

## **Servicescape under consideration of Hedonic and Utilitarian approach, a Conceptual debate related to customer satisfaction in context of female clothing brand in Pakistan**

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### **Abstract**

This research offers to explore the relationship between the customer satisfaction and servicescape under consideration of two motives as hedonic approach (related to fun & amusement) and utilitarian approach (related to satisfying the needs). This study depicts that which approach is influenced more by creating positive service environment and to revisit the consumers especially in case of females in Pakistan. To investigate how and which consumers are influenced from the different shopping experience exclusively in female clothing in Pakistan a qualitative approach has been used in this study. This conceptual study defends the soundness of relationship through intense literature review. According to this study, use of ambient factors, cleanliness, aesthetic factors, signs and symbols create a long lasting effect on customer satisfaction as they also wish to have some leisure and amusement by shopping particularly in case of females. In Pakistan, most of the females who are engaged in the shopping of different arrays are inclined towards hedonic servicescape more than utilitarian servicescape.

**Keywords:** Hedonic, Utilitarian, Store environment, Customer satisfaction, Servicescape.

### **Introduction**

The influence of physical surroundings on customer satisfaction is being offered in this very paper under consideration of utilitarian and hedonic approach in Pakistan. Pakistani people have clothing culture that is enriched with the number of years of old heritage as well as modernism. Pakistani clothes express the Pakistani culture. Dresses in each culture reflect distinctive style as well as way of living. There are a large number of outlets regarding female clothing which in the paramount of its physical environment significantly affect the customer satisfaction in relation to utilitarian as well as hedonic approach. The excellence of the service environment holds immense importance for the customers. They are largely effected by the environment in which services are being provided for attracting the customers and the environment has a direct link with customer satisfaction (Vieira, A.A. 2009).

It considers two main approaches utilitarian (to fulfill a task) and hedonic (related to fun & excitement). The study inquires how customer satisfaction is being affected by the physical environment of the outlet in Pakistan. It also depicts that to determine customer's estimation the servicescape hold vital importance (Reimer & Kuehn, 2004). Most of the customers are attracted more when they found extensive use of ambience factors, clear signs, especially it becomes more convenient for the customers when they are easily able to find out routes, departments and rooms etc. To make the customers attracted & to capture their attention towards the outlets, it's necessary to focus on the style and architects of the outlets, cleanliness, sound, eye-catching colors & signs, designs, lighting and both the exterior & interior material. In order to make customers revisit the

outlet, retailers should focus on atmospherics such as architecture, the cleanliness, floor space allocation, product presentation, flooring, and the interior material.

The aim of this study is to analyze the impact of the servicescape in relation to utilitarian and hedonic customers on perceived quality in a more comprehensive way. Servicescape (the physical facilities of a service company) is a widely used term to depict the physical surroundings of a service company. The best servicescape includes ambient conditions such as sound, temperature, odour, the exterior and interior design, as well as tangible parts of the service such as brochures, business cards and other communication material (e.g. Bitner, 1992; Wakefield and Blodgett, 1996). It is a crucial consideration in the creation of a service environment (Orth, Heinrich, and Malkewitz 2012), with a key objective to enhance attractiveness of surroundings (Bitner 1992; Grewal et al. 2003). Now a days, Consumers not only want to accomplish their core needs by visiting different outlets but they intend to have something more than it. (Fiore & Kim, 2007; Turley & Chebat, 2002). Many customers hunt for amusement from shopping than just to fulfill their utilitarian approach. To make the first positive impression on customers is no doubt a crucial as well as difficult task because the service environment is the first trait of the service that the customers normally perceive by visiting the outlets which can satisfy both their utilitarian and hedonic approach. It is the point that consumers are likely to custom impressions of the level of service they will receive. In this respect, physical surroundings of an outlet leave a strong and long lasting impression on customers to generate an experience.

### **Problem discussion**

This study aims to determine which kind of servicescape is affecting customer satisfaction in relation to utilitarian and hedonic approach in Pakistan. Customer experiences and satisfaction is greatly influenced by the personnel behavior and physical environment. Although many new ways are being introduced to capture the customer satisfaction but the most important things they consider are the traditional values, behavior of employees, the range of products and the facilities. The main problem for the management is that how to create a positive environment for customers which may result not only to increase the sales, but could also create a competitive advantage and good fame (Babin & Dardin, 1995; Baker et al., 1992; Donovan et al., 1994; Turley & Milliman, 2000). This research depicts that servicescape can affect the customer satisfaction in relation to utilitarian approach as well as hedonic approach. It's not necessary that all the customers find the same experience from shopping, the experience can be vary customer to customer.

