# Guests' Perception of the Hotel Image: The impact of Servicescape

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**Abstract**

Creating an attractive servicescape has gained an emergent concern among scholars and hospitality managers. Therefore, this study aims to assess the current guests' perception of servicescape in hotels in Egypt, and also to investigate its impact on their perception to the hotel image.

The population of the study comprises four and five-star hotels in Cairo and Alexandria. Using a stratified random sampling technique, a target sample of 47 hotels from Cairo and Alexandria was chosen. In addition, using a simple random sampling technique, a target sample of 940 guests was chosen .

Data was collected by using questionnaires. The results have emphasized that servicscape is a key factor for attracting and satisfying customers in hospitality industry. Also, the results of regression analysis tests found positive and significant correlations between servicescape dimensions (ambient condition, layout and function and signs, symbol and artifacts) and the guests' perception to the hotel image. Accordingly, the study provides hotel managers with many beneficial guidelines to possess a competitive servicescape in order to satisfy their guests.

## Introduction

What appeals to customers' preferences are not only food and beverages; an enjoyable dining environment also matters. Increasing attention is being paid not only to pricing and the merchandise itself, but also to the provision of a pleasant and possibly exciting, shopping atmosphere (Harris & Ezeh, 2008; Hu et al., 2009; Han & Ryu, 2009; Clemes et al., 2011; Ha & Jang, 2012; Ryu et al., 2012;   Amin et al., 2013). Numerous researchers have indicated the importance of  setting up an attractive physical environment and ensuring a good perceived image and satisfaction to achieve a competitive advantage in a very competitive hospitality industry (Harris & Ezeh, 2008; Hu et al., 2009; Han & Ryu, 2009; Clemes et al., 2011; Ha &Jang, 2012; Ryu et al., 2012; Amin et al., 2013).

Customers who choose to eat away from home search for a memorable dining experience (Ryu & Han, 2011).  Subsequently, there is a strong challenge in the service industry to meet the increased expectations of customers towards theme, layout, signs, ambiance and so forth (Agnihotri & Chaturvedi, 2018). Servicescape may be a main reason for a customer's satisfaction or unsatisfaction about his/her visit experience to an organization (Bitner, 1992; Sim, et al., 2006; Ryu, Lee, and Kim; Agnihotri & Chaturvedi, 2018; Cheahet al., 2018).

Servicescape has played an important role in affecting service experience (Namasivayama & Lin, 2008; Han & Ryu, 2009). It also plays a critical role in differentiating service firms and influencing their image and consumer behaviors (Han & Ryu, 2009; Hu et al., 2009; Chen &Hu, 2010; Ryu et al., 2012). Hence, the significance of servicescape is outlined in four vital jobs. First, servicescape sends an image about the service to customers. Second, it can energize the proficiency of customers' and employees' activities. Third, it clarifies what parts of the servicescape they are welcome in. Finally, it distinguishes an organization from others and provides it a strong competitive benefit (Puspita, 2015). Accordingly, this phenomenon has recently been found to be an important part of customer evaluation of satisfaction with services (Ruiz, et al., 2012; Ali & Amin, 2013). Therefore this study mainly aims to investigate the impact of servicescape on guests' perception of hotel image.

## 2 Conceptual Background and Hypotheses

### 2.1 Servicescape

Servicescape as a concept was developed by Booms and Bitner. However, many researchers have defined the term "*servicescape*". For example, Servicescape was defined as a package of services offered by an organization (Nguyen, 2006). In this, Kotler and Armstrong (2010) explained servicescape as "*the environment in which the service is assembled and in which spectators interact with tangible commodities that facilitate performance or communication of the service offering*". Ishaq et al. (2014) also indicated that since servicescape is intangible in nature, hence its evaluation and assessment cannot be analyzed while consuming it, but it can be evaluated through service quality and other customer experiences.

