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Research article

Design, comfort, and perceived value as mediators between hotel servicescape and customer loyalty

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ABSTRACT

This study examined how hotel servicescape elements influence customer contentment and post-experience behavioural intentions (PEBI). Using multiple servicescape dimensions and scales for contentment and PEBI, standard regression analyses identified key relationships. Design, comfort, and perceived value emerged as strong mediators between servicescape features and PEBI, emphasising their role in building customer loyalty. Ambient conditions and functionality were critical predictors of both contentment and behavioural intentions, underscoring the need for comfortable, efficient hotel environments. Furthermore, spatial layout and decorative elements directly affected PEBI without necessarily enhancing contentment. Meanwhile, signs, symbols, and social aspects of the servicescape influenced select dimensions of contentment with more subtle effects. These findings highlight the importance of strategic investments in physical design, functional flow, and customer-perceived value. The research offers practical insights for hotel managers and scholars, encouraging a holistic understanding of how environmental cues within hotels shape guest experiences and long-term behavioural outcomes.

KEYWORDS

Design comfort; perceived value; contentment; hotel servicescape experience

Introduction

Intense competition in the hotel industry necessitates innovative differentiation strategies to enhance customer experience and satisfaction (Kranzbuhler et al., 2018; Pelegrin-Borondo et al., 2017). Customer experience, defined as an individual's subjective response to interactions with a service (Gentile et al., 2007; Walls et al., 2011), is multifaceted and can be examined from various perspectives (Dedeoglu et al., 2018; Hsieh & Chuang, 2020; Lemon & Verhoef, 2016). Within lodging facilities, a key aspect is the customer's interaction with the physical environment, encompassing layout, design, decor, and aesthetics (Ali & Amin, 2014; Lee & Jeong, 2012). This environment influences customers' mental, emotional, physical, sensory, and social experiences (Lemon & Verhoef, 2016; Verhoef et al., 2009). That being so, the physical environment of a hotel significantly impacts guest experiences (Wong & Dioko, 2013; Wong & Wu, 2013). In the travel and hospitality sector, the servicescape is central to how guests evaluate service quality (Lin, 2016; Türker et al., 2019). It sets the stage for the simultaneous delivery and consumption of services, profoundly influencing guest satisfaction and perceptions of service excellence (Lockwood & Pyun, 2019). The service setting enables providers to shape customer perceptions, thereby influencing behaviour (Dedeoglu et al., 2018). A superior service environment often cultivates positive guest behaviours, ultimately enhancing satisfaction (Chan et al., 2019; Dong & Siu, 2013). The physical environment of a hotel is a powerful differentiator (Lockwood & Pyun, 2019), driving a strong emphasis on hospitality and design (Song et al., 2021). Interior design can be a competitive advantage for lodging facilities, fostering competitiveness and customer loyalty (Mody et al., 2017; Song et al., 2021).

The concept of the physical environment and its influence on guest experiences is well-established. Bitner's (1992) servicescape framework highlights the role of environmental cues in shaping customer

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perceptions. While seminal, Bitner's work primarily focused on restaurants rather than hotels, warranting further exploration (Lockwood & Pyun, 2019). Given the extended time guests spend in lodging facilities (Dedeoglu et al., 2018; Emir, 2016), understanding the effect of the physical environment on customer emotions and behaviour is crucial. Dedeoglu et al. (2018) highlight a research gap in the servicescape of lodging facilities, particularly compared to retail and online businesses. Moreover, research on the impact of the physical environment on customer satisfaction and behaviour remains limited (Avan et al., 2019). Contentment is a personal emotional state experienced when one perceives their current situation as fulfilling. It represents a low-arousal, positive emotion considered ideal for human experience (Cordaro et al., 2024). An individual's emotional state is influenced by their level of relaxation. In relation to the physical environment, this emotional state is experienced in the immediate context, such as within a hotel setting. It pertains to the perception of whether one's desires have been fulfilled (Rojas & Veenhoven, 2013). This study, therefore, examines how hotel service elements influence guest contentment and subsequent revisit intentions using the Stimulus-Organism-Response (S-O-R) model. This model is a key framework for understanding the relationships among the physical environment, guest satisfaction, and behavioural intentions (Choi & Kandampully, 2019; Lockwood & Pyun, 2019). The study will contribute to understanding how the S-O-R model is applied in the hotel context. Becker & Jaakkola (2020) emphasise the challenges of operationalising customer experience across different contexts. This variability underscores the need for continued research on guest experiences in the hotel industry. Therefore, the overall research question for this study is: *How do specific elements of the hotel servicescape influence guest contentment and subsequent behavioural intentions?*

