

HOTEL INSPIRATION: HOW THE SUBSTANTIVE SERVICESCAPE INSPIRES CUSTOMER SATISFACTION

ABSTRACT

Facilitating inspirational experiences for customers is an emerging topic in the field of tourism and hospitality. Based on the Stimulus-Organism-Response paradigm, we proposed novel effects that substantive servicescape rather than communicative servicescape had a positive effect on inspiration, which had a positive downstream effect on satisfaction. The present research, including a field survey with customers from ten 3–4 star hotels ($N_1=644$) and three experimental studies ($N_2=133$, $N_3=115$, $N_4=227$), examined the effects of substantive and communicative servicescape on inspiration, the downstream effect of inspiration on satisfaction, and the moderating roles of openness to experience and prior experience. The results supported our proposed effects. Furthermore, openness to experience and prior experience moderated the effects of substantive servicescape on inspiration and inspiration on satisfaction, respectively. The current research contributes to the extant literature by offering a more nuanced understanding of the drivers of customer inspiration and the boundary conditions.

KEYWORDS: Substantive servicescape, Inspiration, Satisfaction, Prior experience, Openness to experience

INTRODUCTION

Recent research on how to leverage service ambience to enhance customers' experiences is burgeoning (Jang, 2021; Kandampully et al., 2023; Wu et al., 2021; Xu & Gursoy, 2021). Many hotels are as attractive as fine art, and customers may be inspired by the beautiful aesthetic features of hotel decorations, motivational music and sounds, or even an unforgettable aroma. All these aspects reflect the 'servicescape' of the hotel. Despite the importance of inspirational customer experiences, few studies to-date have examined the influence of servicescape on customer inspiration and the boundary conditions in hospitality research.

Servicescape consists of substantive and communicative staging (Arnould et al., 1998). Substantive staging refers to the physical aspects of the environments, while communicative staging reflects the servicescape's social aspects, involving interpersonal interactions (Dong & Siu, 2013). Thus, it is necessary to further delineate the roles of both types of servicescape in relation to customer inspiration. To address this research gap, the first objective of this research is to examine the differential effects of substantive and communicative servicescape on customer inspiration.

Prior research suggests that customers' sensory, fun, discovery, and inspirational experiences contributed to their overall satisfaction (Liu et al., 2017). In the same vein, we propose that when customers feel inspired by an attractive or beautiful substantive servicescape, they are more likely to make positive evaluations of their hotel stays (i.e., customer satisfaction). Hence, the second objective of our study is to investigate the influence

of customer inspiration on customer satisfaction.

In addition to the proposed main effects of customer inspiration, we also aim to explore the boundary conditions in relation to the customer's personality and trip characteristics.

Prior research suggests that individuals' personality traits can influence their motivations and behaviors (Parks-Leduc et al., 2015). Based on the literature on inspiration, one's openness to experience, representing the tendency to discover novel stimuli and seek new experiences, was positively related to inspiration (Seibert & Kraimer, 2001; Thrash & Elliot, 2003).

Individuals with high openness to experience are curious about their surroundings and sensitive to beauty (Costa & McCrae, 1992). In the service environment, these consumers are more susceptible to attractive substantive servicescapes. They may be more likely to be inspired by the beautiful design elements of a substantive servicescape. Therefore, this research investigates the moderating role of openness to experience in the relationship between servicescape and customer inspiration.

The last objective of this research is to examine the moderating role of prior experience in the relationship between customer inspiration and satisfaction. Hedonic adaption of hotel customer experience (i.e., customer satiation) may negatively influence customer satisfaction (Park & Jang, 2014a, 2014b). In addition, the feeling of inspiration could be adapted (Bagozzi et al., 1999). As a result, the more experiences customers have with hotels, the less impact their inspirational experiences have on customer satisfaction.

Overall, this research contributes to the extant literature in the following ways. First, to the best of our knowledge, the current research has pioneered in demonstrating the causal relationship between hotel servicescape and customer inspiration, which has deepened our

current understanding of servicescape; Second, unlike prior studies which consistently found positive effects of servicescape, this research offers a more nuanced understanding of the drivers of customer inspiration (i.e., the differential effects of substantive and communicative servicescapes); Third, the current research expanded our understanding regarding experience marketing by exploring the boundary conditions in the hospitality context to improve customers' satisfaction, paving ways for future service marketing research.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Hotel Servicescape

Servicescape refers to human-made environments where services occur (Kaminakis et al., 2019). Servicescape is a multidimensional construct that consists of physical and social components (Tubillejas-Andrés et al., 2020). Bitner (1992) proposed that a servicescape involves three dimensions: environmental atmosphere, spatial arrangement, and artifacts. Baker et al. (1994) noted that social factors are also important parts of the service environment, such as the interaction between consumers and employees.

One common classification of servicescape is to group it into substantive stagings and communicative stagings, with the former concerning physical attributes and the latter concerning personnel and cultural attributes. Substantive stagings of servicescape include attractive atmospheric (e.g., smell and music) and design elements (e.g., architecture, style, and layout). Communicative stagings refer to service quality, attire and appearance of service

personnel, and service attitude (Babin et al., 2003; Bitner, 1992; Dong & Siu, 2013; Dedeoglu et al., 2018; Harris & Ezech, 2008).

Servicescape, as an environmental stimulus, can affect people's emotional and behavioral responses. For example, Kaminakis et al. (2019) found that servicescape could affect customers' and employees' pleasure. Liu et al. (2018) demonstrated that physical servicescape cues (i.e., shape) and social servicescape cues (i.e., busyness) interactively affect customer satisfaction. Chao et al. (2021) discovered the influence of servicescape stimuli on restaurant customers' word-of-mouth intentions. With the prevalence of e-commerce, recent research turns the research focus to online servicescape and its influences (e.g., Kautish & Sharma, 2021; Kim, 2021). Some scholars have started to focus on social servicescape and also uncovered its influence on customer satisfaction (Line & Hanks, 2019), place attachment (Kim & Lee, 2022), customer engagement, customer citizenship behaviors (Li & Wei, 2021), and CSR participation (Line et al., 2018).

Prior research also investigated the relationships between the multi-dimensional structures of servicescape and customers' behavioral intentions. For instance, Dedeoglu et al. (2018) argued that hotel substantive and communicative servicescape positively influenced customers' revisiting intentions and word-of-mouth. Park, Back, et al. (2019) found that both substantive and communicative servicescapes positively impacted customers' positive emotions. However, the differential effects of the substantive and communicative servicescapes remain unclear.

Substantive and Communicative Stagings of Servicescape, Inspiration and Satisfaction:

From the Stimulus-Organism-Response (S-O-R) Perspective

The stimulus-organism-response (S-O-R) paradigm proposed by Mehrabian and Russell (1974) has been widely used as a theoretical framework that explains the environmental stimulus influence across marketing, education, tourism, and hospitality disciplines. From the S-O-R perspective, environmental stimuli (S) (e.g., marketing variables like product design and advertising) can lead to consumers' arousal (O), which in turn results in their responses (Mehrabian & Russell, 1974). In the hospitality research, a number of studies have applied the SOR paradigm to explain the environmental influences on customer's affects and behaviors. For example, Choi and Kandampully (2019) examined the influence of hotel atmosphere on customer satisfaction, uncovering that the effects vary across different atmosphere elements. By contrast, Park et al. (2019) revealed that both substantive staging and communicative staging indirectly influence customer satisfaction through positive affect. Nanu et al. (2020) uncovered that hotel lobby design and biophilic design have a positive effect on customer's intention to book. Similarly, He et al. (2022) found that customers' perceptions of the mediated servicescape have significant impacts on their actual online booking behaviors. He et al. (2021) discovered that wellness tourism can inspire tourists to engage. Kwon and Boger (2020) further demonstrated that customer's brand experience contributed to his or her inspiration. Therefore, it is reasonable for our study to regard perceived servicescape as an environmental stimulus, inspiration as an arousal, and customer satisfaction as an individual response. In fact, extant research has revealed the impact of servicescape on positive emotions (Park et al., 2019). Furthermore, prior hospitality literature

classified hotel customers' experiences into inviting, care, and comfort dimensions (Pijls et al., 2017), and revealed the influences of customers' sensitivity to hotel environment, customer-customer interactions, and customer emotions in shaping customer experience (Walls et al., 2011; Wang et al., 2021; Wei et al., 2022). Nonetheless, previous research has largely ignored customers' inspirational experiences and has failed to identify how such experiences may vary depending on hotel characteristics, customer personality, and customer trip characteristics. Hence, we filled this research gap in experience marketing and hospitality research by investigating the impact of servicescape on customer inspiration, which is a novel construct in service marketing. Our findings have important implications for the nature and measurement of hotel customer experience.

