Perception Towards Servicescape Of Quick Service Restaurant In Surat City – A Case Study of McDonald

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Abstract:

In today's world there are many people who prefer fast food chain or fast food stores, which are affected the mentality of the consumers. These type of restaurant, with my study I wanted to know perception of customers towards servicescape of McDonald in Surat city. In this study total 110 respondents were selected with convenient   sampling and result has been presented based on descriptive analysis as well as Mann Whitney U test with the help of SPSS

Keywords: Physical environment, Quick service restaurant, Servicescape.

INTRODUCTION

Fast food is a mass-produced food that is prepared and served very quickly. The food is typically less nutritionally valuable compared to other foods and dishes. While any meal with low preparation time can be considered fast food, typically the term refers to food sold in a restaurant or store with frozen, preheated or precooked ingredients, and served to the customer in a packaged form for take-out/take-away. Fast food restaurants are traditionally distinguished by their ability to serve food via a drive-through. Outlets may be stands or kiosks, which may provide no shelter or seating, or fast food restaurants (also known as quick service restaurants). Franchise operations that are part of restaurant chains have standardized foodstuffs shipped to each restaurant from central locations. Fast food began with the first fish and chip shops in Britain in the 1860s. Drive-through restaurants were first popularized in the 1950s in the United States. The term "fast food" was recognized in a dictionary by Merriam–Webster in 1951. According to the National Institutes of Health (NIH), fast foods are quick alternatives to home-cooked meals. They are also high in saturated fat, sugar, salt and calories. Eating too much fast food has been linked to, among other things, colorectal cancer, obesity and high cholesterol. The traditional family dinner is increasingly being replaced by the consumption of takeaway, or eating "on the run". As a result, the time invested on food preparation is getting lower and lower, with an average couple in the United States spending 47 minutes and 19 seconds per day on food preparation in 2013.

A fast food restaurant, also known as a Quick Service Restaurant or QSR within the industry itself, is a specific type of restaurant characterized both by its fast food cuisine and by minimal table service. Food served in fast food restaurants typically caters to a "meat-sweet diet" and is offered from a limited menu; is cooked in bulk in advance and kept hot; is finished and packaged to order; and is usually available ready to take away, though seating may be provided. Fast food restaurants are usually part of a restaurant chain or franchise operation, which provisions standardized ingredients and/or partially prepared foods and supplies to each restaurant through controlled supply channels. The term "fast food" was recognized in a dictionary by Merriam–Webster in 1951.

India's quick service restaurant (QSR) business was floundering after body blows from demonetisation, the ban on liquor sales on highways and the introduction of the goods and services tax (GST). Hundreds of QSR and café outlets shut between 2013 and 2016 through the reckless expansion of 2015. Now, they have bounced back, galvanised by the unexpected challenges. Smaller stores, more food innovations, moving out of high streets and greater focus on same-store sales growth (SSG) are driving resurgence.
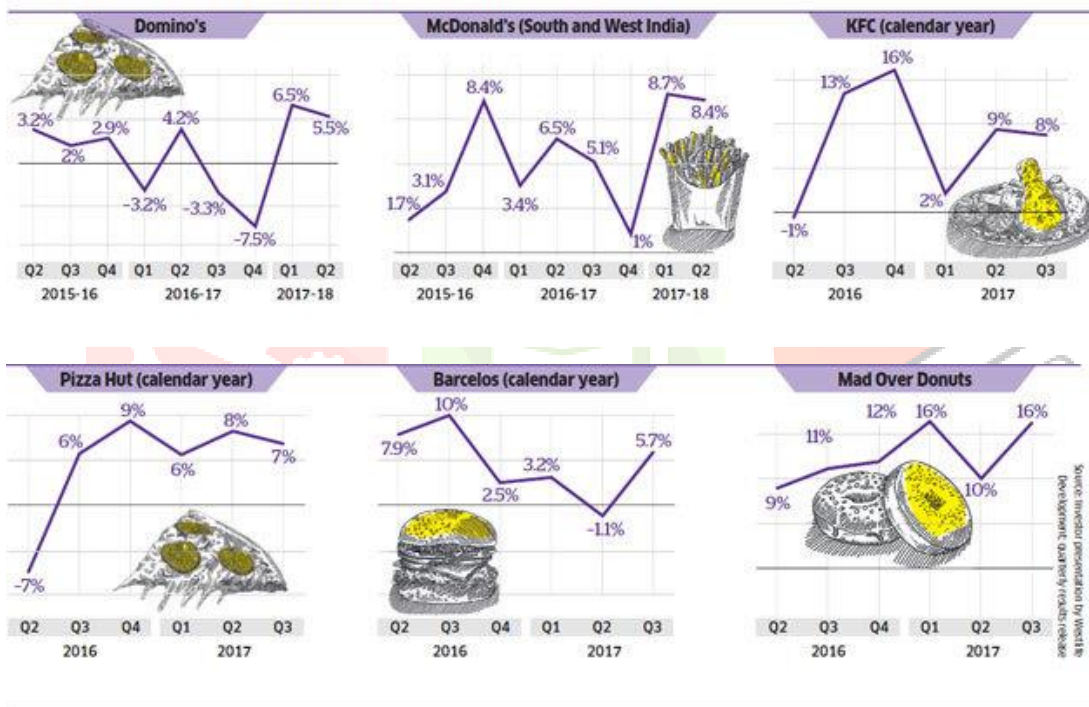