Theoretical framework

S-O-R model

The S-O-R model, proposed by Mehrabian & Russell (1974), posits a link between the physical environment, human emotions, and behavioural responses. Environmental stimuli (S) trigger internal processes (O), leading to subsequent reactions (R). Unlike a direct stimulus-response relationship, the environment indirectly influences behaviour by affecting the organism's internal state (Lockwood & Pyun, 2019). Bagozzi (1986) notes that stimuli are external factors, such as marketing mix elements and the physical environment, while the organism encompasses internal structures and processes that mediate the stimulus-response interaction. The flexibility of the S-O-R is considered one of its strengths (Jacoby, 2002). It can be used to examine both internal and external stimuli; tangible and intangible stimuli; experiential and non-experiential states, including attitude, emotion, perception/feeling, judgement, belief, motivation, and thinking, and several response factors, including intention, behaviour, avoidance, among others (Sultan et al., 2021). The model has been widely applied in retail and marketing (Chen & Yao, 2018; Demangeot & Broderick, 2016; Kamboj et al., 2018; Kim et al., 2020; Lucía-Palacios et al., 2016; Wu & Li, 2018). In these contexts, environmental characteristics influence consumer emotions, which, in turn, affect behaviours. In the tourism sector, a few studies have applied the S-O-R model (Jang & Namkung, 2009; Jani & Han, 2015; Kim & Moon, 2009) to hotel servicescapes. Jani & Han (2015) found the model to be important for explaining the relationships among hotel ambience, customer emotions, and responses. In this study, the hotel's physical environment serves as the stimulus. Guests' emotional responses constitute the organism, and post-stay return intention represents the behavioural response. While marketing materials can create initial impressions, the in-situ experience of the physical environment ultimately influences return decisions, holding other factors constant, such as booking channels (e.g., corporate bookings) and available alternatives. To better understand the specific relationships within this S-O-R framework in the context of the hotel industry, this study aims to investigate the following research questions:

- How do various dimensions of the hotel servicescape (e.g., ambient conditions, spatial layout, furnishings, signage) influence guests?
- Which specific dimensions of servicescape significantly correlate with guest behavioural intentions?
- How does guest contentment with the hotel servicescape affect their behavioural intentions?

Literature review

Hotel physical environment characteristics

The physical environment, often termed the *servicescape*, encompasses an organisation's layout, design, and aesthetics (Ali & Amin, 2014; Lee & Jeong, 2012). This tangible or intangible space is where customers encounter service providers (Avan et al., 2019) and where their experiences are directly or indirectly influenced (Bitner, 1992; Durna et al., 2015; Liu & Jang, 2009; Mehrabian & Russell, 1974). Beyond physical attributes, the servicescape includes intangible elements like staff demeanour and cultural cues

(Dedeoglu et al., 2018; Durna et al., 2015; Meng & Choi, 2017). Chang (2016) and Dong & Siu (2013) distinguish between communicative and substantive staging, highlighting their roles in shaping customer experiences. These factors can significantly impact customer and staff behaviour (Kandampully et al., 2023). Given the simultaneous production and consumption of services and customers' often limited prior knowledge, the servicescape plays a vital role in shaping perceptions and evaluations (Artuğer, 2020; Avan et al., 2019; Lockwood & Pyun, 2019). Its influence on customer satisfaction is clear across various sectors (hotels, supermarkets, restaurants, etc.). While the servicescape remains a fundamental aspect of environmental-behaviour research, it has also faced criticism. Critics argue that the concept often neglects social interactions and cultural nuances (Line et al., 2018; Pizam & Tasci, 2019; Rosenbaum & Massiah, 2011).

