

A Study of Non-Physical Interior Elements in Shaping Sense of Place in Airport Executive Lounges: A Case Study of Concordia Lounge, I Gusti Ngurah Rai International Airport

Nisriina Salmannida¹, Prasetyo Wahyudie²

Institut Teknologi Sepuluh Nopember, Indonesia

Email: 6029231005@student.its.ac.id¹, prasetyo_w@its.ac.id²

KEYWORDS

Non-Physical Elements;
Sense of Place; Lounge
Interior; User
Experience; Ngurah Rai
Airport

ABSTRACT

As a premier tourist destination and an important transit hub in Indonesia, Bali requires airport waiting facilities that are not only functional but also comfortable and meaningful. The Concordia Lounge at I Gusti Ngurah Rai International Airport serves as an exclusive space that offers such an experience. This study aims to examine how non-physical interior elements—such as emotional comfort, perception of facilities, and integration of local culture—shape the sense of place and enhance user satisfaction. Using a qualitative approach through observation and semi-structured interviews, this research explores users' perceptions of spatial atmosphere and emotional attachment to the place. The findings indicate that emotional comfort and facility quality are dominant factors influencing user experience. A tranquil atmosphere, privacy, cleanliness, seating comfort, and personalized service contribute to emotional attachment. Elements such as warm lighting, incense scents, and traditional decorations reinforce the local Balinese ambiance. This study highlights the importance of non-physical elements in creating a waiting space that is not only functionally comfortable but also emotionally engaging through user experience design and place-making approaches. These findings provide insights for lounge operators to improve service quality based on user experience. These insights demonstrate the strategic importance of non-physical elements in designing executive lounges that support user experience, enhance spatial identity, and reinforce the overall image of airport services.

Attribution-ShareAlike 4.0 International (CC BY-SA 4.0)



INTRODUCTION

Bali is one of Indonesia's foremost tourist destinations, renowned for its cultural richness, natural beauty, and the hospitality of its people. In addition to being a popular tourist spot, Bali also plays a strategic role as a major transit hub in the air transportation network for both domestic and international travelers. According to data from the Central Statistics Agency of Bali Province (2025), the number of international tourist arrivals in Bali increased from 5.2 million in 2023 to over 6.3 million in 2024, indicating a significant surge in air travel activity in the post-pandemic period.

As the number of flights and passengers increases, the need for comfortable, representative, and high-quality waiting lounge facilities becomes increasingly important.

Exclusive lounge facilities such as the Concordia Lounge at I Gusti Ngurah Rai International Airport address this need. A lounge is not merely a departure waiting area but also functions as a transitional space that offers comfort, calmness, and services that support both the emotional and functional needs of users.

In this context, it is essential to understand how interior elements—especially non-physical elements such as cognitive and perceptual aspects within the sense of place—can holistically shape the user experience. One relevant approach to exploring this issue is through the concept of the sense of place. Sense of place refers to the emotional connection between individuals and a place, formed through interactions among physical, social, and psychological factors (Relph, 1976; Steele, 1981). This element involves perceptions of comfort, spatial identity, memory, and the emotional experiences users associate with the space they inhabit (Pramudito, 2020).

According to Baraban and Durocher (2001), the sense of place emerges through psychological reactions to a space's physical and non-physical elements, ultimately influencing user behavior within that environment. In the context of airport lounge interiors, this includes the room's ambiance, aroma, lighting, privacy, and even the integration of local cultural elements within the interior design. The atmosphere of a space plays a crucial role in evoking certain emotional effects; as explained by Kotler (1973), a well-designed atmosphere can influence consumer behavior, including length of stay and purchasing decisions. (Kotler, 1973).

Customer satisfaction in the context of exclusive airport lounges is heavily determined by the holistic experience perceived by the users. Ryu and Han (2010) argue that perceptions of service quality and spatial comfort play vital roles in driving customer loyalty and strengthening brand image (Ryu & Han, 2010). Conversely, disturbances such as overcrowding, noise, and limited mobility can reduce comfort and negatively affect perceptions of service quality (Guntari, Fatra, & Sugiyanto, 2017).

