

Investigation of service quality and social servicescape on visitors' revisit intention

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Abstract

Consumer has started to observe all the tangibles and intangibles elements which force service organization to re-position themselves into intense competitive service environment. However, literature on linking tangibles and intangibles to revisit intention as a socialization perspective is in scarce amount and leads to apparent gap. Systematic processing helps to make accurate prediction but it is time consuming whereas heuristic information processing reduces cognitive efforts in interpreting the information. The argument of this paper is built upon assumption that people try accept less-intensive heuristic processing to spend leisure time. Convenience sample of 147 respondents residing in western region of India were finally used for subsequent analysis. Study revealed that Social Servicescape is positively and significantly related to Image. the result of the present study suggests that there is a positive relationship between image and revisit intention. Present study tries to fill the wider gap addressed to understand the relationship between social servicescape, experience intensifiers and revisit intentions in Water Park set up.

Keywords: Revisit intention, Service experience, Image, Social service scape, Service intensification, Overall service quality

1. Introduction

Travelers have become more conscious while making choices of spending leisure time and have started to give more importance to physical surroundings (Ryu and Jang, 2007; Tombs and McColl-Kennedy, 2003). On the other hand, destination planners are working hard to deliver exceptional services to earn customer loyalty (Liat et al., 2017; Gautam, 2015). It is equally important for destination designers to understand cognitive-emotional processing of physical surroundings (Lin and Lin, 2016). Tourist normally spends two hours or more while their visit to leisure Park (Donovan and Rossiter, 1982) and hence physical surroundings have become important criteria in selection of leisure service (Harris and Exeh, 2008; Ryu and Jang, 2008; Lin,

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2004). In recent years, the word “physical surrounding” has been often used interchangeably for the word “servicescape” in service sector (Kumar et al., 2017; Ryu and Han, 2010) and it is well accepted in marketing literature that physical surrounding and visual aesthetics are the main element of servicescape and effect on destination selection (Lin and Lin, 2016; Mari and Poggesi, 2013; Rosenbaum and Massiah, 2011; Aubert-Gamet, 1997; Bitner, 1992).

According to Bitner (1992), ServiceScpae is “physical surroundings that have impact on the behaviors of customers in service set up” and tourist may react to such physical surroundings in a cognitive, emotional and physiological manner. Further Bitner (1992) classifies several service intensifiers like ambient conditions, layout, signs and symbols as dimensions of servicescape (Dong and Siu, 2013; Mari and Poggesi, 2013; Rosenbaum and Massiah, 2011). Nowadays, people are more interested in experiencing servicescape elements in group only and hence the concept which has caught the attention of service marketer is “Social servicescape” (Nguyen et al., 2012). Even majority of tourists’ decision are based on their interaction with their friends and other influences (Sheng et al., 2017; Ballantyne et al., 2017). So, it becomes imperative to understand behavior of tourist in social environment.

In fact, tourists have started to observe all the tangibles and intangibles elements which force destination planners to re-position themselves into intense competitive tourism environment (Kumar et al., 2017; Ryu and han, 2010; Lovelock and Gummesson, 2004). In such growing complete environment in destinations visit, destination planners have been trying hard to understand the factors affecting tourist’ intention to revisit their respective service offerings (Alegre and Cladera, 2009; Um et al., 2006). On the same vein, destination marketers are more interested to understand the revisiting intention rather than just a routine type of one-time visit (Lam et al., 2011; Kim et al., 2009; Jang and Feng, 2007). Conversation has been on relating anxiety and enjoyment with servicescape been well established (Bujisic et al., 2017; Beudaert et al. 2017). Recent literature has also coined a term like linguistic servicescape (Touchstone et al., 2017). However, literature on linking intention to revisit from service perspective is in scarce amount and leads to apparent gap.

