

CHAPTER 3

# The servicescape

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## Introduction

No matter who you are, where or how you live; what your physical, mental and spiritual requirements [are] – your environment is essential to your mental balance. Leatrice Eiseman

Recent advances in the services literature suggest that what service consumers seek is an 'experience' (Gilmore and Pine 2002). Service organizations are exhorted to provide memorable experiences to their consumers. A service 'product' is a combination of intangible and tangible components. Organizations that provide the most appropriate combination of the two are most likely to achieve competitive success. While it is important to recognize that the actual service provided is intangible, the setting in which any service is provided is constituted of both tangible and intangible elements. The environment in which a service is provided, therefore, plays a very important role in the creation and facilitation of a consumer's service experience. The service environment is termed the 'servicescape' and represents the artificial and psychological, landscape in which a service experience is organized and delivered by service providers and experienced by consumers.

Servicescapes have a particularly important role to play in a service establishment. Consumers seek evidence of the eventual 'quality' of the intangible service from observing the tangible elements – that is, the servicescape (Berry and Parasuraman 1991). Therefore, the more intangible a service is, the more managerial attention is required towards servicescape elements (Shostack 1977).

A servicescape is described as the physical environment of an organization encompassing several different elements such as overall layout, design and decor. The servicescape also includes atmospherics such as lighting, colours and music. Servicescapes are important since they influence consumers' cognitive, emotional and physiological states, as well as their behaviours. Service organizations therefore employ elements of the servicescape and atmospherics to motivate consumer satisfaction and repeat purchase behaviour. Organizations also use servicescape elements to direct and manage consumer interactions with the organization (e.g. in fast food restaurants) and thereby increase operational efficiencies.

The effect of environments on individuals has been investigated extensively adopting various fundamental theoretical domains. Among the more important theories explaining individuals' reactions to environments are those proposed by Lewin (1951), who proposed that human behaviour is a function of the environment and individual differences (expressed

as  $B = f(P, E)$ ) and models developed by others using Gestalt psychology. These and other theoretical frames have been applied to model individual behaviour in service settings. Such an understanding permits managers to better design and manage the 'moments of truth' that are so vital to the success of a service business (Carlzon 1987). Research in this area has also shown that the physical environment in which a service is provided has an important effect on consumer satisfaction (Turley and Milliman 2000).

The objective of this chapter is to provide a fuller understanding of the effects of servicescapes on consumers in a service setting. To achieve this goal, the chapter begins with definitions of the servicescape. Next, the effects of the servicescape on consumer behaviour are described using theoretical perspectives, mainly from environmental psychology. The chapter goes on to review research in the effects of various elements of the servicescape such as music, scents and colour on consumers. Finally, the key issues are summarized and implications for managers discussed.

## Defining the servicescape

Initial research in servicescapes was largely in the context of retail operations, but later research recognized the importance of the role of servicescapes in other services, including hospitality. For example, Kotler (1973) analysed the role of store interiors and exteriors in motivating sales of manufactured products. He noted that store interiors and exteriors (i.e. the servicescape) had a strong effect on store sales volumes. Later, Bitner (1992) extended the concept more specifically in the context of services, including both employees and customers in her analysis.

A servicescape consists of all elements that can be employed to influence both employee and customer behaviour in the service setting. This is especially important in the service industry due to the element of co-production in which the service is produced by both the employee and consumer together.<sup>1</sup> Moreover, the service is generally produced and consumed simultaneously (Bitner 1992; Zeithaml et al. 1985). Elements such as lighting, signage, textures, colour, music, fragrances and temperature of the environment all contribute to creating a servicescape. Bitner summarizes the different elements into three composite dimensions, namely ambient conditions;

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<sup>1</sup>See also Chapter 4.

spatial layout and functionality; and signs, symbols and artefacts. It must be noted that different industries will use different combinations of the elements to influence particular forms and sets of behaviour. For example, a fast food operation depends on a different set of environmental cues than a fine-dining restaurant. Thus, the choice of servicescape in an organization is dependent on its strategic market orientation.

Environmental psychologists note that in studying the effects of environments on human behaviour, it must be recognized that the environment is often in the background. The individual is often unaware, directly, of the effects of any single element in the environment; it is the cumulative effect that is powerful and complex (Russell and Snodgrass 1987). It is therefore important for service managers to recognize that their design of the servicescape has a subtle yet powerful effect on consumer and employee behaviour. Opposed to a strictly operations design view in which managers concentrate on achieving higher efficiencies, it is suggested that the effects of particular choices in signage, layout or other elements of the servicescape on employee and consumer emotions, attitudes and behaviours have to be attended to by managers.

