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Entitled

DESIGNING FOR A LOCAL BRAND IMAGE OF ARCHITECTURE TO ACHIEVE CULTURAL SUSTAINABILITY: AL AIN CITY AS A CASE STUDY

By

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Abstract

Cities, like Al Ain, are dynamic entities, echoing the diverse rhythms and values of their inhabitants. Urban evolution showcases a city's brand—its unique identity sculpted by historical, cultural, and local influences. A city's true essence emerges when architects collaborate with residents, blending their desires with the city's architectural legacy. This study aimed to evaluate the effectiveness of a brand-based design strategy, integrating the architecture process with insights from local residents to foster a sense of identity and belonging in the built environment. Grounded in the personal construct theory, the research applied the repertory grid technique, combining both qualitative and quantitative methods. The brand image of Al Ain was initially explored through open-ended interviews with four participants. This lead the design guidelines of a villa, which was subsequently assessed by 84 local participants concerning its suitability within the city. The study identified 88 constructs representing the Al Ain's brand image from the residents viewpoint. Primary findings highlighted the suitability of the repertory grid technique with its analysis tools and the brand-based design strategy in developing designs that align with the city's character and that are meaningful to its locals. The research aimed to bridge the divergence between architectural design and the ever-changing desires of the city's residents, advocating for design decisions that are contemporary and resonate with local sentiments. This research provides a deeper understanding of the repertory grid technique's application within an architectural framework. It emphasizes the method's ability to capture deep meanings and preferences of end-users in relation to architectural designs.

Keywords: Al Ain City, Meaning Making, Modernism, Neo-Traditional, Critical Regionalism, Brand-Based Design Strategy, Repertory Grid Technique, Interpretive Clustering.