Inspiration is defined as “a breathing in or infusion of some idea, purpose, etc. into the mind; the suggestion, awakening, or creation of some feeling or impulse, especially of an exalted kind” (Oxford English Dictionary, p.1036; Simpson & Weiner, 1989; Thrash & Elliot, 2003). Inspiration is a motivational state elicited by external trigger stimuli such as attractive aesthetic design (e.g., artworks) (Harding, 1948). Inspiration involves three core characteristics: *evocation*, meaning that one might be aroused by something particular (e.g., attraction to the object, p.873, Thrash & Elliot 2003); *transcendence*, involving a sense of self-enhancement; and *motivation*, meaning that one is driven to realize new ideas (Thrash & Elliot, 2003, 2004). Thrash and Elliot (2003) reviewed a large body of literature and discovered that "a sense of beauty" (p. 871), the Greek transcendental of beauty (p.873), "what is beautiful" (Haidt & Keltner, in press), the beauty of the trigger object (p.873), and the transcendent qualities of beauty (p.873) can inspire people.

Previous research has found antecedents of inspiration, including the physical environment (e.g., nature such as the parks and the wilderness, Costello, 2021; Fuller, 2012; Sarkar et al., 2008), the positive emotions (Liang et al., 2016; Thrash & Elliot, 2003), and the complicated but predominantly positive emotions (Hepper et al., 2012; Stephan et al., 2015). Substantive stagings of servicescape are effective in influencing the customers' emotional states (Babin et al., 2003; Bitner, 1992; Dedeoglu et al., 2018; Kim & Moon, 2009; Ye et al., 2021). Customers' inspirational experiences, rather than ordinary hotel experiences, may be unexpected, resulting in a pleasant surprise (i.e., the surprise effect) and higher inspiration. Recent research has found that a volume of unexpected information may induce inspiring emotions (Keltner & Haidt, 2003; Lichtenberg, 2015), which then promote inspiration (Dai & Jiang, 2023).

The attractive physical components of substantive servicescape are usually superior in architecture, color scheme, and spatial layout (Dong & Siu, 2013). Prior research showed that attractive elements can stimulate people's imaginations and promote divergent thinking (Burton et al., 1999). An and Youn (2018) found that aesthetic experiences, such as being exposed to beautiful paintings, music, or art, can evoke people's inspiration and enhance creativity. Similarly, Böttger et al. (2017) argued that beautiful and novel designs can enhance customers' physiological arousal and elicit an "Aha!" moment that corresponds with inspiration feelings. Furthermore, Böttger et al. (2017) revealed that novel stimuli in consumption environments, such as creative product categories and unique product displays, could provide customers with new ideas, fire their imagination, and further evoke customer inspiration. Exploration and openness have also been found to relate closely to inspiration

(Thrash & Elliot, 2004). In other words, the attractive and unique layout of the consumption environments may induce their inclination to explore new possibilities, leading to feelings of inspiration. Thus, substantive servicescape involving attractive and beautiful physical components may positively influence customer inspiration. In particular, customers' appreciation of the hotel substantive servicescape, such as attractive architecture and designs, cheerful atmosphere, up-to-date facilities, cleanness, color scheme, and well-maintained facilities, may trigger one's imaginative and divergent thinking, leading to more inspirational experience.

However, communicative servicescape (the social aspect of servicescape) includes the personnel of an organization and cultural elements, focusing on interpersonal interaction (more about mundane issues), which is less likely to evoke customer inspiration (Thrash & Elliot 2003). It has been found that only exceptional situations such as heroes and role models in the social and interpersonal interaction may lead to inspirational experience (Thrash & Elliot 2003). Based on the above reasoning, this research hypothesizes:

Hypothesis 1: Substantive servicescape has a positive effect on inspiration.

Downstream Effects of Inspiration on Satisfaction

Customer inspiration can mediate the relationship between substantive servicescape and satisfaction. Inspiration involves two processes: (1) one is inspired by something novel and extraordinary (e.g., Greek transcendental of beauty and high attractiveness), and (2) one is

motivated to implement new ideas and make actions (Thrash & Elliot 2003, 2004).

Furthermore, the two processes of inspiration are causally linked (Böttger et al., 2017). For instance, when consumers are inspired by novel and beautiful substantive servicescape, they will have an incentive to act positively (Winterich et al., 2019). Hence, inspired customers are likely to make positive service evaluations (e.g., customer satisfaction). Customer satisfaction is defined as a customer's overall evaluation of a product or service (Bitner & Hubbert, 1994; Oliver, 1980). According to the Expectancy-Disconfirmation paradigm (Cadotte et al., 1987; Oliver, 1980), customer satisfaction is their response to consistency or inconsistency between their prior expectations of service and the actual experience. A positive emotional state as a result of such a disconfirmation would most likely lead to inspiration (e.g., the Aha! Moment that leads to inspiration, Böttger et al., 2017). Although customers may make multiple comparisons against expectations during their stay, the effects of such a positive disconfirmation at the start of their stays may have the highest chance to inspire customers. Inspiration consists of three major components, that is, transcendence, evocation, and approach motivation (Belzak et al., 2017; Thrash & Elliot, 2003). These three characteristics capture the uniqueness about inspiration (Thrash, 2021). Transcendence occurs as customers become aware of new or better possibilities after evocation by exposure to stimulus objects in the external environment such as the novel and beautiful substantive servicescape. Subsequently, customers have the approach motivation to focus on moving toward a positive outcome, instead of moving away from a negative outcome (Elliot & Thrash, 2002). Such an approach motivation of customers may in turn results in their positive evaluations of the stimulus objects which are perceived to be psychologically rewarding (Arnold & Reynolds,

2012). As such, customer who are inspired by hotel's substantive servicescape are more likely to have positive evaluative responses to their stays, resulting in higher customer satisfaction.

Based on the above arguments, this research hypothesizes:

Hypothesis 2: Inspiration mediates the relationship between substantive servicescape and satisfaction.

Openness to Experience as a Moderator Between Substantive Servicescape and Inspiration

Openness to experience, as a personality trait, involves being open-minded, curious, imaginative, non-traditional, and artistically sensitive (Costa & McCrae, 1992). Individuals with high openness to experience may enjoy exploring the surroundings and be attracted by beautiful, novel, and unusual stimuli in the environment. In contrast, people with lower openness to experience rely more on familiar surroundings and are less sensitive to novel and beautiful stimuli (Costa & McCrae, 1992). Prior psychology research showed that openness to experience facilitated receptiveness to evocative stimuli and was positively associated with inspiration (Thrash & Elliot, 2003). In service-consumption environments, a substantive servicescape, including novel and attractive aesthetic design elements, may inspire an individual (Huu Khoi et al., 2019). Consumers with high openness are inclined to focus on the servicescape's aesthetic design and be inspired by the beautiful and novel service-consumption environments. However, consumers with low openness could be less curious

about novelty and beauty. Based on the above reasoning, this research hypothesizes:

Hypothesis 3: Openness to experience positively moderates the effects of substantive servicescape on inspiration such that consumers with high openness to experience will experience more inspiration than those with low openness to experience.