Given the importance of lounges as representations of airport service quality, this study aims to identify the role of non-physical interior elements—specifically cognitive and perceptual aspects—in shaping the sense of place and influencing user satisfaction at the Concordia Lounge of I Gusti Ngurah Rai International Airport. Non-physical elements such as perceived comfort, emotional atmosphere, spatial attachment, and symbolic value perceived by users are dominant factors in shaping a meaningful experience of the place. Therefore, this study specifically focuses on the non-physical aspects of the sense of place, as these are considered the most influential in creating emotional connections and user satisfaction. This focus is not only relevant for user experience-based design development but also offers strategic insights for airport facility managers to enhance service quality and strengthen the competitiveness of the national tourism sector.

Sense of place is a concept that describes the emotional and psychological attachment people feel toward a specific environment or location. Lynch (1960) stated that this attachment emerges when individuals perceive the uniqueness and distinctive identity of a place (Lynch, 1960). Furthermore, Relph (1976) emphasized that sense of place is a way to understand the relationship between people and their environment, which can help identify a location's character and guide efforts to preserve or restore spaces that have lost their identity (Relph, 1976).

Sense of place can be interpreted as an individual’s experience of a particular environment, capable of eliciting emotional responses such as joy and delight (Steele, 1981). In his book *The Sense of Place* (1981), Fritz Steele stated that sense of place refers to the emotional relationship formed from an individual’s experience of a place, which then creates a lasting impression. Shamai (1991) reinforced this understanding by stating that sense of place encompasses various aspects of how people relate to a place through the interaction between humans and their surroundings (Shamai, 1991).

Sense of place can also be viewed as a general attitude toward a physical environment—a complex psychosocial structure that shapes beliefs, emotions, and behavioral commitments that refer to the self. Thus, the concept adopts the view that evaluative judgments can be expressed through cognitive, affective, and behavioral dimensions (Bagozzi, 1978; Bagozzi et al., 1979; Breckler, 1984; Katz & Stotland, 1959; Ostrom, 1969; Rosenberg & Hovland, 1960) as cited in (Jorgensen & Stedman, 2006). These dimensions include cognitive aspects (e.g., beliefs and perceptions), affective (e.g., emotions and feelings), and conative (e.g., behavioral intentions and commitments). Moreover, researchers such as Hummon (1992), Greider and Garkovich (1994), and Williams and Stewart (1998), as cited in Stedman (2003), emphasized that sense of place is constructed from symbolic meanings attached to a physical environment (Stedman, 2003).

Janice and Tito Gunawan W. (2020) explained that the theory of sense of place is based on interactive and psychological concepts, where the interaction between a setting and its users generates reactions in the form of feelings, perceptions, behaviors, and more—resulting from the reciprocal relationship between setting and user. Rifani (2021), in her journal, asserted that sense of place occurs through the interaction between a physical setting (built form) and user activity. This view is supported by researcher Nabila Anindya et al. (2023), who noted that sense of place can be influenced by both physical and social factors.

Through these various perspectives, the theory seeks to understand how the relationship between people and places is formed, and how these factors influence individuals’ feelings, behaviors, and satisfaction with a particular space. The table below summarizes several scholars’ views on the concept of sense of place and the contributing elements in its formation:

	Setting Fisik	Aktivitas	Meaning (Makna)	Kognitif	Afektif	Konatif	Pengalaman	Identitas Tempat
Lynch (1960)	-	-	-	-	-	-	✓	✓
Relph (1976)	✓	✓	✓	-	-	-	-	-
Bagozzi, 1978	-	✓	-	✓	✓	✓	-	-
Fritz Steele (1981)	✓	✓	-	✓	✓	-	-	✓
Hull dan Vigo (1990)	✓	✓	-	✓	✓	-	-	-
Greider dan Garkovich (1994)	-	✓	-	-	-	-	-	✓
Eisenhauer et al. (2000)	✓	-	-	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Carmona (2003)	✓	✓	✓	-	-	-	-	-
Najafi (2011)	✓	✓	-	-	✓	-	✓	-
Hashemzhad, et al. (2013)	✓	-	-	✓	-	✓	✓	-
Melania Rahadiyanti (2019)	✓	-	-	-	✓	-	-	✓
Christin Dameria, dkk. (2020)	✓	-	✓	-	-	-	-	✓
Janice dan Ir. Tito Gunawan W., MSA. (2020)	✓	-	-	✓	✓	✓	✓	-