Fig.1 : Growth rate of selected QSR in India

Source:https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/industry/services/hotels/restaurants/ /62098915.cms

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK LITERATURE REVIEW

Since the term the 'servicescape' was first coined by Bitner (1992), **Booms and Bitner** defined a Servicescape as "the environment in which the service is assembled and in which the seller and customer interact, combined with tangible commodities that facilitate performance or communication of the service"

The Servicescape Model

It identifies the main dimensions in a service environment and views them holistically. Customer and employee responses classified under, cognitive, emotional and psychological which would in turn lead to overt behavior towards the environment. Key to effective design is how well each individual dimension fits together with everything else.
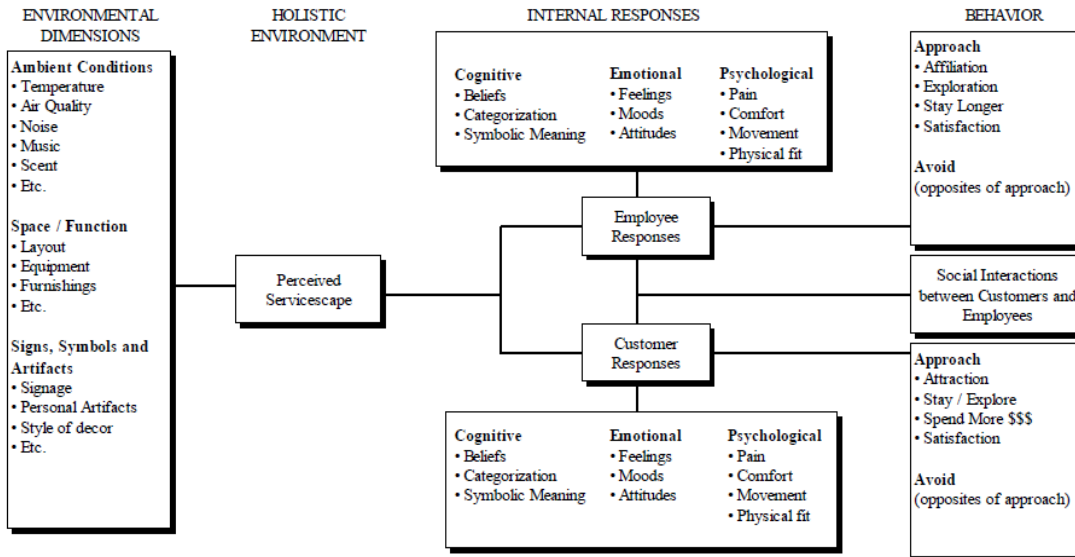
Source: Adapted from M.J. Bitner, "Servicescapes: The Impact of Physical Surroundings on Customers and Employees", *Journal of Marketing* 56 (April 1992), pp.57-71.

[Fig.2: Servicescape Model]

Dimensions of the Service Environment:

Service environments are complex and have many design elements. The main dimension in the servicescape model includes: **Ambient Conditions,** Which includes Music, Scent, Color etc. **Spatial Layout and Functionality,** Which includes Layout refers to size and shape of furnishings and the ways it is arranged, Functionality is the ability of those items to facilitate performance. **Signs, Symbols and Artifact,** Which includes Explicit or implicit signals to communicate the firm's image, help consumers find their way and to convey the rules of behavior.

Servicescape Serves Four Core Purposes:-

Shape customer's Experiences and Behavior, For Images, Positioning and Differentiation, Servicescape as a part of value proposition, Facilitate the service encounter & enhance the productivity.