Theoretical background

The study has tried to build the argument based on information processing theory (Petty et al., 1981; Chaiken, 1980). The tenets of information theory suggest that people try to evaluate information heuristically or systematically (Xie et al., 2011). Systematic processing helps to make accurate prediction but it is time consuming whereas heuristic information processing reduces cognitive efforts in interpreting the information (Chaiken, 1980). The argument of this paper is built upon assumption that people try accept less-intensive heuristic processing to spend leisure time (Hanks et al., 2017). In the same line, information received from social contacts is considered as most accurate, it will help to create certain image in the mind of an individual. Further explanation needed that how an individual process such information received from social background and result into favorable or unfavorable intentions.

Literature review and Hypotheses development

Experience Intensifiers

The word experience has multiple facets in servicescape literature (Parish et al., 2008). According to Edvardsson (2005, p. 129) Customer service experience is “the service encounter and/or service process that creates the customer’s cognitive, emotional and behavioral responses which result in a mental mark, a memory”. Research on servicescape and service experience suggest that if the tourist had very good

experience from service offering then it can result into greater experience intensification (White and Yu, 2005; Rojas and Camarero, 2008). Moreover greater experience intensification can result into purchase of souvenirs, accessories, and presents (Schau et al., 2017; Kim and Littrell, 1999). On the contrary, Bigne et al., (2005) found non-significant relationship between good experience and buying of souvenirs related to place of visit. Though in general, tourist with positive service experience can think about bringing lots of good memories by collecting as many items from the place (Dong and Siu, 2013).

H1: Experience intensification positively influence revisit intention.

Social Servicescape

Researchers have started to give ever more importance to social servicescape (Baker et al., 2002). Most commonly, the term social servicescape often used for the service offering place which is crowded and where people get chance to interact others (Hanks et al., 2017; Pons et al., 2006; Hightower et al., 2002). It can also be observed that interactions with other people who share same servicescape are engaged with discussion of positive and negative overall experience (Hightower et al., 2002; Babin and Darden, 1995; Kelley et al., 1993; Ward et al., 1992). In same line, presences of many people at a same place for same service have found to be significantly related to favorable/unfavorable customer experience (Kaura, 2013; Pons et al., 2006; Berry et al., 2002). Relationship of Social servicescape and customer experience often varies among the nature of service and place of service offering (Kaura, 2013; Nguyen et al., 2012; Tombs and McColl-Kennedy, 2003) (e.g. relationship between social servicescape and customer experience varies in retail store and cinema).

H2: Social servicescape has negative relationship with overall customer experience.

Overall service quality and Servicescape

In last 30 years, service quality is one most researched area in marketing domain (Ostrom et al., 2010; Liat et al., 2017). In Service quality has been defined as “an overall appraisal of a product or service that is dependent on tourist’ prior expectations” (Gautam, 2015; Bitner, 1994; Parasuraman et al., 1988) When linking service quality with servicescape, it has been observed that tourist use extrinsic cues like physical surrounding for inferring quality (Reimer and Kuehn, 2005; Hightower et al., 2002). In this regard, literature on service quality suggests that customer may use the servicescape to shape their perceptions of the service quality and hence servicescape has direct and significant relationship with overall service quality (Hooper et al., 2013). Customer experiences are influenced by e-service quality, customer engagement alongside with loyalties with B2C E-commerce (Sukendi et al. 2021). service quality and price fairness both have a direct and significant effect on consumer satisfaction (Ahmed et al., 2022) also indicates relationships of consumers’ loyalty and their perceptions of service quality, price and satisfaction in restaurant service. The TQM Journal. In the other words, social servicescape can act as predecessor to overall service quality and overall service quality can generate favorable experience and subsequently intention to revisit the place of service.

H3: Social servicescape has positive and significant relationship with overall service quality

H4: Overall service quality has positive and significant relationship with overall customer experience

H5: Overall service quality has positive and significant relationship with intention to revisit.