Figure 1 Elements of Sense of Place Theory
(Source: Nisriina Salmannida, 2025)

Based on the literature above and perspectives from various researchers, it can be concluded that the concept of sense of place involves both physical and non-physical elements that influence emotional connections and perceptions of a place. Some core elements consistently identified across theories include physical setting, activities, and meaning. These elements create a deeper bond between people and their environment.

Overall, these perspectives indicate that sense of place arises from the interaction between physical elements—such as spatial design—and non-physical elements, including psychological aspects like emotions, experiences, perceptions, and symbolic meaning. However, in certain contexts, particularly transitional spaces focused on user experience such as airport executive lounges, non-physical aspects play a significantly more dominant role. Emotional attachment, comfort, atmosphere, and users' perceptions of service quality become the primary factors in shaping meaningful impressions of such spaces. Therefore, this study specifically focuses on the non-physical aspects of sense of place to explore how psychological and perceptual elements contribute to creating meaningful user experiences in lounge environments.

In his book *The Sense of Place* (1981), Fritz Steele proposed that the sense of place arises from an individual's experience of a particular location. This experience is shaped by two main parameters: cognitive and perceptual factors, and the physical characteristics of the place. Steele explained this systematically through a table showing that sense of place is constructed through a combination of psychological and physical aspects.

According to Steele, the elements that shape sense of place can be classified as follows:

a) Cognitive and Perceptual Factors

An individual's perception of a place is heavily influenced by personal experiences, motivation, cultural background, and interactions with the surrounding environment. These factors are subjective and reflect how a person emotionally and cognitively perceives and evaluates a space.

b) Physical Characteristics of the Place

The physical elements of a space—such as size, scale, shape, texture, color, sound, decoration, and temperature—play a crucial role in differentiating one place from another. These elements provide visual and sensory stimuli that strengthen spatial identity and influence user perception.

In line with Steele's perspective, Hashemnezhad et al. (2013) stated that the sense of place is formed through two main influences: subjective influences (stemming from personal perceptions and experiences) and objective influences (emerging from the physical conditions or real form of the place) (Hashemnezhad, 2013). Objective aspects include elements that can be sensed by human senses and serve as visual symbols, while subjective aspects stem from individuals' emotional experiences with a place.

Furthermore, Wardhani (2019) explained that the formation of sense of place is not only determined by physical elements such as a building's appearance or visual symbols that create spatial character, but also by non-physical elements such as the activities occurring within the space and the users' perceptions and interactions. These activities and perceptions build emotional bonds and a sense of connectedness that enrich a place's meaning (Wardhani, 2019).

Non-physical or internal aspects of individuals also play a vital role in shaping the sense of place within a particular environment. Shirvani (1985) classified the activities occurring in a place into two main categories: core activities and supporting activities. These activities contribute to how individuals understand and relate to a place.

Punter (1991) suggested that sense of place is shaped by three main components: activity, meaning, and the built environment. Meanwhile, Montgomery (1998) added that non-physical elements contributing to the sense of place relate to meaning, also referred to as the image of the place. (Montgomery, 1998).

Carmona (2003) reinforced this idea by stating that sense of place is created from the integration of physical form, human activity, and the image or perception of a place. These three aspects interact to build a meaningful relationship with a place through the connection between visual appearance, human activity, and place identity (Carmona, 2003).