Guest perceptions of the servicescape

Environmental psychologists emphasise that an individual's environment significantly influences their behaviour (Avan et al., 2019). Key contributors to this field include Kotler (1973), Mehrabian and Russell (1974), and Bitner (1992), who categorise human behavioural responses to an environment as either approach (positive engagement and desire to stay) or avoidance (withdrawal and a desire to leave). To apply this concept within hospitality, Lockwood and Pyun (2019) suggest measuring the specific influence of the "servicescape" on guest behaviour. The servicescape functions as a form of nonverbal communication, where physical elements such as furnishings and staff uniforms influence guest perceptions (Bitner, 1992). These environmental cues act as stimuli that trigger internal emotional states, which then shape behavioural responses. This process is best explained through Mehrabian & Russell's (1974) PAD model, which proposes three emotional dimensions: Pleasure (valence), Arousal (stimulation), and Dominance (perceived control), that interact to determine how a person responds to their environment. For example, high-arousal environments with vibrant colours and dynamic lighting can energise guests, while low-arousal settings promote relaxation. Research consistently demonstrates that these initial emotional responses significantly influence subsequent behaviours and judgments (Avan et al., 2019; Lee & Chuang, 2022; Lockwood & Pyun, 2019). Positive emotional states, triggered by the servicescape, promote favourable attitudes and customer loyalty (Line et al., 2018). However, the importance of these factors varies by context. Sukhu et al. (2019) emphasises that ambience has a stronger impact on emotions in luxury hotels, where guest expectations for sensory quality are much higher. This principle also applies to the restaurant industry; in the Nigerian context, Eka et al. (2024) observed that the spatial layout, ambience, and social aspects of a restaurant's servicescape directly influence guest satisfaction.

Approach behaviours involve positive engagement and a desire to return, while avoidance behaviours reflect dissatisfaction and a lack of intent to revisit. These responses are shaped by guests' perceptions of the servicescape (Avan et al., 2019; Bitner, 1992; Choi & Kandampully, 2019; Lockwood & Pyun, 2019; Mehrabian & Russell, 1974). Given the focus on upscale hotels in previous research (Lockwood & Pyun, 2019), future studies should examine how the servicescape influences emotions and behaviours across different hotel tiers to provide a more comprehensive understanding. Empirically, Avan et al. (2019) found that the servicescape strongly and significantly influences respondents' positive and negative emotions. This is in line with earlier studies, such as those by Ali & Amin (2014). In that study, they found that the physical environment had a strong, positive influence on customer emotions, satisfaction, and behavioural intentions. However, in terms of the strength of the influence, they found it was more on emotions than on behavioural intentions. This leads to the first hypothesis that:

H_1: There is no significant relationship between servicescape elements and guest contentment.

Post-experience behavioural intentions

Post-experience behavioural intention (PEBI), defined as a consumer's inclination to repurchase and recommend a product or service, is significantly influenced by customer satisfaction in the hospitality industry (Sukhu et al., 2019). Positive PEBI includes repeat visits, recommendations, and greater price tolerance, whereas negative PEBI encompasses complaints, avoidance, and decreased patronage (Durna et al., 2015). Customer experience management is pivotal in shaping purchase decisions and behaviours (Yoon & Lee, 2017). Research consistently links high customer satisfaction to positive PEBI, including loyalty and advocacy (Bitner, 1992; Cetin & Walls, 2016; Dedeoglu et al., 2018; Tran et al., 2020). Consumer expectations shape perceptions of service quality and, in turn, subsequent PEBI (Hollebeek & Rather, 2019). Brand experience in tourism influences recall, attachment, advocacy, and loyalty (Rather et al., 2019). Exceptional hotel experiences positively affect loyalty, word-of-mouth, and overall business performance. Although the servicescape significantly shapes customer experience and satisfaction, customer experience

itself is a critical determinant of PEBI. To enhance hotel success, a deeper understanding of how to create exceptional customer experiences is essential. To this end, the following hypotheses are proposed:

H_2: There is no significant relationship between servicescape elements and post-experience behavioural intentions

H_3: There are no significant relationships between guests' contentment (low arousal positive emotions) and post-experience behavioural intentions.

