Assessing Social and Physical Servicescape as Drivers of Hotels’ Image Formation: Customers Perspective

Emad Abdel-Aal       Jehan El-Amir Abbas
Faculty of Tourism and Hotels, Sadat City University

Abstract
Place should not be viewed as a physical space that customers patronize because their service experiences in place are shaped by its occupants. This study investigates the effects of social and physical servicescape cues on customers’ perception of hotel image formation. Based on data derived from 138 customers at five star hotels in Cairo, social servicescape cues (service employees, other customers and rapport) have been differentiated with physical servicescape cues (facility Aesthetics, spatial Layout, ambient conditions, signs and symbols) in perceiving hotel image. Consequently, a significant positive relationship was found between the social 0.63(*) and physical servicescape 0.53(**) drivers and hotel image formation. Moreover, social servicescape was more influential than the physical one where a significant predictive relationship (p < 0.05) was found between Social and Physical servicescape and hotel image formation with variability of 39.8% and 30.2% respectively.

Key Words: Social Servicescape, Physical Servicescape, Hotel Image

Introduction
Servicescape is the artificial and psychological landscape in which a service experience is organized and delivered by servicemen and experienced by consumers. The physical environment of a hotel encompasses several different elements such as overall layout, design and decor (Namasivayam and Lin, 2008). Evidence of ultimate service is sought by observing the touchable elements (physical surroundings), called servicescape (Berry and Parasuraman, 1991). Additionally, customer behaviors and employee attitudes are influenced by the organization’s physical setting (Bitner, 1992).
According to Medabesh and Upadhyaya (2012) until the 1960s psychologists ignored the effects of physical setting in their attempts to predict customer behaviors. Since that, a large and steadily growing body of literature within the field of environmental psychology has studied the relationship between human beings and their built environments (Darley and Gilbert, 1985). Hotel managers and service providers, therefore, cannot assume total control or ownership of the space, since it is the consumer who assigns meaning to place. Consequently, this leads one to ask whether some consumers become attached to certain places because it helps to facilitate their social experiences (Johnstone, 2012). Customers evaluate a specific servicescape through various environmental cues.
that form their image, which then stimulates some kind of response (Medabesh and Upadhyaya, 2012).

**Literature Review**

**Social Servicescape**
The social Servicescape is likely to be more influential than the physical factors within the hospitality service environment (Guerin, 1993) that has high levels of customer–employee contact (Butcher, 2005; Tombs and McColl-Kennedy, 2003). Moreover, Social facilitation theory suggests that even when individuals do not directly interact, the mere presence of others influence behavior in the service scene (Tombs and McColl-Kennedy, 2010).

A social servicescape is generally defined as the employee and customer elements that are found in a consumption setting (Rosenbaum and Montoya, 2007), and when customers perceive that service employees are customer oriented, customers are displaying social bonding between other customers and service employees, resulting in a positive hotel image (Jang et al., 2015). Tombs and McColl-Kennedy (2003), Butcher (2005), Rosenbaum and Montoya (2007), and Rosenbaum and Massiah (2011) postulated that the social servicescape could be recognized via the people (e.g., service employees, other customers), its quantity (e.g., crowding), and its quality of interactions (e.g., rapport). Most previous studies on service environment stated that perceived social crowding affects customer experiences negatively (Eroglu and Machleit, 1990; Machleit et al., 2000). Therefore, the current study concentrates on the other three cues of social servicescape as follows:

**Service Employees**
Employees’ customer orientation has been characterized as an employee’s tendency to meet customers’ needs in an on-the-job structure (Brown et al., 2002; Harris and Ezeh, 2008). Hildebrandt (1988) proposed that “service employees” become a component of hotel atmosphere and are associated with hotel image. Customers spontaneously evaluate service environment on the role of service employees’ efforts and capabilities, perceived through certain behavioral cues that exhibit friendliness, empathy, attentiveness (Specht et al., 2007; Jang et al., 2015) competence and physical attractiveness (Harris and Ezeh, 2008).