Image and revisit intention

Kotler and Barich (1991) argued that what matter to customers is the impression that shaped the behaviour. Reynolds (1965) defined image as “a mental structure which tourist develop based on a few selected

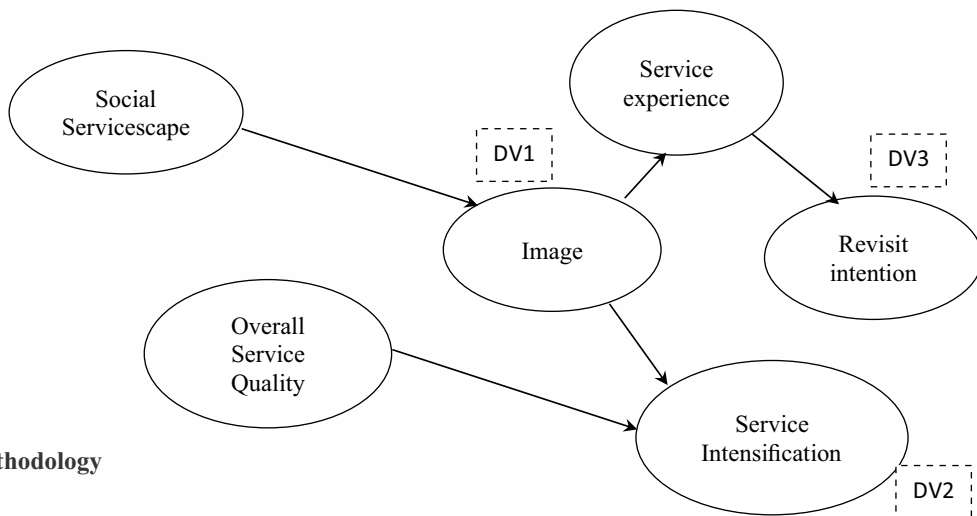
impressions out of the totality of their impressions” (Dedeoğlu, Küçükergin and Balıkcıoğlu, 2015). In fact, Zeithaml et al. (1996) described that behavioural responses are positive when tourist have favorable service experience which results into positive impression about the services provider. Indeed tourists having positive impression resulting from quality of service received or satisfaction with physical environment provided (Gautam, 2015), they would indulge more in revisiting intentions. Kundmpully et al., (2011) showed that tourist loyalty is positively influenced by perceived image leading to subtle behavioural changes (Jani and Han, 2014).

In hotel settings, Dedeoğlu, Küçükergin and Balıkcıoğlu (2015) proved that behavioural intentions are positively affected by image. Moreover, the impression perception formed due to physical environment of water parks in tourists will respond favorably by exhibiting greater intention to revisit. Based on this argument, following hypothesis was framed:

H5: Perceived image positively influences the revisit intentions.

Based on above discussion, following proposed model is presented (refer figure 1).

Fig 1 Proposed research model



Methodology

Sample

The data were collected through self-rating structured questionnaire. Survey approach was adopted. Convenience sample of 147 respondents residing in western region of India were finally used for subsequent analysis. A water park in a western region was selected to draw the sample. The Waterpark is relatively biggest of India and thus a choice for researcher. Of sample, 63% were male and 82% unmarried. Sample was dominated by young people with 18-29 years of age group and also dominated by family size of 4-5 persons (64%).

Measures

All the constructs were measured on 5-point Likert type scale anchored with strongly agree (5) to strongly

disagree (1) (refer table 1). The cronbach alpha of all values are reasonably close to the cut off value of 0.6 (Cronbach, 1951). This indicates that scales are internally consistent. All the scale have been adopted from previous studies. Social servicescape was measured with three statements “I would say that the Water Park was crowded”, “Other visitors at the Water Park were well mannered” and “Other visitors at the Water Park seemed to be friendly”. Further overall service quality was measured with four statements like “The Water Park provided good service during our visit”, “The services at Water Park were of a very high Quality”, “The services at Water Park suited my needs”, “and the services at Water Park were reliable”. Even service experience was measured with statements like “Overall evaluation about the whole experience was most/least memorable”, “How memorable was your total experience”, and “How enjoyable was your total experience”. Service intensification was measured by statements like “I purchased accessories/toys etc. from a store at water park”, “I took memorable pictures there”,

and “Pictures taken at Water Park will help me to keep the experience forever”. Mainly revisit intention was measured with statements like “I will come at the same waterpark in the future also and “I will continue visiting same water park”. Finally image was measured with the statements like “I have a good impression of the Water Park”, “I think other visitors have a positive image of the water park” and “The water park I visited has a better image than the others”.