Prior Experience as a Moderator Between Inspiration and Satisfaction

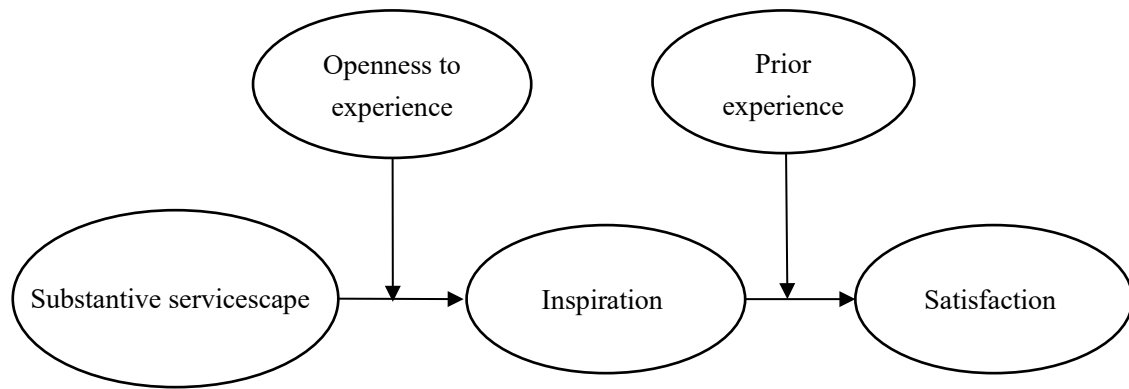
The effects of inspiration may be attenuated over time because the feeling of inspiration may be adapted (Bagozzi et al., 1999). Prior experience is the number of times that customers have visited the hotels. In tourism research, past experience has been conceptualized as tourist actually having visited a particular destination (Fuchs & Reichel 2010; Sönmez & Graefe 1998). According to Kerstetter and Cho (2004), repeat visits can be considered as past experience with the destination. Prior research demonstrates that first-time and repeat customers differ in their experience and evaluation (Ryu & Han, 2011). Recent research revealed that the positive effect of room-related attributes on hotel customer satisfaction decreases while service-related attributes increase with the number of repeat visits (Hu et al., 2019). The law of diminishing marginal utility, which refers to the reduced added satisfaction that customers derived from the consumption of goods and services, can explain the moderating role of past experience on the relationship between customer inspiration and satisfaction. In psychology research and marketing research, hedonic adaption (Diener et al., 2006) and customer satiation (Sevilla et al., 2019) were used to describe the phenomenon.

Customer satiation has received increasing attention in the service and hospitality literature (Line et al., 2016; Park & Jang, 2014a, 2014b; Park, Bufquin, et al., 2019). Return visits to a hospitality organization increase customer satiation (Park & Jang, 2014a). Previous research indicates that customer satiation with restaurant food, service, and atmosphere has a negative and direct impact on service quality perceptions and an indirect impact on overall satisfaction (Line et al., 2016). Furthermore, physical surroundings increased restaurant customer satiation, lowering customer satisfaction (Park & Jang, 2014b). According to the satiation logic, customers may have lower satisfaction when they feel bored by their hotel experience (i.e., satiation with an inspirational experience brought on by the servicescape). Therefore, the effect of an inspirational experience on satisfaction is likely to be diminished as more hotel experiences are accumulated. Based on the above arguments, this research hypothesizes:

Hypothesis 4: Prior experience negatively moderates the effect of inspiration on satisfaction such that the effect is weakened as customer's prior experience increases.

The conceptual model is presented in Figure 1.

Figure 1
Conceptual Model



STUDY 1

Sample and Procedures

Study 1 aims to examine the relationships between substantive servicescape and inspiration, communicative servicescapes and inspiration, the downstream effects of inspiration on customer satisfaction, and the moderating role of prior experience between inspiration and customer satisfaction. Ten star-rated hotels were randomly selected with the assistance of the local travel association in Guangdong province (with the highest GDP among all the provinces), China. The hotel managers were approached for cooperation, and the hotel staff assisted with distributing the questionnaires to customers in January 2019. Every fifth customer checking out of the hotels was systematically approached for self-administered and anonymous questionnaire surveys with small gifts as incentives. To reduce common method bias, the order of the questionnaire items was counterbalanced. The respondents were told that there were no right or wrong answers to each question (Podsakoff

et al., 2003). By adopting these procedures, the respondents were unable to identify our hypotheses.

Existing scales were used to measure customers' perceptions of hotel servicescape (Dong & Siu, 2013), inspiration (Böttger et al., 2017; Thrash & Elliot, 2003), and satisfaction (Cronin et al., 2000). Prior experience was measured by the number of times that customers have stayed at the hotel. A total of 644 valid questionnaires were collected. The data was analyzed by SMART-Partial Least Square (SMART-PLS) as it has minimal requirements for data assumptions (e.g., multivariate normality) and can deal with complex models with bootstrapping.

Results

The sample consists of a relatively even distribution of males and females. Approximately two thirds of the respondents were aged 25-45. The respondents were generally well-educated, with a majority of them having received a three-year college education or a four-year university education. More than half of the respondents had a monthly income of over 5000 Yuan. Details are summarized in Table 1.

Table 2 presents the final results of tests of reliability and construct validity. Factor loadings of all items ranged from 0.730 to 0.934, exceeding the satisfactory level of 0.7. The Cronbach's alphas of all variables ranged from 0.892 to 0.927, surpassing the satisfactory level of 0.70. As presented in Table 2, all the composite reliability values, which ranged from 0.925 to 0.948, were above the acceptable level of 0.60 (Bagozzi & Yi, 1988). Moreover,

convergent validity was supported, based on the fact that the average variance extracted of every construct was above the acceptable level of 0.50 (Fornell & Larcker, 1981). We further examined discriminant validity by comparing the square root of the average variance extracted of each latent variable with the correlations among the latent variables (Fornell & Larcker, 1981). The results showed that the square root of the average variance extracted for each latent variable is larger than the correlation index between this latent variable and every other latent variable. HTMT statistics range from 0.01 to 0.75, and the confidence interval of these statistics was well below 0.8, suggesting satisfactory discriminant validity. In sum, discriminant validity between constructs was confirmed (see Table 3).

Table 1
Demographic Profile of the Respondents (N = 644)

Variable	Frequency (N)	Percentage (%)
Gender		
Female	294	45.7
Male	307	47.7
Prefer not to say	43	6.7
Age		
18-24	107	16.6
25-35	292	45.3
36-45	151	23.4
46-55	42	6.5
>55	12	1.9
Prefer not to say	40	6.2
Education level		
Junior high school or below	41	6.4
Senior high school	107	16.6
Three-year College degree	210	32.6
Four-year University degree	169	26.2

Graduate degree	50	7.8
Prefer not to say	67	10.4
Personal monthly income		
Below CYN 2000	30	4.7
CYN 2001-5000	190	29.5
CYN 5001-8000	193	30.0
CYN 8001 and above	155	24.1
Prefer not to say	76	11.8
Occupation		
Civil servant	35	5.4
Office clerk	321	49.8
Professional	80	12.4
Self-employed entrepreneur	137	21.3
Student	26	4.0
Soldier	2	0.3
Other	43	6.7

Table 2

Measurement Model Results

Constructs and scale items	Standard factor loading	Cronbach's Alpha	Composite reliability (CR)	Average variance extracted (AVE)
Communicative servicescape		0.927	0.948	0.820
The employees of the hotel are willing to help.	0.894			
The employees of the hotel are polite and friendly.	0.916			
The employees of the hotel give customers personal attention.	0.918			
The employees of the hotel are passionate.	0.895			
Substantive servicescape		0.926	0.939	0.660

The background music in the hotel is pleasant.	0.730			
The hotel has nice smell.	0.768			
The atmosphere of the hotel is cheerful.	0.844			
The hotel has up-to-date facilities.	0.810			
The hotel is clean.	0.842			
The architecture of the hotel is attractive.	0.850			
The color scheme of the hotel is attractive.	0.852			
The facilities are maintained well.	0.796			
Inspiration		0.892	0.925	0.755
I experienced inspiration.	0.849			
Something I encountered or experienced inspired me.	0.846			
I was inspired to do something.	0.898			
I felt inspired.	0.882			
Satisfaction		0.916	0.947	0.855
It is a wise decision to stay at this hotel.	0.928			
I am very glad to stay at this hotel.	0.934			
Overall, I am satisfied with my stay at this hotel.	0.913			