Venolia (1988) adopting a counselling psychology perspective notes that the servicescape consists of the actual physical dimensions and also a mental dimension (i.e. messages imparted to consumers by the physical environment) and an emotional dimension (i.e. the emotional responses an environment evokes). These dimensions reflect the fact that environments affect individuals physically, psychologically, emotionally and spiritually.

Definitions of the servicescape in the consumer literature have expanded from a strict attention to the physical environment in which a service is provided. Tombs and McColl-Kennedy (2003) propose a 'social-servicescape model' and suggest that not only the physical aspect but also the social aspect (other customers and service providers in the environment) affect consumer behaviour. More recently, Rosenbaum (2005) speaks of 'symbolic servicescapes'. He suggests that certain elements in a servicescape may evoke the same meaning for people of a given ethnicity and that such elements may function in a symbolic manner. Rosenbaum (2005: 258) notes that 'ethnic consumers may respond both to a *physical* servicescape and to a *symbolic* servicescape' when considering whether or not to patronize an establishment.

In summary, the servicescape has been described as having both physical and non-physical dimensions. The progression of definitions suggest that researchers are moving away from a

strict and narrow definition of servicescapes comprising physical and tangible elements to one that is comprehensive and includes social, psychological and contextual elements. The next section reviews theoretical frames that have been used to analyse the effects of the servicescape on human behaviour. While most of the literature has discussed the impact of the servicescape on consumer behaviour, there is some research in employee reactions to servicescapes. In this chapter, however, servicescape effects on individuals are discussed without preference for one or the other group of individuals. Managers and researchers should note that different elements have different effects, given particular situations. For example, the length and design of a queuing system will have an effect on consumers who are in a hurry.<sup>2</sup> Or the type and texture of flooring becomes of paramount interest to an employee who has to stand on her feet for long hours.

## Theoretical and methodological frames adopted in servicescape research

A number of different theoretical frames have been adopted in describing the effects of servicescapes on humans. The area of environmental psychology has a rich tradition of research exploring the connections between human behaviour and the environment in which such behaviour occurs, with a view to enhancing positive outcomes from such interactions.

Researchers in environmental psychology propose the 'person-in-environment system' as the unit of analysis in research projects. This perspective requires researchers to account for not only the characteristics of the individual but also 'the complexity of the real-life situation (Wapner et al. 2000: 296). This perspective calls for a transactional and contextual approach to understanding the person–environment relationships. As the authors note, 'the person and the environment are considered parts of the whole' and 'the relations are viewed as part of an integrated process rather than as unidirectional chains of cause–effect relationships' (Wapner et al. 2000: 291). However, as Aubert-Gamet (1997) argues, most studies in servicescapes have adopted a positivist research orientation. Adopting this perspective implies that researchers assume a correspondence between the elements of the servicescape and individuals' behavioural, emotional or cognitive outcomes in the given space.

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<sup>2</sup>See also Chapter 5.

Research in this frame seeks to understand and predict consumers' behaviours, given a set of servicescape elements. Thus, research has adopted either a natural science or a human science method to analysing the human–environment relationship. In natural science approaches, researchers focus on observable behaviour and seek explanations rooted in the environment for such behaviour. Contrastingly, a human science perspective 'specifies as its goal the understanding of experience, or the explication of structural relationships, patterns, or organization that specifies meaning' (Walsh et al. 2000: 303). In this context, the work of Lefebvre (cited in Aubert-Gamet 1997) is relevant. His conceptualization of space draws on post-modern constructivist paradigm that argues for a space co-constructed by both architect and consumer (Aubert-Gamet 1997). Consumers are seen as appropriating the space and both constructing and attributing meaning to it.

The main theoretical streams in environmental psychology may be usefully divided as cognitive theories and affective theories. Thus, theoretical frames emphasizing the role of perceptual processes (e.g. Lee 2003; Baroni 2003; Bonaiuto et al. 2003) fall in the cognitive theory camp, while those that describe the nature of individuals' attachment to an environment (Guiliani 2003) are affective. Besides this, theories have also been developed that seek to explain the social setting, individuals' attitudes towards a setting and its effect on individual behaviour in particular environments (Staats 2003). Membership in particular groups may also influence individuals' behaviours in settings or their attitudes towards certain environments. Hence, identity theories have been applied to explain person–environment interactions (Twigger-Ross et al. 2003).