According to Zeithaml et al. (2009), servicscape is a service environment where interaction between customers and employees takes place; it also involves all aspects of the physical facility along with other tangible communication. In the hospitality industry, hotel management can manipulate the ambient and design factors of servicescape such as changing temperature, music and scent (Demoulin, 2011). Moreover, Yang (2015) indicated that managing ambient and design factors of servicescape leads to a better value for customers. In general, servicescape essentially wrap the service and deliver an external image about the service to the customers. It helps convey the expected roles, behaviors, and relationships for the customers and employees. Servicescape distinguishes a company from its competitor and tells the market about the target market (Bitner, 1992; Zeithaml & Bitner 1996).

### 2.2 Servicescape Dimensions

Baker (1986) broke down the general concept of environment into three basic components: ambient factors, design factors, and social factors. Baker (1986) and Bitner (1992) considered ambient as one dimension but did not include social factors. During the 1990s, researchers began to examine servicescape in leisure and hospitality settings (Yang, 2015). Wakefield and Blodgett conducted studies in servicescape of leisure settings (Wakefield & Blodgett, 1996, 1999). However, Wakefield and Blodgett (1994) focused on the tangible aspects of servicescape in sport complexes and did not examine ambience, while Wakefield and Blodgett (1999) included ambience as a dimension of servicescape.

Lucas (2003) investigated casino servicescape. The items used to measure navigation, seating comfort, and interior décor were adapted. From another side, some special characteristics of a casino, such as coin sound and machine sound were also considered. In addition to casinos, hotels and restaurants also have special characteristics that some dimensions of retail store servicescape might not be applicable. Therefore, Countryman and Jang (2006) developed a measurement tailored to hotel lobbies. Ryu and Jang (2008) also developed "*DINESCAPE*" designated to restaurants.

Hospitality researchers have looked at the effects of servicescape in restaurants (Ryu & Jang, 2007; Ryu & Jang, 2008; Kim & Moon, 2009; Ha & Jang, 2012), festivals (Taylor & Shanka, 2002), casinos (Lam et al., 2011), and convention centers (Nelson, 2009; Siu et al., 2012). Although some recent studies have discussed servicescape of other areas in the lodging industry, however the effects of guestroom servicescape have not been widely examined, (Lucas, 2003; Heide et al., 2007; Hilliard & Baloglu, 2008; Naqshbandi & Munir, 2011; Simpehet al., 2011; Ariffin et al., 2013).

Finally, Yang (2015) cleared that the above studies expand the knowledge in hotel servicescape, however they are all non-experimental studies, which has the limitation of not providing solid evidence for causal effects between servicescape dimensions and subsequent responses, only one study (Park *et* al., 2010) was experimental, however it investigated how guestroom Servicescape influences pleasure and arousal and did not examine other variables.

In this research we will adopt the dimensions of servicescape according to Bitner (1992), he divided servicescape into three dimensions; (1) ambient conditions (temperature, lighting, noise, music, odor, color,…etc), (2) space and function(layout, equipment, furnishing,……etc) and (3) sign, symbol and artifacts(personal artifacts, signage, style of décor,..etc). Therefore the following hypothesis is formulated:

*H1: Servicescape influences the guests' perception of hotel image positively.*

### 2.2.1 Ambient Conditions
Ambient conditions include background characteristics of the environment such as temperature, lighting, noise, music, and scent; they affect the five senses (Russell and Snodgrass, 1987). The pleasant scent, pleasing music, comfortable temperature, low noise level and adequate lighting, all harmonizing to result in satisfied customers having more favorable perceptions of an operation (Ariffin et al., 2011). According to Custers et al. (2010) and Quartier et al. (2014), lighting takes into account several variables: brightness, contrast, glare and sparkle, decorative lighting and lighting installation. Lighting can not only influence emotions, moods, and cognition but also the atmosphere and the spatial impression. Mabel (2011) and Oriane Ferrera (2015) also showed that noise and loudness of sound have usually been perceived as irritating and annoying. The majority of people prefer relaxing environment. Some customers do not even prefer noise or presence of other customers while dining (Cornish, 2013).