Now day, Pakistani females are contributing enthusiastically in social activities, they are becoming more brand conscious than before. They prefer to visit the branded outlets having good physical environment because they also demand good services along with fulfilling their needs. And the textile industry of Pakistan is growing and emerging day by day. Both the local as well as foreign brands are trying their best to make available best services for their customers and it's all because of the emerging trends and fashion clothing. This study reveals that which kind of servicescape is mostly adored in Pakistani environment for female clothing. Consumer buying behaviour which is greatly influenced by the servicescape is a very dynamic subject and has a great significance in female clothing in Pakistan. People in Pakistan are getting more conscious instead of just fulfilling their needs, they are also inclined towards fun, pleasure and amusement. Although it is difficult for all managers to create suitable servicescape while facing the circumstances in Pakistan but most of the customers seem to be interested to have good physical environment for best shopping experience. Along with customers getting satisfaction in good servicescape can be resulted beneficial to spread good word of mouth.

**Objective:**

1. The objective of this research is to find out the significant relationship between servicescape and customer satisfaction.
2. How customers are being affected by utilitarian servicescape.
3. How customers are being affected by hedonic servicescape.

**Significance**

1. This study will be extremely help full to understand whether hedonic approach or utilitarian approach is more appropriate in development of suitable servicescape regarding female fashion clothing outlets in Pakistan.
2. This conceptual study will provide sufficient insight for empirical research in future.
3. This study will also provide adequate information regarding customer satisfaction, servicescape, utilitarian approach and hedonic approach

**Research methodology**

The argumentative research technique is used for the accomplishment of this research study, it's a technique that requires the researcher to investigate a topic, generate, assemble, and evaluate evidence and establish a position on the topic in a brief manner (Toulmin, 1958).

**Servicescape**

The servicescape can be defined as a physical setting of the malls, outlets, stores etc. It also comprises environmental scopes and have a great influence on humans mentally, emotionally, physically and physiologically. Servicescape is probably the most commonly used term which refers to the Actual physical environment where the service is performed, consumed and delivered. According to (Booms and Bitner, 1992) servicescape has three major dimensions: Ambient factors (lighting, scent, air quality, temperature, music, and noise), spatial layout and functionality (the existence and arrangement of machinery, equipment, and furnishings) and Signs, symbols, and artifacts (signage, artwork and decorative items, point of parity displays).

In Pakistan, the trend of female clothing has taken a rapid progress since quite long time and they want shopping in good environment. As physical environment of the various outlets of Gul Ahmad, Sana sfinaz, Warda, Nishat, Al-karm, Breeze, Junaid jamshed, Maria B, Shah posh, Khuda Baksh, Khaddi and Origins has a great influence on customer satisfaction. With the availability of so many outlets it is getting convenient now for the people to experience the best environment for fulfilling their needs. The use of servicescape in different shopping stores in Pakistan gives the customers an awesome experience, satisfaction and willingness to revisit the outlets. One thing is quite obvious that the influence of best servicescape is most evident in most of the services such as shopping malls, restaurants, amusement parks etc.

In Pakistan various empirical researches have revealed that physical environment of different outlets of female clothing such as Gul Ahmad, Sana sfinaz, Nishat etc. may translate into more contented customers as well as faster and efficient services (Darley and Smith, 1995). Servicescape may largely effect the attitudes of both personnel and customers.

The factors that influence on best servicescape are, ambience, spatial layout, signs, symbols and artifacts all are associated with customer patronage. Physical environment is one of the most important factors that are capable of manipulating a wide range of behaviour as well as providing a context in which this behaviour occurs. It consists of such elements as colour, size, brightness, shape, volume, scent, freshness, and temperature. Nowadays, with more money, time and willingness to travel extra shops, and the growing quantity and variety of retail development,

consumers want to accomplish their needs in the context of pleasure, fun and amusement (Kirkup&Rafiq, 1999)

#### ***Ambient Factor in servicescape***

Ambient factors include the factors which directly hit the non-visual senses. They include background variables such as lighting, aroma, noise, music, air quality and temperature (Milliman, 1982). Ambient factors in female clothing largely affect the customer satisfaction. They play an important role in servicescape and leave a long lasting impression on customer's satisfaction. They play a crucial part in creating servicescape and attracting utilitarian as well as hedonic customers.

