Servicescape, Guest Satisfaction, and Intention to Book a Hotel Room

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Abstract
Servicescape role in the service industry is increasingly important and getting attention in the hospitality research, however less attention has been given specifically on physical servicescape and guest satisfaction towards the intention to book a hotel room. The purpose of this research is to study the operationalize construct of physical servicescape. Drawing on Stimulus-Organism-Response (SOR) theory, this study aims to examine the relationship between physical servicescape and guest satisfaction towards the intention to book a hotel room behavior. A quantitative study by distributing questionnaires to hotel guest who experienced the physical servicescape at the hotel will be employed. Analysis of the data collected by using Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) will be used to test the hypothesized relationships among variables. In addition, it is hoped that this study will sheds new lights on the relationship between physical servicescape and guest satisfaction towards intention to book. The theoretical and practical implications will be discussed.
Keywords: Physical Servicescape, Guest Satisfaction, Behavior Intention

Introduction
A well-designed servicescape is very important for organization that serve customers in the service environment (Zemke et al., 2019). For instance, in hotel environment, hotel lobbies are the first place that is visited and serve as one of critical point of face-to-face communication between guests and staff upon arrival (Nanu et al., 2020). As one of the vital elements of the tourism industry, hotel need to create an excellent service quality via good and attractive physical environment to meet the satisfaction of the guest (Ali & Amin, 2014). Prompt and courtesy, room and facilities attributes rank as top 3 most important reason for Malaysian customers satisfaction towards hotel (Norliza et al., 2021). Those are elements in servicescape as there are three main elements under physical servicescape namely ambient condition, space/function layout and sign/symbol/artefacts. It is crucial to look at the satisfaction level of hotel guests in viewing physical servicescape before they book a hotel room, especially during hotel preparation to reopen to public due to pandemic restrictions.

One of the most important elements under physical servicescape is hotel lobby. Hotel lobby physical design and layout is often the one guest in touch and see first before its service. The interaction in the lobby includes tangible and intangible. Physical environment which the tangible of the lobby has an impact on guest satisfaction on overall service. Physical environments reflect hotel capability and servicescape. As for the service that is intangible, it gets the benefit from physical environment. The benefit includes influence the hotel image and leave a positive or negative impression and satisfaction to guests (Seung, 2019). In addition, for luxury hotel, they spend thousands of moneys in designing their hotel lobby. They give attention in creating lobby that captivate guest with architecture and design. To add the atmospheric value, they add fresh flower or green plant in the lobby. Viewing nature over metal structure help remove fatigue and gives positive affect to health and stress-related illness (Franěk et al., 2018).

Many research focuses on atmospheric and servicescape design of hotel lobby from ambient, spatial layout and functionality, signs, symbols, artifacts (Bitner, 1992), style, lighting, furnishings, colours, space and function, music (Countryman & Jang, 2006; Morrison et al., 2011; Muzamil & Munir, 2011), and scent (Leenders et al., 2019; Ramlee & Said, 2014). Besides that, research on servicescape towards customer satisfaction has been conducted in social servicescape (Morkunas & Rudiene, 2020), online servicescape (Hanafi et al., 2021), and fast casual dining (Line & Hanks, 2020). However, there is still limited research into understanding whether physical servicescape have an impact towards the guest satisfaction in the hotel setting, specifically in Malaysia context. Thus, the aim of the study is to look at the physical servicescape towards guest satisfaction and intention to book a hotel room. This study intends to answer the following objectives: i. to examine a relationship between physical servicescape and guest satisfaction, ii. to analyze a relationship between guest satisfaction and intention to book a hotel room.

It is hoped that this study will contribute to the theoretical and industrial in the related area. For the theoretical significance, this study will add to the literature of the subject area namely servicescape, customer satisfaction and intention to book especially in hotel industry by using the Stimulus-Organism-Response (SOR) theory. For the industrial significance, the study will add and give benefit to the industry as management of hotel could see the importance of physical servicescape towards the customer satisfaction and intention to book a hotel room. As it is being mentioned earlier that most of luxury hotel spend lots of money for their physical servicescape specifically hotel lobby. Hence, the study will provide insight information to the management of the hotel.

