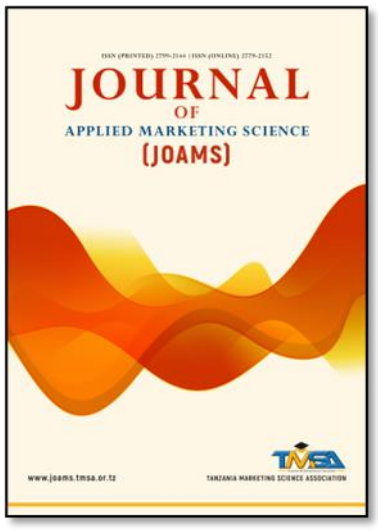


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You Really Care, I Can't Stay Quiet: Mediation Effect of Corporate Brand Trust in Servicescape and Brand Evangelism in The Tanzanian Hotel Industry

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You Really Care, I Can't Stay Quiet: Mediation Effect of Corporate Brand Trust in Servicescape and Brand Evangelism in The Tanzanian Hotel Industry

David Amani

Abstract; The study aims to examine the impact of servicescape on brand evangelism, mediated by corporate brand trust. It responds to the scholarly call for investigating servicescape as a driver of attitudinal behaviors, specifically brand evangelism. Data was collected from 505 customers of selected hotels in Tanzania. The analysis, conducted using structural equation modeling, revealed that servicescape has a significant influence on brand evangelism among customers in the hotel industry. These findings suggest that servicescapes serve as strategic assets for fostering corporate brand trust, ultimately leading to the conversion of customers into brand evangelists.

Keywords: servicescape, corporate brand trust, brand evangelism, hotel industry

Introduction

The hotel industry continues to be the fastest-growing sector of tourism and leisure in the world (Amani & Ismail, 2022). Despite the turbulent situation of the COVID-19 pandemic, the hotel industry has continued to regain its competitiveness over other sectors of tourism and leisure (Gupta & Sahu, 2021; Zhang et al., 2020). With this ongoing growth in the industry, marketers have made the effort to promote distinctive experiences by revamping and adding new services and products, new designs, and new facilities (Dedeoglu et al., 2018). Amani & Ismail (2022) argue that hotels may continue to gain a competitive edge by ensuring customers participate in different positive brand-building behaviors. However, current literature has focused on short-term outcomes related to satisfaction, such as word-of-mouth (WOM), with little attention to advanced brand-building behavior (Dedeoglu et al., 2018). Amani & Ismail (2022) add that to promote positive brand

building, the hotel industry should invest in building strong brand relationships that cover both cognitive and emotional elements. Amani (2022b) contends that cognitive brand relationship quality represents higher levels of brand satisfaction and trust as an outcome of evaluations of brand performance. Emotional brand relationship quality represents higher levels of brand passion and intimacy due to the intensity of connection and closeness with a brand(Joshua, 2016).

Research streams in consumer psychology have revealed that emotions and cognitions are different forms of attitudes and, hence, have differential effects on customers' attitudinal behavior (Dedeoglu et al., 2018). In line with that, literature on hotel branding emphasizes that the cognitive and emotional elements of relationship quality trigger different loyalty outcomes in customers. According to Kinyongoh (2019), these loyalty outcomes are WOM and brand evangelism. WOM shares positive recommendations about the brand based on objective and rational facts about the brand (Amani, 2022a). Moreover, brand evangelism is more emotion-focused than WOM, and the emotions that nurture it are extremely deep and passionate (Kang et al., 2020). Literature on hotel branding suggests a paucity of evidence in studies that examine the antecedents and consequences of behavior similar to brand evangelism (Li & Wei, 2021). The current study focused on brand evangelism, an attitudinal behavior demonstrated by customers who have trust and faith in their favorite brand. Several related studies have suggested that a more emotional hotel service servicescape can generate a variety of attitudes and behaviors, such as word-of-mouth marketing and the intention to visit (Lockwood & Pyun, 2019).

