

# Servicescape and Customer Behavioral Intention: The Impact of Servicescape on Customer Emotion Responses towards Customer Satisfaction and Behavioral Intention in Local Coffee Shops in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

Sang-Hyeop Lee<sup>1</sup>, Liew KharKhiaw<sup>1</sup> and Dong-Ho Kim<sup>2¶</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Centre for Tourism, Hospitality, and Culinary Management, Sunway University

<sup>2¶</sup>Department of Baking Technology, Hyejeon College

**ABSTRACT:** There are limited resources on how servicescape influence customer emotions and respond towards customer satisfaction and behavioral intention. Hence, this research investigates how servicescape influence customer behavioral intention in local coffee shops in Kuala Lumpur by using Multiple Regression analysis. This study mainly focus on three environmental dimensions, which are the facility aesthetics, music and layout accessibility. Based on the result, it shows that both music and layout accessibility are significant factors that greatly influence customer satisfaction and behavioral intention. Overall, this research indicates that managers should realise that music and layout accessibility play an important role to influence customers eating out at coffee shops.

**Keywords:** servicescape, satisfaction, behavioral intention, emotion responses

## INTRODUCTION

Coffee is one of the most widely consumed and popular beverage in the world (Taylor & Demmig-Adams 2007). Nearly 500 billion cups of coffee are consumed annually throughout the world (Bidel & Tuomilehto 2013). The size of the coffee industry has increased significantly over the past decades. Based on Kalidas & Zeeshan (2014), more people are drinking coffee in Malaysia and this phenomenon has brought in a lot of both international and local merchants to invest in a high-quality coffee shop. Coffee sales were RM37.28 million in year 2011 and is estimated an increase to RM42.90 million in year 2016.

The term 'servicescape' is define as a physical, manmade environment which different from a natural or social environment (Rosenbaum & Massiah 2011), it is then categorised into three types of dimensions by Bitner (1992) of the physical surrounding which is 'ambient conditions', 'space and functions' and 'sign, symbols and artifacts'. Servicescape is one of the most critical elements that greatly affect customers' emotions which lead to customer satisfaction and behavioral intention while utilizing the products or services in the food service industry. For example, one of the servicescape dimension, music is able to influence customers' spending power in a restaurant setting (Caldwell & Hibbert 1999). Moreover, servicescape is a significant factor that in-

¶ Corresponding Author: Dong-Ho Kim, Department of Baking Technology, Hyejeon College, 25, Daehakgil Hongsung Eup, Hongsung Gun, Chung Nam, 32244, South Korea, Tel : +82-10-5413-7761, Fax : +82-41-630-5299, E-mail: dhk5299@hj.ac.kr

fluence customers' behavioral intentions in leisure service settings (Wakefield & Blodgett 1996). Servicescape is an influential factor determining how customers respond in a service industry, therefore research can be conducted to study how servicescape affect the customers' emotions and behavioral intentions in local coffee shops setting.

The purpose of this study were (1) To study the relationship between the facility aesthetics and customer emotions, (2) To investigate the relationship between the music and customer emotions, (3) To explore the relationship between the layout accessibility and customer emotions, (4) To test the relationship between customer emotions and customer satisfaction, (5) To examine the relationship between customer emotions and behavioral intention, (6) To identify the effect of customer satisfaction on behavioral intention in local coffee shop in Kuala Lumpur.

## BACKGROUND AND HYPOTHESES

### *Facility Aesthetics*

Facility aesthetics is considered to be one of the most important factors in various service settings (Ryu & Han 2010). Facility aesthetics are the functions of the architectural design, artwork and decorative items plus the interior design, which influence the appeal of the servicescape (Wakefield & Blodgett 1996). Firm uses architectural designs, artifacts, drawings and decorative items to build aesthetic impression (Zeithaml et al 2006) in order to let customers to understand the theme of the place. For instance, Olive garden chain restaurant uses Italian-themed artifacts to enhance customers feeling of entering an Italian restaurant or Italy itself. Once customers entered to a firm which provide service facilities like restaurants, they are more likely to observe (consciously and subconsciously) the designs and décor of the facility that would affect their perceptions towards the service facility (Ryu & Jang 2007). Previous scholars found that physical environment of various service settings have a significant effect on customers' perception of the facilities; the reason is because customers would make judgement based on the atmospheric elements in the facilities (Jang & Namkung 2009).