The New Hotel Experience that Affects Physical Servicescape
Figure 1.1 elaborate on what will the new hotel experience looks like. With regards to the physical servicescape that is being studied in this research, it is proven that servicescape is very much significant nowadays especially during the pandemic and when the tourism industry is ready to open their business to the public. There are about ten new hotel experiences stated in the figure below. Among the new experience are possible temperature checks before entry, physical distancing measures to be observed and check out and check in areas to be separated to avoid crowding. Besides that, cleanliness of the room is being emphasized (Awan et al., 2020; Gopalakrishna et al., 2021) as part of the new normal experience by having high-frequency cleaning and sanitation of surfaces and rooms. All these

new hotel experiences are closely related to the servicescape of the hotel. For instance, lobby hotel will have the temperature scanner and special counter for hotel guest to scan MySejahtera. Hence, this new norm service delivery might affect the guest satisfaction in experiencing the servicescape of the hotel.
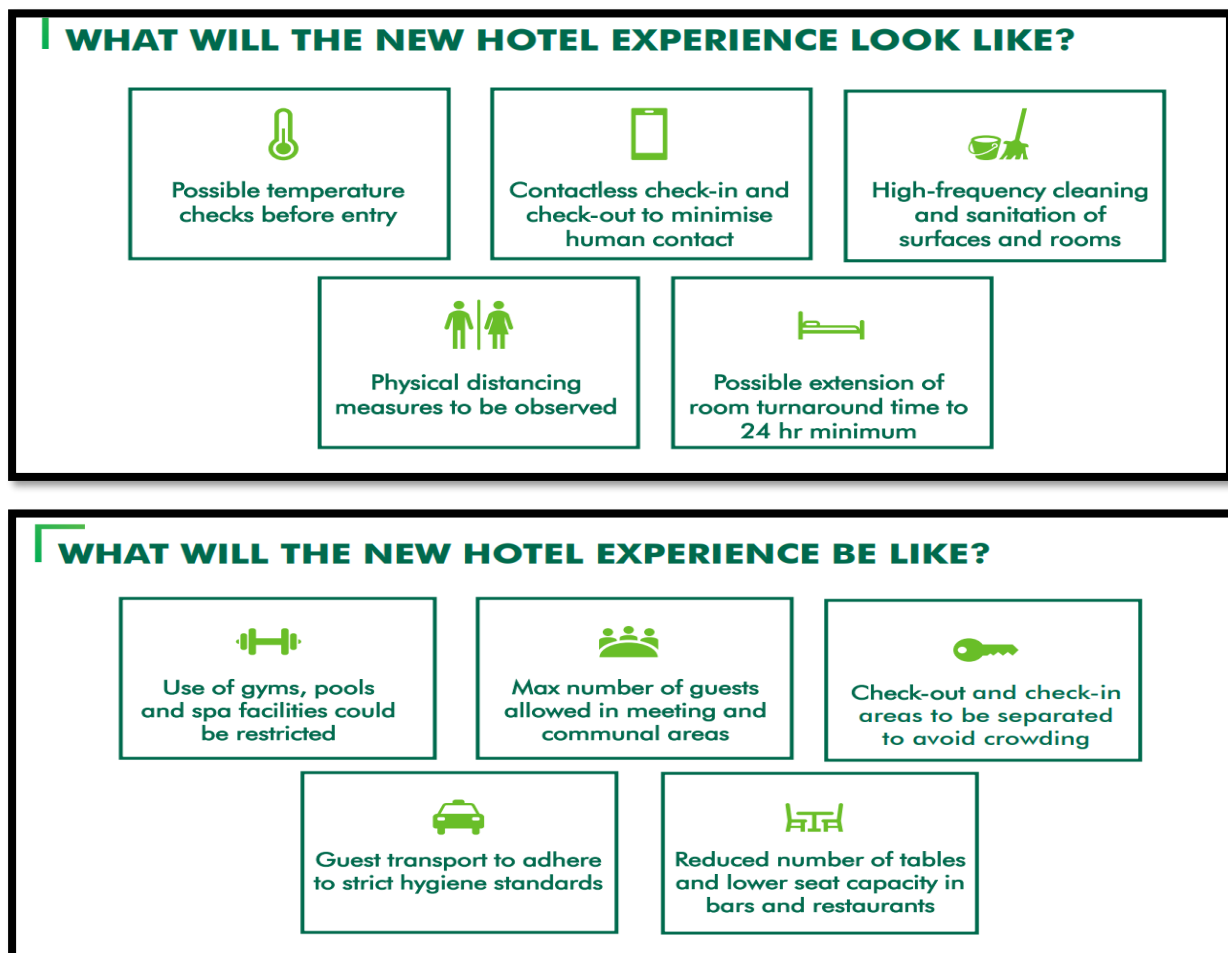