Various literature on hotel branding defines the "servicescape" as the atmospheric attributes of the hotel where the service transaction occurs. It consists of components such as layout and design, music, color, and the scent of a physical environment. The research realm on the role of servicescape in determining various customers' responses in the hotel industry has received considerable attention over the past decade (Li & Wei, 2021). However, great emphasis has been placed on basic customer responses associated with satisfaction, such as word-of-mouth and recommendation intentions (Li & Wei, 2021). Dedeoglu et al. (2018) revealed the importance of previous experience in determining the impact of servicescape on hedonic value and behavioral intentions. It also revealed the need for further exploration of the service landscape as antecedents of experience-related outcomes. Also, Lee & Chuang (2022) revealed that ambiance, interactions with employees, authenticity, and fascination are important drivers of customer loyalty. On the other hand Lee & Chuang (2022) suggests a holistic approach to investigating the influence of the servicescape on customers' responses. According to Lockwood & Pyun (2019), more research into the role of servicescape on customers' emotional and behavioral responses is needed.

Nonetheless, limited studies investigate the role of servicescape in determining advanced customers' responses, such as brand evangelism in the hotel industry (Dedeoglu et al., 2018; Li & Wei, 2021). Precisely, existing research has examined only the role of servicescape in driving word-of-mouth and recommendation intentions, which are basic customers' responses due to satisfaction (Chang, 2016; Dedeoglu et al., 2018) However, to examine the effects of servicescape on brand evangelism, provide feedback to hoteliers on the role of servicescape in determining customers' responses that go beyond customer satisfaction. Thus, this study seeks to thoroughly explore the impacts of servicescape components on brand evangelism via corporate brand trust. It is thought to provide feedback to hoteliers and help customers promote evangelistic behavior by effectively designing atmospheric cues. Through the Stimuli-Organism-Responses (S-O-R) paradigm, the study suggests that atmospheric cues, i.e., servicescape components (stimuli), motivate customers to assign meanings from different perspectives (organisms) (Dedeoglu et al., 2018; Lin & Mattila, 2010). These meanings from different perspectives (organisms) influence customer behavior, i.e., brand evangelism (responses).

Literature Review and Development of Hypotheses

Mediation Role of Corporate Brand Trust (CBT)

The effort to build a competitive edge in the hotel industry should focus on transforming the service delivery system in hotels and not on specific products and services (Prentice et al., 2021). Servicescape involves physical surroundings where business firms such as hotels deliver services to their customers (Lin & Mattila, 2010). Thus, servicescape is made up of atmospheric characteristics that define the environments in which services are delivered rather than focusing on specific products or services offered by the hotel (Joshua, 2016). The hotel industry should invest in atmospheric attributes to ensure that physical surroundings build customer trust in the overall system rather than specific products or services provided by hotels. Li & Wei (2021) argue that servicescapes are very crucial in determining customers' trust in service delivery in the hotel industry. For instance, during a turbulent situation such as COVID-19, atmospheric cues such as clean environments were considered important elements that enhanced brand trust and ultimately the intention to visit hotels and restaurants (Amani & Ismail, 2022; Victor et al., 2021). Corporate brand trust is customer belief in the general practices of the hotels and not their specific products and services (Kim et al., 2015). Corporate brand trust emerges when customers believe that the organization as a system works for the benefit of its customers or society (Han & Rhee, 2021). Kim et al. (2015) argue that corporate trust involves customers' evaluation of the performance of the organization in terms of its practices during service delivery.

Servicescapes (SVC)

The nature of services is intangible, and thus it is difficult to evaluate their performance

(Dedeoglu et al., 2018). There are challenges and difficulties for service firms such as hotels in the management of service consumption (Lin & Mattila, 2010). Thus, atmospheric cues or attributes, i.e., servicescapes, are important dimensions that help service firms such as hotels enhance service evaluations (Lockwood & Pyun, 2019). The term "servicescapes" is derived from the word "landscape," implying a holistic service environment that affects customers' experiences and can arouse their emotional responses (Dedeoglu et al., 2018; Lee & Chuang, 2022). It is the artificial and psychological landscape in which a service experience is prepared, delivered by service firms, and experienced by customers (Joshua, 2016). Servicescapes have become a focal point in hotel management practice because it allows service firms to gain a competitive advantage through differentiation strategies. Servicescapes are crucial in enhancing customers' trust in service firms and the products or services they offer (Amani & Ismail, 2022). The intangibility of services gives service firms a role to play in ensuring that services are delivered, and the environments in which services are provided foster trust.

