

# The Influence of Servicescape Dimensions on Customer Satisfaction and Behavioral Intentions: An Examination of Casual Dining Restaurants

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## Abstract

The physical and social aspects of the service make up a different portion of the servicescape; this portion is referred to as the "social component." The result of combining all of these elements is the servicescape. While previous studies have often looked at these factors separately, the purpose of the present research is to look at both factors' effects simultaneously in the context of casual dining establishments. The purpose of this is to have a deeper comprehension of the ways in which these two elements impact consumer behavior. This will be carried out for the purpose to have a better understanding of the relationship that these two elements have. Structural equation modeling was used to examine the data collected from 462 clients in Delhi who completed a questionnaire regarding the purpose of the assignment. The results show that, in along with the physical parts of the servicescape, the social characteristics also play a role in influencing customers' level of satisfaction, which can impact their behavior going forward.

**Keywords:** Servicescape, Physical Servicescape, Customer Satisfaction, Dining Restaurant

## Introduction

Managers in the service industry have known for some time that creating a pleasant and effective service environment is crucial. This is especially crucial in the hospitality sector, where customers may spend anywhere from a couple of hours at a restaurant to multiple weeks at a resort over the course of a summer vacation. Regardless of the duration or location of the encounter, the service environment's design plays a crucial role in influencing customers' perceptions of their experience and subsequent actions after making a purchase.

"Servicescape" is a term used by Bitner (1992) to describe the environment in which hospitable is experienced. such "the landscape" as well as "tablescape," "servicescape" describes the optimum operation and visual appeal of a certain area, such a place of consumption. This includes the physical layout, such as the arrangement of furniture and directional signage, the atmosphere, which includes lighting,

temperature, fragrance, music, and the decor, which includes artwork, branding elements, and thematic decorations. Numerous studies conducted over the past few decades have demonstrated how tangible and physical attributes of the consumption environment, despite being inanimate, have a significant impact on consumer behaviors related to hospitality consumption. This includes visceral reactions, levels of satisfaction, intentions to return, and word-of-mouth recommendations.

Modern servicescape theories stress the importance of a holistic approach to consumer space planning and management. This viewpoint acknowledges the significant contributions of academic research to enhancing space design in the hospitality industry. Supporters of this viewpoint argue that although the arrangement, atmosphere, and aesthetics are important physical elements of the servicescape, a thorough examination should also consider the social players who bring life to the consumption environment. In alternative terms, contemporary viewpoints on consuming settings emphasize the necessity of doing a comprehensive analysis of both the tangible and intangible aspects of the servicescape.

Many different terms have been used to describe the social service landscape. It extends beyond the primary consumer to include coworkers and anyone who is directly involved in providing service to them. Kim & Lee (2012), argue that the social aspect of the servicescape emphasizes the existence of social others rather than their active participation. Typically, social service interactions are passive and indirect. From restaurants and bars to casinos and hotels, and even entire tourist hotspots, research into the social servicescape has uncovered far-reaching consequences for both fellow customers and service workers.

In conclusion, the social servicescape which is distinct from the servicescape's more widely acknowledged physical component is becoming more and more acknowledged as a crucial component of the whole. This article's objective is to investigate how a social servicescape affects consumers' inclination to act and be satisfied.

## Literature Review & Theoretical Background

### Stimulus-Organism-Response Framework

Within the context with the stimuli-organism-response (S-O-R) hypothesis, the current investigation was conceived. The inner states (O) and ensuing behavioral reactions (R) are influenced by external stimuli (S) (Ahn & Seo, 2018). Cognitive and emotional states are altered through sensory interaction, which in turn influences behavior (Ahn & Seo, 2018). According to S-O-R, environmental signals have an impact on customers' behavioral intentions. The impacts of many stimuli can be examined with the use of the framework. The S-O-R model was used to classify restaurant social servicescape into three distinct groups: Employees, Customers, and Physical.

Three distinct phases make up the dining experience, each of which is important in and of itself (Wijaya et al., 2013; Wijaya, 2014; Richterová, 2016). The appearance, behavior, and congruence of employees with the customers affect the dining experience. Pizam & Tasci, (2019) assert that the attributes of fellow consumers within the service setting hold significant importance in shaping the service experience. Recent research has demonstrated that directing attention towards social density elucidates the manner in which customer interactions significantly impact the perception of service quality.