Figure 1. 1 The New Hotel Experience *(Source: CBRE Research, November 2020)*

Physical Servicescape
Originally, servicescape is defined as something related to the service encounters that occur in a physical and social environment (Bitner, 1992). In addition, servicescape explained as the service environment where interaction between customers and employees takes place which includes all tangible elements (Siu et al., 2012). This is being highlighted in Figure 1.2 that shows the elements of physical evidence. The physical servicescape comprise of facility exterior and facility interior. The figure also stated the elements of other intangibles such as business cards, stationery, and uniform. In this modern era, servicescape can also be defined as the comprehensive physical environment perceived by customers and consists of elements such as facilities, furniture, signs, temperature, noise, cleanliness (Artuğer, 2020).

SERVICESCAPE	OTHER TANGIBLES
Facility exterior	Business cards Stationery Billing statements Reports Employees dress Uniform Brochures Web pages Virtual servicescape
Exterior design Signage Parking Landscape Surrounding environment	
Facility interior	
Interior design Equipment Signage Layout Air quality/temperature	

Figure 1. 2 Elements of physical evidence *(Source: Zeithmal, 2006)*

Physical servicescape is the important element for the hotel. It is mentioned earlier that well designed servicescape is very important for service industry including hotel. It will lead to guest satisfaction as the servicescape fulfill their expectations. Initially, it is being highlighted that positive experiences is the prerequisite for customer satisfaction (Serra-Cantallops et al., 2020). Hence, good servicescape is essential and need to be considered and offered to the hotel guest to ensure satisfaction at the end of the service delivery service.

Guest Satisfaction

To establish long-term relationships with customers, the important elements that gain popularity in research topic is customer satisfaction (Cheng et al., 2019). Customer satisfactions varied because of preferences, behavior, and personality which create uniqueness in an individual. The guest impressions on physical environment may make a guest to enter or does not want to enter the business, either approach or avoidance behavior (Fidzani & Caughey, 2014).

World Tourism Organization (1985) defined tourist satisfaction as a psychological concept that involves the feeling of wellbeing and pleasure that results from fulfilment of one's hopes and expectations of an appealing product and/or service. In other words, when customer have experienced a hotel's performance that met their expectations, it will result to customer satisfaction (Ali et al., 2021). People have more intention to come back to the place they feel impressed with the environment due to higher level of pleasure and arousal (Ramlee & Said, 2014). Hence, first impression is important as it determines guest a view that influence how they see the total service. Ezeh et al (2021) stated that satisfying customers' needs is critical as hotel must understand their demographical backgrounds to excite them. For instance, guest of higher priced luxury hotel tends to be more engaged and satisfied when the atmosphere matches guest expectations of hotel level (Choi & Kandampully, 2019). It supports the facts that luxury hotel spends lots of money on the physical servicescape to attract and satisfied the hotel guest. This is also due to the more sophisticated and demanding customers of todays' hospitality industry (Ali et al., 2021). Furthermore, the satisfaction level will lead to loyalty, WOM and intention to return to the restaurant (Hanks & Line , 2018) and hotel (Artuğer, 2020).

Intention to Book

Purchase intention is defined as the probability that an individual's buying behavior will result in the purchase (Whitlark et al., 1993). The measuring of the purchase intention especially in hotel customer behavior studies has long been utilized (Boo & Park, 2019). In addition, loyalty is a good behavioral element that will normally lead and predict the behavioral intentions (Aksoy, 2013).