While the broader discipline of environmental psychology is developing new theoretical frames, among the more common perspectives researchers in servicescapes have adopted is the S-O-R (stimulus-organism-response) model (Donovan and Rossiter 1982). This research stream developed from Lewin's (1951) formula relating to human behaviour and the environment:  $B = f(P, E)$ , where behaviour (B) is modelled as a function (f) of the interaction between the person (P) and the environment (E). According to this model, various environmental stimuli (such as music, crowding, lighting, colour and temperature) have an effect on individuals' emotions, cognitions and feelings. As a consequence, individuals respond to these stimuli by adopting behaviours that enhance their well-being. This framework has dominated much of the research in servicescapes.

The S-O-R model, adopting a more emotional frame, explores the interactions between the environment and the person,

whereas environmental researchers following the principles of Gestalt psychology attempt to provide a more cognitive explanation of the interactions. According to Gestalt psychologists, perception is a function of multiple sources of input from the environment and from one's own predispositions, expectations, motives and knowledge gleaned from past learning experiences (Goldstein 1999; Schiffman and Kanuk 1978). All of these elements together produce an individual's picture of the world. People generally receive a variety of stimuli from a servicescape and then organize them cognitively into groups and form images from the stimuli as a whole. The Gestalt approach explains how individuals organize mental figure-like images and how such images are both organized and perceived through various sensory aids, such as visual, audio and olfactory sensations.

Unlike research that seeks to outline the connections between the environment and individuals' affective responses, Gestalt researchers attempt to understand and describe how environments influence individuals' mental models, schema and perceptual frames. Researchers following the principles of Gestalt psychology 'believed that a perception cannot be meaningfully deconstructed into its elementary components ... the attempt to break down and reduce a perception to its presumed elementary sensory units would be to lose sight of the perception itself' (Lin 2004: 165). According to Lin (2004), individuals first organize their perceptions, which then influence their affective reactions and subsequent secondary cognitive processing and behaviours. Opposite to the S-O-R model described earlier, Gestalt principles assume proactive individuals who consciously and, oftentimes, proactively organize their interactions with the environment (Namasivayam and Lin 2004). Tombs and McColl-Kennedy (2003: 453) note that '[individuals'] behaviors may not necessarily be directly affect driven but may require some cognitive appraisals'.

Cue utilization theory describes products or services as consisting of a number of cues that 'serve as surrogate indicators of the product's quality' (Reimer and Kuehn 2005: 786). The theory treats cues as either intrinsic or extrinsic to the product or service. In the case of manufactured products, physical attributes of a product such as size or shape serve as intrinsic cues, while extrinsic cues include brand names and price. However, it is suggested that in the case of services, because of simultaneous production and consumption, the only intrinsic cues available are in the servicescape itself. The theory is used to model individuals' information search processes and consequent behaviour, in a consumption setting. The role of servicescapes as an

influence on the information search processes is thus modelled using the perspective of cue utilization theory.

Recognizing that not just physical characteristics of the environment but also social characteristics (such as other consumers in the setting) have an effect on consumer behaviour, researchers conceptualize a social-servicescape (Tombs and McColl-Kennedy 2003). The authors integrate three socially oriented theories – Social Facilitation (Zajonc 1965), Behaviour Settings (Barker 1968) and Affective Events Theory (Weiss and Cropanzano 1996) – to develop their concept of social-servicescapes. Drawing on existing research, the concept includes five key elements (Tombs and McColl-Kennedy 2003: 458):

1. purchase occasion (context);
2. social density (physical elements);
3. displayed emotion of others (social elements);
4. customer's affective responses (internal responses); and
5. customer's cognitive responses (either as intention of behaviour or as actual behaviours).

This perspective moves research away from a narrow delineation of the servicescape as a set of physical and intangible elements to include other consumers in the setting as an important component of the servicescape. Similarly, the occasion of purchase is also taken into account to explain consumer behaviour in servicescapes.

As noted earlier, researchers also speak of a symbolic servicescape. This line of reasoning is informed by sociological research that suggests 'ethnic groups maintain distinct symbolic universes, which evoke common meanings among members' (Rosenbaum 2005: 260). The author extends Bitner's (1992) argument that consumers pay attention to signs, symbols and artefacts in a servicescape to receive meaning and to recognize their similarity (or difference) from other individuals in the setting. Thus, servicescape elements serve to construct symbolic spaces which have meaning for individuals. Such meaning will then subsequently drive their behaviour. This line of research implicitly draws on theorizing that suggests that identity formation and appropriation are part of the person–environment interaction.