### Casual dining restaurants

The restaurant business is evolving, but operators still need to keep an eye on things like logistics, kitchen cleanliness, customer service, and more. When going out to dine, whether with loved ones or just for a treat, people aim to boost their spirits, fill their bellies, and have a wonderful time. You can't expect takeout to taste as well as restaurant fare if all you do is place an order and wait. You can tell a good casual eating establishment by the standard of its cuisine, atmosphere, and cutlery. Both the restaurant owner and the diner work together to provide a memorable meal.

Food in the CDR is famous for being freshly made and tastefully designed, so charging a bit more for it is not always wrong. How well a company cares for its customers and serves their needs is the key to its success.

## Employee Servicescape

The people of an organization have a crucial role in defining the firm's image from the perspective of the client. This is primarily due to the fact that they often serve as the first point of contact (Nguyen, 2006). The wait staff's traits and behavior significantly impact customers' assessments, perceptions, satisfaction, and actions (Pizam et al., 2016). According to Nugden (2006), customers commonly assess the efficacy of service staff by considering their external appearance, level of skill, and behavior. This assertion holds true even when there is an indirect interaction with a specific employee (Line & Hanks, 2017; Cho, 2024; Hai & Duong 2024; Min et al., 2024; Kumar et al., 2023; Rodríguez Pérez, 2023).

The presence, demeanor, and appearance of the staff can have a significant effect on customer satisfaction and their subsequent behavior (Hanks & Line, 2018; Martin & Pranter, 1989). Customers' views and actions can be influenced by employees' presence in a service setting, and the characteristics displayed by these workers can considerably shape the overall experience of the customers (Martin & Pranter, 1989). Customers' impressions of a restaurant are influenced in no small part by the way its staff members look. According to Hildebrandt, (1988) this feature eventually becomes identified with the establishment's character. Based on the service provider's efforts and skills, which are inferred from a number of behavioral clues that reflect warmth, understanding, and attentiveness, customers automatically evaluate the quality of a service encounter, as discovered by Specht, Fitchel & Meyer, (2007).

Liu & Jang, (2009) discovered that the appearance of employees was crucial in determining consumer satisfaction and loyalty. Magnini et al., (2013) made a similarly groundbreaking discovery when they found that employees' facial traits, like whether or not they sported facial hair, were highly predictive of how customers would rate the quality of service they received. Researchers Liu & Jang, (2009) found that customers were more satisfied and loyal to businesses when employees took pride in their appearance. According to Baker & Kim (2018), a service provider's outward appearance has a profound impact on

the quality of their interactions with customers.

According to Martin & Pranter, (1989), customers have a tendency to favor interactions with employees that they view as sharing similarities with themselves. This inclination is partly driven by the notion that such similarity increases the ability to anticipate and fulfill their desires, inclinations, and goals. According to the research conducted by Netemeyer et al., (2012), the level of perceived similarity between consumer and service personnel during a contact has the potential to influence several outcomes, such as customer happiness, brand loyalty, and spending behavior.

## Customer Servicescape

The presence of other customers in a setting where service is being provided can have both direct and indirect effects on a person's level of happiness (Martin & Pranter, 1989). Bitner, (1992) and (Huang, 2008) also supported that, as a consequence of this, several other clients are typically considered to be essential constituents of the service environment itself. Just as staff members possess the capacity to shape a customer's experience, the attributes, resemblances, and behaviors of fellow customers can exert an equally substantial influence on the overall perception. Pizam & Tasci, (2019) assert that a significant determinant of the holistic service experience lies in the attributes of fellow consumers inside the service environment. The research conducted by Jang et al., (2015) demonstrated that the customer servicescape has a significant impact on consumers' perceptions, evaluations, levels of satisfaction, and behaviors.

It is normal for there to be other consumers present during service interactions (Tombs & McColl-Kennedy, 2003; Mishra et al., 2023). Therefore, it is important to consider the integration of these consumers within the hospitality service environment. According to Baker, Parasuraman, Grewal & Voss (2002), as well as Huber and McCann (1982), it is posited that other customers play a role as providers of cues that the primary customer utilizes to evaluate the quality of service. Significantly, the aforementioned consumers are persons who not only get services but also display emotions and behaviors that have the potential to impact the evaluation of the service by the

primary customers (Tombs & McColl-Kennedy, 2003; Hanks et al., 2017).