Following in this section few of the existing researches, available pertaining to servicescape, are included in literature review, like its impact or effect or evaluation for different service sectors.

The importance of servicecapes could be traced back as early as 1970s when **Kotler (1973)** used the "atmospherics" to express the "quality of the surrounding place" measured through the stimulation of

customers' sensory systems in terms of visual (color, brightness, size and shapes), aural (volume and pitch), olfactory (scent; freshness) and tactile (softness, smoothness and temperature).

Levitt (1981) notes that when customers evaluate intangible products (e.g., services), they always depend to some extent on both appearance and external impression; servicescapes, in this context, encompass the appearance and impression of the service organization's overall products and services. Based on Levitt's explanation, since the hospitality industry provides a high degree of intangible product levels like services, consumers are likely to use tangible aspects like appearances to make judgments and evaluations. Servicescapes, in this case, are not only an important component of a customer's impression formation, but also an important source of evidence in the overall evaluation of the servicescape itself and the service organization in general.

Ingrid Y. Lin (2004) found that Servicescapes play an important role in many service organizations (e.g., hotels, restaurants, and hospitals) in that they provide a first impression, before customers have a chance to interact with service employees. Therefore, these servicescapes are an important element that customers will use to guide their beliefs, attitude, and expectations of a service provider. Customers interact with the physical facility continuously, an experience that outweighs their interactions with service employees. Hence, researchers, service providers, and designers should not neglect the importance of servicescapes.

Mika Berglund, Ylva Halvarsson (2008) concluded that the servicescape can be used as a means of achieving competitive advantage, and thus attracting new prospective clients. Moreover they found out that the perceived service quality can be enhanced through a positive response of the servicescape. The servicescape can influence the customer's overly satisfaction with the services. Creating a positive experience affecting the customer's repurchase behavior can ultimately lead to a long term relationship between the customer and the service provider. Servicescape also positively affect the relationship between employee and the service organization.

Roscoe Hightower, JR. (2010) agreed with that the physical environment has a positive influence on consumers'behavior intentions in service encounters around the world and across many industries. Their research is offered as a means to frame several common oversights associated with the servicescape construct's conceptualization and its potential influence on consumer behavioral intentions. They also suggested that researchers and practitioners utilize the instrument containing ambient dimension, social dimension & design dimension to develop a customized tool relative to their firm, industry, and country.

Daire Hooper, Joseph Coughlan, Michael R Mullen (2010) recognized that customers evaluate services holistically, however the servicescape should be regarded as a primer which moulds customers' expectations of the service they are about to receive. Indeed, it is quite possible for an individual to evaluate a service or store based on aesthetics or visual cues only and for this reason it is understandable that servicescape evaluations should serve as an antecedent to service quality perceptions. Their research

suggests that consumers evaluate the servicescape which then leads to linkages to service quality and subsequently to behavioral intentions.

Egle Cicenaite, Maria Maciejewska (2012) their study highlighted that a number of factors, 'lightning and colours', 'signs and symbols', and 'space/function and noise' are linked to customers' behaviour. In relation to the theoretical part, it can be said that factors such as lighting, noise, colours, signs and symbols as well as space/function conditions such as layout and equipment create emotionally pleasant environment in the supermarket. Therefore, those environmental factors influence customers' mood, attitude or certain beliefs about the supermarket. This leads to a customers' satisfaction or even happiness which refer to stimulation or excitement.

Teresa Fernandes & Sara Neves (2014) found that servicescape influences consumer perceived value when creating service experiences, with comfort and layout accessibility as the main drivers, followed by cleanliness, electronic equipment, and finally the aesthetic dimension. They had found that servicescape also influences consumer attitudes and behaviour: value in-context generates customers' satisfaction, which in turn has a positive effect on their desire to repeat the experience.

Above literature review signifies that servicescape is one of the most important criteria to think up on by the service provider to attract, build and retain customers towards any service, further these reviews of literature bring notice that whatever servicescape model was used to build questionnaire and which result in reliable questionnaire.

Objectives of the Study

- To Study perception towards servicescape of QSR in Surat city.
- To identify the elements that positively contributes to the perception of servicescape of QSR.
- To identify difference in perception towards servicescape between male and female respondents.

Research Methodology

This is a descriptive research design of cross sectional study where all the samples that is 110 have been selected by using judgmental sampling techniques which is a part of non-probabilistic sampling techniques. Sample elements were citizens of Surat city. Primary data was collected with the help of structured questionnaire.