Research design

This study employed a quantitative cross-sectional survey design to examine hotel guests' perceptions of the servicescape in the Sekondi–Takoradi Metropolis. The cross-sectional approach was appropriate because data was collected at a single point in time, enabling an efficient assessment of the guest experience without the need for repeated observations. The survey method was particularly suitable given the mobile and time-constrained nature of hotel guests. Structured questionnaires ensured quick administration, consistent responses, and minimal disruption to guests' schedules. This approach also facilitated data collection from a relatively large sample, thereby enhancing the reliability and validity of the study's findings. The target population comprised all hotel guests staying in the metropolis, whether for business or leisure. This group was selected because hotel guests provide the most direct insights into servicescape experiences and related behavioural or perceptual factors in the hospitality sector. Quota sampling was used to select hotels, and convenience sampling was used to select guests. For the hotels, 15 were selected proportionally from the 30 registered and licensed hotels in the metropolis, ensuring representation across star categories. Guest selection was based on availability and willingness to participate, informed by each hotel manager's occupancy data. This method provided a robust structural framework and facilitated the practical selection of respondents. In total, 295 guests agreed to participate in the study.

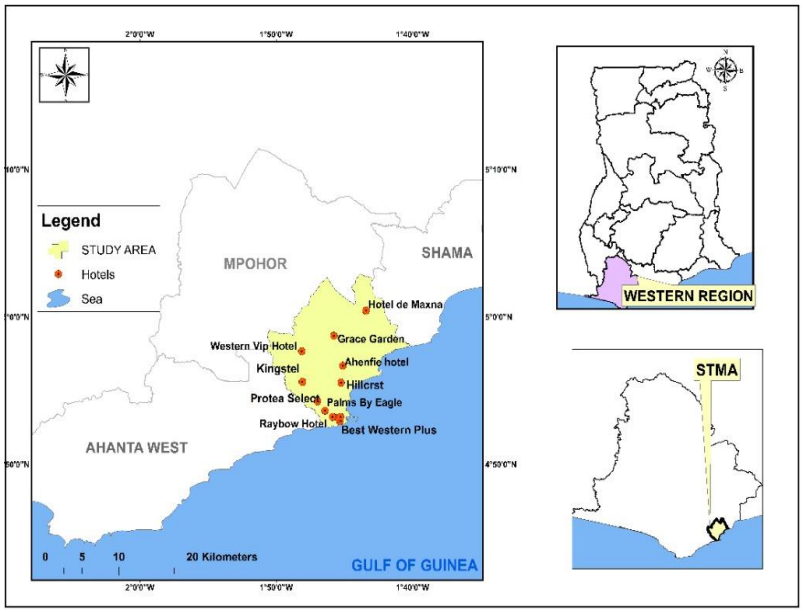

Figure 1: Map of the study area; Sekondi-Takoradi Metropolis.
Source: Cartography Unit, University of Cape Coast

The questionnaire was structured into four modules: *Module 1*: Guests' perception of hotel servicescape. *Module 2*: Guests' contentment with servicescape elements. *Module 3*: Post-experience behavioural intentions of hotel guests. *Module 4*: Socio-demographic characteristics of the respondents. Most items in each section were closed-ended, with a few open-ended ones. A five-point Likert scale (1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Neither Agree nor Disagree, 4 = Agree, 5 = Strongly Agree) was used to measure respondents' perceptions of servicescape, contentment, and post-behavioural intentions. Items were drawn from Ahmed et al. (2020), Choi & Kandampully (2019), and Lockwood and Pyun (2019). Of the 295 questionnaires distributed, 223 were retrieved from the field, representing a response rate of 75%. After sorting and cleaning, 206 were deemed appropriate for analysis, accounting for about 70%. IBM Statistical Product and Service Solutions (SPSS) version 25 was used for descriptive statistics, exploratory factor analysis, and multiple linear regression.

Results

Demographic characteristics

The descriptive analysis shows that a higher percentage of males (60.2%) participated compared to females (39.8%). Although the study uses convenience sampling, the male-to-female distribution aligns with other studies that show male hotel guests dominate (Lockwood & Pyun, 2019; Sotiriadis & Sarmaniotis, 2016). A fact that could be linked to more men using traditional hotel accommodation. Close to half of the respondents (45.6%) were in the 25-34 age group, and the next-largest group was 18-24 (31.6%), suggesting a relatively young respondent base. A significant majority of respondents were Ghanaians (90.8%), with 9.2% non-Ghanaians, including individuals from the USA, Nigeria, Togo, and the Ivory Coast. Regarding marital status, most respondents were single (64.1%), while married individuals accounted for 35.9%. This is consistent with the age distribution, as people aged 18-34 are often unmarried.