Table 3

Correlations Between Constructs

	Inspiration	Communicative staging	Substantive staging	Satisfaction
Inspiration	0.877			
Communicative servicescape	0.470	0.907		
Substantive	0.680	0.676	0.814	

servicescape				
Satisfaction	0.685	0.500	0.609	0.925

Note: bold figures denote the square root of each construct

The structural model was performed to examine the hypothesized relationships and the results are presented in Table 3. Except for the relationship between communicative servicescape and inspiration ($\beta = -0.026$, $t = 0.560$, $p > 0.05$), other path coefficients were significant. Substantive servicescape affected inspiration ($\beta = 0.679$, $t = 17.447$, $p < 0.001$; $f^2 = 0.452$) and inspiration affected satisfaction ($\beta = 0.688$, $t = 24.617$, $p < 0.001$; $f^2 = 0.75$). Additionally, approximately 43.5% of the total variance in inspiration and 47.2% of the total variance in satisfaction were explainable by their antecedents (Q^2 of inspiration is 0.459; Q^2 of satisfaction is 0.374). These results suggest strong predictive power of our model (Hair et al., 2017). In addition, the results also indicated that prior experience negatively moderates the effects of inspiration on satisfaction ($\beta = -0.092$, $p < 0.05$; $f^2 = 0.011$) (see Table 4). Bootstrapping with 5000 subsamples was applied to test the mediation effect. The indirect effect of substantive staging through inspiration to satisfaction is 0.461, which is significant ($p < 0.01$, 95% CI = [0.393, 0.532]).

Table 4

Study 1: Structural Model Results

Relationship	Standardized estimate	t-Value	Hypothesis
Substantive servicescape→Inspiration (H1)	0.679***	17.447	Supported
Communicative servicescape→Inspiration	-0.026	0.560	
Substantive servicescape → Inspiration →	0.688***	24.617	Supported

Satisfaction (H2)			
Prior experience × Inspiration→Satisfaction (H4)	-0.092**	2.429	Supported
Total variance explained:			
R ² of Inspiration = 0.435			
R ² of Satisfaction = 0.472			

Note: *** $p < 0.001$, ** $p < 0.05$

Discussion

The results indicate that substantive servicescape rather than communicative servicescape has a positive effect on inspiration (H1). And the results also offer preliminary support for H2 and H4. In the next study, we will focus on the substantive servicescape and further examine its underlying psychological mechanism on satisfaction via inspiration.

STUDY 2

The purposes of Study 2 are threefold. First, we examine the causal relationship using an experimental method by manipulating the substantive servicescape (i.e., high vs. low attractiveness). Second, we further investigate whether substantive servicescape can influence inspiration (H1). Third, we test whether the impact of substantive servicescape on satisfaction is mediated by inspiration (H2).

Pretest

Prior research showed the substantive servicescape includes atmospheric and design elements (e.g., architecture) (Breneman & Geuens, 2003). Thus, this experiment took the attractiveness of the hotel's architecture appearance as the proxy for substantive staging (including the visual elements of architecture, atmosphere, cleanliness, facilities, and color scheme as a whole). As it is very difficult to encompass and manipulate every substantive staging element (e.g., scent, sound, facilities, etc.) in lab experiments, an overall evaluative measure such as perceived attractiveness of hotels was deemed easier and more appropriate to be operationalized. First, we selected five of the most popular hotel architectural images on Baidu, the largest search engine in China. Next, twenty participants were recruited with some monetary incentives (RMB 2 Yuan, about USD\$0.3) in September 2019, and asked to evaluate the attractiveness of each hotel architecture image (e.g., "what do you think of the attraction of this hotel architecture appearance in this image"; Dong & Siu, 2013) using a seven-point Likert scale (1= not at all, 7= extremely attractive). Finally, the most attractive architectural image was selected ($M_{\text{attractive}} = 6.00$, $SD = 1.34$) as the experimental material of the attractive condition, and the least attractive architectural image ($M_{\text{control}} = 4.60$, $SD = 0.88$) as the experimental material of the control condition (see Appendix for the experimental materials). The attractiveness scores between the two conditions were significantly different, $t(19) = 5.98$, $p < 0.001$.

Participants and Procedures

In this single-factor between-subject design experiment (high vs. low substantive

servicescape), participants were recruited with some monetary incentives (RMB 2 Yuan, about USD\$0.3) from an online survey panel in May 2020. One hundred and thirty-three participants ($N_{\text{control}} = 66$, $N_{\text{attractive}} = 67$) (59.4% female; $M_{\text{age}} = 22.78$, $SD = 2.71$) were randomly assigned to the high or low (control) attractiveness condition using the randomization function. The low attractiveness condition is also considered as the control condition. This sample size was much higher than the expected sample size ($n = 28$ for each condition, power = 0.9; type I error rate = 1%) calculated by using the means and standard deviations in the pretest results according to Chow et al. (2008).

Participants were required to watch the picture of the hotel architectural appearance in their respective conditions for about one minute. After viewing the pictures of the hotel, participants were required to answer a question about the attractiveness of hotel architecture, the same as in the pretest. Next, they completed the inspiration and satisfaction scales identical to those used in Study 1. Finally, we collected demographic information.

Manipulation Check

An independent samples *t*-test showed that participants in the high attractiveness condition rated a significantly higher score for the attractiveness of the hotel's architectural appearance ($M = 5.40$, $SD = 1.37$) than those in the low attractiveness condition ($M = 4.36$, $SD = 1.58$), $t(131) = 4.06$, $p < 0.001$, *Cohen's d* = 0.70. This suggests that the manipulation is successful.

Inspiration

The items used to assess inspiration were averaged to create a composite inspiration score ($\alpha = 0.92$). An independent samples t -test was performed, and the results showed that the high and low attractiveness conditions differed significantly in the scores of inspiration, $t(131) = 2.06, p < 0.05, \text{Cohen's } d = 0.36$. Specifically, participants in the highly attractive servicescape condition reported a stronger feeling of inspiration ($M = 4.74, SD = 1.35$) than those in the low attractiveness condition did ($M = 4.22, SD = 1.55$). In addition, after controlling for demographic variables (such as age and gender), the effect of substantive servicescape on inspiration was still significant ($\beta = 0.44, SE = 0.17, p < 0.05$).

Satisfaction

The three satisfaction items were averaged to form a composite satisfaction score ($\alpha = 0.92$). An independent samples t -test showed that the two conditions had a significant difference in satisfaction scores, $t(131) = 3.75, p < 0.001, \text{Cohen's } d = 0.66$. Specifically, participants in the attractive servicescape condition ($M = 5.38, SD = 1.07$) reported greater satisfaction than those in the control condition did ($M = 4.59, SD = 1.37$).

Mediation by Inspiration

A mediational analysis using a bootstrapping procedure (Model 4) with 5000 resamples

(Hayes & Preacher, 2014) revealed that inspiration mediates substantive servicescape on satisfaction (indirect effect = 0.23, SE = 0.11, $p < 0.001$; 95% CI = [0.02, 0.47]). Specifically, an attractive substantive servicescape positively predicts inspiration ($\beta = 0.35$, SE = 0.17, $p < 0.05$) (H1), and inspiration positively predicts satisfaction ($\beta = 0.66$, SE = 0.06, $p < 0.001$) (H2).