In addition, Jain and Badgare (2011) indicated that "*Musicscape*" is a term used to talk about the musical environment. Music is used for several reasons: awareness, identification, association, remembrance, and because it can also have an impact on the customers' experiences (Oriane Ferrera, 2015). According to Kotler (2012) and Morrison et al. (2011), music has the power to impact consumers' arousal with the increase of pleasure level as well as to influence consumers' behavior. Moreover, according to Eiseman (1998), color is one of the obvious visual cues in a servicescape. Lin (2004) has shown that different colors stimulate varying personal moods and emotions.

In conclusion, Suh et al. (2014) found that air quality, temperature, music and noise/sound level positively affected a luxury hotel's overall image; air quality, odor/aroma, music, noise/sound level, and overall image also positively affected customer satisfaction. However, Naqshbandi and Munir (2011) focused on the relationship between hotel lobby servicescape and the impression of a hotel lobby. Therefore the following hypothesis is formulated:

*H1a: Ambient conditions influence the guests' perception of hotel image positively.*

### 2.2.2 Space and Function
Chua et al. (2010) indicated that the association of space and function can be considered as the designscape, it has to be coherent with the company because it helps customers to understand

the environment, and to know if the place can enable them to fulfill their goals. Nkansah (2011) indicated that spatial layout and functionality of the environment are highly salient to customers.The design of a facility gathers all the non human elements which may have an impact on human cognition, emotion and behavior (Zijlstra and Mobach, 2011). Design and layout should be focused on maximizing the positive and meaningful impact for the customer (Zijlstra and Mobach, 2011). Aspects of interior design, such as ornamental signs, banners, pictures, and other fixtures, may also serve to enhance the perceived quality of the servicescape (Simpeh, 2011).

According to Aghazadeh (2005), the first functionality of layout is to control the flow of traffic through the place. Moreover, managing the space, the layout, the signalization, and the design should be one of the main priorities of company, because it can illustrate the company's function and be used as a differentiator among competitors (Bitner, 1992). Furthermore, Mabel (2011) cleared that the impact of furnishing can be evidenced through the affective response of comfort. For instance, seating comfort is likely to be a particularly salient issue for customers of leisure service settings who must sit for a number of hours observing or participating in some form of entertainment. Therefore the following hypothesis is formulated.

*H1b: Space and function influence the guests' perception of hotel image positively.*

### 2.2.3 Sign, Symbol and Artifacts
Facility aesthetics refers to a function of architectural design, along with interior design and decor, all of which contribute to the attractiveness of the physical environment (Wakefield and Blodgett, 1994). Consumers react more favorably to a blue environment in retail settings, and that warm-colored backgrounds seem to be more capable of eliciting attention and attracting people to approach store (Bellizzi and Hite, 1992). Colors influence people's emotional pleasure more strongly than arousal or dominance. Children often related positive emotions with light colors and negative emotions with dark colors (Boyatzis and Varghese, 1994).

Signs can be used as labels (name of company, name of department), for directional purposes (entrances, exits), and to communicate rules of behavior (no smoking, children must be accompanied by an adult). Additionally, Signage can play an important part in communicating firm image (Wener and Kaminoff, 1982; Mabel, 2011). Quality of materials used in construction, artwork, presence of certificates and photographs on walls, floor coverings, and personal objects displayed in the environment can all communicate symbolic meaning and create an overall aesthetic impression (Peters, 1978). For example, know that white table clothes and subdued lighting in restaurants symbolically convey full service and relatively high prices, whereas counter service, plastic furnishings, and bright lighting symbolize the opposite (Pfeiffer, 1981). Finally, Sundstrom (1986) concluded that certain cues such as desk size and placement symbolize status may be used to reinforce professional image. Therefore the following hypothesis is formulated:

*H1c: Sign, symbol and artifacts influence the guests' perception of hotel image positively.*

