

RELEVANCE OF GREEN SERVICE SCAPE IN MARKETING OF FOOD SERVICES

Prof Abhishek Bhattacharjee¹
Prof Anindya Saha²

Assistant Professor, Army Institute of Management, Kolkata¹
Assistant Professor, Army Institute of Management, Kolkata²

Abstract

During the last few years, customers are putting lot of emphasis on the green concepts of the physical environment of the food service sector. Green servicescapes, in terms of water efficiency, energy efficiency, internal environmental quality etc. have shown the capability of attracting customers towards it. It has a tremendous role in impressing the various customers. Keeping it in mind, this paper aims to determine the effectiveness of green servicescapes in terms of the ranking/rating given by the customers. It also discussed the factors of energy efficient servicescapes which play a great role in attracting customers. It has studied the impact of servicescapes on the consumer behaviour for determining specific influence of the various factors constituting servicescapes.

Keywords: Green servicescape, energy efficiency, food service,

Introduction

Recent trends in the marketing of products and services of food have shown that customers are attracted by the energy efficient physical environment which may be called Green servicescapes; developed from Green concepts of Sustainable Sites, water efficiency, energy, Material and Resources and Indoor Environmental Quality. The factors contributing to energy efficient physical environment/green servicescape play significant role in impressing the customer positively as well as negatively. Lin (2004) has studied impact of servicescapes on the consumer behaviour for determining specific influence of the various factors constituting servicescapes and also significance of these for the service provider. According to Lin, it's important to understand evaluation process by an individual of the physical environment as well as servicescapes because it helps to understand in what manner the individual as a consumer is influenced by the various factors of the servicescapes. Emerging trend is to take into account role of various factors of energy efficient physical environment / Green servicescapes in attracting consumer by influencing consumer behaviour.

Customers spend money on purchasing products/services for the satisfaction derived by use of either of these. There may be aspects of tangible or intangible nature which may contribute to the consumer satisfaction. Environment inside as well as outside a food service center, which may contribute to the energy efficient elements of Green servicescapes, may have significant impact upon the behaviour of the customer influencing his perception of deriving satisfaction from the food services to be purchased by him/her. In the modern context, people have increasing tendency of spending their leisure time in paying short visits to food service centers to have some refreshments/ snacks / eatables of their choice and to seek relaxation from the stress of the work place / daily life, through deriving pleasure from the manmade energy efficient environment around them offering comfort before and during availing themselves of food services. On the basis of the above rationale the present study has been identified from the field of marketing of food services having focus on the green servicescapes.

Statement of Problem-"Green servicescape: Recent trends in marketing of food services"

Aims and Objective of the problem

The study aims to determine rating /ranking of Green servicescape, energy efficient dimensions that the customers (respondents) would perceive in food services. The study has been planned with the aim to determine rating / ranking by the customers/ respondents of the Green servicescape, energy efficient dimensions like:

1. **Décor:** Décor an energy efficient element of Green servicescape has been studied to investigate - Decor of walls is aesthetically outstanding. Ceiling is decorated in a charming manner.
2. **Energy Efficient Lighting:** ratings by respondents have been studied to investigate whether Lighting of the area through energy efficient lighting devices like LED, CFL etc is satisfactory, offers welcome and warm atmosphere. Projection of dancing patterns of light is attractive. Some of the dancing patterns projected on ceilings and walls are pleasing to eyes.

A) **Colour combination:** ratings by respondents have been examined to investigate - Colour combination all around is comfortable and adds to calm.

B) **Background music:** opinion of respondents investigated to ascertain -Music in background is fascinating and relaxing. Background music is efficiently loud and stimulating. Background music is not very loud and is soothing to ears, It is of liking and comforting, very soft and comforting.

C) **Ambient Temperature:** rating by customers has been examined to study- Thermal Comfort (produced by energy efficient cooling/ heating) experienced by customers.

D) **Layout** and design in a energy efficient physical environment(developed keeping in view orientation and solar path throughout the day): have been studied to investigate the appropriateness of location of kitchen. Layout of dining area is convenient to move around. Seating arrangement gives enough space and does not make feel crowded.

E) **Customer interaction** with service employees studied to investigate: -(Servicescape and Service encounter: competitive advantage).