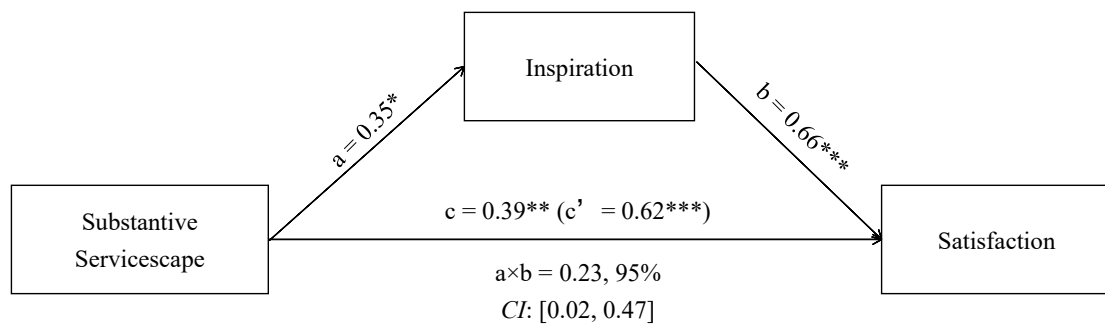
Table 5

Study 2: Mediation by Inspiration

	Effect	SE	<i>t</i> value	<i>p</i> value	95% Confidence interval	
					LLCI	ULCI
Substantive servicescape→Inspiration (H1)	0.35	0.17	2.06	0.04	0.01	0.69
Inspiration→Satisfaction (H2)	0.66	0.06	10.55	<0.001	0.53	0.78
Indirect effect of inspiration on satisfaction (H2)	0.23	0.11	-	-	0.02	0.47

Figure 2

Study 2: Bootstrapping Mediation Analysis



Note: *** $p < 0.001$, ** $p < 0.01$, * $p < 0.05$

Discussion

Study 2 provided causal evidence for the test of the research hypotheses by manipulating the substantive servicescape. However, we believe that there is individual heterogeneity in the influence of substantive servicescape on inspiration. We speculate that the effect of substantive servicescape on inspiration will be stronger when individuals have higher openness to experience. In the following, we will discuss the boundary conditions of this study.

STUDY 3

Study 3 attempts to further examine the mechanism and the boundary condition of the substantive servicescape on inspiration and satisfaction. We hypothesize that an attractive substantive servicescape can evoke customers' inspiration (H1). However, this effect may be stronger (weaker) for individuals with high (low) levels of openness to experience (H3). In this study, we used different stimuli from Study 2 (exterior design) to manipulate the substantive servicescape (interior design) and ran a one-factor between-subject experiment (high vs. low attractive hotel lobby). Moreover, we measure the personality trait of openness to experience and test its moderation effect.

Pretest

In this experiment, hotel lobby designs were used as the stimuli. Similar to Study 2, five

different hotel lobby pictures that have different design elements and layouts were chosen.

Twenty-one participants were recruited with some monetary incentives (RMB 2 Yuan, about USD\$0.3) in April 2019 and asked to evaluate the substantive servicescape of each hotel lobby on four items (e.g., “The atmosphere of the hotel was cheerful”; Dong & Siu, 2013) using a seven-point Likert scale (1= not at all, 7 = strongly agree). Four items were averaged to form a composite attractiveness score of substantive servicescape. Finally, the picture with the highest score was selected ($M_{\text{High}} = 5.74$, $SD = 0.99$) as the experimental material for the highly attractive substantive servicescape condition, and the picture with the lowest score as the experimental material for the control condition ($M_{\text{Control}} = 4.37$, $SD = 0.84$; see Appendix for the experimental materials). The attractiveness rating scores between the two conditions were significantly different, $t(20) = 5.20$, $p < 0.001$.

Participants and Procedures

One hundred and fifteen participants ($N_{\text{control}} = 54$, $N_{\text{high}} = 61$) (72.2% female; $M_{\text{age}} = 23.16$, $SD = 3.44$) were recruited with some monetary incentives (RMB 2 Yuan, about USD\$0.3) in June 2019 and successfully completed the survey, in which they were randomly assigned to either the highly attractive substantive servicescape condition or the control condition. This sample size was much higher than the expected sample size ($n = 16$ for each condition, power = 0.9; type I error rate = 1%) calculated by using the means and standard deviations in the pretest results according to Chow et al. (2008).

Similar to Study 2, participants were required to view a hotel lobby picture (high vs. low-

attractive hotel lobby) for about one minute. Next, they completed the same evaluation of the substantive servicescape for the manipulation check used in Study 2. Finally, participants completed the same inspiration and satisfaction scales used in Study 2, as well as the openness to experience measure adapted from Costa and McCrae's (1992) (10 items, e.g., "I am curious about many things") on a seven-point Likert scale (1 = not at all, 7 = strongly agree). Positive emotions (i.e., pleasant, pride, peaceful, romantic, and excited) were also measured as alternative explanations. We averaged the scores of these positive emotions to form a composite score of positive emotions. Basic demographic data was also collected.

Manipulation Check

The four items used to assess attractiveness were reliable ($\alpha = 0.90$). An independent sample *t*-test was performed and the results showed that participants in the high attractive condition rated significantly higher attractiveness levels ($M = 5.56$, $SD = 0.71$) than those in the control condition did ($M = 4.97$, $SD = 1.13$), $t(113) = 3.34$, $p < 0.01$, *Cohen's d* = 0.63. This suggests that the experimental materials of the two conditions differed significantly in the substantive servicescape.

Moderated Mediation Analysis

To examine the moderated effect of openness to experience ($\alpha = 0.87$), the control and high attractive conditions were coded as 0 and 1, respectively, and a moderated mediation

analysis using a bootstrapping procedure was conducted (Model 7) with 5000 samples (Hayes & Preacher, 2014). As predicted (H3), openness to experience moderated the effect of the substantive servicescape on satisfaction ($\alpha = 0.93$) through inspiration ($\alpha = 0.95$) (index of moderated mediation = 0.19, SE = 0.10, 95% CI = [0.02, 0.43]). Specifically, the interaction effect of substantive servicescape and openness to experience on inspiration was significant ($\beta = 0.35$, SE = 0.17, $p < 0.05$, 95% CI = [0.01, 0.69]). Substantive servicescape had a positive effect on inspiration only for individuals with high openness to experience ($\beta = 0.39$, SE = 0.17, 95% CI = [0.12, 0.77]), while for individuals with low openness to experience, substantive servicescape had no effect on inspiration ($\beta = -0.002$, SE = 0.14, 95% CI = [-0.29, 0.27]). We found that positive emotions did not mediate the relationship between servicescape and satisfaction (indirect effect: 0.178, 95% CI = [-0.026, 0.453]). In addition, positive emotions did not have a significant moderated mediation effect in the relationship between servicescape and satisfaction (moderated mediation index: -0.215, 95% CI = [-0.495, 0.076]). These results rule out the alternative explanation of positive emotions.

Table 6

Study 3: Moderated Mediation Analysis

Variable	Moderated level	Effect	SE	<i>t</i> value	<i>p</i> value	Bootstrap 95% CI
Substantive servicescape→Inspiration (H1)	-	0.35	0.17	2.02	0.46	[0.01, 0.69]
Openness to experience→Inspiration	-	0.16	0.12	1.31	0.19	[-0.08, 0.41]
Substantive servicescape × Openness to	-	0.35	0.17	2.04	0.04	[0.01, 0.69]

experience→Inspiration
(H3)

Moderated mediation on satisfaction						
Index of moderated mediation		0.19	0.10			[0.02, 0.43]
Inspiration as a mediator between substantive servicescape and satisfaction	Openness to experience	0.39	0.17	-	-	[0.12, 0.77]
	High: +1SD					
	Openness to experience	-0.002	0.14	-	-	[-0.29, 0.27]
	Low: -1SD					

Discussion

Firstly, study 3 replicated the results of the positive effect of substantive servicescape on customer inspiration (H1) with new experimental materials (interior design), enhancing the external validity of the study conclusions. Secondly, study 3 tested the moderating effect of openness to experience (H3). Thirdly, study 3 ruled out the alternative explanation of positive emotions.

STUDY 4

In Study 4, we sought to examine H1, H2, H3 simultaneously to replicate the previous findings. Moreover, we used six items of the substantive servicescape measurement scale as the manipulation check of the experimental stimuli from study 2. We also employed the two-stage ('inspire by' and 'inspire to'), 10-item customer inspiration scale to further examine the psychological mechanism of inspiration. In addition, we tried to rule out alternative

explanations of other emotions (i.e., awe, interest, and surprise).