Servicescape research is developing rapidly by incorporating existing theoretical frames, including fresh perspectives and refining our understanding of the effects of servicescapes on consumer behaviour. However, a number of methodological challenges present themselves in the research of environment–person behaviour. As Bechtel et al. (1987: 5) note, the interface

of physical environment and human functioning needs special attention to research methods because 'there is the question as to who or what is the basic unit of analysis. In most social science research, it is the person, group, or societal aggregate. In environmental research, it is as much, if not more the space or place that the person or agglomeration [is using]'. More recently, authors suggest meta-analysis (Stamps III 2002), experience sampling (Hektner and Csikszentmihalyi 2002), geographic information systems (Golledge 2002) and structural equation modelling (Corral-Verdugo 2002) to research environmental issues. Wapner et al. (2000) suggest that researchers should be aware that their assumptions about natural science or human science will drive their research methods. They do not, however, suggest that one has predominance over the other – when the number of variables being examined are reasonable, natural science methods such as experimentation may be usefully adopted. However, should the researcher be more interested in understanding or describing processes underlying the person–environment interaction and changes in these processes, they suggest adopting 'more descriptive, phenomenological methods' (Wapner et al. 2000: 11). Walsh et al. (2000) note that research in this discipline has included narrative sketches and videotapes, self-report survey instruments and idiotape analysis. Aubert-Gamet (1997) notes that servicescape researchers have borrowed analytic tools from many disciplines including anthropology, sociology and semiotics. However, it is preferable to use multiple methods and to adopt triangulation wherever possible (Lin 2004).

## Environmental stimuli

The various elements of the servicescape that constitute stimuli may be broadly classified as visual, auditory and olfactory. Visual stimuli include, among others, colour, lighting, space and function and layout and design (Lin 2004). Colour can be considered as one of the most powerful aspects of an environment. The right colours and colour combinations will stimulate or relax an individual in any given environment. Much research has been conducted on the effect of colour on individual reactions (Eiseman 1998). Colour can be decomposed into three interrelated dimensions: hue (red, blue, green, etc.), value (or the degree of lightness or darkness) and intensity (or the degree of saturation of a colour – for example, bright red). Colours have been shown to enhance introversion or extroversion, incite anger or relaxation and influence physiological

responses (Elliot et al. 2007). In a retail setting, Bellizzi et al. (1983) found that colours affect consumers' purchase behaviours and their perceptions of store image. Individuals have been found to attribute different emotions to different colours, with light colours representing positive emotions while darker ones representing negative emotions (Boyatzis and Varghese 1994). Researchers also noted a gender effect (Hemphill 1996) and an age effect (Silver and Ferrante 1995) in terms of preference for colours. More importantly, certain colours evoked strong physiological reactions (Kwallek and Lewis 1990): men's depression, confusion and anger was associated with working in offices with a high-saturated colour (green, blue, purple, red, yellow or orange); some colours such as blue and violet decreased individuals' blood pressure, pulse and respiration rate (Ward 1995). These findings together have demonstrated the strong influence of environmental colours on individuals' reactions.

Similarly, the type of lighting in an environment directly influences an individual's perceptions of the definition and quality of the space. Lighting influences an individual's perceptions of form, colour, texture and enclosure (Ching 1996). The physical, emotional, psychological and spiritual aspects of space are highlighted and revealed by lighting (Kurtich and Eakin 1993). Natural and artificial lighting have each shown to have different effects on individuals' physiological functioning (Hastings et al. 1980). Areni and Kim (1994) showed that brighter stores cause customers to handle goods more but does not result in increased time spent at store or sales. Flynn (1992) described several psychological dimensions of artificial lighting that caused similar reactions across individuals. These dimensions include people's impressions of visual clarity, spaciousness, relaxation, privacy and pleasantness. For example, environments in which lighting is designed to harmonize with furniture and accessories is perceived as more pleasant than environments in which lighting does not harmonize with other elements of the room (Steffy 1990).