Servicescapes described the atmosphere as a purchasing environment developed to stimulate the customers' emotional responses to enhance their purchasing probabilities. Servicescapes are defined in diverse ways and from diverse perspectives. The servicescapes is a holistic structure of environmental dimensions rather than a single component. (Li, 2021; Li & Wei, 2021) defined servicescapes as the physical environment of service firms, particularly hotels, consisting of numerous different components, such as conditions such as heat, scent, voice, music, lighting, and décor. It explains cognitive responses that affect customers' opinions or responses about hotels, employees, and services or products offered. Literature indicated that the atmospheric cues or attributes, i.e., the servicescapes, could build customers' cognitive responses (Dedeoglu et al., 2018). A growing body of research shows that customer attitudes and behaviors are fairly affected by servicescapes components in the hotel and event contexts. (Park et al., 2019) called for further studies to fully examine the impacts of the servicescapes on diverse customer responses. Thus, with support from these explanations, it is hypothesized that

H_1: Servicescapes influence corporate brand trust

Brand Evangelism (BRE)

Brand evangelism is an attitudinal behavior that explains the enthusiastic behavior of customers toward their trusted brand (Becerra & Badrinarayanan, 2013; Kang et al., 2020). It is a family of WOM that takes the form of a relational perspective (Kinyongoh, 2019; Sharma et al., 2022). Brand evangelism involves behaviors such as the intention to purchase a trusted brand, the intention to recommend and convince others towards a trusted brand, and the intention to defend a trusted brand through oppositional loyalty toward competing brands (Anggarini, 2018; Kang et al., 2020). It encompasses individuals who become

unpaid spokespersons, demonstrating fanatical behavior toward trusted brands (Marticotte et al., 2016). An individual who participates in purchase intention, intention to recommend, and oppositional loyalty is called a brand evangelist or customer evangelist (Doss, 2015). Guy Kawasaki, who is applauded for advocating customer evangelism in business, defines a customer evangelist as an individual who promotes a chosen brand through deep emotional feelings with special efforts and commitment (Kawasaki, 1992). Anggarini (2018) suggests that brand evangelists are deeply rooted in Christian doctrines that consider evangelists as nominated people who preach the good news.

Overall, evangelists have trust in God's promises, and hence, they cannot stay quiet without sharing those promises with others (Ahonen, 2017). Evangelists demonstrate their trust and faith in God by convincing and converting others to become believers (Ahonen, 2017; Hewitt, 2014). Brand evangelists demonstrate the same behavior as evangelists in Christian doctrine (Kawasaki, 1992). Therefore, differences emerge between brand evangelists and customers who engage in word-of-mouth (WOM) behavior (Doss, 2015; Matzler et al., 2007). Kinyongoh (2019) argues that WOM is transactional and time-specific, focusing on sharing a person's level of product or service satisfaction at that particular time. This means any mismatch between expectations and brand performance may trigger different behaviors. Brand evangelism is characterized by its relational specificity and lack of time constraints. It typically relies on a long-lasting relationship between customers and their chosen brand (Marticotte et al., 2016; Sharma et al., 2022). It is different from word-of-mouth (WOM), which only focuses on sharing something special about the brand due to satisfaction without necessarily convincing somebody to purchase the brand (Doss, 2015). The above explanation builds the basis for the study to hypothesize that

H_2: Servicescapes influence brand evangelism

H_3: Corporate brand trust influences brand evangelism

H_4: Corporate brand trust mediates the relationship between servicescapes and brand evangelism

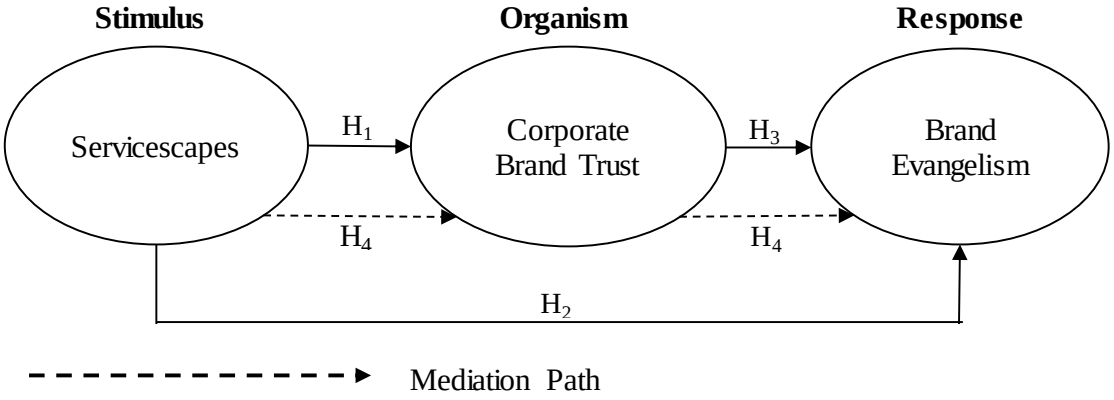
Stimulus-Organism-Response (S-O-R) Paradigm