Managers, Receptionist and Bearers are well dressed and their services are satisfactory. Servicescape is captivating and inviting for repeated visits. Conviction to recommend to friends and others to visit. To accomplish this aim food service centers have been identified and field study has been conducted through questionnaire containing twenty five statements for obtaining preferences, on a five point Likert type scale, from the customers (selected at random) visiting these food service centers.

Scope of study

The earlier investigation related with servicescape were having focus on customer as well as employee satisfaction on the basis of psychological / physiological factors and considered the marketing objectives of the service providers only marginally; without taking into account energy efficient measures to produce Green Servicescape. Many of these studies had emphasized aspects like arousal, Gestalt & Non-Gestalt. These aspects are no doubt valuable and more relevant in the fields related with psychological / physiological studies. Recent trends in the marketing of products and services of food have shown that customers are attracted by the energy efficient physical environment which may be called Green servicescapes. The factors contributing to energy efficient physical environment / green servicescape play significant role

in impressing the customer positively as well as negatively. Lin (2004) has studied impact of servicescapes on the consumer behaviour for determining specific influence of the various factors constituting servicescapes upon satisfaction derived from the services and also significance of these for the service provider in the context of effective marketing of services.

However Lin did not take in to account the energy efficient measures to produce Green Servicescape. Keeping in view the nature of study time & resources available, it's not possible to conduct investigation on the psychological/physiological aspects & focus on issues related with employee satisfaction. As a consequence the scope of the present study is excluding psychological/physiological aspects as well as pertaining to employees satisfaction and takes into account the considerations mentioned above & is restricted to the study of "Green servicescape: Recent trends in marketing of food services."

Literature Survey

Bitner (1982, 1986, 1990, 1992, 1998 & 2005) investigated consumer responses while managing physical environments in service settings. Bitner studied impact of physical surroundings during service encounter on the responses of customers and employees.

Bitner suggested relation benefits in service industries by service customization through employee adaptiveness. Lin I. Y. [2004, 2010 (a) & (b)] investigated various aspects of cognition, emotion and gestalt situations on consumer satisfaction. Miles [et.al](#) (2012) have explored the role of competitive strategy while

linking servicescape to customer satisfaction. Yeng, C.Y. (2014) conducted Study on the interaction between the Food and Beverage Servicescape and Customer waiting Experience.

Consumers willingness to pay more for green practices at Restaurants

In a recent research work Namkung, Y and Jang, S. (2014) have raised query "Are consumers willing to pay more for green practices at restaurants." Their findings were online published on March 5, 2014 in the Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Research : The Professional Council on Hotel, Restaurant and Institutional Education. The objective of their research has been to investigate the characteristics of consumers with a high willingness to pay more and examine the relationship between consumers' perception of Green Brand Image & their willingness to pay more for a restaurant green practice. A total of 334 responses show that more than two thirds of restaurant consumers would be willing to pay extra money for green restaurant practices. Age, previous experience, involvement & self perception were found to be significant in assessing consumers' willingness to pay more for green practices in restaurants. In addition, the result showed that customers with a strong likelihood to pay more for green practices had higher perceptions of green brand image than those who were less likely to pay extra.

Research Methodology

In order to fulfill the above mentioned research objectives, the researcher has used both the qualitative as well as quantitative research approaches. Qualitative research provides the in-depth discussion with respect to energy efficient determinants of Green servicescape. The quantitative research helps the researcher to gain further insight.

Research Design:

A cross-sectional design has been used in the research. This is justified in that, the study has been carried out at a particular point in time, which in our study is the present day, where the perception levels differ according to various respondents and at different points of time.

Primary data collection:

Primary research has been conducted with the help of survey questionnaire which includes mostly the close ended questions. Two food service centers have been selected in the present study for collection of primary data from the customers purchasing food services at the time of study.

Sampling and Sampling Methods with Rationale:

In order to collect the representative samples in the study, the researcher has used random sampling method.

Size of sample

Average number of customers visiting food service centre have been observed in our study to be ranging from 500 to 600 taking into account the two food service centers selected in our study and a sample size of 100 customers from each food service centre was identified for conducting survey and getting the questionnaire filled in. Total sample size is 200.

Energy Efficient Parameters of interest

In our study decor, layout, lighting, background music have been the energy efficient parameters under focus for studying the satisfaction derived from purchasing the food services.

Sampling Procedure

The selection of respondents has been accidental and random because whosoever present for purchasing food services, at the time of filling up the questionnaires, has been identified as a respondent, if willing to fill in responses in the questionnaire.