Additionally, Najafi and Shariff (2011) described sense of place as a holistic concept that emphasizes the subjective human experience, including emotions and attachment to a space. This concept is psychological, interactional, and physical in nature. Rifani (2021) added that the physical form of the environment refers to built elements, while activities reflect the behaviors or actions of individuals. Place identity refers to perceptions formed from evaluating a place's unique characteristics. Rinaldi Mirsa (2020) further detailed these elements into specific variables, arguing that an individual's personal identity strongly influences how they ascribe meaning to a place (Rinaldi Mirsa, 2020).

Sociocultural dimensions also affect sense of place, as every environment represents certain values and cultures. Moreover, economic and political factors can influence how people relate to a place, depending on the prevailing conditions and dynamics in a given region.

This study specifically focuses on non-physical interior elements—including emotional comfort, perceptual quality, and symbolic associations—to examine how these shape the *sense of place* and affect user satisfaction at the Concordia Lounge in I Gusti Ngurah Rai International Airport, Bali. The objective of this study is to explore how users' emotional and perceptual responses to the lounge's atmosphere contribute to a meaningful spatial experience. In doing so, it seeks to uncover how psychological attachment, perceived exclusivity, and comfort interplay in a transitional space like an airport lounge.

The benefit of this research lies in offering valuable insights for interior designers, airport managers, and service providers on how to optimize non-physical elements in order to enhance customer satisfaction, emotional engagement, and spatial identity. Furthermore, the findings contribute to a deeper understanding of user-centered design principles and support efforts to improve service competitiveness in Indonesia's tourism and transportation sectors.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study employs a qualitative approach as the primary method for data collection and analysis. Data were gathered through two main techniques: observation and interviews. The type of observation used is non-participant observation, in which researchers observe without directly engaging in lounge users' activities. Meanwhile, semi-structured interviews were conducted to allow for in-depth exploration of user spatial experiences. All interview responses were transcribed verbatim and analyzed using a coding process.

Data analysis was carried out using *open coding* techniques to identify key themes emerging from observations and interviews. This technique aims to uncover patterns and meanings related to user perceptions of the spatial environment.

The study adopts a case study approach, enabling in-depth analysis of phenomena within a specific bounded system: the Concordia Lounge at I Gusti Ngurah Rai International Airport, Bali. This approach was selected to facilitate contextual and detailed exploration of spatial experience within a defined architectural setting.

The research focuses on examining how non-physical elements—such as perceived comfort, emotional atmosphere, spatial attachment, and symbolic value—shape user experience and satisfaction within the executive lounge environment.

The variables reflect aspects of spatial experience, interior design, and user perception. Key elements include:

Table 1. Research Variables

Variable	Sub-Variabel	Indicator	Objective
<i>Sense of Place (Cognitive and Perceptual Factors), Fritz Steele (1981)</i>	Emotional Attachment	Feelings of comfort, safety, and familiarity within the lounge	To measure the extent to which users feel emotionally connected to the space
	Emotional Comfort	- Sense of calmness and relaxation - Overall experience of the lounge atmosphere	To assess whether users experience emotional comfort while in the lounge
	Satisfaction with Space	- Satisfaction level with lounge aesthetics and functionality (zoning and layout) - Availability of supportive facilities	To evaluate users' satisfaction with the overall lounge experience
	Meaning and Perception	Individual perceptions of the lounge based on personal experience	To explore the meaning visitors assign to the space based on their personal experiences
	Social Attachment	Interaction between visitors and staff or with other visitors	To analyze how social interactions influence visitors' experience in the lounge
	Place Identity	Design elements, ambiance, and lounge theme	To investigate the unique characteristics of the lounge and their contribution to the sense of place
	Facilities and Comfort	Service quality, cleanliness, and comfort of amenities	To assess how well the facilities meet the expectations and needs of visitors

Source: Researcher

The table provides a structured framework for analyzing the contribution of non-physical elements to the formation of 'Sense of Place' in Concordia Lounge.

Data processing in this study was conducted using a qualitative descriptive approach, which aims to gain an in-depth understanding of the research subject. This approach is descriptive in nature, focusing not on hypothesis testing, but rather on detailed presentation of phenomena. The initial stage of qualitative data analysis begins with conceptualization—the process of forming concepts or a theoretical framework prior to field data collection. After data collection, the researcher classifies and describes findings based on observational results.