The S-O-R paradigm provides a theoretical explanation of the process that a person goes through in developing various attitudinal behavior (Lin & Mattila, 2010). The paradigm suggests that attitudinal behavior, i.e., responses, is an outcome of environmental stimuli and organisms (Dedeoglu et al., 2018). According to the S-O-R paradigm, a person builds a certain attitudinal behavior by assigning or developing meaning to environmental stimuli (Mehrabian & Russell, 1974). The process of assigning and developing meaning to environmental stimuli is called organism (Lin & Mattila, 2010). The paradigm proposed is that response is

specific action, i.e., attitudinal behavior demonstrated by a person based on meaning developed from environmental stimuli (Mehrabian & Russell, 1974). Various studies used the S-O-R paradigm to provide a theoretical grounding for the effects of the servicescape (Dedeoglu et al., 2018; Lin & Mattila, 2010). In this study, it is suggested that servicescapes as an environmental stimulus consists of atmospheric attributes that can be translated as corporate brand trust as an organism. In turn, this effect can influence consumers' responses or reactions in the form of brand evangelism. Hence, the study suggests that atmospheric attributes inside and outside the hotel, i.e., servicescape elements, can captivate customers and inspire them to assign meanings from different perspectives. These atmospheric characteristics, such as servicescapes, and meanings from perspectives (organisms), influence customer behavior, such as brand evangelism.

Conceptual Model

The study's conceptual model, as presented in Figure 1, indicates that the study hypothesized a three-factor model with servicescape as an exogenous variable, corporate brand trust as a mediator, and brand evangelism as an endogenous variable. The study used the S-O-R paradigm to hypothesize that servicescapes are environmental stimuli that enhance corporate brand trust as an organism, which eventually leads to brand evangelism as a response.



Methodology

Study Setting

The current study setting was the hotel industry in Tanzania, with a focus on the relationship between servicescape and brand evangelism. The study was conducted in Arusha, Kilimanjaro, and Dar-es-salaam, arguably the most endowed and strategic regions for the hotel industry in Tanzania (Anderson & Sanga, 2019). Evidence indicates that the regions have hotels that have been accredited by international bodies responsible for quality and standards in the hotel industry (Amani & Chao, 2023). In

addition, these three regions are the gateway for visitors and guests who visit Tanzania. According to the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS), more than 60 percent of potential visitors or guests in Tanzania use Arusha and Kilimanjaro regions as their gateways (NBS, 2016). In addition, at least 24 percent of visitors use the Dar-es-salaam region, and the remaining 16 percent use other minor gateways.

Participants and sampling design

The study involved customers of selected hotels in Arusha, Kilimanjaro, and Dar-es-salaam, in Tanzania. Using the convenience sampling technique, 505 customers were selected to participate in the current study. This sample size is technically sufficient to meet several methodological requirements, notably multivariate data analysis, i.e., structural equation modelling (Hair et al., 2010; Kline, 2015). Zikmund et al. (2009) argue that convenience sampling is sampling by getting conveniently accessible or available respondents. The use of convenience samples assures the possibility of obtaining a sufficient number of completed questionnaires quickly and economically. It encompasses choosing haphazardly required cases that are easiest to get for your samples, such as the respondent interviewed at random in a hotel or restaurant (Amani, 2023). Overall, in the study, a researcher determined that the most convenient and cost-effective method was to set up an interview booth from which it was easy to intercept customers at selected restaurants and hotels. Respondents were customers approached in key hotspots, i.e., selected hotels and restaurants. 505 valid responses were received out of 550 surveys distributed, representing a response rate of 91.82 percent, significantly higher than the recommended threshold of 50 percent (Simiyu et al., 2020).

