The Built Experience: Creating a connection between the built environment and the service experience

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Is there a need for a new research line that looks into how the built environment is part of the service experience?

Should the built environment be managed as part of the service experience or should it be managed as an asset?
Defining Service and the service experience

- Services are deeds, processes, and performances. (Zeitmal, Bitner)

- A time-perishable, intangible experience performed for a customer acting the role of a co-producer.
Customer Contact (Chase; Kellogg)
Service as system (holism)
Service Package (Fitzsimons)

• Service Experience
  • Explicit and implicit services
    • Information; Facilitating goods; Supporting Facilities
Servicescape

• Design of buying environments to produce specific emotional effects in the buyer that enhance his (or her) purchase probability. (Kotler 1973)

• All of the objective physical factors that can be controlled by the firm to enhance (or constrain) employee and customer actions. (Bitner 1992)

• Consciously designed places calculated to produce commercially significant actions. (Arnould et al. 1998)
Servicescape components

• Involve both tangible and intangible elements (Hoffman and Turley 2002)

• Total configuration of environmental dimensions including ambient conditions, spatial layout and functionality, and signs symbols and artefacts. (Bitner 1992)

• Ambient factors, design factors, and social factors (Baker 1987)

• The importance of a particular servicescape component is likely to vary across different service organizations. (Bitner 1992; Kotler 1973)
Emerically what is known...Servicescapes

• Two reviews of the servicescape literature:
What is empirically known...Service ops

• Nothing, but

• Chase (1983) Customer contact (high vs. low)
  • Capacity planning
  • Location
  • Facility layout
What are the links?

- Research both conceptually and empirically demonstrate that there are links between components of the built environment and the behavior and emotional state of customers and employees.
- Conceptually, there are also impacts of the built environment in terms of location and capacity on the operational structure of the service.
- But most research looks at things from a reductionist standpoint and fails to acknowledge links between components of the service experience and the built environment, though there are some studies that look at relationship between two components.
- No holism approach has been applied.
Is a systems based, holism approach warranted in order to understand if the built environment is more than just part of the environment in which the service experience occurs? Is the built environment in fact part of the service experience?
Fitzsimons service package may provide insight.

• Clearly, the empirical literature indicates that there is a link between the service experience and the built environment.

• Fitzsimons conceptually, and systematically, makes the link as well. And further develops this by relating the service experience to implicit and explicit services.

• Implicit and explicit services can be in turn linked to aesthetic and functional factors (design factors) of the built environment (Aubert-Gamet 1997).

• Implied, but very important, is the social factors in terms of co-production (customer participation).
Is there a need for a new theoretical construct: the Built Experience?

• Service management researchers gravitate towards wanting a typology to help make sense of the myriad of services and how management decisions affect them.

• But these typologies are often times rudimentary and are not able to account for the complexity and variability found in may services due to variations in customer needs and employee ability, think retail shop vs. health care center.

• Yet, understanding conceptually the links between components of the built environment and operational and functional components of the service experience seems to go beyond what is offered in the servicescape. Therefore may require a new theoretical approach.
What is the conceptual model of the Built Experience?

• Well, I am not sure.

• But it needs to contain components of ambiance, design and social interaction; it needs to take into consideration the affects of customer variation in terms of inputs as well as interaction (contact and co-production); it needs to differentiate between efficiency and effectiveness and identify what the potential trade-offs could be.
What can a conceptual model of the Built Experience provide in terms of research?

• Ultimately, it can look at what are the key trade-offs in terms of placing resources toward certain components of the built environment and the service experience.

• Propositions should look at:
  • Location affect
  • Emotional affect
  • Purchasing affect
  • Satisfaction affect
  • Efficiency affect
  • Optimization
There is significant potential for further research into the relationship between the built environment and the service experience.

Both reviews indicate gaps in the research and also allude to the need of more holistic approaches.

A conceptual model for the Built Experience could provide a basis for future research, using a holism approach. But such research may not be generalizable.

But maybe nothing is generalizable when it comes to services...