For data analysis, this study refers to the qualitative data analysis model developed by Miles and Huberman. According to Miles and Huberman (1994) in Rodsyada (2020: 213–217), the data analysis process includes three main stages: data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing/verification. These stages aim to filter relevant information, present it systematically, and evaluate the accuracy and validity of the collected data. By using this method, the study is expected to yield a comprehensive and in-depth understanding of the sense of place within the studied lounge context.

RESEARCH AND DISCUSSION

The analysis of sense of place in the Concordia Lounge at I Gusti Ngurah Rai International Airport, Bali, aims to understand how visitors form emotional attachment and meaningful experiences with the space. The concept of sense of place describes how physical elements, activities, and social meanings of a location contribute to spatial identity and influence user experience (Tuan, 1977; Relph, 1976). In the context of airport lounges, experiences derived from interior design, spatial ambiance, and social interactions help create feelings of comfort, exclusivity, and memorability for visitors.

This study focuses on the cognitive and perceptual aspects of the Concordia Lounge at I Gusti Ngurah Rai International Airport as the object of inquiry to explore the concept of sense of place in executive waiting areas.

Respondents' Demographic Profile

The demographic profile of respondents in this study aims to identify the characteristics of Concordia Lounge users at I Gusti Ngurah Rai International Airport, Bali. Collected information includes age, gender, country of origin or residence, and travel purpose. This data is used to understand how individual characteristics influence perceptions, experiences, and emotional attachment to the lounge.

In studies concerning sense of place, demographic factors play an important role in shaping how a person interprets and experiences a place (Relph, 1976). For instance, business travelers and leisure tourists may have different needs and expectations when using lounge facilities. Thus, analysis of these demographic characteristics is essential to highlight variations in user experiences based on background. The data presented in this section include age, gender, country of origin, travel purpose, frequency of lounge visits, and length of stay in the lounge.

Table 2. Respondents' Demographic Profile

No	Age	Gender	Country of Origin	Traveling Purpose	Frequency of Lounge Visits	Duration of Stay
1	20	Male	Indonesia	Holiday	Routine (≥5 times)	1–2 Hour

2	25	Female	Australia	Holiday	First time	30–60 Minute
3	25	Male	Japan	Business	Frequent times)	(3–4 2–3 Hour
4	28	Female	Indonesia	Family Visit	Routine times)	(≥5 1–2 Hour
5	30	Male	USA	Holiday	First time	30–60 Minute
6	30	Female	Singapore	Business	Frequent times)	(3–4 1–2 Hour
7	32	Male	Singapore	Transit	First time	2–3 Hour
8	35	Female	Malaysia	Holiday	Frequent times)	(3–4 1–2 Hour
9	35	Male	Indonesia	Business	Routine times)	(≥5 30–60 Minute
10	40	Female	India	Transit	Barely times)	(1–2 1–2 Hour
11	42	Male	South Korea	Business	Routine times)	(≥5 2–3 Hour
12	45	Female	France	Holiday	Frequent times)	(3–4 1–2 Hour
13	47	Male	Indonesia	Business	Routine times)	(≥5 30–60 Minute
14	50	Female	England	Family Visit	Barely times)	(1–2 1–2 Hour
15	50	Male	Germany	Transit	First time	2–3 Hour

Source: Researcher

The demographic data above shows that users of the Concordia Lounge come from diverse backgrounds in terms of age, gender, nationality, and travel purpose. This diversity illustrates that sense of place in the lounge is influenced not only by design elements but also by user experiences and backgrounds.

The demographic data serve as a foundation for understanding how user profiles affect their perceptions and emotional attachment to the Concordia Lounge, and how design and services might be enhanced to provide a more optimal experience.

Analysis & Study of Non-Physical Elements That Shape Sense of Place

In the Concordia Lounge, non-physical factors such as ambiance, comfort, a sense of exclusivity, and social interaction between visitors and staff are key components in shaping perceptions of the space. Psychological aspects such as a sense of safety, emotional connection, and tranquility contribute to the level of user satisfaction and attachment to the lounge.