Purchase intention is something that is being hoped by the business and in this case is the hotel. It will lead to the increment of the hotel sales of the products and services. Customer who has options on buying or acquiring services and products from various service provider will select based on the satisfaction level acquire from the products or services. It is being emphasized that hoteliers need to understand the relationship between guests' satisfaction with the services offered by the hotel they stayed in and the intention to purchase (Boo & Park, 2019). Furthermore, positive memory will normally lead to intention to purchase.

Stimulus-Organism-Response (SOR) Theory

Many studies in service environment adapt Stimulus-Organism-Response (SOR) model in their study (Al Halbusi et al., 2020). Similarly, the conceptual framework proposed in this study will use the same theory as the underpinning theory that will support the result. In this article, we propose servicescape and its elements as *stimuli* or independent variable for the study. The *organism* is represented by guest satisfaction or the mediating variable and finally the dependent variable that is intention to book represents the *response*.

Conceptual Framework and Hypothesis

Figure 1.3 illustrates the proposed conceptual framework for the study. The framework is developed based on the Stimulus-Organism-Response (SOR) model (Mehrabian & Russell, 1974). Physical servicescape elements (ambient condition, space/function layout and sign/symbol/artefacts) are classified as the stimulus, whereby guest satisfaction and intention to book are categorized as organism and response respectively.
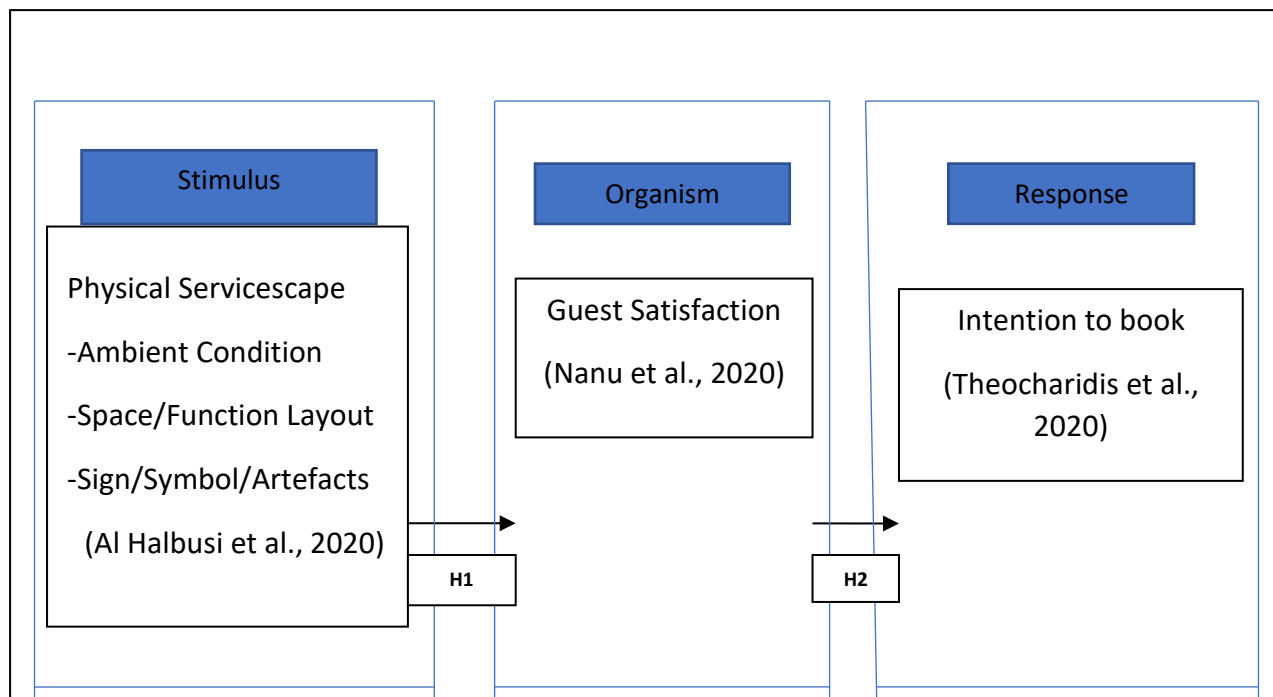
Figure 1. 3 The Conceptual Framework

Relationship between Servicescape and Guest Satisfaction

It is being mentioned earlier that well-designed servicescape is very important in service environment (Zemke et al., 2019). It is being supported by (Artuğer, 2020) that ambient conditions, decor, signs and symbols had a significant effect on customer satisfaction. The elements mentioned above are part of the physical servicescape. Thus, the below hypothesis is proposed.