Data Analysis

Table 1 : Demographic Analysis		
Gender	Frequency	Percentage
Male	56	50.9%
Female	54	49.1%
Total	110	100.0
Age		
Below 18	11	10.0%
18 - 25	70	63.6%
25 - 35	26	23.6%
35 & Above	3	2.7%
Total	110	100.0

Married Statement		
Married	39	35.5%
Unmarried	69	62.7%
Divorcee	2	1.8%
Total	110	100
Annual Family Income		
< 2,00,000	15	13.6%
2,00,000 - 4,00,000	19	17.3%
4,00,000 - 6,00,000	34	30.9%
6,00,000 - 8,00,000	31	28.2%
>8,00,000	11	10.0%
Total	110	100.0

From analysis it is found that out of these 79.1% respondents prefer McDonald, rest of 20.9% respondents don't prefer McDonald. Now out of total preferred to visit this QSR, 30% respondents visit twice in month and follow up 22% respondents visit once in month; 14% respondents visit more than thrice in a month. During 4 to 6 pm most of the respondents (28%) prefer McDonald, during 10 am to 12 pm of the respondents (9%) prefer McDonald, during 12 to 4 pm of the respondents (19%) prefer McDonald, while after 6 pm (23%) prefer McDonald. Study shows that 51.8% respondnets are statisfied while 27.3% respondnets are dissatisfied.

Table 2: Descriptive Statistics

Components of Servicescape	Mean	Std. Dev
The background music/sound is appropriate	4.00	1.034
Overall, the ambient condition in the facility	3.89	.769
Sufficient lighting in restaurant	3.74	.970
Temperature of restaurant is appropriate	3.60	.933
The air quality in the restaurant is good	3.70	1.001
The restaurant layout makes it easy to the food you want	3.68	.982
The restaurant's layout makes it easy to get to where you want to go	3.60	.933
The restaurant layout makes it easy to get the restroom	3.34	1.010
The restaurant layout makes it easy to get to parking areas	3.51	1.066
The restaurant layout makes it easy to get to smoking areas	3.34	.998
Artifacts and decorations in the restaurant are appropriate	3.68	1.126
The signage gives you a clear direction	3.75	1.070
The signage is easy to be understood	3.79	.990
There is sufficient signage in the restaurant	3.63	1.122
The utilities on the table are clean	3.70	.954
The restaurant maintains clean food service area	3.63	1.080
Corridor is clean and hygiene	3.74	1.115
The restaurant maintains clean restrooms	3.66	1.119
The restaurant maintains clean exits	3.61	1.315
Valid N (listwise)		

From above table no.2 it is found that the mean of all the statements is between 3 to 4, it means that for all the components of servicescape the perception of respondents is neutral to agree. Out of the total elements of servicescape "the background music is appropriate" got the highest Mean value 4.00, followed by mean value of 3.89 for "Overall, the ambient condition in the facility". The least positive responses that is 3.34 mean value were given to two elements "The restaurant layout makes it easy to get the restroom" and "The restaurant layout makes it easy to get to smoking areas".

Hypotheses

H₀: There is no significant difference in the average perception towards QSR between male and female respondents.

H₁: There is significant difference in the average perception towards QSR between male and female respondents.

Table 3: Ranks

	Gender	N	Mean Rank	Sum of Ranks
	MALE	56	49.49	2771.50
SERVICESCAPE_AVG	FEMALE	54	61.73	3333.50
	Total	110		

Table 4: Test Statisticsᵃ

	SERVICESCAPE_AVG
Mann-Whitney U	1175.500
Wilcoxon W	2771.500
Z	-2.166
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	.030

a. Grouping Variable: Gender

From the above table it is seen that the Mann-Whitney U yields mean rank 49.49 for male group and 61.73 for female group which indicate that female are having higher position in the test, with its p=0.030 which is less than the 0.05. Therefore we reject the null hypothesis and can be concluded that there is significant difference in the average perception towards QSR between male and female respondents.

Conclusion

From this study it is concluded that for all the components of servicescape of selected QSR the perception of respondents is neutral to agree, it means they are having positive response to them. But then also this selected QSR has scope of upgrade the elements of servicescape as per latest trends. Out of the total elements of servicescape "the background music is appropriate" got the highest positive response followed by "Overall, the ambient condition in the facility". The least positive responses were given to two elements "The restaurant layout makes it easy to get the restroom" and "The restaurant layout makes it easy to get to smoking areas". Moreover, there is significant difference in the perception towards servicescape between male and female respondents.

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