Data Collection Procedures

The study used structured questionnaires that were self-administered to selected respondents, i.e., customers of selected hotels. Before the data collection exercise, pilot testing of the instrument was conducted to ensure the reliability of the survey instruments. Pre-testing of the survey instruments was done among 70 respondents, and the Cronbach alpha coefficient for all constructs was 0.6 above the threshold of 0.7 (Ursachi et al., 2015). However, minor opinions were offered to reword the language of the items used in the questionnaire to enhance clarity. To ensure a good response rate, the objectives of the study were well explained to respondents before they started to fill out the questionnaire. As part of the ethical considerations in research, respondents were asked for their consent to participate in the study, and their anonymity and confidentiality were strictly assured. The study used an on-site survey, and the data collection exercise started in August 2021 and ended in October 2021.

Measures

The current study adopted a confirmed measurement scale in terms of reliability and validity from past studies on servicescape and branding, as presented in Table 1. However, minor rewording and modifications were taken to reflect the

current study settings. All constructs were captured using a 5-point Likert scale anchored from 1-strongly disagree to 5-strongly agree (Likert et al., 1934). To measure servicescape, the study adopted a scale by (Lin & Mattila, 2010). In addition, a measurement scale developed by(Sharma et al., 2020) was adopted to measure corporate brand trust. Finally, brand evangelism was measured using a measurement scale by (Becerra & Badrinarayanan, 2013).

Analysis and Results

Common Method Bias

The current study involves collecting data through a self-reported survey, from which common method bias might emerge as an issue of concern in the collected data. Overall, CMB may affect the study findings by introducing bias when estimating parameters in the relationships among the study's variables of interest (Podsakoff et al., 2003). The study has employed both procedural and statistical remedies in dealing with CMB. Procedurally, measures were taken to guarantee the anonymity and confidentiality of respondents, and it was emphasized that there were no correct or incorrect responses to the items. Furthermore, the study employed statistical remedies to check for CMB. The statistical remedy employed was Harman's single-factor test. All latent factors were subjected into exploratory factor analysis (EFA) using single rotation to test the predominant factor (Podsakoff, 2003). The results show that no single factor explains more than 50% of the total variance. This means that CMB was not found in the data that was collected.

Measurement Model

The study measurement model was evaluated through Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) using AMOS version 21. Psychometric properties of the measurement model, i.e., reliability and validity of the constructs, were evaluated to make sure that all measurement items yielded a good internal consistency and measured each proposed latent construct. All constructs yielded Cronbach Alpha Coefficient (α) above the threshold value of 0.7, confirming good reliability(Santos, 1999; Tavakol & Dennick, 2011). In addition, Convergent validity was evaluated with factor loadings of more than 0.6 (Gerbing & Anderson, 1988). The composite Reliability (CR) Coefficient ranged from 0.827 to 0.925, over and above the recommended value of 7.0, and the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) for constructs ranged from 0.500 to 0.711, greater than the recommended value of 0.50 (Rajalahti & Kvalheim, 2011). The results of the evaluation of the measurement model are presented in table 1. Table 2 present the results of discriminant validity. Overall, the results confirm discriminant validity among constructs because the square root of the AVE for each construct was greater than the correlations between a given construct and others (Fornell & Larcker, 1981). Furthermore, the study evaluates the measurement model's goodness of fit which demonstrates a good fit between the data and the theoretical model. The results of goodness statistics demonstrate χ^2 = 238.088, df= 86, and χ^2/df = 2.768; Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA) = 0.059 less than the

recommended value of 0.08 (Hooper et al., 2008). Also, Goodness of Fit Index (GFI) = 0.938; Adjusted Goodness of Fit Index (AGFI) = 0.914; and Comparative Fit Index (CFI) = 0.967 above the recommended value of 0.9 (McDonald & Ho, 2002; Schermelleh-Engel et al., 2003). Parsimony Comparative Fit Index (PCFI) = 0.792, and Parsimony Normed Fit Index (PNFI) = 0.778 above the threshold of 0.7 (Schermelleh-Engel et al., 2003).