**Other Customers**
Other customers’ presence may enhance the service experience (Grove and Fisk, 1997; Tombs and McColl-Kennedy, 2010). For example, the ability to join the excitement of the other fans present at a match facilitates the spectators’ enjoyment of being at the stadium (Ng et al., 2007), or diminish the privacy of the service setting in some other cases. Literature in psychology, sociology,
education, and organizational behaviour explains the need to realize a sense of belonging, whether that was for a national, community, work, home or personal level (Bendek, 2002; Southerton, 2002).

**Rapport**

Rapport is described as a customer’s perception of an interesting interaction with service employees, characterized by a personal connection between the two interactants (Gremler and Gwinner, 2000, 2008; Macintosh, 2009). A number of studies have indicated that the friendship like relationship among customers and employees improves and supports service outcomes (Hartline and Farrell, 1996; Keng et al., 2007) and repurchase intentions (Gounaris and Venetis, 2002; Nicholson, Compeau, and Sethi, 2001). Rapport between other customers and employees represents a positive indication for interpersonal service quality and, therefore, enhances customers’ perception of hotel image (Jang et al., 2015). According to Dong and Siu (2013) to raise an enjoyable service experience, visitors may endeavor to extend the experience after leaving the service setting. Experience extension refers to visitors’ efforts to share the perceived cognitive benefits from the experience, often by telling their friends (Arnould and Price, 1993). The result for the service provider may be positive word-of-mouth advertising. The instant growth in electronic communication is likely making this process more effective. People with a collectivist orientation (as in East Asia) depend heavily on others’ opinions as a reliable information channel in decision making (Liu et al., 2000).

**Physical Servicescape**

Physical environment has been differently identified in most studies. Bitner (1992) classified servicescape as ambient conditions, spatial layout, and signs, symbols and artifacts. Han and Ryu (2009) declared spatial layout, décor and artifacts, and ambient conditions for investigating the factors of physical environment within a hotel. Wakefield and Blodgett (1996), assumed that built environment can be controlled; therefore the researchers focused on layout accessibility, facility cleanliness, seating comfort and facility aesthetics, and did not focus on ambient conditions in studying the leisure services. Nguyen and Leblanc (2002) classified physical environment into five items: ambient conditions, exterior layout, interior layout, décor, and location within insurance and hospitality services. Shashikala and Suresh (2013) indicated that servicescape is composed of seven components: aesthetic factor, ambient factor, cleanliness, layout, variety, signs, symbols, and artifacts; and social factors, when studying servicescape and customer loyalty. Hooper et al. (2013) stated that servicescape is composed of equipment, design, space, ambience, and hygiene, and considered it to be one of service quality components’. The current
study concentrates on the physical servicescape cues (ambient Conditions, spatial layout, facility aesthetics, signs and symbols) as follows:

**Ambient Conditions**
Ambient conditions are factors that affect perceptions and human responses to the service experience and result in either approach or avoidance behavior (Mattila and Wirtz, 2001). Background characteristics of the environment such as temperature, lighting, air quality, music, and scent might be included in the hotel ambient conditions (Bitner, 1992; Medabesh and Upadhyaya, 2012). Lighting, temperature, music, and color can all influence employees’ job satisfaction and performance (Sundstrom and Sundstrom, 1986). It is often recognized that when a guest visits a hotel, he would like an environment which would make him feel comfortable and relaxed during the duration of his stay. Temperature can be unpleasant if not controlled adequately (Medabesh and Upadhyaya, 2012). Environmental psychology investigated the relationship between light intensity and task productivity. It was found that participants perceived tasks more positively and reported less tedium in a hotel room (Stone and Irvine, 1994; Kim, 1997). Studying music and consumer behavior have revealed that music may be used as an effective tool to minimize the negative outcomes of waiting in any service operation (Hui et al., 1997). The key for creating a pleasant sound environment is the balance of loud and constant sound volume (Kryter, 1985). Ambient odors may also influence a consumer’s mood (Bone and Ellen, 1999).

**Spatial Layout**
Within the hotel service setting, layout accessibility refers to the way in which furnishings and equipment, and service areas are arranged, and the spatial relationships among these elements (Bitner, 1992). The ease of entry from and to ancillary service areas such as concessions, restrooms, and souvenir stands could be through an effective layout (Baker et al., 1994).