Table 1: Profile of respondents

Variables		Frequency	Percentage
Sex			
	Male	124	60.2
	Female	82	39.8
Age			
	18-24	65	31.6
	25-34	94	45.6
	35-44	32	15.5
	45 and above	15	7.3
Nationality			
	Ghanaian	187	90.8
	Non-Ghanaian	19	9.2
Religion			
	Christianity	112	54.4
	Islam	68	33.0
	Atheist	26	12.6
Marital status			
	Single	132	64.1
	Married	74	35.9
Level of education			
	Basic school	4	1.9
	High school	30	14.6
	University/college	151	73.3
	Post-graduate	21	10.2

Reliability and validity of the hotel servicescape scale

The structural validity and reliability of the hotel servicescape scale were evaluated using exploratory factor analysis (EFA). The analysis yielded a significant Bartlett's test of sphericity ($p < .001$) and a Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) measure of 0.941, confirming the appropriateness of the data for factor extraction. Scale reliability was established through Cronbach's alpha, with coefficients ranging from 0.86 to 0.91, surpassing the generally accepted minimum of 0.7 (Pallant, 2010). The EFA explained 67% of the total variance in the data.

Table 2: Reliability analysis of physical environment scale

Construct/Items (physical environment)	Factor loadings	Cronbach's alpha
I *Ambient Conditions*		.912
Relaxing overall ambience	.827	
Comfortable temperature	.802	
Refreshing air quality	.801	
Well-kept and clean surroundings	.800	
Attractive interior design and colour schemes	.794	
Appealing and comfortable wall, floor, and ceiling decor	.779	
Attractive exterior design and finishes	.755	
Adequate and appropriate lighting	.692	
Pleasant and enjoyable background music/sound	.643	
Acceptable noise levels	.632	
II Spatial Layout		.880
Adequate parking space	.896	
Spacious interior environment	.890	
Easy movement within the hotel	.852	
Logical and easily accessible layout	.791	
III Functionality		.897
Comfortable furniture and seating arrangement	.885	
Modern and efficient equipment and furnishings	.880	
Comfortable and attractive guestroom layout	.877	
Well-cleaned and properly supplied guestroom	.859	
IV Signs and Symbols		.864
Informative directional signs	.914	
Sufficient visible directional signs (e.g., entrance, exit)	.880	
Multilingual directional signs	.868	
V Decorative pieces		.869
Appropriately located paintings	.856	
Attractive hotel logo	.831	
Attractive decorative style	.820	
Attractive photo frames	.811	
Attractive ornaments, sculptures, and vases	.735	
VI Social Servicescape		.901
Acceptable interaction with employees	.821	
Courteous and friendly employees	.813	
Employees make me feel valued	.791	
Prompt and efficient service delivery	.776	

Well-composed and mannered, other guests	.772	
Suitable type and level of crowd (other guests)	.756	
Acceptable interaction with other guests	.738	
Attractively dressed and professional employees	.708	
Total variance explained		67.043%

Bartlett's Test of Sphericity (Approx. Chi-Square) =5720.483, p-value = .000
Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy = .941

Reliability of the contentment scale

To assess the construct validity and reliability of the contentment scale and its subscales in measuring contentment with the hotel's physical environment, a series of analyses was conducted. Three subscales, *atmosphere and mood, design and comfort*, and *value for money*, were developed based on item content. The suitability of the data for factor analysis was established through a Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) measure of 0.952 and a significant Bartlett's test of sphericity ($\chi^2 = 2301.154$, $p < .001$) using 14 variables. Principal component analysis (PCA) with varimax rotation revealed a single-factor solution that accounted for 67% of the total variance. The overall scale demonstrated high reliability (Cronbach's alpha = .959). To further examine the contribution of each subscale, factor loadings and Cronbach's alpha coefficients were analysed (Table 3). The factor loadings and Cronbach's alpha indicated that each subscale contributed significantly to overall contentment with the hotel's physical environment.

