك جميع المقتنيات التاريخيه في ذات الموقع	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
خلق متحف حي (تمثيلي) داخل الموقع الأثري	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
الاحتفاظ بمتحف الموقع التاريخي المجاور له و تغير وسائط العرض	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

A موافق B غير موافق و M ربما

11. بشكل عام . مالذي يثير اهتمامك و يحدد اذا كنت سوف تزور/ لا تزور متحف الموقع او الموقع التاريخي المجاور (اختر الإجابات التي تنطبق) *

سعر تذاكر الدخول

حالة الطقس

مرافق الطعام و الشراب

أنشطه اللعب و المرح

خدمات ذوي الاحتياجات الخاصه

المرافق الصحيه

12. ما هي اقتراحاتك لتطوير تجربة الزائر في المواقع التاريخيه و المتاحف المتعلقة بها ؟ *

13. شاركنا تجربتك في احد المواقع التاريخيه / المتاحف المتعلقة بها في البحرين او في اي مكان في العالم . أرائكم مهمه جدا في تطوير خدمات المتاحف و جعلها تستقطب زوار أكثر.

شكراً لمشاركتكم

Appendix C

Observational Visits Protocol

The following information is a step by step guide for filling the Observation Form.

Context

Before starting the observation process, the observer is required to note what station/activity is being observed, date the observation is taking place and the time (--- to ---) the observation is taking place.

The observation was taken at:

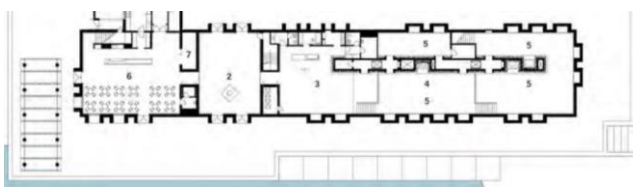
- Historic Site Historic Site Interpretation Center

Station		Date	___ / ___ / ___
Activity		Time	From ___ To ___

Visitors at station

This section requires some basic demographic information. The numbers to be collected are total number of visitors from each category that were observed in any observation station or time (i.e. exhibition hall for 30 minutes).

The observation process will be taken at different stations in the same site museum or at its related archeological site. Therefore, it is preferably to use a key plan (i.e. museum plan) to spot the exact observation station and describe the setting briefly:



Station description (i.e. function, display, size, lighting, color/materials, indoor/outdoor, event ...etc.)

Observer notes

The final section enables the observer to make any notes additional to information gathered in observation data sheet. This will provide an opportunity to have final comment on anything uncommon or not included in the observation that may be important to answer the research question.

Is there an item that is really popular to visitors?	
Where do people stop and read text panels?	
Are interactive displays working and easy to use?	
Are there any blockages with the general flow of visitors?	
Are there any blockages because of audio tours, queueing or people taking photographs?	
In the case of couples and groups – is there some discussion about particular objects, interactives or related topics?	
Are there any visitor comments which should be recorded as feedback to front of house?	
Visitors are mostly attracted to (interpretation strategy)	
Did visitors stop to ask questions about directions or assistance?	
Did visitors ask for extra information about a display?	
Do visitors have their own narrative to share by seeing an object on display? (ask them if possible)	
Do they have any feedback about their visit?	
Other comments	

Documenting

Once the observation has taken place, it is time to enter the data digitally and prepare for analysis.

Appendix D

Semi-Structured Open-Ended Interview Protocol

Introduction

Greetings. My name is May Al-Saffar, a PhD candidate in Architectural Engineering from United Arab Emirates University. I would like to thank you once again for agreeing to participate in the interview aspect of my study.

My PhD research field study is going to take place in Bahrain, and here with the research my dissertation title and the core research question/sub-questions:

Research objectives

This study evaluates the ability of historic site-related museums to convey meanings from historic sites to visitors and explores the stakeholders' (service providers and visitors) perceptual and emotional experience of the same settings.

Purpose

The purpose of this interview is to get your perceptual and emotional experiences in historic sites and historic sites interpretation centers of the same sites. (example: Qal'at Al Bahrain and Qal'at Al Bahrain site museum).

Please feel comfortable with saying what you really think and how you really feel.

This open-ended interview should only take 10-40 minutes to complete depending on the conversation and the follow-up questions.

Tape recorder instructions

If it is okay with you. I will be tape-recording our conversation. The purpose of this is so that I can get all the details but at the same time be able to carry an attentive conversation with you.

I assure you that all your comments will remain confidential and your anonymity will be kept preserved.

Preamble/consent form instructions

Before we get started. Please take few minutes to read this preamble (read and sign this consent form).

*Hand the participant consent form, after returning the consent form (Appendix E), turn tape recorder on.