### 2.3 Hotel Image
Ryu et al.(2008) and Keller (1993) defined brand image as a series of perceptions about a brand the consumer formulates as reflected by brand associations. Similarly, Low and Lamb (2000) defined image as *"the reasoned or emotional perceptions consumers associate to specific brands"*. In addition, Baloglu and Brinberg (1997) defined image as *"the sum of beliefs, ideas, and impressions that customers have of a place or destination"*. Bitner (1990) indicated that hotel image has been identified as an important factor in the overall evaluation of a firm and is argued to be what comes to the mind of a customer when they hear the name of a firm. Nguyen (2006) added that there are two principal components of corporate image; functional and emotional. The functional component is related to those tangible characteristics that can easily

be measured, such as the physical environment offered by the hotel; the emotional component is associated with those psychological dimensions that are manifested by feelings and attitudes towards an organization.

Nguyen (2006) and Saleem and Raja (2014) found that brand image is something that comes to the customers' mind when they hear the name of a hotel. In addition, Mohajerani and Miremadi (2012) stated that the image of service organization is diverse, and therefore, each customer has different types of expected impression, experiences and contacts with the organization, and that leads to a different image acceptance.

Brand image can be translated into what customer could benefit the realization customer's attributes and the customer's personality traits (Maroofi et al., 2012). Dhillon (2013) indicated that image is an important element of a hotel; a brand acts as the most influential element in services because of its natural uniqueness like perish ability, inseparability, tangibility and heterogeneity. Lahap et al. (2014) stated that hotel image is also an important variable that positively or negatively influences marketing strategies of the hotel itself.

### 3 The Methodology and Data Collection
Mainly this study aims to achieve the following objectives:

1. To highlight the significance of servicescape for hotel operation.
2. To assess customers' perceptions of hotel image in the hotel operations.
3. To examine the influence of servicescape on customers' perceptions of hotel image.

Therefore, the overall study can be classified as analytical-descriptive research as it achieved a statistical analysis to the collected data in order to test the study hypotheses, and to achieve the previous objectives of the study, and consequently.
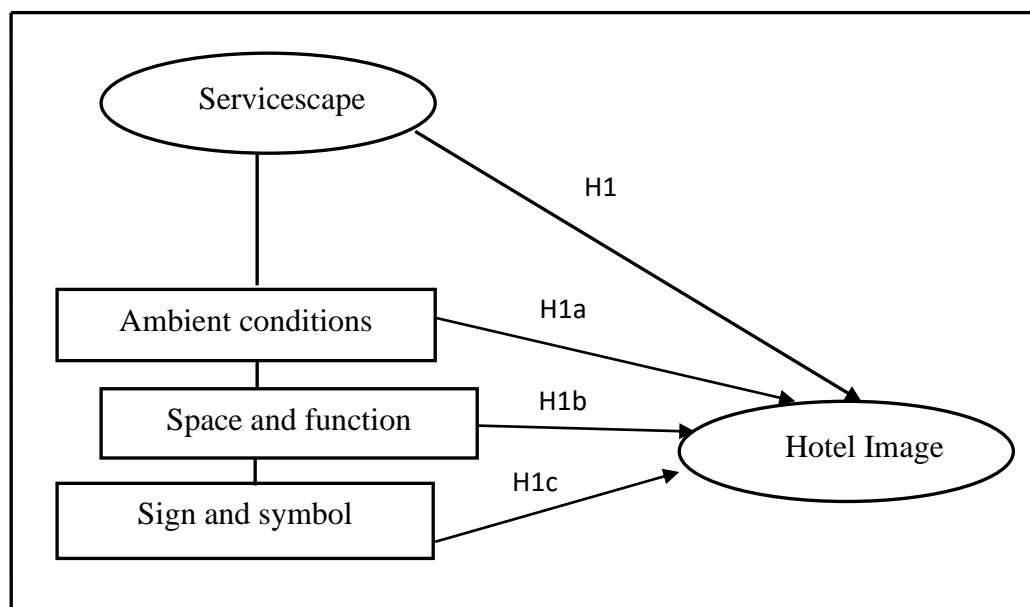


Figure 1: The conceptual framework

### 3.1 sample frame

The population of the study consisted of four and five-star hotels in Cairo and Alexandria which are 88 hotels. The target population for this study included guests from both the four and five-stars. This research employed stratified random sampling to ensure the equal allocation among Cairo and Alexandria. In this study, the sample size included 47 hotel randomly selected.