Auditory cues include music and noise in an environment. Many studies have shown that music can be used as an effective tool to minimize the negative consequences of waiting in a service operation (Hui et al. 1997). More recently, Sweeney and Wyber (2002) found that consumers rated a retail environment as more pleasurable and the merchandise on offer as of higher quality if they liked the music being played. In their 1993 study, Yalch and Spangenberg found that younger consumers spent more time shopping when background music was played. Another study by Areni and Kim (1993) demonstrated the

differing effects of classical and top-forty music on wine shoppers. Playing classical music resulted in significantly higher sales because it led consumers to buy more expensive items. Classical music was found to make bank consumers feel more positively towards the environment (Yalch and Spangenberg 1993). Dube et al. (1995) found that music appears to influence the quality of buyer–seller interactions. Thus, music has been shown in a number of settings and environments to have an important effect on individuals' psychological state and consequently their behaviours. Indeed, on 27 September 2007, Intercontinental Hotels & Resorts issued a press release announcing a 'global acoustic programme'. They reported that in addition to ethnographic research, they had interviewed 1100 guests throughout the world and found that 'two out of three were passionate about music and very clear about the styles of music they prefer'. Hence, this company believes 'music is an integral part of the guest experience' (Intercontinental Hotels & Resorts 2007).

Olfactory cues as influences on consumer behaviour have also been extensively investigated. Exposure to specific odours determines various psychological processes such as mood, cognition, person perception, sexual behaviour and ingestive functions (Martin 1994). Baron (1997) found that mall shoppers who smelled baking cookies or roasting coffee were significantly likely to spontaneously help a same-sex stranger than people not exposed to such smells. Research has shown that when the odour is congruent with the product class being examined, consumers spend more time on processing product information, are more holistic in their processing and are more variety seeking compared to when the odour is incongruent (Mitchell et al. 1995; Spangenberg et al. 1996).

## Intervening moderators or mediators

From the sample of research described above, it is clear that individual elements in the environment have an important effect on consumer behaviour. While research aimed at exploring and making clear the effects of individual or sets of environmental elements on behaviour is important, it is also important to account for 'consumers' psychological processing and evaluation' (Lin 2004: 174). Research has also focused on moderators and mediators that may alter the relationship between such servicescape elements and outcomes. Lin (2004) provides a useful summary of the relationships: she distinguishes between micro- and macro-level factors that intervene

between the servicescape attribute and individuals' cognitive or affective processing of the information. Some micro-level factors that may moderate the relationship include personality, cognitive style, level of involvement and other demographic variables such as gender and age. Macro-level factors that may impact the relationship include cultural factors (e.g. individualism versus collectivism) and the socio-cultural setting (e.g. church or theme park). Timko et al. (2000) suggest that there should be a match between individuals' personal traits and the nature of environmental demands in order to obtain positive affective and behavioural outcomes. Researchers also suggest that personality predispositions influence individuals' evaluative responses to an environment (Lin 2004; Nasar 2000). Russell and Snodgrass (1987) noted that a number of individual differences such as arousal seeking tendencies, prior mood and prior expectations influence the relationship between individual and environment. While much research in environmental psychology has investigated these and other variables, less work has been conducted in this area in the context of consumer behaviour.

At the macro-level, a number of interesting perspectives have been developed. Timko et al. (2000) note that social environments have unique 'personalities' and the management of environmental personality to be accessible to individuals who have a range of personality types is very important. In another perspective, environments are considered as personal contexts – spaces constructed and construed by individuals in a manner suiting their particular needs (Little 2000). Thus, individuals may 'construct' restorative niche spaces within larger environmental boundaries. Such spaces are very personal and idiosyncratic; one person's restorative niche may be another's discordant space! Barker (1968) on the other hand conceives of spaces as 'behaviour-settings', that is, spaces are said to bound a definite set of behaviours within a time-space dimension. Individuals who are in church or at a discotheque adopt the norms of the behaviour setting they find themselves in.

Mention must also be made about the issue of levels of analysis: it is possible to study servicescapes at the level of the individual, the group or the organization. It is perhaps important to account for the different processes that impact consumer behaviour at these various levels of conceptualization. The type and nature of moderators or mediators that has to be accounted for will change depending on the level of analysis. For example, it is possible that personality factors will have a greater role to play at the individual level of analysis compared to groups. In groups, it is possible that group socio-cultural factors moderate

the relationship between environments and individuals in the group. Moreover, it is also important to account for the temporal element: Namasivayam and Lin (2004) describe servicescape impacts before and after a consumer transacts with a service provider. Consumers are said to process environmental information differently based on their temporal location with reference to the service interaction. It is important, therefore, for servicescape researchers to account for these and other potential moderators and mediators.

### Implications of the servicescape's effect on consumers

Research in environmental psychology concerns itself with accounting for the effects of environments on human behaviour. Thus, the main focus of research is to explore how different elements in the environment can be managed to produce positive effects on humans in the environment. In the domain of consumer behaviour, servicescape research has documented the effect of the environment on consumers' behaviours including time spent in the store (Grossbart et al. 1990), retention of customers (Babin and Attaway 2000), purchasing behaviour (De Mozota 1990), product choice (Buckley 1991), quality (Reimer and Kuehn 2005), satisfaction (Bitner 1990) and dissatisfaction (Morrin and Ratneshwar 2000).