Data Collection And Analysis

Primary research has been conducted in Kolkata using quantitative questionnaire. The total sample size achieved in this study is 200.

Respondents' Demographics Analysis:

The personality parameters taken into account include gender, age, education, monthly income, level of employment and number of years since the respondent has been visiting food service centre.

Method of data analysis and graphical presentation

A questionnaire containing 25 statements has been developed for obtaining preferences of the respondents on a five point Likert Type Scale ranging from Strongly Disagree to Strongly Agree.

Conclusion

Interpretation from customers responses on statements

Table (a), given below, shows five top scoring statements each incurring very strong / strong agreements from the respondents.

Sl No	Statement	No. of respondents/ % incurring very strong/strong agreement
1	Cleanliness of dining area is excellent.	181, (90.5%)
2	Quality of flooring is very good	177, (88.5%)
3	Managers, receptionists & bearers are well dressed & their services are satisfactory.	177, (88.5%)
4	Servicescape is captivating & inviting to me for repeated visits	174, (87%)
5	I'm convinced to recommend to my friends & others to visit	173, (86.5%)

Responses of Customers Reveal

1. Excellent cleanliness of dining area, very good quality of flooring have a very high level of impact upon the satisfaction derived from these elements of servicescape of the food service centre. (elements of servicescape)
2. Well dressed Managers, Receptionist and Bearers offering satisfactory services have a very high level of impact upon the satisfaction derived from the attire, appearance and services offered by the employees serving within servicescape of the food service centers. (interaction with employees)
3. Customers are convinced to recommend to their friends and others to visit the service centre, because of very high level of satisfaction derived by them, from the elements of servicescape of the food service centre. The above conviction of the customers is an obvious outcome of their encounter with the employees offering services. (service encounter)

Main elements of servicescape i.e. Décor, Layout, Lighting & Background Music have impact upon level of satisfaction derived from the various elements of servicescape by the customer.

References

1. Booms, Bernard H. and Mary J. Bitner (1982), "Marketing Services by Managing the Environment",

Cornell Hotel and Restaurant Administration Quarterly, 23 (May), 35-9.

2. Bitner, Mary Jo; Booms Bernard H & Tetreault Mary Stanfield (1990), "The Service Encounter: Diagnosing Favourable & Unfavourable Incidents", Jr of Marketing Vol. 54.

3. Bitner, M.J. (1990). Evaluating service encounters: The effect of physical surroundings and employee response. Journal of Marketing, 54, 69-82.

4. Bitner, M. J.(1992). Servicescapes: The impact of physical surroundings on customers and employees. Journal of Marketing, 56, 57-71.

5. Bitner, M.J., Kevin P. Gwinner, Dwayne D. Gremler (1998): Relation Benefits in Services Industries: The Customer's Perspective. Jr. of the Academy of Marketing Sc.

6. Bitner, M.J., Kelvin P Gwinner, Stephen W Brown, Ajith Kumar (2005) :Service customization through employee adaptiveness; Journal of Service Research Vol. 8.

7. Lin, I.Y. (2004). Evaluating a servicescape:The effect of cognition and emotion. International Journal of Hospitality Management, 23, 163-178.

8. Lin, I. Y. (2010a). The combined effect of color and music on customer satisfaction in hotel bars. Journal of Hospitality Marketing & Management, 19(1), 22-37.

9. Lin, I. Y. (2010b). The interactive effect of Gestalt situations and arousal seeking tendency on customers emotional responses: Matching color and music.

10. Miles. P., Miles G., Cannon (2012) "Linking servicescape to customer satisfaction: exploring the role of competitive strategy", Internal Jr. of Opera.& Prod. Mgt Vol. 32 No.7.

11. Namkaung, Y and Jang, S. (2014) "Are Consumers willing to Pay More for Green Practices at Restaurants?" Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Research: The professional Journal of the Council on Hotel, Restaurant, and Institutional Education, Published online on March 5, 2014.

12. Yang, C.Y. (2014) "Study on the Interaction between the Food and Beverage Servicescape and Customer waiting Experience", REVISTA INTERNACIONAL DE SOCIOLOGIA (RIS) Special Issue on Organizational Innovation. VOL. 72, EXTRA 2, XX - XX, JUNIO 2014.