### 3.2 Data Collection and measures

The researcher designed a questionnaire as a measuring instrument to obtain the required data that helps him test the research hypotheses. The questionnaire was divided into two sections for measuring the variables of the study (table 1). All items were measured using a 5-item scale ranging from "strongly disagree" (1) to "strongly agree" (5). The survey items are shown in the appendix. A pretest of the questionnaire was conducted with many academic staff as well as twenty customers who visited the hospitality field; they were asked to give their notes and comments about the efficiency of the layout, the clarity of the words, the adequacy of the questions, the efficiency of the instructions, the codes chosen for preceded questions and finally the probable duration for answering the questionnaire. In order to avoid response biases, the participants in the pilot study were not included in the main survey. The questionnaires were distributed among 940 customers, twenty questionnaires were distributed in each hotel; only 598 questionnaires were obtained and valid, which represents a response rate of 63.61%. Hence, the number of the valid and returned questionnaires gave a good response rate as according to (Sekaran, 2001), a response rate of thirty percent is acceptable for most studies.

Table 1: Measurements of the study

| Variables | Conceptual Definition | Operational Definition | Instrument Items | Scale Source |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Servicescape** | Experiencing the non-physical and psychological appearance of a service provided and organized by service providers | **Ambient Conditions** include: (Temperature, Lighting, Noise, Music, Odors and Colors). | **Part A** From Q1 to Q15 | Ryu & Han (2011) |
| | | **Space & Function** Include: (Design, Layout and Furnishing). | **Part B** From Q16 to Q24 | Countryman & Jang (2006) |
| | | **Sign & Symbol** Include: (style of décor, Signs, Artifacts and Symbols) | **Part C** From Q25 to Q33 | Dong & Siu (2013) |
| **Hotel Image** | The overall evaluation of a firm and is argued to be what comes to the mind of a customer when they hear the name of a firm. | | From Q1 to Q7 | Nguyen & LeBlanc (2001) |

## 4. Results

### 4.1 Reliability Analysis

A reliability analysis (Cronbach's Alpha) was conducted to ensure the validity and reliability of the questionnaire items. Reliability test was conducted for the variables of the study. All values of Cronbach's alpha for constructs were greater than 0.7 which are considerably high indicating that the reliability of all constructs used in this study was supported as shown in table 2.

Table 2: Reliability of the Study Constructs

| Measure | No. of Items | Cronbach's Alpha |
|---|---|---|
| **Servicescape** | 32 | .939 |
| o   Ambient conditions | 14 | .895 |
| o   Space and function | ٩ | .881 |
| o   Sign and symbol | ٩ | .889 |
| **Hotel image** | 7 | .844 |

## 4.2. *Respondents' Profile*

The majority of the respondents were male, that is 365 of the 598, representing 61% of the sample while the remaining 233 (39%) comprised of female respondents. In addition, the majority of the respondents were the age group from 25 to 35 (n=204, 34.1%) followed by those were the age group from 35 to 45 years (n=178, that is approximately 29.8%), the respondents more than 45 were (n=115, 19.2%). Those less than 25 years comprised the minority of the respondents (n=101), that is 16.9% of the respondents. This indicated that the majority of respondents were middle age. Moreover, the majority of the sample was married (n=306 or 51.2%), while a further 243 respondents (40.6%), were single. and the rest (divorced or widowed) comprised the smallest group of respondents (n=49 or 8.2%). In addition to above, the majority of the sample was Egyptian (n=550, that is approximately 92%), followed by the minority of the respondents were other nationality such as (English, Italians, French) (n=48), that is 8% of the respondents. Furthermore, in terms of respondents' educational level, the majority of respondents were graduated from college (n= 488 or 81.6%), followed by guests who completed Master degrees or diploma (n= 51 or 8.5%), only a small group of respondents was under secondary school (n= 11 or 1.8%) while the remaining (n= 48 or 8 %) were guests with secondary school. Finally, in terms of number of times visited the majority of the respondents were visited hotel for more than three times (five, seven, nine) (n= 223), that is 37.3% of the respondents. Followed by those were visited three times (n= 160 or 26.8%), only a small group of respondents was visited hotel once time (n= 98 or 16.4%) while the remaining (n= 117 or 19.6 %) were guests who visited hotel twice times.