Environmental psychologists have been concerned with similar outcomes, but they have also been concerned with the degree to which an environment facilitates or blocks an individual's plans (Russell and Snodgrass 1987). According to this view, individuals select certain environments in order to carry out a 'plan'. To the extent an environment supports the attainment of such planned goals, the environment will be seen in positive light. Researchers note that the outcomes of such frustration of plans can be emotional. Individuals may react to frustrated motives with anger, sadness or even depression. Bitner (1992) categorizes individuals' responses as internal and behaviour. Individuals' internal responses include cognitive (beliefs, categorization and symbolic meaning), emotional (mood and attitude) and physiological (pain, comfort, movement and physical fit). Individuals' behaviours include approach and avoidance behaviours. Approach behaviours include attraction, stay and explore, spend money and carry out plan, while avoidance behaviours include all the opposites of approach. Donovan and Rossiter (1982) showed that the environment influenced individuals' shopping enjoyment, financial expenditures, time spent browsing and store exploration. More recent

perspectives suggest that individuals' appropriate space for their own purposes and the extent to which the environment permits such appropriation will affect their behaviour (Aubert-Gamet 1997).

## Future research

The notion of 'experience' has been suggested as an alternative to 'commoditization'. Hospitality managers are exhorted to provide 'a memorable experience – one that creates a lasting memory for each guest' (Gilmore and Pine 2002: 87). The authors suggest that the way to do this is to use 'services as the stage and goods as props to engage individual customers in an inherently personal way' (Gilmore and Pine 2002: 88). As has been discussed here, hospitality environments are considered key factors in managing customers' experiences. Hospitality researchers may want to explore the idea of the Gestalt and the customer experience. To what extent do consumers include the environment while 'experiencing' a service?

More research is required exploring the interaction of factors at the individual level and the environment. The notion of person–environment fit should be more fully explored to outline the connections between particular personalities and their preferred environments. Such knowledge can motivate more targeted design of servicescape elements. While there are broad generalities such as pink environment for girls and blue for boys, a more thorough investigation of the connections between personality and environment will aid in the design of appropriate spaces. Hogan and Roberts (2000: 12) note that 'the interaction in a person–situation interaction is between a person's identity, the role he or she must play in an interaction, the agenda for the interaction and the implications of the interaction for a person's reputation'. Individuals in a social setting may be conscious of their identity and may actually use the social setting in constructing their identities (Twigger-Ross et al. 2003). Applying the precepts of identity theory (Tajfel 1978, 1981; Breakwell 1986) may clarify how individuals use servicescapes to realize or construct identity and thus help hospitality managers better manage the interaction. Also as noted earlier, theorists conceptualize a social-servicescape in which the social environment is presented as an important factor determining consumers' affective and cognitive outcomes (Tombs and McColl-Kennedy 2003). Thus, more research is needed accounting for the influence of the social environment on individuals.

A number of research questions can be generated based on the extant gaps in the literature. For example, what are the effects of different environmental attributes in different hospitality settings? What are the effects of different colours in different hospitality settings? What kind of music is the most appropriate in a bar? How do individuals react to ceiling heights and which reaction is the most appropriate in a given space and for a specific function? Which element/s has/have the greatest role to play in individuals' reactions and sense making? Do individuals evaluate each element, or do they take into account a set of specific markers to make sense of hospitality environments? That is, do all individuals engage in Gestaltic evaluations? How does the idea of categorization influence how individuals process environmental information? Do individuals associate particular environmental markers with particular brands? More research is warranted in understanding consumers' evaluative processes.

For managers, there exists a rich stream of research that provides information about how to design spaces that maximize various target behaviours (e.g. time spent in the restaurant – managers may want to minimize the length of time customers occupy the seat!). However, more research in social-servicescapes, symbolic servicescapes and servicescapes as important influences on individuals' identity may provide managers with a more sophisticated toolbox.

## Summary and conclusions

This chapter summarized the main areas of research in servicescapes. A number of novel theoretical frames were briefly reviewed. In sum, it can be noted that while the research in environmental psychology has advanced, there is little progress in theoretical underpinnings in servicescape research (important exceptions have been noted in this chapter). Researchers and managers will benefit greatly with more theorizing and empirical research in this area.

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