Interview questions

Question topics	Interview questions
Thoughts Knowledge	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>What are the motivations of the current developments?</u> • Can you tell me about this historic site/historic site related museum? • Do you think this type of museums is important? Why? • What makes this museum different compared to the National Museum of Bahrain? • Do you think that the architecture of site-related museum is important? Why? • Does the museum spatial layout helped you to understand the historic site story? • <u>How did the spatial layout helped you to explain the historic site story?</u> • What are the current display techniques used in this museum?
Behavior Emotions Sensory	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can you describe your experience of this historic site/historic site related museum? What happened? What did you like/dislike of your visit? • What did you do? How do you remember it? Did you enjoy your time? • How do you feel about it? How was your emotional reaction towards the experience? • What do you think about it? How do you conceive its success in conveying the historic site story? • Can you describe the visitors over there? • <u>What did the museum offer to attract visitors?</u> • What are the drivers and challenges to visit museums?
thoughts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What do you suggest enhancing the visitors experience in such museums? • What do you suggest improving the meaning-making process in historic site/historic site related museum?
<p>Notes: All questions were targeted to service providers and visitors, but the underlined questions were specifically for service providers.</p>	

Post interview

Interview code number or name: -----

Location: -----

Date: ----- Length: -----

Age: 15 30 45 60

Educational level: -----(Optional)

Profession: -----

Family status: -----(Optional)

- 1- How did the interviewee appear to me?
- 2- Atmosphere /location
- 3- Motivation to take part on the interview
- 4- Gestures, eye contact, non-verbal, signals
- 5- Interaction during the interview / difficult passages
- 6- Three main points the interviewee made.
 -
 -
 -

Appendix E

Research Consent Form

-English-

Research objective: This study evaluates the ability of historic site-related museums to convey meanings from historic sites to visitors and explores the stakeholders' perceptual and emotional experience of the same settings.

You are deciding whether to participate in a research.

This form indicates your willingness to participate in the study. By signing this form, your signature indicates you have decided to participate.

This Research Consent Form will be retained by the researcher as evidence of your agreement to participate in this research.

Consent form Agreement

Please read and complete the information in this box below:

	I already received a clear explanation about the research, its objectives, benefits, and related ethical risks and ultimate freedom in participation
	I voluntary accept participation in this study without any form of pressure
	I am aware that my participation will be part of May Al-Saffar PhD dissertation and part of any academic publication affiliated to United Arab Emirates University (UAEU)
	I understand that I can terminate my participation any time
	I consent to be voice recorded for transcription purposes
	I consent to be recorded, quoted or identified.
	I consent to be recorded, anonymously

Name

Participants signature

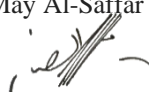
Date

If you have any further questions or concerns about this study, please contact:

Tel:	00973-39966974 (Bahrain) or 00971-553108148 (UAE)
E-mail:	may.alsaffar@gmail.com or 201690176@uaeu.ac.ae

You will be given a Project Information Statement that explains the research in detail, and the statement includes revocation clause for your own usage if you decide to withdraw your consent any time later. The Project Information statement is your record of participation in this research.

Name of researcher
May Al-Saffar



استمارة الموافقة على المشاركة في الدراسة - اللغة العربية

مجال الدراسة: انطباع الناس حول المتاحف التابعة للمواقع الأثرية

أنت تتخذ قرار بالمشاركة من عدمه في هذه الدراسة

هذه الاستمارة تشير الى استعدادك للمشاركة في الدراسة من خلال التوقيع في الأسفل.

موافقة أو توقيع المشارك في البحث:

الرجاء قراءة واستكمال المعلومات الواردة أعلاه ومن ثم الانتقال لمرحلة التوقيع النهائية:

حصلت على شرح مفصل عن الدراسة وأهدافها وإجراءاتها، ومنافعها، والمخاطر المحتملة وعن الحرية الكاملة للمشاركة.
أوافق على التطوع في الدراسة المذكورة أعلاه بدون إجبار أو ضغط من أي طرف آخر
أنا على دراية تامة أن مشاركتي سوف تكون جزء من رسالة الدكتوراه للباحثة مي الصفار و كذلك جزء من أي منشورات أكاديمية باسم جامعة الإمارات العربية المتحدة
أفهم ان بإمكانني التوقف عن المشاركة في أي وقت
أوافق انه سيتم تسجيل صوتي لغرض إعادة كتابة نص المقابلة
أوافق على استخدام معلوماتي بالنص و أيضا الإشارة لي بالاسم
أوافق على الاستعداد للمشاركة و لكن دون ذكر الاسم

موافقة المتطوع:

أنا المتطوع (الاسم) قرأت المعلومات المذكورة أعلاه وفهمتها، وبناء عليه فأني

أوافق على المشاركة في البحث.

التوقيع _____ التاريخ _____

طريقة التواصل مع الباحث

إذا كانت لديك أية أسئلة عن الدراسة يمكنك التواصل مع الباحثة مي الصفار عبر قنوات التواصل التالية:

الهاتف	00973-39966974 (البحرين) أو 00971-553108148 (الإمارات)
البريد الإلكتروني	may.alsaffar@gmail.com أو 201690176@uaeu.ac.ae

سيتم تزويدك ببيان معلومات المشروع التي تشرح الدراسة بالتفصيل، ويتضمن هذا البيان فقرة إلغاء لتتمكن من استخدامها إذا قررت سحب موافقتك في مرحلة لاحقة. بيان معلومات المشروع هو المستند الخاص بك للمشاركة في الدراسة. سيتم الاحتفاظ باستمارة الموافقة على المشاركة في الدراسة من قبل الباحث كدليل على موافقتك في هذه الدراسة.

اسم الباحثة: مي الصفار