#### ***Aesthetic Factor in servicescape***

Aesthetic factors which include a function of architectural style, along with interior decor, colour scheme, ceiling, pictures, plants, wall decoration extremely affect customer satisfaction in relation to utilitarian as well as hedonic approach (Garvin, 2009). They have an intense effect on customers especially in catching the attention of females in the outlets of female clothing. Aesthetic factors hold an important place because they influence ambience. These factors increase the facilities for customers. Outlet colours influence the trust, customer loyalty and store choice (Lee & Rao 2010).

#### ***Sign, Symbols, and Artefacts in servicescape***

Signs, symbols, and artefacts basically lead the customers towards desired directions. All of these things positively enhance customer satisfaction in relation to utilitarian and hedonic approach. It is also found that physical environment may result in positive consumer mood and image. Signs, symbols and artefacts in various outlets of female clothing such as Gull Ahmad, Nishat linen, Warda, Shah Posh, Origins, fulfil the utilitarian as well as hedonic approach (Simpheh K N, Simpheh M, Nasiru, Tawiah, 2011).

#### ***Cleanliness in servicescape***

Cleanliness has a strong influence on consumers' perceptions of retail stores and services. Cleanliness is much important factor in servicescape to make the customers satisfied. It holds significant importance for both utilitarian and hedonic customers Lucas, (2003).

#### ***Social Factors in servicescape***

Social elements are of much importance in servicescape especially in female clothing. The employees and customers in the service setting are two main things. Employee's best relationship with customers increases the level of customer loyalty. Presence of more social cues in store environment may lead to higher levels of arousal (Baker J., 1987).

#### ***Utilitarian Servicescape***

Utilitarian approach is a consumer behavior which aims to look for solutions to problems and finally acquires the optimal value (Babin et al, 1994; Batra and Ahtola, 1991). In utilitarian approach consumers go through coherent process. Utilitarian approach can be defined as preference satisfaction rather than to fulfill the aesthetic need which is emphasizing on needs and objectives. In servicescape utilitarian approach is surely connected to the different varieties of product and physical structures regarding shopping values which is determined by a sense of completion (Olsen and Skallerud, 2011).

Within the literature it has been recognised that there are two primary behavioural approaches which have a link with the purchasing of goods or services, they are as utilitarian and hedonistic structures (Hirshman and Holbrook, 1982; Herabadi, Verplanken and Knippenberg, 2009). These two behavioural approaches are different from each other. The utilitarian approach is task related as well as tempting to one's mind and reason (Strahilevitz and Myers, 1998; Childers, Carrb, Pecke and Carson, 2001; Roy and Ng, 2012) and hedonic approach has a great emphasis towards responsive attitudes, and thrilling traits of a product. Moreover, not only the

accomplishment of the task but also an obligation of the experience. (Hirshman, 1980; Woods, 1960; Overby and Lee, 2006; Nili, Delavari, Tavassoli and Barati, 2013; Babin, Darden and Griffin, 1994).

Utilitarian approach in servicescape may be described as a physical environment in which customers are being satisfied by fulfilling their tasks and the environment where limited ambient factors are mostly used for instance local small shops of female clothing in Pakistan which don't have the capacity to create an outstanding environment and servicescape to introduce the exclusive national brands. But just because of their utilitarian approach in servicescape it seems to be difficult for them to attract the number of customers. In utilitarian approach they normally exclude the factors that result in pleasure, fun and amusement for the customers. Utilitarian approach can satisfy the customers who are interested in just accomplishment of their need (Bäckström & Johansson, 2006). Utilitarian approach in servicescape is said to pay little attention towards the attracted physical environment.

### ***Hedonic Servicescape***

Sometimes customers don't have any intension to purchase but it is the result of hedonic servicescape that they are forced to experience that hedonic servicescape which resulted in fun and pleasure. Hedonic servicescape is defined to replicate the emotional worth of shopping especially in female clothing (Baker et al., 2002), and hedonic approach refers to those emotions which aim to use that item (Voss et al., 2003). From good environment pleasant experiences and longer stay lead towards hedonic approach. Customers having hedonic approach like to stay for long time and revisit the stores in the pleasant environment and this environment enhances the likelihood, buying intentions and memorable moments. (Beatty & Ferrell, 1998; Donovan & Rossiter, 1982; Maymand & Ahmadinejad, 2011).

From empirical researches it is quite obvious that hedonic servicescape affects the females more than males (Darley and Smith, 1995). In various female clothing this approach can be experienced vividly. As in Ideas by Gull Ahmad, Nishat Linen, Khuda Bakhsh, Warda, all of these outlets are designed in such a way that customers feel pleasure by visiting these outlets. And hedonic servicescape creates a long lasting memorable shopping experience as usage of ambient factors, cleanliness, architecture etc.