### Physical Servicescape

Bitner's (1992) conceptual framework describing the physical servicescape provides the theoretical foundation for this study on the physical elements essential to the casual eating experience. The physical servicescape, particularly in full-service restaurants, has been the subject of much research. While there are many similarities between full-service and casual eating establishments, there are also specific factors that may affect how the servicescape affects customer outcomes in each category. Typically, diners at full-service restaurants remain longer than those at casual dining establishments. Because of this, individuals spend significantly more time interacting with the tangible elements of the servicescape. Unlike patrons of full-service restaurants, casual eating establishments tend to cater more to the social and nutritional needs of its patrons than to those of celebratory events, romantic dates, or relaxation after a demanding workweek. The influence of servicescape ambiance affects customer satisfaction with casual eating restaurants requires empirical investigation due to these discrepancies. Scholarly interest in the effects of these contextual elements on customer perceptions and actions has increased recently (Mari & Poggesi, 2013; Parasuraman et al., 1988).

### Customer Satisfaction and Behavior Intentions in Restaurants

To ensure the success of any business, it is essential to prioritize the fulfillment of the needs and expectations of its clientele. The degree to which a consumer is satisfied with their purchase might be seen as a post-purchase measure of how they feel about the product. According to studies (Zeithaml et al., 1996; Baker & Crompton, 2000), satisfied clients are more likely to promote a company and spread favorable feedback about it. This is because they feel that the company has satisfied their needs.

According to Fishbein's (2008), theory of reasoned action, behavioral intention is the mechanism by which attitudes and individual norms influence future actions. This

highlights the pivotal role of behavioral intention within the framework of the theory.

These theories have been developed in relation to casual eating establishments based on the previously listed literature. Figure 1 displays a diagrammatic illustration of the same:

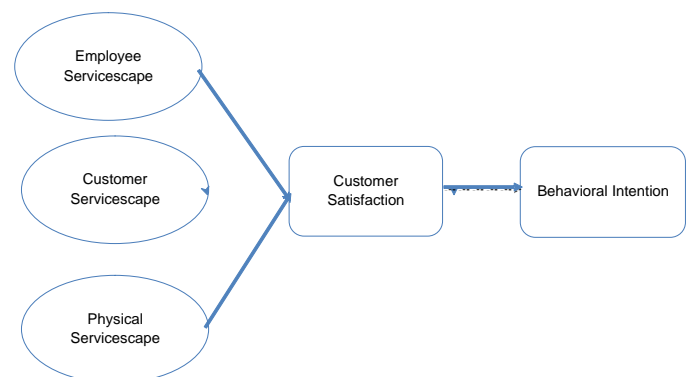
H1: Employee Servicescape positively affects customer satisfaction while dining.

H2: Customer Servicescape positively affects customer satisfaction while dining.

H3: Physical Servicescape positively affects customer satisfaction while dining.

H4: Customer satisfaction positively affects behavioral intention.

**Figure 1: Research Model**



### Methodology

Using a quantitative survey questionnaire, this study looked into how different aspects of service technology affected customer satisfaction and behavioral intention. A questionnaire was distributed to 892 customers, out of whom 462 were found suitable for the study. Table 1 represent the demographic details of all the respondents. All the participants had had at least one-time dining experience in the past year in casual dining restaurants. Here, the seven-point Likert scale was used for data collection, where '1 represents strongly disagree and 7 represents strongly agree'.

**Table 1: Demographic characteristics**

Demographics	Number	Percent (%)
<b>Gender</b>		
Male	239	51.7
Female	223	48.3
<b>Age Group</b>		
18-21 years	98	21.2
22-25 years	129	27.9
26-29 years	145	31.4
30 years and above	90	19.5
<b>Annual Income</b>		
Less than 2 lakhs	94	20.3
2-4 lakhs	70	15.2
5-7 lakhs	185	40.1
8 lakhs and above	113	24.4
<b>Employment Type</b>		
Unemployed	2	0.4
Student	257	55.6
Public Sector	12	2.6
Private Sector	126	27.3
Self-employed	65	14.1
<b>Restaurant Visitation Frequency</b>		
<3 times/month	197	42.6
>3 times/month	265	57.4

### Reliability and Validity Results

The focus of this study is to evaluate the instrument's reliability. In order to achieve this objective, the researchers utilized Cronbach's Alpha as a measure of the internal consistency of the variable. The study found that the proposed model had a reliability value of 0.915%, exceeding the established standard of 0.7% (Mishra & Kumar, 2023; Henseler, Ringle, & Sinkovics, 2009; Nunnally, 1978). In addition, it became clear that ensuring

the reliability of each individual construct was of utmost importance the details of all the items are represented in Table 2.