Table 1 Measurement Model Assessment

Latent variable	Items	Factor loadings	CR	α
Servicescapes			0.880	0.873
	The hotel plays music that I like at an appropriate volume	0.888		
	Overall the layout makes it easy to get around and to go to the restrooms	0.870		
	The interior wall and floor schemes are attractive and match the overall theme of the hotel	0.875		
	The exterior of the hotel gives it an attractive character	0.600		
	The interior is decorated in an attractive fashion	0.602		
Corporate Brand	Trust		0.925	0.927
	This hotel is generally clean and free of clutter	0.824		
	This hotel is honest and truthful with its	0.890		

	customers		
	This hotel has practices that favor the customer's best interest	0.880	
	I feel that the employees of this hotel seem very concerned	0.867	
	I feel that the employees of this hotel can be relied upon to give honest advice	0.761	
Brand Evangelism		0.827	0.825
	I feel the need to tell everybody that this hotel is the most appealing	0.631	
	If I meet with someone who is looking for leisure or entertainment, I would tell him to visit this hotel	0.688	
	I think I have the responsibility to convert several people whom I interact with them to become potential customers of this hotel	0.759	
	When my friends are looking for a hotel, I would tell them not to visit any other hotels.	0.741	
	I would like to become a regular customer of the services and products offered by this hotel	0.675	

Table 2 Discriminant Validity Using Fornell-Larcker Criterion

	AVE	MSV	MaxR(H)	SVC	CBT	BRE
SVC	0.602	0.410	0.918	**0.776**		
CBT	0.711	0.410	0.930	0.640	**0.843**	
BRE	0.500	0.353	0.833	0.594	0.493	**0.700**

Structural Model and Testing of Hypotheses

In this study, the testing of hypotheses was preceded by the evaluation of structural mode. The goodness statistics demonstrate a good fit between the data and the structural model. The results of goodness statistics reveal χ^2 = 217.725, *df*= 85, and χ^2/df = 2.561; Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA) = 0.056 less than the recommended value of 0.08 (Hooper et al., 2008). Also, Goodness of Fit Index (GFI) = 0.945; Adjusted Goodness of Fit Index (AGFI) = 0.923; and Comparative Fit Index (CFI) = 0.972 above the recommended value of 0.9 (Kline, 2005). Parsimony Comparative Fit Index (PCFI) = 0.787, and Parsimony Normed Fit Index (PNFI) = 0.773 above the threshold of 0.7 (Schermelleh-Engel et al., 2003). After confirming the goodness of fit of the structural model, the proposed hypotheses were tested using SEM through AMOS version 21. The study in H_1 predicts that servicescapes can influence corporate brand trust. The findings presented in table 3 indicate that servicescapes influences corporate brand trust (β = 0.640; t > 1.96; p < 0.001). Also, in H_2 it was expected that servicescapes would affect brand evangelism. This hypothesis was confirmed by results in table 3 which indicate that the relationship between servicescapes and brand evangelism is positive and significant (β = 0.309; t > 1.96; p < 0.001). H_3 speculates that corporate brand trust has a significant positive effect on brand evangelism. The hypothesis was confirmed with (β = 0.363; t > 1.96; p < 0.001).

Table 3 Results of the Proposed Model

Hypotheses	Path Model	path coefficient	standard error	t-statistics	p-value	Decision
H1	SVC → CBT	.640	.046	13.971	***	Supported
H_1	SVC → BRE	.309	.045	6.805	***	Supported
H_3	CBT → BRE	.363	.039	9.193	***	Supported

*** p-value < 0.001

Testing of Mediation Effect

Hypothesis 4 was tested using the PROCESS macro proposed by Hayes (2013). The findings indicate that corporate brand trust mediates the relationship between servicescapes and brand evangelism since the bootstrap CI (upper CI and lower CI) does not contain zero. Overall the study findings suggest that the direct effect of servicescapes on brand evangelism is significant (direct effect = 0.430; 95% bootstrap CI from 0.346 to 0.514). In addition, the indirect effect between servicescapes and brand evangelism was also significant (indirect effect = 0.081; 95% bootstrap CI from 0.020 to 0.141).

Discussion

The role of servicescapes in determining advanced attitudinal behavior has not been extensively discussed in the literature. This is a surprise because several authors suggest that servicescapes represent emotional attributes that can foster various emotional responses (Dedeoglu et al., 2018). The study proposed and tested empirically a model that investigated the role of servicescapes in promoting brand evangelism via corporate brand trust in the hotel industry. While grounded in the S-O-R paradigm, servicescapes is grouped under environmental stimuli that accelerate corporate brand trust as an organism and finally promote brand evangelism as a response. The findings suggest that all hypotheses were confirmed. This means servicescapes are drivers of attitudinal behavior, i.e., brand evangelism. The findings add to our current understanding of the role of servicescapes in determining various behavioral intentions such as loyalty and positive recommendation (Chang, 2016; Park et al., 2019). The study findings have also confirmed the mediating role of corporate brand trust in the relationship between servicescapes and brand evangelism.