### *Music*

Music has been studied and proved to be a significant impact as one of the ambient condition variables to customer behavioral intentions in shopping mall and restaurants (Caldwell & Hibbert 1999). It would be a great help to the service managers if they are able to understand the effects of music on customers (Morrison et al 2011). The reason is it is cheap and easy to control as compare to other elements of the environment. Numerical studies have showed that music tempo in shopping mall would affect the pace of shopping, the time span of staying, and the amount of money spent (Bitner, 1992). A research has done in a wine cellar by playing classical music and top-forty music to examine the impact of the background music on purchasing behaviour (Areni & Kim 1993). The result was not significant in terms of bottle sold but more expensive wine were sold when classical music is played compare to top-forty music.

### *Layout Accessibility*

Layout accessibility is very important in service settings as it affect significantly towards customers' emotions and behavioral intention in the facilities (Lee et al 2014). Besides, a layout might have a significant impact on customers' quality perception towards the facilities, excitement levels, and indirectly on the desire to return (Ryu & Jang 2007). As supported by some scholars said that people have a strong need to know where they are or able to find their way in an unfamiliar environments (Lucas 2012). Layout accessibility define as the way items (e.g., equipment, machinery and furniture), service areas and corridors are arranged within an environment (Bitner 1992). Studies have done and proved that the spatial layout of the environment would show significant effect to the customers in the service settings as space is necessary for moving around and comfortable sitting environment (Han & Ryu 2009), thus a functional layout accessibility would prevent the customers in the restaurant feeling crowded.

### *Customer Emotions*

Customer emotions have been identified to be an important key contributor to the service industry

(Ryu & Jang 2007). Defining the MR model (Mehrabian & Russel, 1974), customers emotions are influenced by the degree of exposure towards particular stimuli physical environment of the facility (Kim & Moon 2009). The effect is significant enough for the customers on the selection of service provider, perception towards service quality, the possibility of repeat customer and development of brand loyalty (Barsky & Nash 2002). Emotions are often define as two independent dimension which is positive and negative affect. However there is research proved that different emotions would lead to vary behavioral intentions (Mattila & Ro 2008). Moreover, emotions have great effect on customer satisfaction and found that positive emotions would lead to positive customer satisfaction (Lee et al 2014).

#### *Customer Satisfaction*

Customer satisfaction is a crucial factor in restaurant settings as it is proved to be a major contributor to a company's success in terms of customer retention, loyalty, positive word-of-mouth, long-term profitability (Ryu et al 2008). Moreover, customer satisfaction is an essential factor for organizations to build a long term relationship with their customers 'because it is cheaper to keep existing customers than recruit new customers (Amoako et al 2012). There are several ways in defining customer satisfaction based on previous scholars. According to Lee et al (2013), satisfaction is defined as an overall decision process of the perceived differences between previous expectation and the actual quality of usage. Another approach is based on disconfirmation theory, satisfaction can be define as the end result of an evaluation between the consumers' expectations of the product or service and their actual experience (Clemes et al 2010). Constantly provide quality products and services that satisfy customers would result in more frequent purchase, greater volume and purchase other services and products offered by the organization (Reichheld & Sasser 1989).

#### *Behavioral Intention*

Behavioral intention considered to be one of the key factors to the service industry as the construct is closely related with customer repurchase intention, loyalty and customer retention (Hu et al 2009).

The positive intention to return back to the same service facility would result in reduce marketing costs, brand loyalty, and promote favourable word of mouth communication (Clemes et al 2010). On the other hand, undesirable behavioral intention will outcome negative customer responses. For example, complaint behaviour and switching (Lobo et al 2007). It is defined as the degree to which a person has developed conscious ideas to carry out or not carry out some specified future behaviour (Namkung & Jang 2010). Even though arguments about the level of correlation between the behavioral intention and the actual action are still occurring, but generally agree that behavioral intention is a feasible variable for studying future behaviour (Liu & Jang 2009). Over the past decades, there are numerous research have been done on behavioral intention in different service context. One of the scholars study on repurchase intentions (behavioral intention) and result show that there is a positive relationship exist between customer satisfactions, service quality and repurchase intention (Cronin & Taylor 1992).