Calculating the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) and Composite Reliability (CR) for each construct was used to evaluate convergent reliability. With  $AVE > 0.05$  and  $CR > 0.70$  across all constructs, the results demonstrated the significance of convergent reliability. Given that the correlation estimates for each construct were uniformly

positive and the p-values for the covariances between constructs were noteworthy, the assessment of the instrument's nomological validity attracted attention as well.

The discriminant validity results were also positive, with the AVE of each construct exceeding the inter-construct correlation value squared. These findings collectively demonstrate the model's dependability and suitability for this research.

**Table 2: Items Descriptive and Factor Loadings**

Construct	Measurement Item	Cronbach Alpha	Source	SRW	Mean	SD	Factor Loading
<b>Employee Servicescape (Morkunas and Rudiene, 2020) Cronbach Alpha= 0.91, AVE= 0.526, CR=0.851</b>							
<b>Employee Servicescape</b>	ESP 1	0.91	Source	0.762	3.54	1.001	0.662
	ESP 2			0.812	3.68	0.872	0.719
	ESP 3			0.617	3.92	0.781	0.562
	ESP 4			0.679	3.45	0.812	0.799
	ESP 5			0.772	3.71	0.772	0.797
<b>Customer Servicescape (Morkunas and Rudiene, 2020) Cronbach Alpha= 0.87, AVE= 0.511, CR= 0.874</b>							
<b>Customer Servicescape</b>	CSP 1	0.87	Source	0.751	3.67	0.819	0.671
	CSP 2			0.683	3.56	0.872	0.694
	CSP 3			0.822	3.89	0.864	0.782
	CSP 4			0.819	3.12	0.851	0.753
	CSP 5			0.798	3.26	0.894	0.567
<b>Physical Servicescape (Line and Hanks, 2019) Cronbach Alpha= 0.93, AVE= 0.592, CR= 0.866</b>							
<b>Physical Servicescape</b>	PSP 1	0.93	Source	0.769	3.31	0.743	0.684
	PSP 2			0.828	3.87	0.784	0.692
	PSP 3			0.665	3.65	0.792	0.609
	PSP 4			0.751	3.81	0.742	0.713
	PSP 5			0.763	3.78	0.751	0.774
<b>Customer Satisfaction (Line and Hanks, 2019), Cronbach Alpha= 0.88, AVE= 0.614, CR= 0.792</b>							
<b>Customer Satisfaction</b>	CSN 1	0.88	Source	0.783	3.61	0.795	0.559
	CSN 2			0.811	3.78	0.783	0.734
	CSN 3			0.882	3.19	0.759	0.785
	CSN 4			0.795	3.83	0.745	0.692
	CS 5			0.811	3.74	0.791	0.771

Construct	Measurement Item	Cronbach Alpha	Source	SRW	Mean	SD	Factor Loading
<b>Behavioral Intention (Line and Hanks, 2019), Cronbach Alpha= 0.89, AVE= 0.588, CR= 0.875</b>							
<b>Behavioral Intention</b>	BI 1	0.89	Source	0.881	3.98	0.782	0.617
	BI 2			0.879	3.76	0.748	0.785
	BI 3			0.865	3.53	0.801	0.771
	BI 4			0.849	3.28	0.869	0.795

**Table 3: Model Fit Indicators**

Fit Index	GFI	CFI	TLI	CMIN/df	RMSEA
<b>Achieved Value</b>	0.862	0.921	0.91	1.873	0.065
<b>Threshold of Acceptance</b>	>0.80	>0.90	>0.90	As high as 5.0	<0.07

The CFA approach essentially determines how well a certain model factor represents the data. Model fit indices can be used to investigate this; if the parameters of the model fit are determined to be good, the model is validated.

The results indicated the goodness of fit of the model with the values of CMIN/df = 1.873 as high as 5.0 (Kline, 1998), CFI = 0.921, > .90 (Hu & Bentler, 1999), TLI = 0.91, > .90

(Hooper et al., 2008), GFI = 0.862; RMSEA = 0.065 < 0.07 (Steiger, 1990). The results indicate that the relationships suggested in the model are significantly related, as the relationships between variables are significant (p-value < 0.5) Table 3 represents the actual value of the model as well as the threshold value of each indicator.