Many marketers are of the opinion that working with atmospherics is one of the most important marketing strategy (Turley & Milliman, 2000). Atmospherics relate different aspects of the environment and arrangements of atmospherics can define the achievement and catastrophe of an establishment (Bitner, 1990 in Turley & Milliman, 2000). In (Turley and Milliman's 2000) literature reviews, 25 out of 28 studies are resulted in imperative influence on sales in atmospherics. For customers satisfaction and exclusive shopping experience atmospherics are managed appropriately for the customer (Turley & Chebat, 2002).

In this way consumers are greatly influenced by the retailers. However, physical surroundings are intensively intermingled with personal characteristics (Bitner, 1992). The physical environment of outlets attracts customer satisfaction by providing good environment (Babin & Dardin, 1995; Bitner, 1992; Turley & Chebat, 2002; Turley & Milliman, 2000). (Turley and Hoffman, 2002) It is also argued that working with atmospherics is really an important factor to offer in various stores and outlets.

### **Customer Satisfaction**

Customer's satisfaction is a term which can be described as a degree of satisfaction which is provided by the services and goods of a business. The perceived quality of physical environment play a vital role to define whether the customers are satisfied or not from that very environment.

When the customers are willing to spend extended periods of time in the physical surroundings of the service provider, it shows that they are satisfied and want to have fun, amusement and pleasure from that surroundings in such cases (Turley and Fugate, 1992).

And one thing effects how long the customers wish to stay in that facility. In the different mall environment Female shoppers also tend to change their buying behaviour. Girls with a high degree of self-confidence still expressed a lot of concern in dealing with salespeople and engaging in impulsive shopping behaviour (Mallalieu & Palan, 2006). The significant mall environment affects the buying behaviour and brings the customers towards satisfaction whether they are having utilitarian approach or hedonic approach.

This research is meant to examine the response of female fashion clothing towards the mall atmosphere. Progressively, it is necessary for managers to have knowledge about which retail attributes are central to which customers to develop an appropriate strategy in this regard, particularly among female market so that customer satisfaction may be attained. It can be easy for the designers to learn that what features can derive customers to return from servicescape and the shopping value. In addition, it would be appropriate to understand the differences in mall attribute satisfaction and shopping value.

Many store patrons are not aware of the effects of the store environment towards consumer shopping behaviour. And this is because of the lack of exposure about store environment and servicescape that greatly influence consumer shopping behaviour and lead them towards satisfaction. Furthermore, store patrons also cannot identify the true reasons why they patronise a particular store.

### **Discussion**

As supported in the literature, the perception of the mall environment has a positive or negative impact on the opinion of product and service quality. There are two main attributes of services, core service and employee service that can be assessed during or after consumption that might be in accordance with the general conceptualization of service quality (Parasuraman, 1985). This research depicts that servicescape can affect the customer satisfaction in relation to utilitarian approach as well as hedonic approach. According to quantitative research of (Maria Andersson, Sara Palmblad and Tajana Prevedan, 2012) hedonic approach is greater among the females than males which are quite obvious in the beautifully arranged outlets of female clothing. It has been observed from different eras of Pakistan that females are mostly attracted towards charming physical surroundings in markets. Ambient factors create a real essence in enhancing their hedonic approach and these variables are not the part of primary service but their absence may make hedonic customers feel uncomfortable.

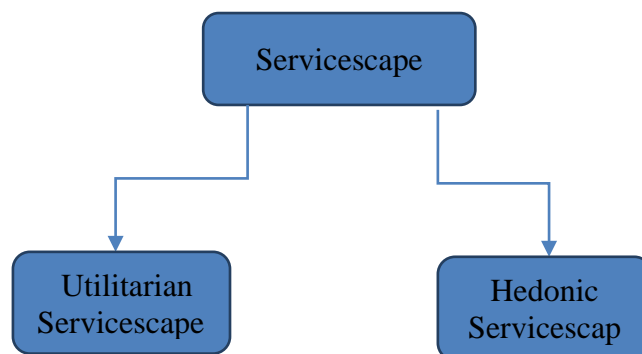
Whenever they go for shopping most of them are driven towards hedonic approach. Most of them want some fun, amusement and pleasure along with fulfilling utilitarian approach but some of the people are just inclined to fulfil their need and requirements. According to this research, customers having hedonic approach can be more satisfied from the physical environment and servicescape than the customers who have utilitarian approach as atmospherics can be more memorable in some situations for example in Pakistan best servicescape can be experienced in the charming outlets of female clothing as Gull Ahmad, Warda, Sana safeenaz, Nishat Linen, Breeze etc. And the research indicates that most of the customers are attracted towards the physical surroundings as customers like appealing colors, hearing music while they do shopping because they feel that the store takes them into consideration, and that it takes care of them (Linsen, 1975). Shopping is an activity of selection and purchase. It is also considered a leisure activity in some context as well as an economic one.