## **METHODOLOGY**

### *Survey and Sampling*

#### *1) Measure*

A survey form was developed based on related literatures of the research by previous scholars. The self-administrated questionnaire included twenty nine items divided into seven sections: (a) Demographic questions; (b) Facility Aesthetics (five items) based on Wakefield & Blodgett (1996); (c) Music (three items) adopted from Baker's (1986) and North & Hargreaves (1998); (d) Layout Accessibility (four items) adopted from Kim & Moon (2009); (e) Customer Emotions (three items) adopted from Mehrabian and Russell (1974). The Mehrabian and Russell measurement was modified to adapt coffee shop context. Items for emotions was separated into 2 parts: pleasure and arousal. Pleasure comprises of 2 items which is unhappy- happy and annoyed- pleased. Arousal comprises of 1 item which is depressed-cheerful. (f) Customer Satisfaction (two items) adopted from Oliver (1997); (g) Behavioral

Intention (three items) based on Zeithaml et al (1996). Respondents were asked to rate what they thought about the characteristics of the environment when they are in the coffee shop. They rate each items using 5-point Likert scale, (1=strongly disagree; 5=strongly agree). The reliability of measurements was used by Cronbach’s alpha. It showed that the alpha values exceeded the conventional cut-off point of 0.70 (Nunnally 1978).

2) Data Collection

A self-developed survey forms was distributed directly confronting to 308 respondents over twelve days in January 2015 at 8 coffee shops in Kuala Lumpur area of Malaysia. All the respondents were briefed through the meaning of each measurement items. Each respondent was requested to answer the questions in the survey form based on his or her own experience in that particular café. Out of 308 returned questionnaires, 302 remained after removing 6 questionnaires that found missing information.

RESULTS

Demographic Profile of the Sample

The sample (n=302) was 45.7% male (n=138) and 54.3% female (n=164). The age of respondents were ranged from 18 to over 60 years. Majority of the respondents aged between 18 to 29 years (41.1%), second were 30 to 39 years (28.8%). As for annual income, most of them were less than RM20, 000 (38.7%), followed by earning RM20, 000 to

RM40, 000 (26.2%). Majority of the respondents’ education level were at Diploma (39.4%), next was Degree (30.5%). Most of the respondents visited the café once a week (45.4%), followed by 2 to 4 times a week (37.4%). Many of them stayed at the café for 1 to 3 hours (49.4%), followed by spending less than 1 hour at café (27.5%).

Correlation Analysis

A correlation matrix of the variables was utilised to test the discriminant and convergent validity of the acquired measures. This matrix analyse the relationship between two variables, it can have positive or negative, little or no relationship between the variables (Taylor, 1990). A correlation coefficient that is near to +1 signifies a positive relationship between the variables, whereas a correlation coefficient that is near to -1 shows a negative relationship between the two variables (Taylor, 1990). This study shows the correlation pattern within indices are not the same compare with the correlation patterns between indices. The correlations within indices are unusually greater than those between indices.

Regression Analysis

Multiple regression was utilised to test the significance of the dependant variables and the significance level between the hypotheses (Stolzenberg, 2004). Table 1 illustrates the relationship of customer emotions and other selected variables. The regression analysis shows that Music ( $t=2.352, p<.05$ ) and Layout Accessibility ( $t=5.136, p<.01$ ) had

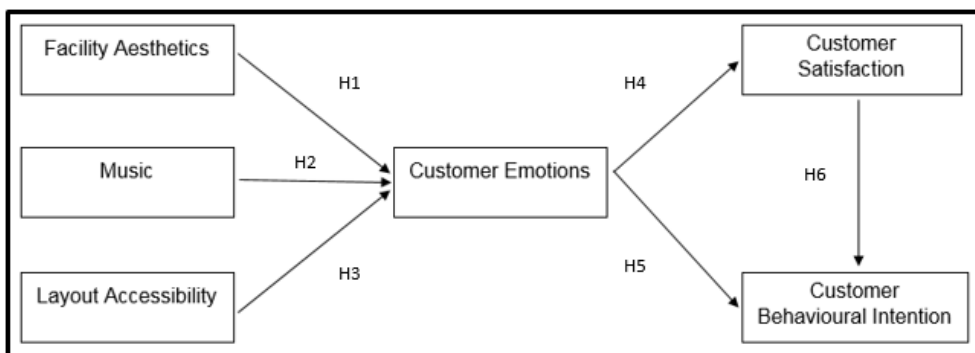


Figure 1. Conceptual model.