Participants and Procedures

The study used a 2 (substantive servicescape: high vs. control) \times (openness to experience) mixed design, where the substantive servicescape was manipulated and openness to experience was measured. Two hundred and twenty-seven participants ($N_{\text{control}} = 105$, $N_{\text{high}} = 122$ from Credamo) (58.1% female; $M_{\text{age}} = 30.49$, $SD = 9.92$) were recruited with some monetary incentives (RMB 2 Yuan, about USD \$ 0.3) in July 2023 and successfully completed the survey, in which they were randomly assigned to either the highly attractive substantive servicescape condition or the control condition.

The experiment procedures are similar to Study 2. After watching the pictures, participants completed six items of substantive servicescape measurement scale (“The background music in the hotel is pleasant” and “The hotel has nice smell” were removed since they were unsuitable for this experiment) for the manipulation check. Then, participants completed the two-stage (‘inspire by’ and ‘inspire to’), 10-item customer inspiration scale (adapted from Böttger et al., 2017). Finally, participants completed the same satisfaction and the openness to experience scales used in Study 3 on a seven-point Likert scale (1 = not at all, 7 = strongly agree). Awe, interest, and surprise were also measured as alternative explanations. Basic demographic data was also collected.

Manipulation Check

The six items used to measure substantive servicescape were reliable ($\alpha = 0.94$) and were averaged to create a composite attractiveness score of substantive servicescape as the manipulation check. An independent samples *t*-test showed that participants in the high attractiveness condition rated a significantly higher score for the attractiveness of the hotel's substantive servicescape ($M = 5.97$, $SD = 0.78$) than those in the low attractiveness condition ($M = 3.84$, $SD = 1.49$), $t(225) = 13.74$, $p < 0.001$, *Cohen's d* = 1.83. This suggests that the manipulation was successful.

Inspiration

The ten items used to assess inspiration were reliable ($\alpha = 0.97$) and were averaged to create a composite inspiration score. An independent samples *t*-test showed that the high and low attractiveness conditions differed significantly in the scores of inspiration, $t(225) = 13.13$, $p < 0.001$, *Cohen's d* = 1.75. Specifically, participants in the highly attractive servicescape condition reported a stronger feeling of inspiration ($M = 5.66$, $SD = 1.05$) than those in the low attractiveness condition did ($M = 3.42$, $SD = 1.51$). In addition, after controlling for demographic variables (such as age and gender), the effect of substantive servicescape on inspiration was still significant ($\beta = 0.66$, $SE = 0.17$, $p < 0.001$).

Satisfaction

The three satisfaction items were reliable ($\alpha = 0.93$) and were averaged to form a composite satisfaction score. An independent samples *t*-test showed that the two conditions had a significant difference in satisfaction scores, $t(225) = 10.39$, $p < 0.001$, *Cohen's d* = 1.39. Specifically, participants in the highly attractive servicescape condition ($M = 5.78$, $SD = 0.99$) reported greater satisfaction than those in the control condition did ($M = 4.00$, $SD = 1.56$).

Mediation by Inspiration

We adopted bootstrapping procedure (Model 4) with 5000 samples for mediation analysis, taking inspiration, awe, interest and surprise as mediation variables at the same time. The results reveal that inspiration mediates substantive servicescape on satisfaction (indirect effect = 0.66, $SE = 0.14$; 95% $CI = [0.38, 0.95]$). Specifically, substantive servicescape can positively predict inspiration ($\beta = 0.45$, $SE = 0.10$, $p < 0.001$), and inspiration can positively predict satisfaction ($\beta = 0.78$, $SE = 0.04$, $p < 0.001$).

In addition, neither awe (indirect effect = 0.01, $SE = 0.03$; 95% $CI = [-0.04, 0.07]$) nor surprise (indirect effect = -0.09, $SE = 0.06$; 95% $CI = [-0.21, 0.02]$) had significant mediating effects. Therefore, alternative explanations of awe and surprise were ruled out. Despite the significant mediating effect of interest (indirect effect = 0.60, $SE = 0.12$; 95% $CI = [0.38, 0.84]$), the mediating effect of inspiration still existed, and the effect was slightly larger than that of interest (see table 7).

Furthermore, we found that inspiration served as a mediator in the relationship between interest and satisfaction (indirect effect = 0.31, $SE = 0.06$; 95% $CI = [0.19, 0.43]$), and interest

also acted as a mediator in the relationship between inspiration and satisfaction (indirect effect = 0.39, SE = 0.08; 95% CI= [0.24, 0.54]). Although the mediating effect of interest cannot be ruled out, after controlling for interest, inspiration still significantly mediated the relationship between substantive servicescape and satisfaction (indirect effect = 0.26, SE = 0.08; 95% CI= [0.13, 0.43]).

Table 7

Study 4: Mediation by Inspiration, Awe, Interest, Surprise

	Effect	SE	<i>t</i> value	<i>p</i> value	95% Confidence interval	
					LLCI	ULCI
Substantive servicescape → Inspiration (H1)	0.45	0.10	13.23	<0.001	1.12	1.51
Inspiration → Satisfaction	0.78	0.04	21.01	<0.001	0.81	0.98
Indirect effect of inspiration on satisfaction (H3)	0.66	0.14	-	-	0.38	0.93
Indirect effect of awe on satisfaction	0.01	0.03	-	-	-0.04	0.07
Indirect effect of interest on satisfaction	0.60	0.12	-	-	0.38	0.84
Indirect effect of surprise on satisfaction	-0.09	0.06	-	-	-0.21	0.02

Moderated Mediation Analysis

A bootstrapping procedure (Model 7) with 5000 samples (Hayes and Preacher, 2014) found that openness to experience moderated the effect of substantive servicescape on satisfaction

through inspiration (index of moderated mediation = 0.15, SE = 0.06, 95% CI = [0.03, 0.28]), supporting H3. Specifically, the interaction effect of substantive servicescape and openness to experience on inspiration was significant ($\beta = 0.32$, SE = 0.11, $p < 0.05$, 95% CI = [0.11, 0.53]). Substantive servicescape had a positive effect on inspiration only for individuals with high openness to experience ($\beta = 0.26$, SE = 0.07, 95% CI = [0.14, 0.41]), while for individuals with low openness to experience, substantive servicescape had no effect on inspiration ($\beta = 0.07$, SE = 0.06, 95% CI = [-0.03, 0.20]).

Table 8

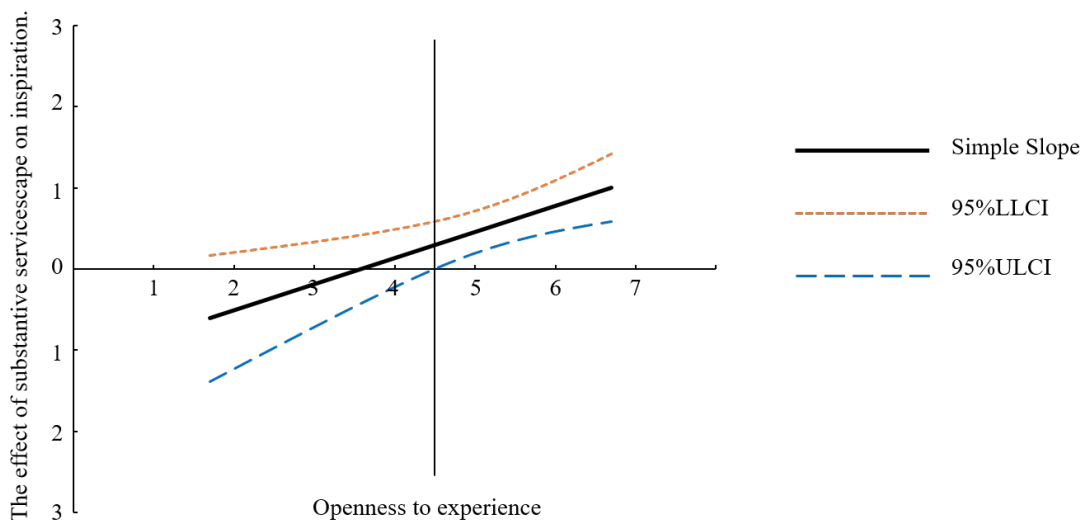
Study 4: Moderated Mediation Analysis

variable	Moderated level	Effect	SE	<i>t</i> value	<i>p</i> value	Bootstrap 95% CI
Substantive servicescape → Inspiration (H1)	-	0.34	0.08	4.28	< 0.001	[0.18, 0.49]
Openness to experience → Inspiration	-	-0.05	0.05	-1.05	0.30	[-0.16, 0.05]
substantive servicescape × Openness to experience → Inspiration (H4)	-	0.32	0.11	2.99	0.003	[0.11, 0.53]
Moderated mediation on satisfaction						
Index of moderated mediation		0.19	0.06			[0.03, 0.28]
Inspiration as a mediator between substantive servicescape and satisfaction	Openness to experience High: +1SD	0.26	0.07	-	-	[0.14, 0.41]
	Openness to experience Low: -1SD	0.07	0.06	-	-	[-0.03, 0.20]

A floodlight analysis using a bootstrapped samples (5,000) procedure with PROCESS Model 1 (Hayes & Preacher, 2014) was conducted. The Johnson–Neyman significance region is at 4.49 and higher (with 83.70% of the responses above this value and 16.29% of the responses below this value). The effects of substantive servicescape on inspiration was significant only at higher openness to experience (J-N point = 4.49, Effect_{JN} = 0.29, SE = 0.15, $t = 1.97$, $p = 0.05$).