The study's findings confirm that customers' attitudinal behaviors, such as brand evangelism, can be realized by building trust through environmental arrangements, i.e., servicescapes components. Servicescape components such as background music are mechanisms for creating service coolness in the hotel industry (Lin & Mattila, 2010). It is very powerful at building memorable experiences and enhancing customers' psychological states. Furthermore, the findings suggest that the environmental arrangements of both interior and exterior parts of the servicescapes promise public health protection. (Wei et al., 2021) for example, claims that environmental arrangements as part of the servicescapes increased brand trust and customer intention to revisit hotels during a turbulent situation like COVID-19. Moreover, the findings have confirmed the role of decorations and color schemes as part of the servicescapes in determining corporate brand trust and eventually brand evangelism. (Apaolaza et al., 2021) agrees with these findings, arguing that decorations and color schemes are important indicators of service coolness. Furthermore, as part of the servicescapes, decoration and color schemes play an important role in maintaining the physical environments of hotels.

Theoretical Implications

The current study advances knowledge in the literature on servicescapes in the hotel industry. The study developed and tested a conceptual model that suggested that servicescapes influence brand evangelism via corporate brand trust. Therefore, the study examines the interplay of servicescapes, corporate brand trust, and brand evangelism. Thus, the study's objective was to advance knowledge of the cardinal role of servicescapes in enhancing corporate brand trust and brand evangelism in the hotel industry. Through the S-O-R paradigm, the study adds theoretical knowledge of servicescapes in the hotel industry by proposing servicescapes as strategies to build corporate brand trust and reinforce attitudinal behavior, i.e., brand evangelism, in the hotel industry.

Practical Implications

The findings of the study suggest that attitudinal behavior such as brand evangelism is influenced by the servicescapes. Thus, hoteliers have the role of establishing which servicescapes draws the attention of customers and which can build an emotional experience. This also indicates that the management of hotels should design servicescapes that embody the psychological attributes of customers to evoke positive experiences during service delivery. Servicescape should be integrated as part of the service encounter component used by employees to support interaction with customers. This means personalized services can be achieved during service encounters through investing in servicescapes. Personalized services through servicescapes create emotional bonds between customers and hotel brands. Hoteliers should consider servicescapes as a strategic tool that not only enhances customers' satisfaction but is a tool for building positive experiences. The management in hotels should therefore recruit personnel who are capable of

designing and managing servicescapes to build positive experiences for customers during service encounters.

In addition, hoteliers should design capacity-building programs for their employees to equip them with essential skills and knowledge to manage and maintain atmospheric cues, which can enhance attitudinal behavior. It is important to suggest that characteristics of services such as variability imply that employees should be empowered to ensure they are consistent in managing atmospheric cues, i.e., servicescapes. Management of hotels should consider the suitability and relevance of servicescapes in determining customers' satisfaction. In fact, not all servicescapes are suitable for all customers, and therefore, understanding target customers and their needs is of great importance. Servicescapes should be part of the value proposition, which can help hotels to occupy space in the minds of customers. The study suggests that it is necessary to adopt and customize components of servicescapes while considering the types of services offered and targeted customers.

Limitation of study and Future Study

The study highlighted a few limitations that scholars should take as an avenue for further studies to advance knowledge on the role of servicescapes in building attitudinal behaviors such as brand evangelism. The study recommends comparative studies between females and males by examining the way each group responds to servicescapes. This is crucial because some studies suggest differences between the two groups when exposed to servicescapes (Li & Wei, 2021). In addition, there is an avenue for further studies across different cultural settings and contexts. This can increase the robustness of the findings by obtaining evidence from cross-cultural studies. It is also critical to validate the model by conducting research in other hospitality-related businesses, such as restaurants. The convenience sampling technique may limit the generalization of the findings, and therefore it is important to test the proposed model using other probability sampling techniques for generalization purposes. Furthermore, future research may consider modifying the model by incorporating additional mediator variables, such as brand love, in the relationship between servicescapes and advanced attitudinal behavior, such as brand evangelism.

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