Table 1. Standardized regression coefficients predicting customer emotions

Independent variables	Customer emotions	
	Model 1	Model 2
Control variables		
Gender	.003	.006
Length of stay at the coffee shop		
Less than 1 hour	.072	.049
1~3 hours	.102	.062
3~5 hours	.031	.064
More than 5 hours	.042	.049
Time visited at the coffee shop		
Once a week	.061	.059
2~4 times a week	.075	.061
5~7 times a week	.077	.048
More than 7 times a week	.039	.072
Hypothesized variables		
Facility aesthetics		.024
Music		.153*
Layout accessibility		.496**
$R^2$	.018	.385

\*  $p < .05$ , \*\*  $p < .01$ .

a significant effect on customer emotions. Hence, hypothesis 2 and 3 were supported. Music, Layout Accessibility and control variable (i.e., gender, length of stay at the coffee shop, time visited at the coffee shop) described 38.5% of variance in customer emotions. Table 2 shows the relationship between customer satisfaction and customer emotions. The regression analysis shows that customer satisfaction had a significant effect on customer emotions ( $t=17.574$ ,  $p < .01$ ), hence hypothesis 4 is supported. Customer emotions and control variables indicated 32.6% of variance in customer satisfaction. Table 3 shows the relationship among behavioral intention, customer emotions and customer satisfaction. The regression analysis indicates that customer emotions ( $t=11.604$ ,  $p < .01$ ) and customer satisfaction ( $t=9.306$ ,  $p < .01$ ) had a significant influence on behavioral intention. Hence, supporting hypothesis 5 and 6. Customer emotions, customer satisfaction and control variables explained

52.2% of variance behavioral intention.

## CONCLUSION

Due to the rising numbers of café opened in Malaysia, people are paying more attention into servicescape, customer emotions, customer satisfaction and behavioral intention. Based on Bitner's (1992) conceptual framework, it stated that physical environment in service industry plays an important role in influencing human behaviour and emotional status. This study verified that the physical settings do impact on customers' emotion, satisfaction and behavioral intention in the context of local coffee shop. The result of this study showed that there was no significant impact towards facility aesthetics on customer emotions. The attractiveness of the coffee shop does not affect much on customer emotions mainly due to most of the local coffee shops in Malaysia do not emphasize on the exterior but focus

Table 2. Standardized regression coefficients predicting customer satisfaction

Independent variables	Customer satisfaction	
	Model 1	Model 2
Control variables		
Gender	.034	.047
Length of stay at the coffee shop		
Less than 1 hour	.033	.042
1~3 hours	.054	.087
3~5 hours	.064	.064
More than 5 hours	.025	.033
Time visited at the coffee shop		
Once a week	.042	.071
2~4 times a week	.072	.047
5~7 times a week	.085	.067
More than 7 times a week	.038	.045
Hypothesized variables		
Customer emotions		.685**
$R^2$	.022	.326

\*  $p < .05$ , \*\*  $p < .01$ .

more on the food. Based on Wakefield & Blodgett (1996), the appearance is just a first impression for the customers to judge about the café. On the other hand, the result showed that music and layout accessibility play an important role affecting customer emotions. Besides, customer emotions prove to be important in affecting customer satisfaction. In addition, both customer emotions and customer satisfaction have a significant impact on behavioral intention. Customer satisfaction is an important factor that affects customers' revisit intention and positive word-of-mouth (Ryu & Han 2010).

This study provides meaningful theoretical and managerial implications. From the theoretical point of view, this study offers information about customers' emotion, satisfaction and behavioral intentions of the local coffee industry in Kuala Lumpur. This study showed that music and layout accessibility have a significant impact on customer emotions and positive customer emotion and satisfaction would lead to positive behavioral intention, for instance positive word-of-mouth and revisit intention. It also

suggested that administrators should look into music and layout accessibility whenever evaluating customers' emotion and satisfaction on local coffee shop in Kuala Lumpur.

As for managerial point of view, the result of this study aid managers to have a better understanding that music and layout accessibility would contribute either positive or negative customer emotions that would eventually affect customers' satisfaction and behavioral intentions. Managers that effectively improve on the music selection and layout accessibility of the coffee shop would expect high level of behavioral intentions (e.g., intention to stay longer, intention of revisiting and intention of spreading positive word-of-mouth). Hence, improving customers' emotion and satisfaction is the key to succeed in the coffee shop business.