This section highlights how these non-physical elements influence user experience in the lounge. Referring to Fritz Steele's (1981) theory, the study aims to uncover how visitors' perceptions, expectations, and subjective experiences contribute to shaping sense of place at the Concordia Lounge.

Each individual has a different perception of a space, formed through personal cognitive and emotional experiences. In Steele's (1981) framework, cognitive and perceptual factors encompass how individuals interpret, understand, and emotionally respond to space based on personal interaction and experience.

In the context of the Concordia Lounge, these aspects are central to creating emotional attachment between users and the space. Perceptions of comfort, ease of navigation, spatial functionality, and aesthetic value all play important roles in shaping spatial experience. Through in-depth interviews with visitors, this analysis explores their subjective experiences, including responses to ambiance, design, and elements that support emotional connection with the lounge.

The discussion is presented in the form of a structured analysis table for each non-physical sub-variable and its impact on sense of place.

Table 3. Analysis of Non-Physical Elements That Shape Sense of Place

Sub-Variabel	Indicator	Observation Results	Respondent Quotes
Emotional Attachment	Feeling of comfort, safety, and familiarity in the lounge space	Most visitors felt safe and comfortable, especially due to the calm and exclusive atmosphere. Frequent users perceived the lounge as a familiar and pleasant pre-departure space.	R3: "Saya merasa cukup nyaman di sini, tempatnya tenang untuk menunggu penerbangan." R6: "It's peaceful enough for me to relax before my next meeting." R8: "Lounge ini cukup nyaman, seperti ruang tunggu pribadi."
	Role in Shaping the Sense of Place	A sense of safety, comfort, and familiarity reinforces place attachment and contributes to the development of a personal identity associated with the space (Relph, 1976; Steele, 1981).	
Emotional Comfort	- Sense of calm and relaxation - Overall experience of lounge ambiance	Business travelers prioritized a quiet ambiance for work, while leisure travelers appreciated the comfort for relaxation.	R2: "Area makannya cozy, saya suka bersantai di sini." R3: "Kadang terlalu berisik, sulit fokus kalau mau kerja." R12: "The lounge feels calm and relaxing, perfect after a long flight."
	Role in Shaping the Sense of Place	Emotional comfort—such as feelings of calmness and relaxation—supports meaningful place experiences and strengthens affective connections between users and the space (Montgomery, 1998).	
Satisfaction with Space	- Satisfaction with lounge aesthetics and function - Availability of supporting facilities	Zoning—such as work areas, dining zones, and relaxation spaces—was generally effective. However, some long-stay visitors criticized the seating comfort in certain areas.	R9: "Tempat kerja di lounge cukup nyaman untuk buka laptop sambil menunggu." R8: "Saya lebih suka area santainya, dekorasinya homey dan nyaman." R11: "Having a proper working area really helps me catch up before my flight."
	Role in Shaping the Sense of Place	User satisfaction with the lounge's spatial organization and supporting facilities enhances the sense of satisfaction and deepens psychological attachment to the place (Steele, 1981; Lynch, 1960).	
Meaning and Perception	Individual perception of the lounge based on personal experience	The lounge was perceived as an exclusive and comfortable place. International visitors compared it with other lounges abroad, while domestic travelers saw it as a premium facility.	R6: "For me, it's mainly a working space with comfort." R5: "Lounge ini buat saya tempat bersantai sebelum boarding." R13: "Saya selalu pakai