**Facility Aesthetics**
Concerning facility aesthetics, which refers to a function of architectural design, along with interior design and decor, all of that contribute to the attractiveness of the physical environment (Wakefield and Blodgett, 1994). Seating comfort also is affected by both the physical seat itself and by the space between the seats.

**Signs and Symbols**
Signs displayed on the exterior and interior of a structure are examples of explicit communicators. These signs can be used as labels (e.g., name of department), for directional purposes (e.g., entrances, exits), and to communicate
regulations of behavior (e.g., no smoking). Signage can participate as an important role in communicating organization’s image (Wener and Kaminoff, 1982). Hotel managers, for example, know that white table cloths and subdued lighting symbolically transmit full service and relatively high prices, whereas counter service, plastic furnishings and bright lighting symbolize the opposite.

**Servicescape and Image**

Keller (1993, 2003) and Ryu et al. (2008) described business image as a range of perceptions resulting from the relationship between customers and a product or a person. Business image is also regarded as the way a community perceives the prestige of a business including the employees, customers, other shareholders and public (Barich and Kotler, 1991). As stated by Kotler and Gertner (2002), hotel businesses should pay more attention to the customer image-creating process, when customer behavior is taken into consideration. Servicescape components may be more effective in helping customers’ assessment of their environment, due to the intangible nature of services (Nguyen, 2006, Walls et al., 2011; Durna et al., 2015). In image studies on hotel businesses, it was indicated that business image is quite related with the servicescape of businesses (Nguyen and LeBlanc, 2001).

Social and physical servicescape contribute to the image of the hotel and influence customers’ behavioral intentions such as wanting to stay longer in the hotel, willingness to spend more money, and recommending the hotel to others (Jang et al., 2015). Eventually, when customers develop a favorable hotel image, the image affects the customers’ future behavior such as repatronage and loyalty behavior (Bloemer and De Ruyter, 1998; Prendergast and Man, 2002; Jang et al., 2015).

Hoteliers should pay attention to each detail rather than ignoring servicescape arrangement and only concentrate on short-term services. When a guest arrives after a long journey and enters a hot lobby, hotel employee’s high performance and friendly manner is not sufficient (Dedeoğlu et al., 2015).

It must not be forgotten that management activates the customers’ intentions of purchasing behaviour and encourages them to consume (Zukin and Maguire, 2004). Hence, considering those trends are constantly changing to influence people’s likes and desires (Kotler and Armstrong, 2011). Hotel businesses should adjust servicescape cues especially physical ones in accordance with fashion and trends.

Kandampully and Suhartanto (2000) and Kandampully et al. (2011) stated that perceived image can venue a hotel one step at the head of its competitors by giving it a competitive edge. Kotler et al. (2006) stated that image has an
influence on the perception of hotel business and changing servicescape arrangements can have an effect on hotel image. When it is taken into consideration that servicescape has the potential of becoming the determiner of a hotel image, it can be assured that considering servicescape precisely and examining its effect on business image is necessary (Durna et al., 2015).

Methodology
Based on previous research in the areas of the social and physical servicescape in the hotel, it was obvious the scarcity of researches dealing with the hotel image formation from the customer perspective (Dedeoğlu et al. 2015; Jang et al., 2015). Even though these little researches deal with restaurants and customer behaviour intentions, the current study was designed to investigate the effects of social and physical servicescape cues on customers’ perception of hotel image formation. Moreover, the present research tries to identify which cues of social and physical servicescape are more related with hotel image formation.

Measuring Instrument
A quantitative approach was employed in this study. A questionnaire was created that contained three main sections. The first part included 8 statements measuring social servicescape (service employees, other customers and rapport) based on (Tombs and McColl-Kennedy, 2003; Butcher, 2005; Ezeh, 2007; Rosenbaum and Montoya, 2007; Rosenbaum and Massiah, 2011; Jang et al., 2015), 13 statements measuring physical servicescape cues (facility Aesthetics, spatial Layout, ambient conditions, signs and symbols) based on Bitner (1992) and finally, the overall hotel image was measured via 4 statements based on (Nguyen, 2006; Dedeoğlu et al. 2015; Durna et al. 2015; Jang et al., 2015). All statements were measured via a 5-point Likert scale (1 = completely disagree to 5 = completely agree). The study variables (dependent and independent) are suggested to be in a theoretical proposed model, see figure 1.
The initial questionnaire was conducted with two identified groups for comments. The two identified groups were 5 academic staff, and 5 managers in five star hotels. The purpose of the pre-test was to detect potential problems in the questionnaire design, clarity, and wording (Zikmund et al., 2013). There was no problem with the questionnaire.