In such a competitive industry where consumers have many choices due to the booming of coffee industry over the past few years in Malaysia, given that consumers have high level of positive emotions and satisfaction is crucial for business to get to the

Table 3. Standardized regression coefficients predicting behavioral intention

Independent variables	Behavioral intention	
	Model 1	Model 2
Control variables		
Gender	.041	.033
Length of stay at the coffee shop		
Less than 1 hour	.034	.045
1~3 hours	.105	.074
3~5 hours	.091	.054
More than 5 hours	.056	.066
Time visited at the coffee shop		
Once a week	.021	.034
2~4 times a week	.095	.071
5~7 times a week	.065	.078
More than 7 times a week	.033	.056
Hypothesized variables		
Customer semotions		.408**
Customer satisfaction		.382**
$R^2$	.036	.522

\*  $p < .05$ , \*\*  $p < .01$ .

top. Managers should take meticulous care in terms of choosing types of music to play in the coffee shops. Slow tempo music would influence customers to stay longer and spend more (Morrison et al 2011). In addition, managers should understand the importance of the layout accessibility that has a significant impact on customers' emotions. Based on the findings of this study in local coffee shops, music and layout accessibility are more significant than facility aesthetics. Improvements on music selection and layout accessibility would lead to high level of customer satisfaction, as a result high level of customer retention and long term profitability (Ryu et al 2008).

There are several limitations in this study; (a) the results of this study may not be generalized to the population of all local coffee shops in Malaysia due to the data were collected utilizing convenience sampling method. All the data was collected at local coffee shops in Kuala Lumpur area. Hence, the findings may be generalized to areas that have similar

demographic, (b) the conceptual framework can be extended to other elements of servicescape, which have not been study (e.g., sign, symbol and artifacts, ambient conditions and space/function).

A few future studies have emerged as the end result of this research. Future researchers could explore different service context (e.g., dessert shops and bakery café). Also, future studies may look into other constructs that were not included in this research, which are the 'ambient conditions', 'space and functions' and 'sign, symbols and artifacts'. The reason is because this research only explored on three physical environment dimensions hence it might not reflect the entire features of the physical setting in a local coffee shop setting. By applying different servicescape dimensions would contribute an overall completeness of the Malaysia local coffee industry. Future research on local coffee shop could investigate in other states of Malaysia (e.g., Malacca, Johor, and Sabah).

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Received: 18 September, 2015

Revised: 9 October, 2015

Accepted: 20 October, 2015

## 말레이시아 쿠알라룸푸에 위치한 로컬 커피숍의 서비스 스키페이가 고객의 감정, 만족도, 향후 행동의도에 미치는 영향

이상협<sup>1)</sup> · Liew Kharkhiaw<sup>1)</sup> · 김동호<sup>2)¶</sup>

<sup>1)</sup>Centre for Tourism, Hospitality, and Culinary Management, Sunway University

<sup>2)¶</sup>해전대학교 제과제빵과

### 국문초록

본 연구의 목적은 말레이시아의 쿠알라룸푸 지역에 거주하는 308명의 로컬 커피숍 고객을 대상으로 서비스 스키페이가 그들의 감정, 만족도, 향후 행동의도에 미치는 영향을 분석한 것이다. 말레이시아의 수도이자 최대 도시인 쿠알라룸푸는 각종 프랜차이즈 커피숍뿐만 아니라, 로컬 커피숍이 매우 많이 성황 중에 있다. 하지만 로컬 커피숍에 대한 연구가 거의 전무한 실정에서, 본 연구는 매우 의미있고 중요한 시사점을 주는 것이라고 할 수 있다.

본 연구는 카페 고객이 느끼는 서비스 스키페이의 3가지 요소들이 고객의 감정에 미치는 영향, 고객의 감정이 만족도와 향후 행동의도에 미치는 영향, 그리고 만족도가 향후 행동의도에 미치는 영향을 연구하였다. 서비스 스키페이 요소들 중에서 music과 layout accessibility가 고객감정에 긍정적인 영향을 미치는 것으로 나타났다. Facility aesthetics는 고객감정에 긍정적인 영향을 미치지 않는 것으로 나타났다. 고객의 감정은 만족도와 향후 행동의도에 긍정적인 영향을 미치며, 고객만족 또한 향후 행동의도에 긍정적인 영향을 미치는 것으로 나타났다. 본 연구는 말레이시아 수도권 쿠알라룸푸 지역에 향후 진출하려는 커피숍 관련 사업체들에게 의미심장한 결과를 제시하는 점이 많은 중요한 연구라고 할 수 있다.

주제어: 감정, 만족도, 향후 행동의도, 서비스 스키페이