			<i>lounge ini buat kerja cepat sebelum penerbangan."</i>
	Role in Shaping the Sense of Place	Positive individual perceptions formed through experience contribute to the construction of <i>place identity</i> , reinforcing emotional and symbolic bonds between users and the environment (Relph, 1976; Montgomery, 1998).	
Social Attachment	Interaction between visitors and staff or other visitors	Most interactions were between visitors and staff; there was little social interaction among guests, indicating the lounge functions more as a private than a social space.	R3: "Saya lebih suka tenang saja, tidak banyak ngobrol dengan orang lain." R12: "I had a friendly conversation with the staff, they are very helpful!" R4: "Saya sempat berbicara sedikit dengan pengunjung lain, ramah."
	Role in Shaping the Sense of Place	Limited interaction among visitors indicates the lounge functions more as a private rather than a communal space, fostering individual rather than collective bonds to the place (Gustafson, 2001; Steele, 1981).	
Spatial Identity	Design elements, ambiance, and lounge theme	Harmonious color schemes, calming lighting, and Balinese decorative elements (paintings, wood carvings) gave the lounge a distinctive and exclusive character.	R11: "I like the modern design, it feels clean and professional." R8: "Dekorasi kayu dan lukisan Bali membuat lounge ini terasa hangat." R14: "It feels welcoming, not too corporate, which is nice for family travelers."
	Role in Shaping the Sense of Place	A visual identity grounded in local cultural aesthetics enhances cultural distinctiveness and enriches the meaning of place (Relph, 1976; Steele, 1981).	
Facilities & Comfort	Service quality, cleanliness, and physical comfort	Visitors were satisfied with cleanliness and service, but some recommended improvements in food variety and ergonomic seating for longer stays.	R1: "Saya puas dengan kebersihan dan pelayanannya." R7: "Pilihan makanan kurang banyak, apalagi untuk vegetarian." R10: "Makanan enak, tapi kurang variasi kalau menunggu lama."
	Role in Shaping the Sense of Place	High-quality amenities support a positive user experience and strengthen place attachment through physical comfort (Porteous, 1977; Mahdizadeh et al., 2020).	

Source: Researcher

Based on the observations and in-depth interviews with users, this study finds that non-physical interior elements play a significant role in shaping the sense of place and influencing user satisfaction at the Concordia Lounge, I Gusti Ngurah Rai International Airport, Bali. These non-physical elements include spatial ambiance, psychological comfort, perceived exclusivity, and the quality of social interactions and service.

a) First, strong emotional attachment emerged as a fundamental component in constructing a sense of place. Visitors reported feeling comfortable, safe, and calm within the lounge. The

tranquil atmosphere, warm lighting, and well-organized facilities create the impression of a private space that supports relaxation—for both business and leisure travelers. This aligns with the theory of emotional bonding proposed by Relph (1976) and Steele (1981), which states that emotional comfort and familiarity contribute to a sense of belonging.

- b) Second, in terms of spatial functionality, the lounge successfully accommodates the diverse needs of users through effective zoning—such as work areas, dining areas, and relaxation zones. This supports Steele’s (1981) argument that spatial functionality is essential for developing user attachment to a place. Users who spent longer periods in the lounge were more critical of comfort-related details such as chair ergonomics and lighting quality, suggesting that perceptions of comfort are subjective and influenced by length of use.
- c) Third, findings related to perception and spatial meaning revealed significant differences between business travelers and leisure users. For business travelers, the lounge is perceived as an exclusive and quiet workspace, while for leisure tourists, the lounge is interpreted as a relaxing space with a Balinese ambiance. This reflects Gustafson’s (2001) perspective that the meaning of a place is shaped by users’ subjective experiences, which are in turn influenced by personal background and travel purpose.
- d) Fourth, although social interaction in the lounge is limited—particularly among business travelers—some leisure visitors showed a willingness to engage with others. The lounge serves more as a private space rather than a “third place” (Oldenburg, 1999). This finding emphasizes the need to balance privacy with opportunities for limited social interaction in order to accommodate the diverse character of users.
- e) Fifth, visual identity also contributes to strengthening sense of place. The lounge combines a minimalist modern aesthetic favored by business users with distinctive Balinese decorative elements appreciated by leisure tourists. This duality creates a plural yet harmonious spatial identity, supporting the concept of place identity described by Relph (1976) and Steele (1981), in which identity is formed through the integration of local context and user needs.
- f) Sixth, in terms of service and facilities, the lounge received positive feedback on cleanliness, staff friendliness, and reliability of services. However, some respondents critiqued the limited food options—especially for longer stays—which highlights that service quality plays a crucial role in forming place attachment, as emphasized by Porteous (1977) and Montgomery (1998).