Table 1: Reliability of scale with its items

Construct	No. of items	Source	Cronbach Alpha
Social Servicescape	3	Hightower et al., (2002)	0.547
Overall Service Quality	4	Grace and O’Cass (2004)	0.715
Service experience	3	Dong and Siu (2012)	0.807
Service intensification	3	Dong and Siu (2012)	0.508
Revisit intention	2	Seiders et al., 2005	0.584
Image	3	Nguyen and LeBlanc (2001)	0.733

Model 1 (Image)

In order to identify predictors of tourists image for Water parks, simultaneous multiple regression was conducted. The model contained two variables namely social servicescape and overall service quality. Table 2 depicted that model was found to be significant (F=20.997; and p<0.05). The model’s explanatory power was 38.5%. This indicated that image is explained by social servicescape and overall service quality upto 38.5%.

Table 2: Model-fit statistics for image

Variables	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	18.262	2	9.131	20.997	0.000*
Residual	29.137	67	0.435		
Total	47.398	69			

Note:*significant at p<0.05 level; R-square = 38.5%

Table 3 displayed that all the VIF (variance inflation factor) values were well below than 10 indicating the absence of multi-collinearity. This is being a serious concern as it affects the estimation of coefficients (Hair et al. 1998). Among these two dimensions, social servicescape (p<0.05) and overall service quality (p< 0.05) were found to be significant predictors of image perception for Water park facilities (table 3). The predictability of these two variables was in the following descending order: overall service quality (t=5.316;

$\beta=0.524$) and social servicescape ($t=2.354$; $\beta=0.232$).

Table 3: Coefficients of predictors of Image

	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	<i>t</i>	Sig.	Collinearity Statistics
	B	Std. Error	Beta			VIF
(Constant)	0.942	0.441	---	2.135	0.036	---
Overall SQ	0.576	0.108	0.524	5.316	0.000*	1.058
Social Servicescape	0.213	0.091	0.232	2.354	0.022*	1.058

Note: IMAGE=0.942 + 0.576(Overall service quality) + 0.213 (Social servicescape) + error; * $p<0.05$

Model 2 (Revisit intention)

Moving ahead, simultaneous multiple regression was conducted In order to identify predictors of tourists' revisit intention for Water parks. The model contained two variables namely image and service experience. Table 4 depicted that model was found to be significant ($F=18.022$; and $p<0.05$). The model's explanatory power was 35%. This indicated that these two variables explained 35% variation in customers' revisit intentions for Water Park.

Table 4: Model-fit statistics for revisit intention

Variables	Sum of Squares	<i>df</i>	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	13.947	2	6.973	18.022	0.000*
Residual	25.925	67	0.387		
Total	39.871	69			

Note:*significant at $p<0.05$ level; R-square = 35%

Table 5 displayed that all the VIF (variance inflation factor) values were well below than 10 indicating the absence of multi-collinearity. This is being a serious concern as it affects the estimation of coefficients (Hair et al. 1998). Among these two dimensions, image ($t=4.954$, $\beta=0.524$; $p<0.05$) was found to be significant predictors of revisit intention for water park facilities (table 5), while service experience was found to be non-significant ($p>0.05$).

Table 5: Coefficients of predictors of Revisit intention

	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	<i>t</i>	Sig.	Collinearity Statistics
	B	Std. Error	Beta			VIF
Constant	1.516	0.399	---	3.798	0.000	---
Image	0.481	0.097	0.524	4.954	0.000*	1.153
Service experience	0.130	0.096	0.143	1.350	0.182	1.153

Note: REVISIT INT=1.516 + 0.481(Image) + 0.130 (Service experience) + error; * $p<0.05$

Model 3 (Service intensification)

In order to identify predictors of Service intensification for Water parks, simultaneous multiple regression was conducted. The model contained two variables namely image and overall service quality. Table 6 depicted that model was found to be significant ($F=8.652$; and $p<0.05$). The model's explanatory power was 20.5%. This indicated that image is explained by social servicescape and overall service quality upto 20.5%.