## 4.3. *Testing Research Hypotheses*

Regression analysis (table 3) was performed to predict the level of hotel image based on servicescape. Servicescape correlates and influences significantly with hotel image (R= .561, sig.000). It was noted that about 31% of the variance could be predicted by servicescape. The changes of 1 unit in servicescape will cause a change of 0.774 units in the hotel image. Hence, H1 is supported. The results also showed that all elements of servicescape influence significantly the hotel image. Results showed that ambient conditions caused about 27% of the variance in hotel image. The changes of 1 unit in the training will cause a change of 0.658 units in the hotel image. Hence, H1a is supported. Layout caused 28% of the variance in hotel image. The changes of 1 unit in layout will cause a change of 0.665 units in the hotel image. Hence, H1b is supported. Signs caused about 14% of the variance in hotel image. The changes of 1 unit in signs will cause a change of 0.387 units in hotel image. Hence, H1c is supported.

Table 3: Regression Analysis (Servicescape and Hotel Image)

| | | **R** | **R Square** | **Adjusted R Square** | **B** | **Sig.** | **Hypotheses** |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | **Servicescape  (H1)** | .561 | .315 | .314 | .774 | .000 | supported |
| **1** | Ambient condition (H1a) | .528 | .279 | .277 | .658 | .000 | supported |
| **2** | Layout (H1b) | .532[a] | .284 | .282 | .665 | .000 | supported |
| **3** | Sign (H1c) | .374[a] | .140 | .139 | .387 | .000 | supported |

## 5 Discussions of Results

This study aimed to investigate the relationship between three main variables of servicescape dimensions (ambient condition, layout and function and signs, symbol and artifacts) and the guests' perception of hotel image. Findings demonstrated that servicescape elements were positively related to hotel image separately and jointly. These results are agreed with Kloosterman (2017) who found that hotel image is significantly influenced due to the prominent role of the servicescape of boutique hotels. He concluded that to meet and exceed expectations of the hotel guests, which subsequently will increase business performance, the hotel image

should closely be aligned. If the hotel image is not considered carefully, a gap between these two components could appear.

It was also agreed with Newman (2007) who indicated that an effective and helpful signage added to a good spatial organization induces a positive image of the operation. In addition, Durna, Dedeoğlu and Balikçioglu (2015) found that servicescape components had a positive effect on overall image, therefore, according to them, managers who intend to present a positive business image should design servicescape components according to current trends or the fashion expectations of target consumers. This would by default increase the attractiveness of the business. Moreover, businesses can create unique concepts by designing and developing new servicescape components. This step can be beneficial, especially for hotel businesses wishing to establish a specific brand. Moreover, the result is agreed with Bitner (1990) who indicated that hotel image is an important factor in the overall evaluation of a firm and is argued to be what comes to the mind of a customer when they hear the name of a firm.

This study confirmed the importance of servicscape dimensions that many researchers such as Ryu and Jang (2007), Ryu and Han (2011) and Cheah et al. (2018) recommended for servicscape. This is somewhat similar to Shashikala and Suresh (2013) who revealed that DINESCAPE dimensions (ambient factor, aesthetic factor, layout, variety, cleanliness, signs, symbols and artifacts, and social factor) are capable of inducing significant variations in customers' behaviors.