Overall, this study demonstrates that non-physical interior elements are instrumental in constructing a sense of place through a blend of emotional experience, functional perception, and strong visual identity. These elements significantly contribute to user satisfaction, particularly in terms of comfort, personal meaning of space, and the alignment of services with user expectations. The findings reinforce the position of Concordia Lounge not merely as a waiting room, but as a meaningful place that provides emotional and functional value to its users.

CONCLUSION

The study reveals that non-physical interior elements—such as spatial ambiance, emotional comfort, perception of exclusivity, and quality of service interactions—significantly shape the sense of place and user satisfaction within the Concordia Lounge at I Gusti Ngurah Rai International Airport, Bali. Emotional attachment is fostered through a harmonious blend

of calm atmosphere, adaptive spatial functions, and a visual identity that integrates modern design with local cultural nuances, demonstrating that the user experience is influenced not only by physical facilities but also by psychological and symbolic meanings attributed to the space. These findings underscore the strategic importance of optimizing non-physical elements in executive lounge design to enhance user satisfaction and loyalty. For future research, it is recommended to investigate multiple airport lounges across diverse cultural contexts to test the generalizability of these results, while practitioners are encouraged to adopt user-centered design strategies that emphasize emotional experience, cultural integration, and comfort in spatial planning.

REFERENCES

- Carmona, M. C. (2003). *Public Places, Urban Spaces: The Dimensions of Urban Design*. Architectural Press.
- Guntari, F., Fatra, O., & Sugiyanto, A. (2017). Perencanaan Perluasan Ruang Tunggu Terminal Domestik Bandara Internasional Ahmad Yani Semarang. *Jurnal Ilmiah Aviasi* 10.3., 128-135.
- Hashemnezhad, H. H. (2013). "Sense of Place" and "Place Attachment". *International Journal of Architecture and Urban Development*.
- Jorgensen, B. S., & Stedman, R. C. (2006). A comparative analysis of predictors of sense of place dimensions: Attachment to, dependence on, and identification with lakeshore properties. *Journal of Environmental Management* 79 (2006) 316–327.
- Kotler, P. (1973). Atmospherics as a Marketing Tool. *Journal of Retailing*, 49(4), 48–64.
- Lynch, K. A. (1960). *The Image of the City*. Massachusetts: MIT Press.
- Montgomery, J. (1998). Making a City: Urbanity, Vitality and Urban Design. *Journal of Urban Design*, 3, 93-116. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/13574809808724418>.
- Relph, E. (1976). *Place and Placelessness*. Pion.
- Rinaldi Mirsa, Z. F. (2020). KAJIAN SENSE OF PLACE Pada Koridor Pasar Tomok Kabupaten Samosir. Vol 3 No 1, Januari 2020; halaman 314 - 323.
- Ryu, K., & Han, H. (2010). Influence of the Quality of Food, Service, and Physical Environment on Customer Satisfaction and Behavioral Intention in Quick-Casual Restaurants: Moderating Role of Perceived Price. *Journal of Hospitality & Tourism Research* 34(3). DOI:10.1177/1096348009350624, 310-329.
- Shamai, S. (1991). Sense of Place: An Empirical Measurement. *Geoforum* 22(3). [https://doi.org/10.1016/0016-7185\(91\)90017-K](https://doi.org/10.1016/0016-7185(91)90017-K), 347–358.
- Stedman, R. C. (2003). Is It Really Just a Social Construction?: The Contribution of the Physical Environment to Sense of Place . *Society & Natural Resources: An International Journal*, 16:8, 671-685 <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/08941920309189>.
- Steele, F. (1981). *The Sense of Place*. USA: CBI Publishing Company, Inc.
- Tuan, Y. (1977). *Space And Place: Humanistic Perspective*. Dalam *Philosophy in Geography*. Reidei Publishing Company.
- Wardhani, D. K. (2019). *Panduan Penataan Kawasan Koridor Pasar Tradisional*. Surabaya.