Table 3: Reliability analysis of contentment scale

Construct/Items (Contentment with physical environment)	Factor loadings	Cronbach's alpha
I *Atmosphere and Mood*		.842
The overall atmosphere of the hotel puts me in a good mood	0.797	
The layout and decor of the hotel make me feel at ease and relaxed	0.844	
The hotel creates a pleasurable experience	0.826	
II *Design and Comfort*		.917
I am happy with the cleanliness and aesthetics of the hotel's surroundings	0.825	
The design and arrangement of the hotel's spaces are enjoyable	0.804	
The physical environment is comfortable and well-designed	0.738	
The stylish and inviting decor confirms that I have made the right choice in staying here	0.865	
The appealing environment makes me want to extend my stay	0.838	
The hotel's physical spaces meet and exceed my expectations	0.861	
III *Value for money*		.876
I had value for money using this facility	0.749	
I am satisfied with the decision to use this facility	0.861	
I have a positive impression of this hotel	0.833	
Comparatively, this is one of the best hotels I have stayed in	0.816	
Eigenvalue	8.756	
%Total Variance Explained	67.355	
Overall Cronbach's Alpha		**.959**

Bartlett's Test of Sphericity (Approx. Chi-square) = 2301.154, p-value=0.00. Kaiser-Mayer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy = 0.952

Reliability of the post-experience behaviour scale

The reliability of the post-experience behaviour scale was assessed. All four items demonstrated adequate measurement of the construct. Factor loadings for each item exceeded .70, and the Cronbach's alpha coefficient was .934, indicating high internal consistency. These results confirm the scale's suitability for measuring post-experience behaviour.

Table 4: Reliability analysis of post-experience behaviour scale

Construct/Items (Post-Behavioural Intentions)	Factor loadings	Cronbach's alpha
		.934
I would like to return to this hotel on my next visit	.920	
This facility would be my first choice the next in future	.917	
I would give positive comments about this hotel	.914	
I would recommend this hotel to others based on my experience	.907	
Total variance explained		83.62%

Bartlett's Test of Sphericity (Approx. Chi-Square) = 683.789, p-value = .000
Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy = .865

Results of multiple regression

This study investigated the relationships among six hotel servicescape dimensions, contentment (Atmosphere & Mood, Design & Comfort, and Value), and post-experience behavioural intentions (PEBI). Standard multiple regression analysis was employed to examine the direct effects of servicescape dimensions on both contentment and PEBI, as well as the mediating effects of contentment on PEBI. Six servicescape dimensions served as independent variables, with contentment dimensions as mediators and PEBI as the dependent variable. Results are summarised in Tables 5, 6, and 7. Table 5 presents three models. Model 1: The effect of the six servicescape dimensions on *Atmosphere and Mood.* The model explained 57.1% of the variance ($R^2 = .571$, $F = 44.177$, $p < .000$). Ambient Conditions ($\beta = .315$, $t = 3.687$, $p < .000$) and Functionality ($\beta = .309$, $t = 3.803$, $p < .000$) demonstrated significant positive effects on Atmosphere & Mood. Ambient Conditions exhibited a marginally stronger effect. Spatial Layout ($\beta = .058$, $p = .450$), Signs and Symbols ($\beta = .071$, $p = .330$), Decorative Pieces ($\beta = .065$, $p = .460$), and Social Servicescape ($\beta = .037$, $p = .631$) did not significantly contribute to the model.

Table 5: Regression summary: six servicescape dimensions, contentment (atmosphere & mood, design & comfort, value)

Independent Variables	Dependent variable: Atmosphere & Mood			Dependent variable: Design & Comfort			Dependent Variable: Value		
	β	t-value	p-value	β	t-value	p-value	β	t-value	p-value
I Ambient Conditions	.315	3.687	.000**	.248	3.311	.001**	.239	3.072	.002**
II Spatial Layout	.058	.756	.450	.121	1.808	.072	.027	.394	.694
III Functionality	.309	3.803	.000**	.289	4.069	.000**	.267	3.616	.000**
IV Signs and Symbol	.071	.977	.330	.051	.807	.421	.211	3.195	.002**
V Decorative pieces	.065	.730	.466	.058	.741	.459	-.010	-.123	.902
VI Social Servicescape	.037	.481	.631	.173	2.549	.012*	.199	2.822	.005**
	R^2 = .571, F = 44.177, Sig. =.000			R^2 = .671 F = 67.779 Sig. = .000			R^2 = .645, F = 60.160, Sig. = .000		

Note. *p < .05, **p < .01.