The study confirmed the significance of layout accessibility for the customers' perception of servicescape. This result is consistent with other findings (Ryu and Han, 2011; Mohi, 2012) whose studies showed that restaurant layout positively influences the gusts' perceptions. It is also agreed with Zijlstra and Mobach, (2011) who found that layout of a facility has an impact on customers' cognition, emotion and behavior. They called for attractive design and layout to maximize the positive and meaningful impact for the customer. An improved spatial layout would increase customers' patronage (Wakefield and Blodgett, 1999; Ogbuji et al., 2016; Onuoha and Doris, 2017).

This study also confirmed the significance of ambience, aesthetics and lighting for the customers' perceptions of servicescape. These results are consistent with others (Ryu and Jang, 2007; Namasivyam and Lin, 2008; Kwabena et al., 2011; Mohi, 2012; Onuoha and Doris, 2017) who indicated their influences on gusts' satisfaction. Additionally, this finding is consistent with that of Ryu and Jang (2008) and Mohi, (2012) who identified that servicescape help build a prestigious image for restaurants. Furthermore, Ariffin, Bibon, and Saadiah (2011) agreed with our results and concluded that the pleasant scent, pleasing music, comfortable temperature, low noise level and adequate lighting, all harmonizing with other elements in a restaurant, result in customers having more favorable perceptions of an operation and evaluating their experiences more positively.

## 6. Conclusion
Mainly, the purpose of this research is to study the influence of hotel servicescape on the guests' perceptions of hotel image. The results indicated that quality of servicescape leads to positive hotel image. Hence, this study called hotel managers to give continuous considerations and efforts to the issues of hotels' servicescape; it should not be left to chance. Servicescape should be seen as an essential marketing strategy that should be better managed.
Specifically, the study clarified significance of four dimensions or elements for satisfactory servicescape.

## Recommendations and Implications
As a result, many implications for hotel managers are introduced. First, ambient conditions such as color, music, aroma, temperature, lighting and noise influence customers' perceptions of the

hotel. Colors of the dining area's walls, pictures/paintings, plants/flowers, tableware, linens, floor coverings, and furniture can all play an essential part in delivering an image and in creating an overall aesthetic impression.

Hotel managers should change background music and altering its volume, type and tempo to meet customers' preferences, and to make them feel pleased and relaxed. Aroma and internal temperature of restaurants can be used for several human responses including thermal comfort, perceived air quality. Hotels should also control noise to an acceptable level. It is often recognized that when a guest visits a hotel, he/she would like an environment, which would make him feel comfortable and relaxed during the duration of his stay. Hotel's lighting should be in a harmony with furniture and other accessories, and provide more pleasant and welcome atmosphere. Proper lighting plays a key role in creating "wow factor in hotels.

Second, successful hotel layout should provide an easy access and exit, and make supplementary service areas such as restrooms easier to find. It can affect the final comfort of the customers. An effective and helpful signage added to a good spatial organization induces a good customers' behavior and a positive image of the service. When it comes to spatial layout, the crowd is one of the most important aspects. The first functionality of layout is to control the flow of traffic through the place. Specifically, three points have to be taken into account. First, the circulation, it should encourage the circulation of customers through the different areas. Second, the coordination: it combines goods and space in order to suggest customers' needs. Third, the convenience, which consists in arranging items in a way that should create a degree of convenience for both customers and employees.

Third, hotels' signs, symbols, artifacts and other aesthetics such as paintings/pictures, plant, flowers, furniture, color and wall décor influence both pleasure and arousal emotions of their customers. Signs should be used as labels (name of hotel, name of department), for directional purposes (entrances, exits), and to communicate rules of behavior (no smoking, children must be accompanied by an adult). Additionally, signage can be used in communicating hotel image. Hotel can use signs to reduce perceived crowding and stress in a specific place. In addition, the quality of materials used in construction, artwork, presence of certificates and photographs on walls, floor coverings, and personal objects displayed in the environment can all communicate symbolic meaning and create an overall aesthetic impression. From another side, hotel managers, for example, know that white table cloths and subdued lighting symbolically convey full service and relatively high prices, whereas counter service, plastic furnishings, and bright lighting symbolize the opposite.