**Table 4: Model Summary of Regression Analysis**

	R <sup>2</sup>			Se	t	P	Hypothesis
<b>Employee Servicescape---&gt;CSN</b>	0.734	Constant Pre-dining Service Technology Attributes	0.378 0.679	0.126 0.029	2.897 23.76	0.002 0.000	<b>H1 Supported</b>
<b>Customer Servicescape ---&gt;CSN</b>	0.189	Constant On-site Service Technology Attributes	3.54 -0.15	0.095 0.051	36.31 -2.78	0.000 0.009	<b>H2 Supported</b>
<b>Physical Servicescape---&gt;CSN</b>	0.683	Constant Post-Dining Service Technology Attributes	1.02 0.891	0.156 0.045	8.04 21.182	0.000 0.000	<b>H3 Supported</b>

	R <sup>2</sup>		$\beta$	Se	t	P	Hypothesis
CSN--- >Behavioral Intentions	0.817	Constant	0.297	0.034	8.56	0.000	<b>H4 Supported</b>
		CS	0.431	0.014	31.67	0.047	

It can be observed Employee Servicescape has a significant impact on CSN, where the values are  $\beta$  (0.679),  $t$  (23.76), and  $p < 0.05$ . This leads to the acceptance of Hypothesis 1 (H1) as presented in Table 4. It can be confirmed that Customer Servicescape has a significant impact on CS, where the values are  $B$  (-0.15),  $t$  (-2.78), and  $p < 0.05$ . This leads to the acceptance of Hypothesis 2 (H2). Physical Servicescape has a significant impact on CS, where the values are  $B$  (.891),  $t$  (21.182), and  $p < 0.05$ . This leads to the acceptance of Hypothesis 3 (H3). CS has a significant impact on Behavioral Intention, where the values are  $B$  (.431),  $t$  (31.67), and  $p < 0.05$ . This leads to the acceptance of Hypothesis 4 (H4).

## Conclusion

Casual dining restaurants generate a considerable amount of revenue and continue to grow in prominence. With so many people frequenting casual eating establishments, it's crucial to understand how the atmosphere and the people there affect the quality of service and the meal. There has been a recent trend in scholarly attention towards the analysis of the impacts of the social servicescape. Recent research has shifted its emphasis from comprehending the effects of the physical servicescape on a variety of consumer outcomes to understanding the implications of the social servicescape, in contrast to the majority of previous studies, which were primarily concerned with the effects of the physical servicescape on consumer outcomes.

The results demonstrate conclusively that the restaurant's physical servicescape, the employee servicescape, and the customer servicescape exert a significant influence on customer satisfaction and behavior. These findings are significant because they represent progress toward a more comprehensive understanding of how the material and interpersonal characteristics of the service environment interact to shape the perceptions and evaluations of the most important customers.

## Limitations and Future Research

Despite the undeniable contribution that this study makes to our understanding of the evaluative and behavioral effects associated with both the social and physical servicescape, it is essential to acknowledge the research's limitations. Several moderators have the potential to influence consumer perceptions of social service environment factors. Prior research demonstrates that customer perceptions of the service environment can vary depending on restaurant type and the presence or absence of entertainment options. It's important to note that this study only looked at casual dining restaurants, where interactions between customers and staff happen more often than in Quick Service Restaurants (QSRs), Cloud Kitchens, and hotels. Since there aren't as many chances to talk to people in these later situations, the impact of the social servicescape may be less obvious.

Furthermore, it is essential to acknowledge that investigating the affective and cognitive evaluations of various social servicescape elements represents a promising avenue for future research. These dimensions have the potential to substantially influence consumer satisfaction, perceptions, and actions, thus justifying the need for additional research.

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### Authors' contributions

All authors contributed toward data analysis, drafting and revising the paper and agreed to be responsible for all the aspects of this work.

### Declaration of Conflicts of Interests

Authors declare that they have no conflict of interest.



### Data Availability Statement

The database generated and /or analysed during the current study are not publicly available due to privacy, but are available from the corresponding author on reasonable request.

### Declarations

Author(s) declare that all works are original and this manuscript has not been published in any other journal.

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