Table 6: Model-fit statistics for Service intensification

Variables	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	9.847	2	4.923	8.652	0.000*
Residual	38.128	67	0.569		
Total	47.398	69			

Note: *significant at $p<0.05$ level; R-square = 20.5%

Table 7 displayed that all the VIF (variance inflation factor) values were well below than 10 indicating the absence of multi-collinearity. This is being a serious concern as it affects the estimation of coefficients (Hair et al. 1998). Among these two dimensions, overall service quality ($t=2.467$, $\beta=0.329$; $p<0.05$) was found to be significant predictor of service intensification for Water park facilities (table 7). Image was found to be insignificant predictor ($p>0.05$).

Table 7: Coefficients of predictors of Image

	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	Collinearity Statistics
	B	Std. Error	Beta			VIF
(Constant)	1.483	0.483	---	3.068	0.03	---
Image	0.175	0.134	0.174	1.305	0.196	1.502
Overall SQ	0.365	0.148	0.329	2.467	0.016*	1.502

Note: SERVICE INT=1.483 + 0.175 (Image) + 0.365 (Overall SQ) + error; * $p<0.05$

Findings, Discussion and implications

One of the main goal of present research was to understand cognitive and emotional kind of relationship in servicescape literature (Bitner, 1992) among set of variables like social servicescape, overall service quality, image, service experience, service intensification and revisit intention. The objective was with much importance because limited number researches have been done in relating servicescape and revisit intentions. Present study try to fill the wider gap addressed to understand the relationship between social servicescape, experience intensifiers and revisit intentions in Water Park set up.

Overall relationship between various independent and dependent variables were investigated in two phase. In first model, the relationship of social servicescape and overall service quality with image was evaluated and in second model, the relationship between image and service experience with revisit intention was checked. In third model, image and overall service quality was linked to service intensification. Study revealed that Social Servicescape is positively and significantly related to Image. Several justifications for the relationship between social servicescape and image can be the fact that tourists mainly look at the behaviour of other visitors while generating positive or negative image. In the case of Water Park, they may like to be many people but at same

time crowding may further determine favorable or unfavorable image about the service provider. So it is very much easy to conclude that social servicescape found to be positive related to image. Several implications for such kind of results are that amusement park owner should closely look at all the component of social servicescape like crowdedness, well-mannered and friendly behaviour of other visitors in building favorable impression of visit. Proper planning for crowding is of utmost necessity in order to build positive image.

One more outcome of present study suggest that overall service quality is significantly related to image of service provider. Service quality has been researched extensively with regard to its relation to satisfaction and loyalty (Liat et al., 2017; Ponnampalani, 2017; Pollack, 2009; Wall and Berry, 2007) but in servicescape context, linkage between image of service provider and overall service quality is not well researched. Hence present study adds interesting understanding to present state of service quality and image relationship. Obviously receipt of exceptional service quality is very much important in building overall good image of service provider. It also suggests that service provider at amusement park and water park should give at most importance to providing high quality service and in return it will lead to favorable image.

Moving towards the relationship in second model, the result of the present study suggests that there is a positive relationship between image and revisit intention. Those visitors who return with favorable image are directly related to revisit intention. Mainly visitors, who didn't have very good overall experience, will never think about bringing any smallest item of such worst experience and ultimately it cannot result into favorable intention to revisit. The reason for not getting significant relationship may be visitors always use self-service options and thus have minimum interaction with touch points. Therefore, Water park managers are needed to focus on improving customer service experience for each touch point in every service encounters.

Furthermore, the study revealed that overall service quality is significantly related to service intensification. It means that tourists who had memorable experience with quality provided will try to keep such valuable experience stored for lifetime by bringing either the monuments or accessories of the place of visit. The relationship between service intensifiers and image was found to be non-significant. Water park managers must improve the quality of service as it directly affects tourists' memory and thus recall and remember for whole life.

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