The servicescape is a term which can be defined as the physical setting of the store and outlets. It includes that environmental magnitude which greatly influences humans mentally, emotionally and physiologically. While hedonic approach (related to fun excitement) is a rare behavior that an individual bestows himself completely to pleasure. When consumers intend to buy they are mostly influenced by either hedonic or utilitarian approaches. Although servicescape is an important element that has a direct effect on customer satisfaction behavior and according to this research servicescape can be distributed into two main categories as utilitarian servicescape and hedonic servicescape.

Some customers are influenced by utilitarian servicescape because they are just intended to fulfil their need and they don't prefer the hedonic approach but a number of people are attracted in the direction of hedonic approach in servicescape for best shopping experience. Almost everyone in his shop introduces some kind of servicescape even if that is in the form of a simple local shop with two or three chairs and one table and that can also be in the form of outstanding servicescape with ambient factors, stunning physical surroundings to appeal its customers.

Utilitarian servicescape attract the customers who are inclined to fulfil their basic need and desire. Utilitarian customers have nothing to do with hedonic approach they just want to accomplish their needs. For example in Pakistan there is a lot of local female clothing as Stara cloth house, Zahid fabrics, Alnoor cloth house etc. Hedonic servicescape appeal the customers who just don't want to fulfil their needs rather they are attracted intensively towards good environment, fun and amusement. For example in Pakistan Nishat linen, Sana Safeenaz, Warda, Gull Ahmad, Shah Posh etc.

### Proposed Conceptual Framework



### Conclusion

When looking a bit deeper, within the servicescape, there are two types of servicescape as hedonic servicescape and utilitarian servicescape. Hedonic servicescape can be described as kind of servicescape that intensively affects the customer satisfaction. It is affected by the amusement and pleasure of staying for a long time in the store, the experience of the visit and if the customers wish to revisit the store. The servicescape had more effect on hedonic approach than utilitarian approach. It designates that when the store visit is more impressive, full of amusement and having good environment, it shows that hedonic servicescape has been created there while in utilitarian servicescape consumers pay less attention on the atmosphere than hedonic servicescape.

It clearly indicates that as compare to hedonic servicescape, utilitarian servicescape do not care or pay much attention to the environment. Same is the case in the various top outlets of Pakistan as in J., Nishat Linen, and Warda, Sana Safeenaz, Shah Posh etc. While in utilitarian servicescape much attention is not given on physical environment for fun and amusement. To be inspired by the store visit that products are easy to find or discover and the store is in order, signified

for creating a good impact for both utilitarian and hedonic customers. For customers, to create a positive experience it is important to make them realize that the store is orderly, customer gets stimulated and that products are reachable. From such an environment the customers impression that they have been positively startled and have learned something, and that it becomes easy for them to have exact products.

In order to have a better experience, customers also desire to have their senses enthused and provoked in some way and mostly they cherish this experience and environment in hedonic servicescape rather than utilitarian servicescape. Those customers who want something more than utilitarian approach, find satisfaction from hedonic servicescape as in the style of the store, the ambient factors, and the presentation of the products and the colour theme of the store. Somehow the physical surrounding affects both the experience of the visit as a whole and the liking or disliking of being in the store. The ambient factors, style and charming atmosphere of the outlets are the most important variables which customers perceive in hedonic servicescape.

If the consumers are attracted towards the atmospherics, he or she will also revisit the store. Most of the customers wish to revisit the outlets where hedonic servicescape is being introduced especially in case of female clothing in Pakistan. Those customers who have visited the outlets and stores before will praise the physical settings more than the customer who visits the store for the first time. Especially in female clothing most of the females are attracted towards hedonic servicescape to make themselves satisfied.

They don't only want to fulfil their desires and needs rather they are greatly influenced by the physical surroundings, ambient factors and atmospherics which create hedonic servicescape. To nutshell the whole discussion it can be concluded that customer satisfaction in its great deal is found in the hedonic servicescape especially in case of female clothing in Pakistan. Although utilitarian servicescape also has its own importance for the customers who are just inclined towards fulfilling their needs and don't want to satisfy their aesthetic needs but hedonic servicescape along with fulfilling their needs also provide them fun, amusement and pleasure and succeed in achieving customer satisfaction.

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