Model 2: The effect of the six servicescape dimensions on Design and Comfort. The model accounted for 67.1% of the variance (R^2 = .671, F = 67.779, p < .000). Functionality (β = .289, t = 4.069, p < .000), Ambient Conditions (β = .248, t = 3.311, p = .001), and Social Servicescape (β = .173, t = 2.549, p = .012) significantly predicted *Design & Comfort*, with Functionality demonstrating the strongest effect. Spatial Layout, Signs and Symbols, and Decorative Pieces did not significantly contribute to the model. The third regression model assessed the relationship between the six servicescape dimensions and Value. The model explained 64.5% of the variance (R^2 = .645, F = 60.160, p < .000). Functionality (β = .267, t = 3.616, p < .000), Ambient Conditions (β = .239, t = 3.072, p = .002), Signs and Symbols (β = .211, t = 3.195, p = .002), and Social Servicescape (β = .199, t = 2.822, p = .005) significantly predicted Value. Functionality exhibited the strongest effect. Spatial Layout and Decorative Pieces did not significantly contribute to the model. The fourth regression model examined the direct effects of the six servicescape dimensions on post-experience behaviour. Table 6 reveals a significant overall model (R^2 = .562, F = 42.610, p < .000), accounting for 56.2% of the variance in post-experience behavioural intentions. Four servicescape dimensions significantly predicted post-experience behavioural intentions: Ambient Conditions (β = .215, p = .014), Decorative Pieces (β = .211, p = .021), Spatial Layout (β = .198, p = .011), and Functionality (β = .172, p = .037). Signs and Symbols, and Social Servicescape did not significantly contribute to the model.

Table 6: Regression summary: six servicescape dimensions, post-experience behaviour

Independent Variables	Dependent variable: Post-experience behaviour		
	β	t-value	p-value
I Ambient Conditions	.215	2.491	.014*
II Spatial Layout	.198	2.576	.011*
III Functionality	.172	2.099	.037*
IV Signs and Symbol	.010	.140	.889
V Decorative pieces	.211	2.335	.021*
VI Social Servicescape	.048	.620	.536
	R^2 = .562	F = 42.610	Sig. =.000

Note. *p < .05, **p < .01.

The fifth regression analysis (Table 7) assessed the relationship between the three contentment dimensions (Atmosphere & Mood, Design & Comfort, and Value) and post-experience behavioural intentions. The model demonstrated strong explanatory power (R^2 = .706, F = 161.986, p < .000), accounting for 70.6% of the variance. Design & Comfort (β = .508, p < .000) was the strongest predictor of post-experience behaviour. Value also significantly contributed (β = .254, p = .004). Atmosphere & Mood (β = .107, p = .227) did not significantly predict post-experience behavioural intentions.

Table 7: Regression summary: satisfaction (atmosphere & mood, design & comfort, Value), post-experience behaviour

Independent Variables	Dependent variable: Post-experience behaviour		
	β	t-value	p-value
I Atmosphere & mood	.107	1.211	.227
II Design & Comfort	.508	5.104	.000**
III Value	.254	2.895	.004**
	R^2 = .706	F = 161.986	Sig. =.000

Note. *p < .05, **p < .01.

Discussion

This study examined the effect of hotel servicescape elements on customer responses, employing multiple servicescape dimensions from existing literature alongside a developed contentment (satisfaction) scale and a post-experience behavioural intention (PEBI) scale. Standard multiple regression analyses were conducted to examine the relationships between these constructs. Regression models (Table 5) examining the relationship between six servicescape dimensions and contentment revealed that ambient conditions and functionality were the most significant predictors across all three contentment subscales: atmosphere and mood, design and comfort, and value. Signs and symbols significantly influenced perceived value, but not atmosphere and mood or design and comfort. The social servicescape significantly contributed to design, comfort, and value, but not to atmosphere and mood. The spatial layout and decorative pieces had minimal impact on all three contentment subscales. Although the servicescape elements influenced contentment at