**Limitations**
There were many challenges and obstacles that have been encountered when distributing the questionnaire. Firstly, the geographical area of the population was too wide that costs the researcher a lot of effort, time and money to reach all five-main tourist areas to be able to generalize the results on all over Egypt. Accordingly, data was collected from respondents who visited four and five star hotels in Cairo and Alexandria. Thus, the generalization of the results cannot be made. For instance, the findings should not be generalized to different categories of hotels. In addition, this study only focused on three dimensions of servicescape.

**Directions for Future Research**
The present study discussed a set of elements that affect the servicescape in hotel operations; future research may be devoted to discuss other factors that are not investigated in this study. This study has also drawn responses from customers; additional researches have to investigate the same research hypotheses but from other points of view such as point of view of hotel management. This is very important to authenticate the results of this research, and to substantiate whether employees, supervisors, and management hold the same vision.

Additionally, the current study focused on four and five-star hotels in Egypt, other hotels categories or other international hotels could be included in the comparison study in the future. Furthermore, the present study used only the survey as a tool for collecting information from hotel customers; perhaps, future studies could use in-depth interviews as an alternative approach to provide richer insights into the hotel servicescape.

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**Appendix: the survey items**

  *I   Servicescape*

*A: Ambient conditions*

  **1**    The colors within the hotel are complementary and coordinating.
  **2**    The colors of the hotel premises create a warm atmosphere.
  **3**    The color scheme of the hotel is attractive.
  **4**    The colors of the hotel rooms are pleasant.
  **5**    The background music in the hotel is pleasant.
  **6**    The background music makes me feel relaxed.
  **7**    The lighting of the hotel creates a warm atmosphere.
  **8**    The lighting in the lobby area makes me feel welcome.
  **9**    The lighting of the hotel rooms is inappropriate.
  **10**    The lighting within the hotel premises creates a comfortable atmosphere.
  **11**    The temperature inside the hotel premises is comfortable.
  **12**    The temperature of the hotel room is appropriate
  **13**    The air aroma within the hotel premises is enticing.
  **14**    The air quality in the hotel is bad.
  **15**    In general, the physical environment in the hotel pleases me.

*B: Space and function*

  **16**    The furniture used by the hotel is of high quality.
  **17**    Overall the hotel's layout makes it easy to get to where I want to go.
  **18**    The hotel layout makes it easy to get the restrooms.
  **19**    The hotel layout makes it easy to get to parking areas.
  **20**    The hotel layout makes it easy to get to smoking areas.
  **21**    The overall layout of the hotel makes it easy for me to move around in the hotel.
  **22**    The hotel layout particularly the guest room, give me enough tangible privacy.
  **23**    The layout of the hotel reception is graceful.
  **24**    The layout of the hotel rooms is accommodating.

*C: Sign & Symbol*

  **25**    The hotel's architecture is impressive.
  **26**    I can find each zone in the hotel Easily.
  **27**    Artifacts and decorations in the hotel are appropriate.
  **28**    The signage in the hotel gives me a clear direction.
  **29**    The signage in the hotel is easy to be understood.
  **30**    There is sufficient signage in the hotel.
  **31**    The signage in the hotel is large enough to see clearly.
  **32**    The wall decorations of the hotel are visually appealing.
  **33**    The paintings/ pictures of the hotel are visually attractive.

  **II   Hotel image**

  **1**   The hotel is sophisticated.
  **2**   The hotel has a cheerful and enhancing atmosphere.
  **3**   The hotel has authentic atmosphere.
  **4**   I have a good impression about this hotel.
  **5**   In my opinion, this hotel has a good image in the minds of customers.
  **6**   I believe that this hotel has a worse image than its competitors.
  **7**   The hotel has good enjoyment compared with price.