H1 : There is a positive relationship between servicescape and guest satisfaction.

Relationship between Guest Satisfaction and Intention to Book

Satisfaction will normally lead to the behavioral intention by the customer consuming the products or services offered by the business. According to (Ryu & Han, 2010), customer satisfaction will normally lead to intention to repurchase, positive word of mouth and customer loyalty. Hence, the following hypothesis is developed for the present study.

H2 : There is a positive relationship between guest satisfaction and intention to book

Research Methodology

The study is categorized as basic research as the aim is to answer questions of how physical servicescape can affect guest satisfaction and intention to book a hotel room. This research is driven by curiosity and the desire to expand knowledge of physical servicescape towards guest psychology that is satisfaction.

In addition, the study will be a quantitative research. The method will focus on obtaining data through questionnaire. Online survey will be the chosen method to distribute the questionnaire to the respondent. The survey will be distributed through social media such as Facebook and Instagram. Besides that, survey will also be distributed through WhatsApp and Telegram. The target population of this research are hotel guests that have experienced hotel

lobby servicescape of luxury hotel in Malaysia for the last 6 months to 1 year. Eligible respondent should be 18 years and above and resided in Malaysia.

This study will use roscoe for the sample size as it is appropriate for most behavioral study (Putri, 2012). According to the Roscoe 'rule of thumb', a sample size greater than 30 and less than 500 is suitable for most behavioral studies (Sekaran & Bougie, 2016). It is being mentioned that as a sample size of 100 is considered small, between 100 and 200 is considered medium, and more than 200 is considered large (Hulland et al., 1996). Hence, this study will collect 200 to 300 sample. In addition, the study will use SPSS to analyze the descriptive results of the study such as the reliability and the demographic analysis. Figure 1.5 explained the difference between CBSEM and PLS. As this study will adapt CBSEM which the software involve is AMOS, the study will involve large sample (at least 200) and it will look at the relationship between constructs with underpinning theory mentioned earlier. Hence, CBSEM is the best analysis and AMOS will be the suitable software for this study.

	CBSEM (LISREL, AMOS, EQS, Mplus)	PLS (SmartPLS, PLS Graph, XLSTAT)
Theory	Strong	'Flexible'
Distribution assumptions	Multivariate normality	Non-parametric
Sample size	Large (at least 200)	Small (30-100)
Analytical focus	Confirming theoretically assumed relationships	Prediction and/or identification of relationships between constructs
Number of indicators per construct	Depending on aggregation (or parceling); ideally 4+	One or more (see consistency at large)
Indicators to construct	Mainly reflective (can use MIMIC for formative)	Both reflective and formative
Improper solutions/factor indeterminacy (unique solution)	Depends on model	Always identified
Type of measurement	Interval or ration (otherwise need PRELIS)	Categorical to ratio
Complexity of model	Large models (>100 indicators) problematic	Can deal with large models

Figure 1. 4 Difference between CBSEM and PLS *(Source: Salem et al, 2016)*

Conclusion

This study intends to examine the relationship between servicescape, guest satisfaction and intention to book a hotel room among hotel guests in Malaysia. With mass introduction and mass use of internet, it is believed that servicescape of the hotel namely physical servicescape (ambient condition, space/ function layout and sign/ symbol and artefacts) will affect guest satisfaction and lead to intention to book a hotel room (Buhalis & Leung, 2018). This is due to the tendency for the hotel guest to browse through the hotel servicescape online. Hence, the satisfaction level will be created partially before they experience it on their own. When considering the new hotel experience that might affect the physical servicescape, hotel employees need to educate hotel guest on the new norm service delivery. This is to ensure the satisfaction level remain. In the future, study might want to look at the impact of other servicescape such as social and hotel servicescape and value co-create behavior towards intention to book a hotel. It is being highlighted that co-creation consists of three imperious aspects which includes customer, firm and the interaction between the customer and the firm (Sharma, 2021).

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