different levels, this finding confirms earlier work on the subject (Ali & Amin, 2014; Avan et al., 2019; Lockwood & Pyun, 2019). Ambient conditions were positively and significantly related to PEBI, suggesting that favourable conditions (e.g., lighting, temperature, noise levels) enhance post-experience behavioural intentions. Similarly, spatial layout and functionality significantly influenced PEBI, indicating that well-designed, efficient environments promote positive post-experience behaviours. Decorative elements also positively influenced PEBI, highlighting the role of aesthetics in shaping post-experience perceptions. However, signs, symbols, and the social servicescape did not significantly predict PEBI. These variations notwithstanding, it is clear that, as in previous studies, the experience of the servicescape has some effect on behavioural intentions (Artuğer, 2020; Avan et al., 2019; Kandampully et al., 2023). Regression analysis revealed that design and comfort were the most significant predictors of PEBI, suggesting that comfortable and well-designed environments strongly encourage return visits and recommendations. Perceived value also significantly predicted PEBI, although to a lesser extent than design and comfort. Atmosphere and mood did not significantly predict PEBI, indicating that, while they contribute to the immediate experience, they do not strongly influence long-term behavioural intentions. The available literature indicates that positive customer experiences influence post-experience behaviour (Cetin & Walls, 2016; Tran et al., 2020).

Conclusion

This study provides compelling evidence for the significant impact of the hotel servicescape on customer contentment and post-experience behavioural intentions. Notably, design and comfort, along with perceived value, emerge as crucial mediators in shaping customer loyalty. Ambient conditions and functionality consistently influence both contentment and PEBI, underscoring the importance of a comfortable and efficient environment. While spatial layout and decorative elements directly influence PEBI, their limited impact on contentment suggests that aesthetic and spatial factors drive behavioural intentions independently of immediate contentment. Conversely, signs, symbols, and the social servicescape exhibit nuanced effects, primarily affecting specific dimensions of contentment. These findings highlight the need for hotels to adopt a strategic approach to servicescape management, prioritising investments in design, comfort, functionality, and value to cultivate positive customer experiences and foster long-term loyalty. This study contributes to research on the influences of hotel servicescape. By validating a hotel-specific servicescape scale (Lockwood & Pyun, 2019) and a modified contentment scale in a new context, this study provides insights into the relationships among servicescape dimensions, customer contentment, and behavioural responses. Consistent with previous research in hotel and retail settings, the study demonstrated that hotel servicescape significantly affects customer contentment and PEBI. Ambient Conditions, Spatial Layout, Functionality, and Signs & Symbols positively impacted contentment dimensions, with Ambient Conditions primarily influencing Atmosphere & Mood and Functionality impacting Design & Comfort and Value. Regarding PEBI, Ambient Conditions, Spatial Layout, Functionality, and Decorative Pieces played significant roles, with Ambient Conditions being paramount. The study further revealed that Design & Comfort and Value significantly contributed to PEBI, with Design & Comfort being the strongest predictor. The high R^2 value for the Contentment-PEBI model underscores the importance of contentment in understanding behavioural intentions. This study extends prior research by examining the mediating role of contentment in the servicescape-PEBI relationship.

For practical implications, hotel businesses should prioritise creating optimal Ambient Conditions and ensuring Functionality to enhance customer contentment across all dimensions. Strategic use of Signs & Symbols can boost perceived Value. Given their minimal impact, resources allocated to Decorative Pieces and Spatial Layout should be reevaluated unless they align with specific branding or functional objectives. To enhance PEBI, hoteliers should focus on creating favourable Ambient Conditions, well-organised Spatial Layouts, effective Functionality, and visually appealing Decorative Pieces. Conversely, resources allocated to Signs & Symbols and Social Servicescape, which showed minimal impact on PEBI, might be reallocated. However, contextual factors should be considered before making such changes. Enhancing Design & Comfort, and perceived Value should be prioritised to improve customer satisfaction and retention. Although Atmosphere & Mood showed a positive relationship with PEBI, its non-significant impact suggests that resources should be allocated to areas with proven effectiveness unless further research indicates otherwise. The strong R^2 for the contentment-PEBI relationship underscores the importance of improving Design & Comfort and Value to enhance customer outcomes. This study, conducted in Takoradi, Ghana, among 1–4-star hotels, may not fully represent the diversity of customers and hotels in Ghana. Future research should explore similar relationships in larger cities with more diverse respondents. Further research should examine the roles of Social Servicescape, Decorative Pieces, and Spatial Layout in hotel customer satisfaction, as well as the impact of Signs & Symbols and Social Servicescape on PEBI across different contexts. Given

the non-significant impact of Atmosphere & Mood on PEBI, future studies with diverse samples and settings should explore its potential influence on behavioural intentions

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