Figure 3

Study 4: The Moderating Effect of Openness to Experience (Johnson-Neyman)



Discussion

Firstly, study 4 again supported H1, H2, and H3, which replicated the results of previous

studies and strengthened the robustness of the conclusions. Secondly, building upon the findings of Study 3, study 4 changed the experimental materials (adopted hotel exterior design pictures), and again verified the moderating effect of openness to experience and expanded the external validity of the research conclusions. Third, study 4 also ruled out alternative explanations of awe and surprise, both of which are even mediated by inspiration to influence satisfaction. Finally, despite not ruling out the alternative explanation for interest, our findings reveal the significant mediating effect of inspiration in the same model. Interestingly, the mediating effect of inspiration is even larger than that of interest. This suggests that inspiration may play a more prominent role in the relationship between substantive servicescape attractiveness and satisfaction. Since previous literature has explored that novelty cues which is one of the dimensions of attractiveness can evoke the emotion of interest. Interest, in turn, stimulates curiosity-based behaviors (Fang et al., 2023; Sung et al., 2016). Therefore, our study builds upon previous research and provides a new theoretical perspective of customer inspiration in explaining the relationship between substantive servicescape and satisfaction.

THEORETICAL IMPLICATIONS

Our results extended the findings in prior research, which demonstrated the positive influence of servicescape on customers' responses (Chang, 2016; Jani & Han, 2015; Kaminakis et al., 2019; Pizam & Tasci, 2019). In particular, we introduce inspiration as a novel mediator in the hospitality industry. While previous research has investigated inspiration associated with service and travel experiences, few studies have explored the

potential of the servicescape to influence customer inspiration. The current research uncovered the differential effects of substantive and communicative staging on inspiration and satisfaction, as well as the underlying mechanism and the boundary conditions. Specifically, Study 1 extended previous research by providing evidence that substantive servicescape, rather than communicative servicescape, significantly influences inspiration. Further, prior experience moderated the downstream effects of inspiration on customer satisfaction. The moderating role of prior experience was also an extension to the literature (Dedeoglu et al., 2018). It is likely that customer's satiation with hotel's inspirational experience weakens the effect of their inspirational experiences on customer satisfaction. Studies 2 and 3 provided experimental evidence that the effect of substantive servicescape on satisfaction is causal. Study 3 and 4 further demonstrated the moderated role of openness to experience in the relationship between substantive servicescape and customer inspiration. The individual with high openness is more sensitive to external stimuli (i.e., substantive servicescape) when making evaluations of hotel service.

The current research makes several significant theoretical contributions. First, our research extends existing hospitality literature by illuminating the different impacts of substantive and communicative servicescape on inspiration. While prior studies suggested that inspirational experiences can occur in nature-based tourism (Huu Khoi et al., 2019), it remained unclear whether inspiration could also be linked to servicescapes in a hotel setting. In particular, our study found that attractive aesthetic design elements in the substantive servicescape evoked inspiration. This is consistent with prior research (Park et al., 2019), which demonstrates that servicescapes contribute to customers' positive affects and customer

experience. However, our findings differ from them in that we found only substantive rather than communicative servicescape positively influenced customer inspiration. A possible reason is that although social aspects may be relevant for arousing basic positive feelings (i.e., content and pleasantness) between customers and employees, interpersonal service interactions alone may not be sufficient in eliciting higher-order psychological states such as curiosity and wonderment, which underlie the premise of inspiration. In other words, the communicative servicescape between employees and customers may not necessarily arouse one's transcendence and imagination to the same extent as atmospheric and aesthetic visual stimulation in a substantive servicescape. It seems that what and how customers feel and experience affects their inspiration. Our explanation is consistent with recent research which reveals the influence of brand experience on customer inspiration (Kwon & Boger, 2021). In this sense, the current study expands hospitality literature on the source and drivers of inspiration and offers a more nuanced understanding of the influences of servicescape on a customer's psychological state.

Second, our research demonstrated the downstream effect of inspiration on customer satisfaction. Consistent with Liu et al. (2017)'s finding that customers' experiences, of which one dimension is inspiration, significantly affect overall satisfaction. We singled out the inspirational experience and corroborated its downstream effect by a mixed method design. Our finding enriches the extant literature on the enhancement of customer experience (e.g., Lemon & Verhoef, 2016) by opening a new avenue for future research on inspiration. For example, it would be necessary to explore how inspiration affects other customers' cognitive and affective states.

Third, we are the first to discover the role of prior experience in moderating the effect of inspiration on satisfaction. Specifically, this research found that prior experience negatively moderated the effect of inspiration on satisfaction. Since inspiration necessitates feelings of transcendence and self-enhancement (Lindberg et al., 2014), prior experience with a servicescape may lead to adaption (e.g., return to a normal state) (Bagozzi et al., 1999), and thus the effect of inspiration triggered by the same attractive substantive servicescapes on satisfaction may be weakened over time. Our finding is generally consistent with prior customer satiation research (e.g., Park et al., 2019). Future research may explore factors that can attenuate this negative effect of prior experience. For example, the adoption of advanced technologies such as virtual reality and augmented reality may prolong the influence of customer inspiration.

Finally, to the best of our knowledge, this research serves as the first study to reveal that a customer's personality moderates the relationship between servicescape and inspiration. In particular, individuals with high openness to experience tend to focus more on environmental stimuli such as beautiful aesthetic designs, making them more likely to be inspired by substantive servicescape. The robustness of this effect was demonstrated by using different stimuli in this research. By investigating both prior experience and openness to experience, this research contributes by offering a more nuanced understanding of inspiration and its influence on satisfaction within the substantive servicescape setting.

PRACTICAL IMPLICATIONS

This research also has several valuable practical implications. First, hotel practitioners should attach more importance to beautiful and attractive design elements to inspire customers. Thus, hotel developers can request a design mindset that emphasizes aesthetics, imagination, creativity, broad-mindedness, and intelligence. Inspiration can be embedded within the DNA of properties right at the onset. Meanwhile, hotel managers with existing properties can focus on the details by increasing the attractiveness of aesthetic elements in the lobby or other common, customer-facing areas such as the lounges. The mind and body are connected, and the mind's inspiration and physiological arousal are inseparable (Lindberg et al., 2014). In this view, even fine details in hotels could potentially broaden customers' physiological arousal and induce their inspiration and inclination to explore new possibilities. In addition, practitioners should leverage the power of the internet to elicit customer inspiration by all means. For example, a website and/or social media section that allows customers to share their inspirational experiences with substantive servicescape photos and/or videos is recommended.

Second, hotel managers should not underestimate the role of their guests' personalities in offering memorable experiences. Hotel managers could assess their guests' personalities by customer profiles with their preferences for services and products. With this information, hotel managers may guide customers with high openness to experience to pay more attention to elements in the substantive servicescape, such as the scent of the building, the paintings on the wall, and even types of plants and indoor vegetation. Aroma, paintings, and vegetation are important elements in many modern hotels that may broaden customers' awareness of their surroundings and stimulate transcendental experiences and curiosity about other aspects of

the substantive servicescape. Apart from these, hotel practitioners may design their own themed and inspiring souvenirs with innovative designs so that their guests are able to take them back home with their inspirational memories.