Data Collection and Analysis
The participants of the study are expected to play a role of a customer who experience social and physical servicescape in the hotel setting (the restaurant, the guest room, the lobby, ball room) and fill out the survey questionnaire. Data were collected in five-star hotels located in Cairo, from January to April 2015. Participants in the study were selected using the random sampling method. 240 questionnaire forms were distributed with the help of front office personnel. After eliminating non-valid responses, a total of 138 questionnaire forms were valid for data analysis. Therefore, a valid response rate was 57.5%.

Reliability and Validity
First, the mean substitution method was used in order to replace missing data. Average social and physical servicescape scores on each subscales and hotel image had been calculated, coefficient alpha was computed for each construct and the overall hotel image measure as shown in table 1. Overall, each of the scales demonstrated acceptable reliability in the present context matching the reliability level recommended by Bagozzi and Yi (1988), and Nunnally and Bernestein (1994) (average reliability $\alpha = 0.913$). As for the constructs’
approximated validity, each cue realized a significant correlation (p < 0.01),
which provided preliminary evidence for validity.

Table 1: Cronbach's Alpha, Mean and Std. Deviation of Measurement Model

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Items</th>
<th>Cronbach's Alpha</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Social Servicescape</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Service Employees</td>
<td>.904</td>
<td>4.48</td>
<td>.3536</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employees in this hotel are polite and courteous.</td>
<td>.901</td>
<td>4.49</td>
<td>.5017</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employees in this hotel display personal warmth in their behaviour.</td>
<td>.917</td>
<td>4.70</td>
<td>.4586</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employees in this hotel are happy to serve the customers.</td>
<td>.924</td>
<td>4.71</td>
<td>.4553</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employees in this hotel never seem bothered by customer requests.</td>
<td>.915</td>
<td>4.28</td>
<td>.4519</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employees showed a commitment to satisfying your needs.</td>
<td>.905</td>
<td>4.50</td>
<td>.5017</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Customers</td>
<td>.901</td>
<td>4.49</td>
<td>.5017</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The customers look friendly.</td>
<td>.901</td>
<td>4.49</td>
<td>.5017</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The customers look helpful.</td>
<td>.901</td>
<td>4.49</td>
<td>.5017</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rapport</td>
<td>.907</td>
<td>4.41</td>
<td>.4941</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interactions between service employees and customers look harmonious.</td>
<td>.907</td>
<td>4.41</td>
<td>.4941</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Physical Servicescape</strong></td>
<td>.908</td>
<td>4.08</td>
<td>.1950</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Facility Aesthetics</td>
<td>.910</td>
<td>3.85</td>
<td>.1830</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>This hotel is painted in appealing colors.</td>
<td>.914</td>
<td>3.99</td>
<td>.0851</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The interior architecture gives it an appealing character.</td>
<td>.914</td>
<td>4.00</td>
<td>.1478</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>This hotel is decorated in an appealing fashion.</td>
<td>.905</td>
<td>3.55</td>
<td>.5128</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spatial Layout</td>
<td>.908</td>
<td>4.05</td>
<td>.2083</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The hotel layout makes it easy to get the kind of food service you want</td>
<td>.904</td>
<td>3.99</td>
<td>.7096</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The hotel layout makes it easy to get to your seat.</td>
<td>.914</td>
<td>4.00</td>
<td>.0000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The hotel layout makes it easy to get to the restrooms.</td>
<td>.912</td>
<td>4.24</td>
<td>.4324</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The overall arrangements provide plenty of space.</td>
<td>.914</td>
<td>4.00</td>
<td>.0000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ambient Conditions</td>
<td>.907</td>
<td>4.32</td>
<td>.2566</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Background music relaxes me.</td>
<td>.908</td>
<td>4.23</td>
<td>.4281</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Temperature of hotel is appropriate.</td>
<td>.904</td>
<td>4.42</td>
<td>.4954</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lighting of hotel is appropriate and sufficient.</td>
<td>.911</td>
<td>4.68</td>
<td>.4677</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Air quality is good.</td>
<td>.914</td>
<td>4.00</td>
<td>.0000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>There is a pleasant smell in the hotel.</td>
<td>.910</td>
<td>4.30</td>
<td>.4618</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Signs and Symbols</td>
<td>.914</td>
<td>4.02</td>
<td>.6097</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The signage in the hotel makes it easy to find your way.</td>
<td>.914</td>
<td>4.02</td>
<td>.6097</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Image</td>
<td>.911</td>
<td>4.56</td>
<td>.1081</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I have a good impression about this hotel.</td>
<td>.901</td>
<td>4.49</td>
<td>.5017</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>This hotel has a good image in the minds of other customers.</td>
<td>.924</td>
<td>4.75</td>
<td>.4324</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I believe that this hotel has a better image than others.</td>
<td>.924</td>
<td>4.75</td>
<td>.4324</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The hotel is a favorable place to approach.</td>
<td>.912</td>
<td>4.24</td>
<td>.4324</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reliability Statistics</td>
<td>.913</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Results and Discussion
Descriptive Statistics and Correlation Analysis

Descriptive Statistics of means and standard deviations for each of the measures are displayed in table 2. The descriptive statistics showed that mean scores for social and physical servicescape were 4.48 and 4.08 respectively. Results indicated that the customers reflected a high degree of social servicescape perception than the physical one.

The study describes three main variables in details as follows: First, analyzing the customer perception of social servicescape cues, they consist of service employees (Mean = 4.53) with 0.192 SD, other customers (Mean = 4.49) with 0.501 SD, and rapport (Mean = 4.41) with 0.494 SD. These results may reflect considerable hotel efforts in developing employees’ service skills. Second, analyzing the customer perception of physical servicescape cues, they consist of ambient conditions (Mean = 4.32) with 0.256 SD, spatial layout (Mean = 4.05) with 0.208 SD, facility aesthetics (Mean = 3.85) with 0.198 SD, and signs symbols (Mean = 4.02) with 0.195 SD. Finally, hotel image perception was (Mean = 4.56) with 0.108 SD.

Table 2: Descriptive Statistics and Inter-Correlations of all Research Variables

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Construct</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7</th>
<th>8</th>
<th>9</th>
<th>10</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.Service employees</td>
<td>1.000</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.Other customers</td>
<td>.910**</td>
<td>1.000</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.Rapport</td>
<td>.600**</td>
<td>.616**</td>
<td>1.000</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.Social servicescape</td>
<td>.936**</td>
<td>.897**</td>
<td>.828**</td>
<td>1.000</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.Ambient conditions</td>
<td>.808**</td>
<td>.881**</td>
<td>.551**</td>
<td>.793**</td>
<td>1.000</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.Spatial layout</td>
<td>.850**</td>
<td>.940**</td>
<td>.593**</td>
<td>.846**</td>
<td>.928**</td>
<td>1.000</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.Facility aesthetics</td>
<td>.687**</td>
<td>.741**</td>
<td>.474**</td>
<td>.675**</td>
<td>.675**</td>
<td>.697**</td>
<td>1.000</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.Signs symbols</td>
<td>.537**</td>
<td>.303**</td>
<td>.190**</td>
<td>.305**</td>
<td>.255**</td>
<td>.290**</td>
<td>.246**</td>
<td>1.000</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.Physical servicescape</td>
<td>.803**</td>
<td>.880**</td>
<td>.545**</td>
<td>.788**</td>
<td>.972**</td>
<td>.931**</td>
<td>.802**</td>
<td>.250**</td>
<td>1.000</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.Hotel image</td>
<td>.591**</td>
<td>.580**</td>
<td>.545**</td>
<td>.632**</td>
<td>.553**</td>
<td>.546**</td>
<td>.439**</td>
<td>.508**</td>
<td>.528**</td>
<td>1.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean (M)</td>
<td>4.53</td>
<td>4.49</td>
<td>4.41</td>
<td>4.48</td>
<td>4.32</td>
<td>4.05</td>
<td>3.85</td>
<td>4.02</td>
<td>4.08</td>
<td>4.56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Standard Deviation (SD)</td>
<td>.1927</td>
<td>.50177</td>
<td>.4941</td>
<td>.3536</td>
<td>.2566</td>
<td>.2083</td>
<td>.1984</td>
<td>.6097</td>
<td>.1950</td>
<td>.1081</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).
* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).
According to the results of table 2, the correlation between the two drivers of servicescape and the hotel image formation were calculated. It was observed that a high positive significant correlation between the social 0.632**(*) and physical servicescape 0.528**(*) and hotel image exist. These results match with (Dedeoğlu et al., 2015) who indicated that servicescape had a high explanatory power for image formation.

Concerning the social servicescape driver, the researchers noted that hotel employees as being warm in their behaviour with customers, this social cue was found to be insignificant. Perhaps that may be because the customers do not want too much familiarity with hotel staff.

Regarding the physical servicescape driver, it was observed that ambient conditions (background music, temperature, lighting, air quality, and smell) were highly perceived. That matches with Yalch and Spangenberg (1990) who noted that ‘music is one of the most frequently used ambient conditions to enhance the delivery of services to customers’. To date the main physical servicescape aspect has been music because it is comparatively cheap, easily changed, varied and has prospective appeals to customers (Yalch and Spangenberg, 2000; Chebat et al., 2001; Dubé and Morin, 2001; Mattila and Wirtz, 2001; Medabesh and Upadhyaya, 2012). However, air quality and smell were insignificant in relation to the hotel image and that may be due to their substantive nature.

Unexpectedly, it was found that two spatial layout elements (guest seat in the hotel and overall arrangement of space) were insignificant in relation to hotel image perceived by guests. These elements may be considered as a cornerstone of physical servicescape. On the other hand, Rutes et al. (2001) reported that a private setting such as a hotel guestroom has a greater influence on the overall customers’ hotel experience than a public setting. Siguaw and Enz (1999) noted that hotels aim to adopt a ‘‘home-like style’’ to provide a consistent and convenient environment where guests can feel like they are at home. Relating to the facility aesthetics, color and interior architecture, they were insignificantly perceived by clients. This is may be a result of prior customer image expectation from published brochures and/or hotel website, where the five-star hotels are always keen to allocate more budgets for brochures and updating their websites.

Regression Analysis

Regression analysis was conducted to explore the predictive power of social and physical servicescape for hotel image formation. Table 3 is the model summary for this prediction, where social and physical servicescape accounts for 39.8% and 30.2% variability (influence), respectively on customer’s hotel image formation. Generally, the model is moderate in prediction. However, it shows a fairly positive significant correlation (r >0.05) between social and physical
servicescape and customer’s hotel image formation, the contribution in variability is about 30-40%, and this may be due to the importance of another factors beyond the scope of our research such as service quality and/or sample characteristics.

Johnstone (2012) stated that few studies within the marketing literature have investigated the social aspects of the servicescape and the influence this may have on patronage decisions. It is becoming increasingly important to view hotels as ‘community spaces’ because people play a role in shaping the identity of place, just as place does in shaping self-identity.

Table 3: Coefficient Relation between Social and, Physical Servicescape and Hotel Image

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>* Model</th>
<th>Un-standardized Coefficients</th>
<th>Standardized coefficients</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>B</td>
<td>Std error</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constant for Social Servicescape</td>
<td>3.693</td>
<td>.091</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Servicescape</td>
<td>0.194</td>
<td>.020</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constant for Physical Servicescape</td>
<td>3.307</td>
<td>.162</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical Servicescape</td>
<td>0.307</td>
<td>.040</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note for social: \( R^2=0.398, \) Adj. \( R^2=0.402, \) R=0.634, \( F = 91.585, p<.005. \)
Note for physical: \( R^2=0.302, \) Adj. \( R^2=0.307, \) R=0.554, \( F = 60.303, p<.005. \)
* Dependent variable: Hotel Image
* Regression equation can be formed as Hotel Image = 3.69 + 0.19 Social servicescape
* Regression equation can be formed as Hotel Image = 3.30 + 0.30 Physical servicescape

It was shown that social servicescape has a positive effect on perceived image. These findings match with Mehrabian and Russell (1974) study which extends the implications of environmental psychology. Dong and Siu (2013) confirmed that environmental stimuli can influence customers’ impressions of a service experience and significantly affect their image formation. Also, Jang et al. (2015) customers use social cues in the service environment to deduce the company image.

In addition, it was shown that physical servicescape has a positive effect on perceived image. These results are consistent with the studies of LeBlanc and Nguyen (1996), Wakefield and Blodgett (1999), Nguyen and LeBlanc (2002), Nguyen (2006), Namasivayam and Lin (2008), Kim and Moon (2009), Jang and Namkung (2009), Liu and Jang (2009), Han and Ryu (2009), Siu et al. (2012) and Dedeoğlu et al. (2015).
Conclusion and Implications
It is suggested that managers should take steps to make servicescape components (social and physical ones) more attractive. The modern servicescape is not just a place for commercial exchange; it can also provide one with a sense of connection, familiarity, and social rapport.
When the service employees are customer oriented, other customers display more positive emotions. Furthermore, social ligament among customers and service employees increases positively the customers’ perceptions of hotel image.
Both the social and physical servicescape drivers are important for hotel managers to be improved continuously, where they have a positive effect on perceived customer image. Also, managers should make considerable and pertinent efforts in developing their employees’ service skills. Finally, hotels should enhance the service delivery through concentrating on ambient conditions (background music, temperature, lighting, air quality, and smell) which were highly perceived by customers.

Limitations and Future Research
The limitations of study are represented into three main constraints. First, time and cost for extending the field study to include other cities in Egypt like Sharm El-Sheikh and Hurghada. Second, the study was applied to five-star hotels. Third, the nature of respondents may partially affect their social and physical servicescape’s perception. Therefore, it is proposed that an investigation of the expected relationship between servicescape cues and customer demographics should be undertaken as a future study.

References


Lam, T.P (2005) *The Role of Karaoke Box Servicescapes Play in Customer Satisfaction*. G.R., School of Business, Hong Kong Baptist University, Hong Kong.


تقييم الدلائل الاجتماعية والمادية للخدمة كمحددات تكوين الصورة الذهنية عن الفنادق: من منظور العملاء

عماد عبدالعال - جيهان الأمير عباس
كلية السياحة والفنادق - جامعة مدينه السادات

الملخص العربي

لقد وجد في الدراسات المتعلقة بعلم النفس البيئى أن المكان الذي يرتاده العملاء لتمارسة أي نشاط اجتماعى كالفنادق أو المطاعم أو مراكز التسوق ينطب بخبرات مرتاديه، لأنهم يؤثرون بالتبادل في الصورة الذهنية المتكونه عن هذا المكان. وتهدف هذه الدراسة إلى تقييم دور الدلائل الاجتماعية والمادية للخدمة في تكوين الصورة الذهنية للفنادق ذات الخمس نجوم في القاهرة من منظور العملاء. وتشمل الدلائل الاجتماعية التي تم دراستها (مقدمي الخدمة، العملاء الآخرون، والتفاعل بين مقدمي الخدمة والعملاء) كما تشمل الدلائل المادية (جماليات المكان، التصميم الهندسي العام للحجز المتاح، وظروف المكان المتمثله في الموسيقى، الحرارة، الامضاء، التهوية، الارباح، بالإضافة إلى العلامات الإرشادية).

وبناء على البيانات المستخلصه من 138 عينة وجد أن هناك علاقة ارتباطية إيجابية ذات دلاله معنويه بين الدلائل الاجتماعية والمادية للخدمة وبين الصورة الذهنية المنطقيه لدى العملاء عن هذه الفنادق بدرجة (0.63) و (0.53) على الترتيب، كما تباينت مكونات تلك الدلائل الاجتماعية والمادية في درجة ارتباطها بتكوين الصورة الذهنية لدى العملاء، بيد أن الدليل الاجتماعي كان الأكثر تأثيرا في تلك الصورة الذهنية المتكونه لدى العملاء عن في الدليل المادي بدرجة معنويه (0.05) ودرجة تفسير 39.8 و 30.2% على الترتيب.

الكلمات الدالة: الدلائل الاجتماعية، الدلائل المادية، الصورة الذهنية للفنادق.