Third, hotel managers should make an extra effort to inspire their loyal guests. Our research demonstrates that prior experience moderates the effect of inspiration on satisfaction negatively. Customers with prior experiences may be more familiar with the substantive servicescape, and hence, the goal for managers is to continue to find ways to reignite their transcendence, curiosity, and inspiration. For example, managers can provide repeat customers with information about the substantive servicescape, such as the history of the property, the architect's name, and stories of the interior design. When the repeat customer returns, managers can provide different sets of information such as of the name of the music in the lobby background and the artist and composer's stories. This information aims to evoke repeat customers' sense of curiosity and connect components of storytelling with beautiful design elements so that customers feel transcendence and novel aspects of the substantive servicescape when they return.

CONCLUSION, LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH

Through a field survey and two experimental studies, this research examined the impacts of substantive and communicative servicescape on inspiration, the downstream effect of inspiration on satisfaction, and the moderating roles of openness to experience and prior experience in these relationships. Substantive servicescape had a positive effect on customer

inspiration, which had a positive downstream effect on satisfaction. Prior experience and openness to experience moderated the effects of inspiration on satisfaction, and substantive servicescape on inspiration, respectively. Overall, the research extended the theoretical understanding of substantive and communicative servicescapes and explored the sources and drivers of inspiration in a hospitality setting.

There are limitations to this research and opportunities for future studies. First, the lab experiments of our research used only photographs to present the stimuli rather than more interactive forms of presentation. Future research considers using videos, 3-D tours, or virtual reality to showcase the aesthetic elements of a substantive servicescape. Second, despite this study examining the moderating role of openness to experience, other personality traits (i.e., extroversion) may be relevant in servicescape research (e.g., extraversion and agreeableness). Third, the samples across the four studies were all from the same country. Future research may explore whether there are any cultural differences by running studies in different countries. Finally, the role of service employee in affecting customer inspiration should be further investigated as interpersonal sharing can facilitate memorable experience (Lin et al., 2018) and service leaders can empower employees with creativity (Ye et al., 2020).

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APPENDIX

Measurement Scales

Substantive staging of servicescape (Dong & Siu, 2013)

- SS1. The background music in the hotel is pleasant.
- SS2. The hotel has nice smell.
- SS3. The atmosphere of the hotel is cheerful.
- SS4. The hotel has up-to-date facilities
- SS5. The hotel is clean.
- SS6. The architecture of the hotel is attractive.
- SS7. The color scheme of the hotel is attractive.
- SS8. The facilities are maintained well.

Communicative staging of servicescape (Dong & Siu, 2013)

- CS1. The employees of the hotel are willing to help.
- CS2. The employees of the hotel are polite and friendly.
- CS3. The employees of the hotel give customers personal attention.
- CS4. The employees of the hotel are passionate.

Customer Satisfaction (Cronin, Brady, & Hult, 2000)

- CS1. It is a wise decision to stay at this hotel.
- CS2. I am very glad to stay at this hotel.
- CS3. Overall, I am satisfied with my stay at this hotel.

Customer Inspiration (Thrash & Elliot, 2004)

- CI1. I experienced inspiration.
- CI2. Something I encountered or experienced inspired me.
- CI 3. I was inspired to do something.
- CI 4. I felt inspired.

Customer Inspiration (Böttger et al., 2017)

- CI 1. My imagination was stimulated.
 - CI 2. I unexpectedly and spontaneously got new ideas.
 - CI 3. I was intrigued by a new idea.
 - CI 4. My horizon was broadened.
 - CI 5. I discovered something new.
 - CI 6. I was inspired to buy something.
 - CI 7. I felt a desire to buy something.
-

CI 8. My interest to buy something was increased.

CI 9. I was motivated to buy something.

CI 10. I felt an urge to buy something.

Openness to experience (adopted from Costa and McCrae (1992))

OTE 1. I like to cultivate and develop new hobbies.

OTE 2. I am fascinated by the beauty in the nature and art.

OTE 3. I am interested in poems.

OTE 4. It is easy for me to imagine freely.

OTE 5. It is easy for me to notice my emotional changes in different environments.

OTE 6. I often experience many different emotions or feelings.

OTE 7. Sometimes when I read a poem or appreciate an artwork, I feel very happy.

OTE 8. I am interested in thinking about the nature of the universe or the conditions of human existence.

OTE 9. I am curious about many things.

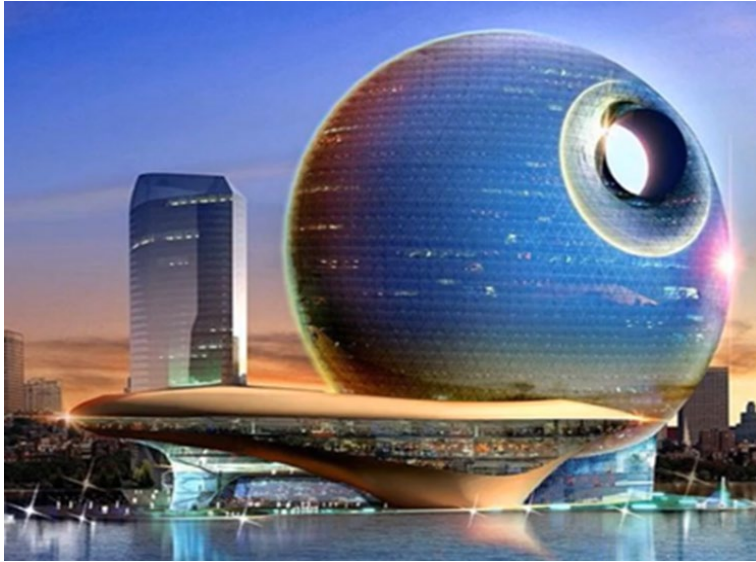
OTE 10. I enjoy thinking about the theoretical or abstract ideas.

Constructs and scale items	mean	Standard deviation	skew	kurtosis
Communicative servicescape				
CS1	3.97	0.85	-0.47	-0.16
CS2	3.93	0.92	-0.57	-0.04
CS3	3.92	0.91	-0.60	0.11
CS4	3.96	0.90	-0.61	0.15
Substantive servicescape				
SS1	4.09	0.77	-0.57	0.24
SS2	4.02	0.82	-0.51	0.12
SS3	4.00	0.80	-0.44	0.04
SS4	3.96	0.84	-0.35	-0.38
SS5	3.95	0.84	-0.38	-0.25
SS6	3.92	0.85	-0.52	0.22
SS7	3.92	0.90	-0.45	-0.36
SS8	3.95	0.89	-0.57	0.11
Inspiration				
Ins1	4.02	0.84	-0.60	0.17

Ins2	3.98	0.87	-0.55	-0.05
Ins3	3.99	0.98	-0.752	-0.50
Ins4	3.92	0.96	-0.74	0.17
Satisfaction				
Sat1	4.07	0.86	-0.79	0.42
Sat2	4.16	0.81	-0.67	0.10
Sat3	4.21	0.78	-0.74	0.17
Openness to experience				
OTE1	5.18	0.99	-0.54	0.45
OTE2	5.47	0.99	-0.28	-0.33
OTE3	4.97	1.20	-0.20	-0.67
OTE4	5.37	1.20	-0.65	0.07
OTE5	5.01	1.13	-0.88	0.68
OTE6	5.13	1.27	-0.56	0.19
OTE7	4.77	1.44	-0.42	-0.35
OTE8	5.17	1.05	-0.54	0.07
OTE9	4.54	1.63	-0.31	-0.88
OTE10	5.10	1.28	-0.21	-0.61
Prior experience	2.83	0.91	-0.09	1.17

Study 2 & 4 Experimental Materials

Picture in the attractive Condition:



Picture in the control Condition:



Study 3 Experimental Materials

Picture in the attractive Condition:



Picture in the control Condition:

