THE UNIVERSITY OF HULL

EXPLORING THE IMPACT OF HOTEL INTERIOR DESIGN THROUGH SERVICE DOMINANT LOGIC (SDL) AND CONSUMER CULTURE THEORY (CCT) LENSES

Being a thesis submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in the University of Hull

By

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Abstract

This study examined the role of interior design in a hotel context. Although the role of interior design is clear in daily life and managerial activities, little consumer research has been conducted to identify the influential elements of interior design and capture their impacts, specifically within the hotel industry. Additionally, there is limited theoretical support for the integration of design and business disciplines, and the integration of consumer culture theory (CCT) and service dominant logic (SDL) theories. Addressing these gaps, this study sought to understand the underpinnings of hotel interior design, and explain its role from the distinct perspective of cosmopolitan consumers, through servicescape, CCT and SDL lenses. Drawing on the CCT and SDL theories in this research, the perspective of value creation in SDL is combined with the meaning creation in CCT, to explore what meanings hotel interior design can convey to hotel consumers, what it means to them, and how it influences them. An interpretivist research paradigm was employed using an inductive approach, and qualitative data was collected through thirty-seven semi- structured interviews.

The findings of the research have indicated that consumers perceive hotels' interior design holistically as a first impression. However, over time and with usage experience certain design elements increase in importance relative to others (e.g. colour, lighting). Therefore the findings highlighted that the perception is formed by both the functionality and the aesthetic appearance of the interior design, and identified the most influential interior design elements. The findings also revealed that hotel interior design is very critical in forming customers' perceptions, creating value, symbolizing meanings, and shaping their overall experience.

This study is of both theoretical and managerial importance. Theoretically, this study developed the "Hotelscape" framework as the core contribution and the final outcome of the study. This framework identifies the elements that form the overall interior design of a hotel servicescape, along with their impacts on customers and hoteliers in one comprehensive framework. It also unites separate concepts such as design and business, and integrates several theories including SDL and CCT. Managerially, this study will enhance the hotel managers' awareness of the practical value of interior design. It will help hoteliers understand their consumers better, and enable them to

manipulate their service environments to differentiate their offerings through interior design. As such, this study sends an overriding message to academics and managers that the coordination between design and business is necessary and beneficial, especially in a globalized and competitive industry such as hotels.

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

This chapter provides background to the research topic, and explains the development of the research problem and its significance for theory and practice. It provides an explanation of the research context, and highlights the research aim and objectives. Finally, this chapter presents the structure of the thesis.

1.2 Background of the study

In 1908, Clay suggested that individuals' response and feeling toward beauty is a vital part of their lives. Art is the natural outcome of their love and desire for beauty and that is why its main role is to satisfy this need (Clay, 1908). Esslinger (2009) intimates that creativity and beauty are as important for business as oxygen is for humans. After all, attractive things are undoubtedly preferred to ugly things (Norman, 2004). This is why design has been defined as "art with a purpose" (West & Purvis, 1992, p. 15). The role of design in achieving profit and market objectives has increased the interest and importance of design and aesthetics for both marketers and consumer psychologists (Hoegg & Alba, 2008). It can play a role in differentiating products and services in consumer eyes (Reimann, Zaichowsky, Neuhaus, Bender, & Weber, 2010).

West and Purvis (1992) believe that design contributes to four business areas: product design, corporate identity, brand and package design, and interior design, which is the focus of this study. De-Mozota (2003) added that design can be integrated in companies through four means: environmental design such as stores, working spaces, service facilities and spaces that represent the firm; product design that includes commercial products and machines; package design, including promotional materials and commercial products; and finally graphic design, which includes stationery, trade names, and logotypes. This implies that design influences diverse parts and activities of organizations, such as product design, workspace physical arrangements, and advertising campaigns (Weggeman, Lammers, & Akkermans, 2007). Design

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creatively supports different activities and reinforces marketing capabilities and techniques. Hence, it is not a substitute for other activities; it is essential (De-Mozota, 2003). Under those circumstances, Esslinger (2009) recommends that designers and business leaders should join their forces together to build creative strategies that will offer a more sustainable and profitable future. He argues that it is extremely important not to ignore design, especially for companies that want to have a competitive advantage. This indicates that art and design are becoming crucial parts of various activities, and academics and managers should respect and optimize that role.

Apart from this, the tangible product or rendered service is only one part of the total consumption experience, as customers respond to the total product when making their purchase decisions (Kotler, 1973, Milliman, 1986). The place and its physical environment is one of the most influential features of the total product (Bitner, 1992; Kotler 1973). Two intertwined streams of research "atmospherics"(Kotler, 1973) and "servicescapes" (Bitner, 1992) help in understanding the various effects of built environments on consumption behaviour. Several studies investigated the impacts of built environments on customers (e.g. Donovan & Rossiter,1982 ; Donovan, Rossiter, Marcoolyn, & Nesdale, 1994; Anderson,1986; Yalch &Spangenberg, 1990; Milliman,1986; Bellizi & Hite, 1992). Servicescapes' design influences customers in several industries such as leisure (Slatten, Mehmetoglu, Svensson, & Svari, 2009), coffee shops (Waxman, 2006), shops and drug stores (Kent & Stone, 2007). Although it is recognized that service managers consider their servicescapes' design, and that design is proved to be beneficial, there is still a lack of theoretical support for the role of servicescapes' design, especially in the hotel industry. Addressing this gap, this research will explore the impacts of hotel interior design through the lens of service dominant logic (SDL) and consumer culture theory (CCT). These will be explained in detail in the literature review chapter.

Since the introduction of Service dominant logic (SDL) theory (Vargo & Lusch, 2004), and Consumer culture theory (CCT) (Arnould & Thompson, 2005), many researchers has investigated several variables in relation to them. However, minimal research have integrated them or explored the role of servicescape in them, and how it can contribute to these theories (Arnould, 2006; Penaloza & Mish, 2011). In this research, the perspective of value creation processes in SDL is combined with the

meaning creation process in CCT, to explore what meanings hotel interior design can convey to hotel guests, and how it influences their perceived value and shapes their experiences. That is because the key to successful design and the development of new services and products is to understand customers' needs and expectations (Masoudi, Cudney, & Paryani, 2013). Customers are seen to perceive servicescape differently from the service providers, which suggests the importance of understanding customers' point of view, and designing strategies accordingly (Orth, Heinrich, & Malkewitz, 2012; Torres & Kline, 2013). Further to this, the messages managers intend to convey when they choose designs might not be perceived and interpreted by customers in the way they expect (Rosenbaum & Massiah, 2011). This justifies why this study is consumer-oriented. To grasp the different factors that influence the research sample, however, first the concept of Globalization must be understood.

The hospitality industry is the core of international business globalization, and among the service industries, hotels are the most globalized (Whitla, Walters, & Davies, 2007; Yu, Byun, & Lee, 2013). International consumer behaviour differences are inexorably fading with the globalization of markets (Funk, & Ndubisi, 2006). This has increased the interest in global market segmentation, which depends on identifying and serving similar groups of consumers regardless of country boundaries (Bolton & Myers, 2003). These consumers are called cosmopolitan consumers (Cleveland, Papadopoulos, & Laroche, 2011). In the twenty-first century, consumption relies on imagery, and has become more trend conscious and differentiated, as consumers are discriminating and looking for what is "cool" and distinctive (Funk, & Ndubisi, 2006). Consumers express their individuality through artefacts, practices and appearance and are always seeking to stand out from the crowd (Strannegard & Strannegard, 2012). Furthermore, these attributes, particularly the urge to be unique, have also become critical for the hotel industry (Strannegard & Strannegard, 2012). It is recognized that today's hotel guests are more widely travelled, sophisticated, demanding, and difficult to please than previously; they have sharp expectations, and low tolerance (Funk & Ndubisi, 2006; Jayawardena, McMillan, Pantin, Taller, & Willie 2013). However, there has been little research on sophisticated cosmopolitan consumers. Therefore, this study was conducted on cosmopolitan consumers, in order to better understand their perceptions and views toward hotels, the most globalized industry.

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Although the role of design is clear in managerial activities, limited consumer research has been conducted to identify the important elements of servicescape design, or break down the physical design factor in services, especially from a consumer perspective. Previous models that used servicescapes and atmospheric elements and antecedents (e.g. Countryman & Jang, 2006; Orth & Malkewitz, 2008) provided no theoretical basis for servicescape design elements, and there is a lack of robust grounding of such elements. It is difficult to understand the role of hotel design without acknowledging what elements form the design and shape it from customers' point of view. This suggests that it is important to distinguish the elements that shape hotel interior design, alongside exploring its role, to gain a comprehensive understanding of the matter.

The hotel industry is highly competitive and hoteliers should find ways to differentiate their products and services and make them stand out. The best recommended way to do this is to understand their customers' requirements and work to meet or rather exceed these requirements (Nadiri & Hussain, 2005). As a result, Yavas and Babakus (2005) strongly suggest that clear understanding and visualizing of customers' needs and their hotel choice process is a must for the survival, growth, and success of hotels. Given that there are clear gaps in the area, and that design is beneficial for other industries, this study explores it further and investigates the impacts of hotel interior design.

Finally, there are some frequently used terms that need to be clarified to guarantee consistency and clarity. First, the extensive reading of the relevant literature on the research topic has revealed that several terms, such as service physical surrounding, service physical environments, service physical setting, and "servicescape" are used interchangeably. However, the term servicescape will be mostly used because it is the most commonly used, and it is relevant for any service business (Reimer & Kuehn, 2005). The term "Servicescape" is defined as: "the physical surrounding or the physical facility where the service is produced, delivered and consumed" (Zeithaml & Bitner, 2003, p. 306).

In specific, this study is interested in the interior design of hotels' servicescapes. This leads to the second key term, interior design; it is defined as: "the art or process of

designing the interior decoration of a room or building" (Stevenson, 2010, p. 912). Interior design is chosen because it is considered one of the main tangible cues of servicescapes (Bitner, 1992), which exerts the most influence on consumers' behaviour (Slatten, et al., 2009). Interior design, and the function of architectural design form a facility's aesthetics, which contribute to the servicescape attractiveness and in turn customers' attitudes (Wakefield& Blodgett, 1996). Interior design is part of the servicescape (Bitner, 1992), an atmospheric element (Slatten et al., 2009), a form of artefact (Rafaeli & Vilnai, 2004a), and it represents aesthetics (Weggeman et al., 2007). This indicates that the construct of interior design is significant, and highlights the need for further exploration in this area as it is still overlooked.

1.3 Research aim and objectives

The aim of this research is to understand the underpinnings of hotel interior design and explain its role, especially in creating value, symbolizing meanings and shaping experiences from cosmopolitan consumers' perspective; through servicescape, SDL and CCT lenses. This is achieved via addressing the following research objectives, inspired by the gaps identified in the literature.

1. To understand how customers' perceptions of hotel servicescape's design are formed

Understanding how customers perceive the interior design of hotels will clarify how hotel guests make sense of their surroundings especially with regard to design features, what hotel design means to them, and how it influences them. This will provide a better, deeper understanding of hotel customers' point of view, and enrich theory, which is deficient in this area.

2. To identify the interior design elements that create value and convey meanings from the distinct perspective of cosmopolitan consumers

The lack of knowledge of the specific design elements that form hotel servicescape's design suggests that dividing the hotel design into its partial components from customers' point of view will help in understanding which elements are perceived as

part of the design and which elements are more influential, especially in creating value and symbolizing meanings. This will provide new theoretical insights and managerial implications.

3. **To comprehend the role of interior design and what it has to offer to the hotel industry through Service dominant logic (SDL) and consumer culture theory (CCT) lenses.**

Identifying the different roles and impacts of interior design in the hotel context justifies the importance of this study and highlights the different benefits of considering hotel servicescape's design for hotel guests and hoteliers. It will show why hoteliers should consider interior design in their core strategies and how they can manipulate their hotel environments to succeed. The research shows how integrating servicescape, SDL, and CCT theories assists in understanding the role of hotel interior design and what this means for the hotel industry. Identifying the way emotions and behaviours are influenced by hotel interior design is another essential element of this objective.

4. **To conceptualize a framework that identifies the significant hotel interior design elements, and maps the relationship between these elements and their impacts in the hotel industry.**

The establishment of this framework will guide academics and managers who are interested in this area, by identifying the lacking information with regard to hotel interior design and its benefits for customers. Hence, the contribution of design to businesses in general, and hotels in particular will be better appreciated.

In order to achieve the research objectives, the following research questions must be answered: how do cosmopolitan consumers perceive interior design in a hotel context? What hotel interior design elements are the most influential, especially in creating value for customers and conveying meanings to them? What is the role of hotel interior design, and what impacts does it have?.

1.4 The context of the study

The study took place in Saudi Arabia, where the researcher conducted thirty-seven semi-structured interviews with Saudi Arabian participants. Saudi Arabia occupies about 2,240,000 square kilometres on the Arabian Peninsula, and its global importance is due to four main characteristics. First, it has the largest reserves of oil in the world (Mellahi, 2007). Second, it has a strategic location. Third, it has a unique Islamic importance because of its custodianship of the Muslim holy places (the Grand Mosque in Mecca and the mosque of the prophet Muhammad in Madinah) (Rice, 2004). Fourth, it is known for the highest birth rate in the world, which has led to a young population, as 60 per cent of the overall population are under 21 years of age (Mellahi, 2007).

The rationale behind choosing Saudi Arabian participants is that Saudi customers are known for their wide travelling and big spending abroad, including choosing the various hotels around the world, especially in their summer holidays. Travellers from the Gulf region in general are among the most valuable customers for the tourism sector worldwide (Khan, 2014). The media have shown that Saudi Arabians, particularly are the world's leading spenders abroad (Alarabiya, 2013; Albawaba, 2014; Odedra, 2014). The researcher is Saudi too, which facilitated access to and engagement with Saudi participants.

There are four main reasons for choosing the hotel industry as the context for this study. First, previous literature indicates that researchers have spent considerable effort on different service industries, especially retail (e.g. Lin & Liang, 2011), and restaurants (e.g. Milliman, 1986), but have expended much less effort on hotels, which highlighted the need to investigate this industry further (e.g. Barsky & Nash, 2002; Countryman & Jang, 2006; Jani & Han, 2011). Second, the hotel industry was selected because interior design is more relevant to hotels than other services (Hassanien, 2006). Third, hotel design is a continuous activity (West & Purvis, 1992), and fourth, hotels' physical attributes are a vital part of value creation for customers (Dube & Renaghan, 2000).

1.5 Research significance

This study is of both theoretical and practical importance. At the theoretical level, it contributes to various areas of knowledge, filling gaps in the extant literature, and responding to previous researchers' calls for further research. Practically, it draws implications regarding applying these theories in different business contexts and how hotel managers and owners can benefit from this study.

1.5.1 From the theoretical perspective

This study links both business and design disciplines from a marketing perspective and helps in acknowledging the interrelation between design and business. In addition, it explores the role of hotel interior design and identifies its impacts from new perspectives, SDL and CCT. there has been little prior research effort to integrate them and employ them to understand the role of servicescape and the benefits it can offer. This will provide a better understanding of the role of interior design in the hotel industry. Integrating several areas of knowledge means that this study will enrich various research streams, including marketing, services, atmospherics, design, aesthetics, buyer behaviour, and environmental psychology. Also, integrating various theories, including SDL, CCT, and servicescape, means that the research will contribute to development of each of them.

This study will fill several gaps in the current literature. It will identify the different elements that shape hotel interior design, and clarify the different emotions and behaviours influenced by these elements. This identification will add new insights, will provide a theoretical base, and will help in understanding customers' perspectives, as most previous studies were from management point of view. This highlights another contribution, which is the understanding of cosmopolitan consumers and their perceptions, because there has been little research on them, and on the relationship between globalization and servicescapes. This study also contributes to research on the hotel industry, as scarce research has focused on hotels before.

1.5.2 From the practical perspective

This study will enhance hotel managers' awareness of the practical value of interior design and help them to identify the more important interior design elements that they should invest in. Additionally, it will help hoteliers understand how to include design in their main strategies, understand their customers better and manipulate their service environments to compete and differentiate their offerings through interior design.

1.6 Overview of the research design

The current research adopts an interpretivist research philosophy, and an inductive research approach, while the research strategy is phenomenology. The rationale behind choosing this research design is mainly due to the need for in-depth information in order to develop better understanding of the concept. Therefore, the most suitable research method for collecting the data was semi-structured face-to-face interviews. Accordingly, thirty-seven interviews were conducted.

1.7 Thesis structure

This thesis has five main chapters.
Chapter One is the introduction to the thesis, containing background to the research topic and identification of the research objectives

Chapter Two is a literature review, which is divided into three parts: the first part analyses the theoretical orientation of the study. The second part explores the context of the study, which is the hotel context, as well as globalization and cosmopolitanism. The third part explains the concept of servicescape. As a result, this chapter summarizes the gaps identified from the extensive literature review over the period of conducting the research.

Chapter Three details the research methodology. It discusses the research philosophy, identifies the research approach employed and explains the strategy. It also discusses the data collection procedure and data analysis process. Finally, it addresses quality and ethical considerations.

Chapter Four is the findings and discussion chapter. It presents the data and identified codes and discusses them. This chapter also highlights the key findings, and introduces the final developed "Hotelscape" framework.

Chapter Five concludes the thesis. It highlights the study contributions, limitations, and further recommendations.

1.8 Summary

In summary, this chapter has introduced the research topic, shown how the research problem was identified, and explained how that was translated into the research aim and objectives. This chapter has also provided an outline of the research context and the justification for choosing it. It also proposed the study's contributions and overviewed the structure of the thesis. The next chapter will review the literature from different disciplines and backgrounds to provide a better understanding and identify the gaps in knowledge.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

The aim of this chapter is to critically analyse previous literature related to the research topic in an attempt to establish gaps in knowledge. The current topic is new as it combines both business and design concepts together; hence, due to it being interdisciplinary, there is a lack of literature that is directly relevant to this study. Nevertheless, selective literature from diverse disciplines provides direction, theoretical grounding, and parameters for the current study. Because hotels are the context of the study, literature related to the hotel industry in general will be covered. Additionally, theories from marketing and services in particular will be reviewed to understand the business side of the topic, while aesthetics and design concepts will be explored to grasp the design aspect. Also, psychological theories will help in understanding how design may impact customers.

Accordingly, this chapter is divided into three parts: the first part explores the theoretical orientation of the study, including the evolution of physical environments' theories and the two theoretical lenses of the study: Service dominant logic and Consumer culture theory. The second part examines the different concepts that surround the research context, including the hotel industry, design, architecture, globalization, and cosmopolitanism. These theories, along with the examined concepts help in the third part of the review. Which explains the concept of servicescapes as the main focus of the study, including the perception of servicescapes, roles of servicescapes as identified in the existing literature, and consumers' emotions and behaviours in servicescapes. These three parts lead to identification of research gaps and formulation of the questions addressed in this study. Figure 1 summarizes the structure of the chapter.
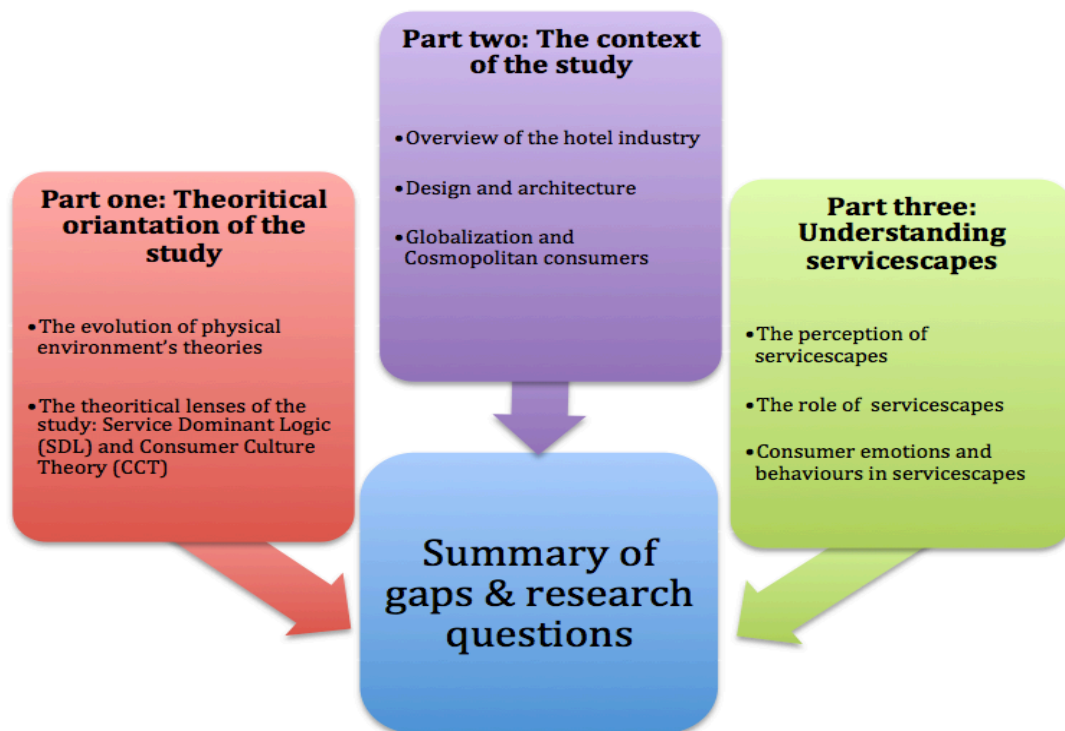
Figure 1 The structure of the literature review chapter (Author)

2.2 Part One: Theoretical orientation of the study

This part reviews the widely cited theories of physical environments as the theoretical orientation of the study. This review draws on different theoretical backgrounds, mainly environmental psychology and marketing. It starts with a clarification of the evolution of the established theories of physical environments, moving to the investigation of the two theoretical lenses of the study, which are Service Dominant Logic and Consumer Culture Theories.

2.2.1 The evolution of physical environment's theories

This part discusses the three main theories that are mostly cited and have derived research streams with regard to physical environments and their impact on customers. The first is the Stimulus-Organism-Response (SOR) theory (Mehrabian & Russell,

1974) derived from environmental psychology, while the other two are derived from marketing, namely, Atmospherics (Kotler, 1973), and Servicescape (Bitner, 1992). Figure 2 illustrates these theories that will be explained next.
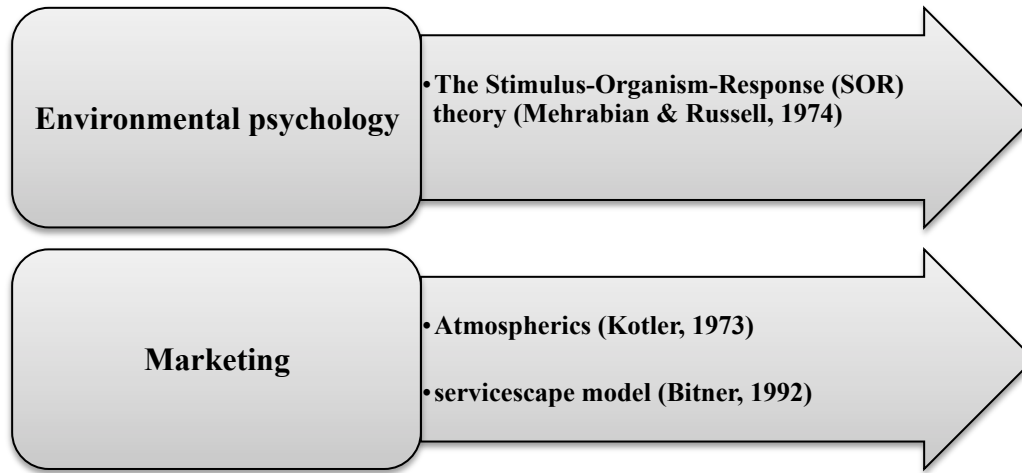
Figure 2 The established theories of physical environments (Author)

2.2.1.1 Environmental phsycology and the Stimulus-Organism-Response (SOR) theory

Environmental psychology is "the discipline that studies the interplay between individuals and their built and natural environment. It examines the influence of the environment on human experiences, behaviour and well-being, as well as the influence of individuals on the environment". (Steg, Van-den-Berg & De-Groot, 2012, p.2). This field has been recognised since the late 1960s as a field of psychology (Stokols, 1978). Emerging from this area of research, Mehrabian and Russell (1974) were the first to conceptualize the relationship between individuals and their environment. They introduced the popular stimulus-organism-response model (SOR) shown in Figure 3. This model summarizes how environmental stimuli (S) influence emotional states (O) and therefore behaviour (R) (Mehrabian & Russell, 1974).
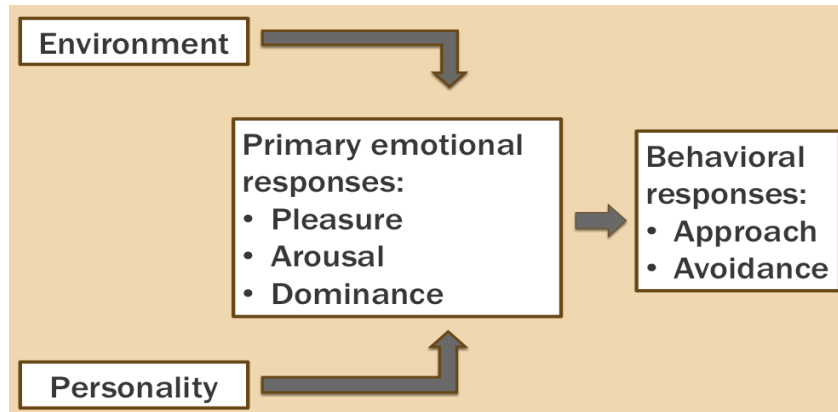
Figure 3 (SOR) Classic environment model (Mehrabian & Russell, 1974, p.8)

Mehrabian and Russell's (1974) SOR model kept the environmental stimuli generally open, and specified the emotional responses in terms of pleasure, arousal, and dominance (PAD). Yet, their model does not capture the entire domain of emotions, as many everyday emotions are absent in their model (Barsky & Nash, 2002). For this reason, this study will investigate the emotional responses in general, instead of these specific three emotions.

Environmental psychologists claim that individuals react to places either by approach behaviour, which is associated with positive behaviour like the desire to stay and explore, or by avoidance behaviour which is the opposite, when individuals have negative behaviour and do not want to stay in or explore a place (Mehrabian & Russell, 1974). As a result, behaviour was researched in most studies from an approach-avoidance perspective (Bellizzi & Hite, 1992; Baker, Wuest, & Stern, 1992; Chebat, Filatrault, Gelinas-Chebat, & Vaninsky, 1995). Restricting behaviours to approach or avoidance is neither sufficient nor useful for understanding the relationship between the environment and consumer behaviour, especially in a service context. For example, not only will atmospheric elements and interior design influence customers' desire to stay in service settings, but also they will affect whether customers will revisit a place or not (Joseph-Mathews, Bonn & Snepenger, 2009). This indicates that the SOR model does not identify specific behaviours, and that there are other behavioural outcomes that may result as an outcome of environmental stimulus. For this reason, this study is open to explore various

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behaviours that could result in a hotel context as an outcome of the hotel interior design, to gain a comprehensive deep understanding.

Donovan and Rossiter (1982) were the first to apply the SOR theory in a consumer context. Later, it was adopted in numerous studies by several researchers, mainly to investigate retail premises and restaurants' physical environments as the stimuli, and explore their impact on consumer behavior (Donovan & Rossiter,1982 ; Donovan et al., 1994; Anderson,1986; Buckley, 1987; Sherman & Smith, 1987; Dawson, Bloch & Ridgway, 1990; Yalch & Spangenberg, 1990; Milliman,1986; Bellizi & Hite, 1992). Considering that this model is dated and has been criticized, this study appplies the idea with some modifications. For instance, no previous studies used this theory in a hotel context or focused on interior design elements as stimuli, to examine their emotional and behavioural impacts. In contrast, this study's main aim is to identify the specific elements of hotel interior design as stimuli and identify their impacts.

2.2.1.2 Atmospherics

Elements of physical environments were categorized differently across studies, but they were first called atmospherics by Kotler (1973), who was the first from a marketing background to highlight the importance of physical environments. Atmospherics can be defined as: "the conscious designing of space to create certain effects in buyers. More specifically, atmospherics is the effort to design buying environments to produce specific emotional effects in the buyer that enhance his purchase probability" (Kotler, 1973, p. 50). Technically, atmosphere is air-surrounding sphere and colloquially it represents the quality of the surrounding space (Kotler, 1973). Kotler (1973) classified atmospheric sensory channels into four dimensions: sight, scent, touch and sound, and his categorization of the specific dimensions of an atmosphere are listed in Table 1.

Visual	Colour
	Brightness
	Size
	Shape
Aural	Volume
	Pitch
Olfactory	Scent
	Freshness
Tactile	Softness
	Smoothness
	Temperature

Table 1 The atmospheric dimensions (Kotler, 1973)

Reviewing Kotler's (1973) work indicates that he has not identified specific cues or clear variables of atmospherics, but rather general characteristics of the physical environment. This has led several researchers to try to identify the different dimensions that form the atmosphere. For example, the continued development of Kotler's 1973 work on atmospheric cues led Baker (1986) to categorize atmospherics into three groups: design elements such as colour and layout, social factors such as employees, and thirdly ambient factors, which include scent and sound. He found out that these elements are very influential on consumer behaviour and on the relationship between customers and retailers. Slatten et al. (2009) have recently divided atmosphere into three components: first, ambience, which includes sound, light and scent; second, interaction; and third, design. Several studies agreed on three dimensions of atmospherics, which are ambient conditions, design factors, and social (Baker, Grewal, & Parasuraman, 1994; Bitner 1992). According to these studies, ambient factors include colour, scent, and sound; design cues include walls, furniture, and layout, and finally social factors are about both employees and other customers.

Berman and Evans (1995) categorize atmospheric elements into four classes: exterior cues (e.g. entrance, surrounding area), the general interior (e.g. lighting, flooring, hygiene), design and layout cues (e.g. space, allocations), and point of purchase

decoration cues (e.g. posters, signs). However, Turley and Milliman (2000) believe that human variables including customer and employee characteristics and uniform should be added as a fifth category as they are influential too.

Atmosphere as a marketing tool has been neglected in the past because vendors tend to think practically and functionally rather than aesthetically, and the tangible product takes precedence in their minds (Kotler, 1973). Moreover, atmosphere is a "silent language", and the recognition and study of silent languages such as body language is new. Bitner (1992) also suggests that physical environments are viewed as a form of nonverbal communication.

Kotler (1973) explains how atmospheres influence behaviour based on the causal chain shown in Figure 4. He explains that products are surrounded by sensory qualities that buyers perceive differently, which affects their information and affective states, which in turn influence purchase likelihood (Kotler, 1973). His theory aligns with the SOR theory in suggesting how environmental stimuli can influence behaviours. A major contribution of Kotler's work is his generalizability, as he points out the affirmative relationship between the available elements of the surrounding environment or as he called it "atmospherics" and consumer behavior. However, the explanation and identification of this relationship are still vague.

| Sensory qualities of space surrounding purchase object | → | Buyer's perception of the sensory qualities of space | → | Effect of perceived sensory qualities on modifying buyer's information and affective state | → | Impact of buyer's modified information and affective state on purchase probability |
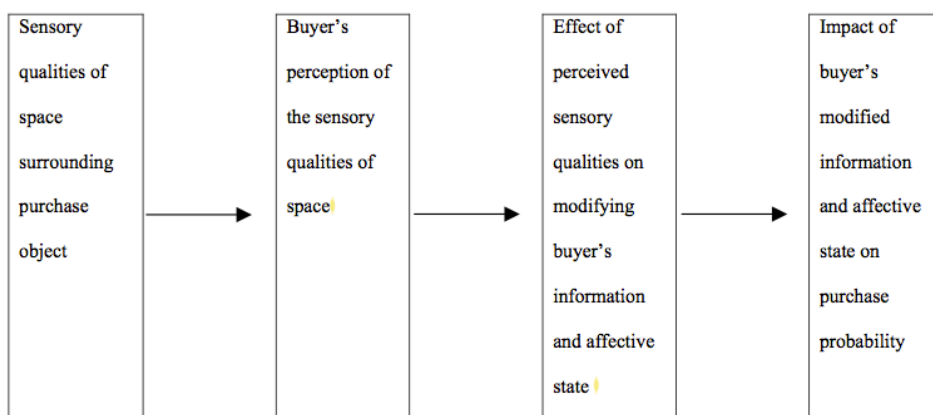
Figure 4 The causal chain connecting atmosphere and purchase probability (Kotler, 1973, p.54)

Atmosphere is important for both businesses and daily life activities. In hospitality, including hotels, atmosphere is a key to guest loyalty, satisfaction and positive word

of mouth and accordingly for business success (Heide, Laerdal & Gronhaug, 2009). Atmosphere is controllable, which makes it easier for managers to manipulate it in order to improve their organizations. Nevertheless, the term is unclear and its driving factors can vary. This suggests that further research on the definition of atmospherics and their importance as a marketing tool is still required. Turley and Milliman (2000) have reviewed a variety of literature on the servicescape and argued that although much research has explored the impact of atmospherics, there is still a lack of theory development to explain, control, and predict consumers' behaviours with regard to atmospherics. In addition, a lack of research regarding customers' emotions and atmosphere exists in leisure and tourism settings (Heide et al., 2009). Addressing these gaps, the current study investigates the role of hotel interior design as a form of atmospherics.

2.2.1.3 Servicescape

The term "servicescape" was first introduced as a result of merging the words "service" and "landscape" by Booms and Bitner in 1981, to study the impacts of physical environments in service settings. Servicescape is "the physical surrounding or the physical facility where the service is produced, delivered and consumed" (Zeithaml & Bitner, 2003, p. 306). In specific it is "manmade, physical surroundings as opposed to the natural or social environment" (Bitner, 1992, p. 58). The term "servicescape" commonly refers to the physical surrounding of any service business. It has become a popular term and is heavily used in marketing (Reimer & Kuehn, 2005). Traditionally, the servicescape is concerned with the atmospherics of services, and their impact on customers' perceptions of the service experience (Reimer & Kuehn, 2005).

Based on previous work of Kotler (1973), Mehrabian and Russell (1974), Baker (1986), and Donovan and Rossiter (1982), Bitner (1992) developed a framework for understanding environment-user relationships in service organizations; this framework is known as Bitner's servicescape model . Bitner's (1992) typology is the most used and cited in the service literature (Tombs & McColl-Kennedy, 2003; Lin & Liang , 2011). Figure 5 illustrates Bitner's model. "The servicescape framework was designed to bridge the gap between marketing and environmental psychology by

offering an explanation regarding how consumers formulate approach/avoidance decisions via physical environmental stimuli" (Rosenbaum, 2005, p. 257). Bitner (1992) divided the servicescape's variables into three main categories: 1. ambient conditions, 2. spatial layout and functionality, and 3. signs, symbols, and artefacts. She explained ambient conditions as the background characteristics of the environment such as temperature, lighting, noise, music, and scents that usually affect the five senses. Ambient conditions are most noticeable when they are extreme or when the time spent in the sevicescape is long (Kotler, 1973; Turley & Milliman, 2000). Spatial layout and functionality refer to the ways in which machinery, equipment, and different space elements are arranged (Bitner, 1992). As for signs, symbols, and artefacts, signage and the quality of materials used in construction and artwork are the main elements (Zeithaml, Bitner, & Gremler, 2009). These dimensions will be discussed in detail later in this chapter. From a management and facility planning perspective, two dimensions of Bitner's categorization, namely, space/ function and signs/symbols/ and artefacts, are normally known as "interior layout and design"(Brauer, 1992).
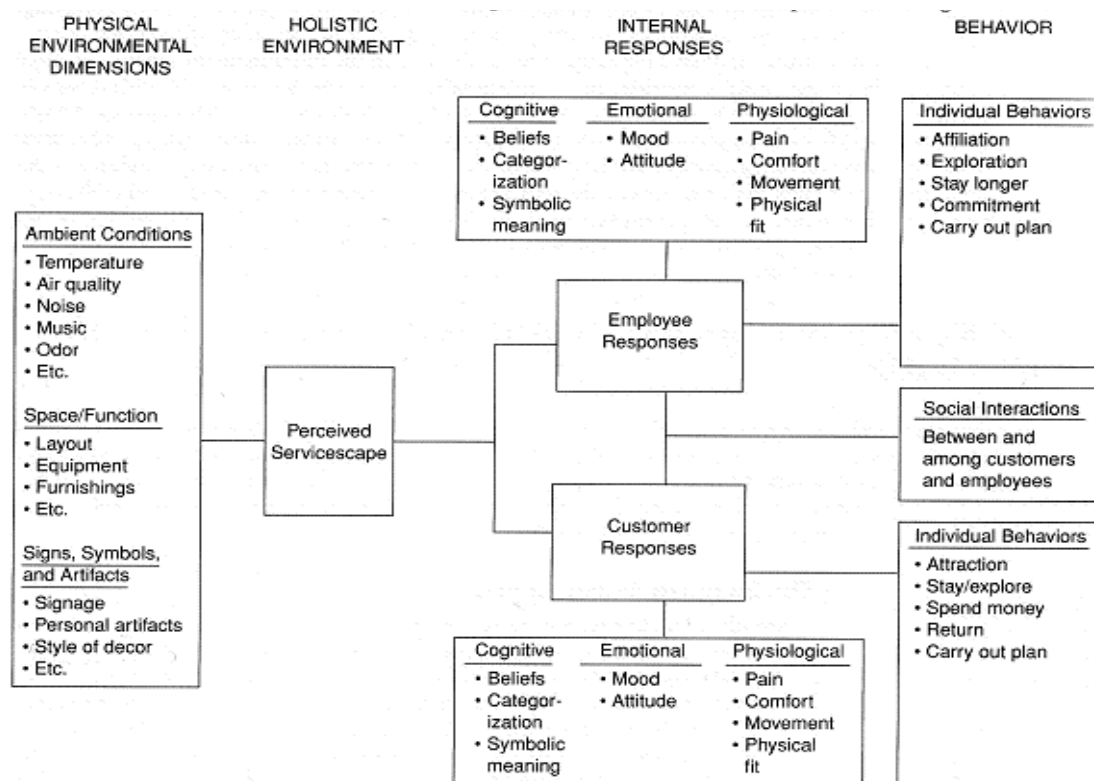
Figure 5 Servicescape: the impact of physical surroundings on customers and employees (Bitner, 1992, p.60)

Bitner's dimensions of servicescape are similar to the dimensions that were proposed earlier by Baker (1986) (design, ambient, and social factors). However, Bitner (1992) focused more on implicit and explicit signals while Baker focused more on the people in the environment. The dimensions in Bitner's model are based on research findings that are context-specific; hence they are not easily generalized (Bitner, 1992). This suggests that dimensions of servicescapes should be explored further and may differ in different contexts. Bitner's model included the various physical elements that are controlled by service providers when dealing with their customers, as well as taking into account the effects of physical dimensions on their own service staff. Bitner's servicescape framework is concerned with understanding environment-user relationships in service organisations in general and it studies the influence on both employees and customers. However, this framework is not based on empirical data from customers' perspective, and it does not consider how customers actively use the physical environment (Walter, Edvardsson, & Ostrom, 2010). The current study, therefore, is consumer-oriented and focuses on the hotel industry.

Since the servicescape framework was introduced it has been widely used in understanding, evaluating and assessing retail environments and their atmospheres (Yalch & Spangenberg, 1990; Wakefield & Blodgett, 1994, 1996; Turley & Milliman, 2000; Reimer & Kuehn, 2005). Nevertheless, scholars have continually highlighted the insufficiency of empirical research in the servicescape area (Donovan et al., 1994; Hoffman & Turley, 2002; Reimer & Kuehn, 2005).

Moreover, most of the studies carried out on the impact of servicescapes' elements on buying behaviour have tended to focus on single elements such as colour (Bellizzi & Hite, 1992; Crowley,1993; Funk & Ndubisi, 2006), music (Milliman, 1986; Areni & Kim, 1993; North & Hargreaves, 1996; Dube et al., 1995, 2007; Wilson, 2003), olfaction (Spangenberg, Crowley, & Henderson 1996; Chebat & Michon, 2003; Spangenberg , Sprott, & Grohmann, 2006), or lighting (Areni & Kim, 1994). Only a few studies have combined more then one stimulus, e.g. music and scent (Mattila & Wirtz, 2001), or colour and lighting (Babin, Hardesty, & Suter, 2003). Hence, little is known about the holistic impact of servicescapes and further research is needed to investigate the influence of the comprehensive servicescape, or a mixture of several

dimensions of it. Reimer and Kuehn (2005) point out that, "there is a need for further research examining the effect of single aspects as well as entire servicescapes" (Reimer & Kuehn, 2005, p. 802). "Although environmental stimuli have been found to influence shopping behaviour, empirical knowledge of how these variables interact to affect shopper perceptions and actions is lacking" (Spangenberg, Grohmann, & Sprott 2005, p 1583). They also argue that "exploring the congruity of multiple environmental cues and its effect on consumer behaviour is one useful direction for future research" (Spangenberg et al., 2005, p 1287). These comments indicate that additional research on the impact of the entire servicescape is still required. It can be argued "that such integration of multiple elements will increase the scant knowledge base on the global configurations of servicescapes" (Ezeh & Harris, 2007, p. 70). In the same way, Walter et al. (2010) state that "there seems to be a need for empirical research in other empirical contexts, focusing on the customer experience of the physical environment as a whole and the role it plays" (Walter et al., 2010, p. 240). These gaps indicate that the servicescape model is deficient and that a conceptual framework that covers servicescapes and their holistic impacts is still required.

A study by Rosenbaum (2005) examined ethnic consumers' response to a symbolic servicescape. A symbolic servicescape is defined as "signs, symbols, objects and artefacts contained within a consumption setting that possess a common interpretation among consumers belonging to a specific ethnic group" (Rosenbaum, 2005, p. 258). Rosenbaum (2005) argues that although all commercial establishments comprise a physical servicescape, they do not always comprise symbolic servicescapes. Although Bitner (1992) did not specify ethnicity as a moderator, Rosenbaum (2005) proposes that ethnic identification moderates the relationship between a symbolic servicescape and consumer behaviour. Figure 6 illustrates this.
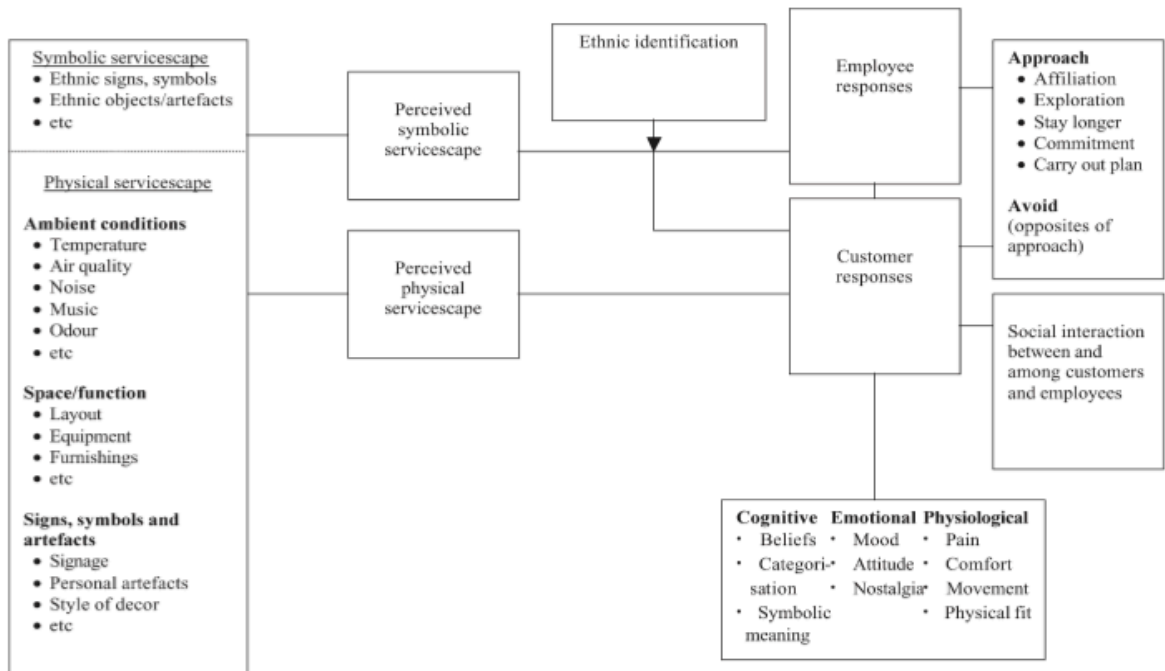
Figure 6 Framework for understanding the symbolic servicescape of ethnic consumers' behaviour in commercial establishments (Rosenbaum, 2005, p.259)

In addition, Rosenbaum and Massia (2011) expanded Bitner's (1992) servicescape paradigm by including the setting's built, social, socially symbolic, and natural elements, as they believe that these factors influence both customers and employees. These can be seen in Figure 7. Rosenbaum and Massia (2011, p.472) state that although "Bitner's (1992) servicescape framework remains invaluable to marketers, it contains a possible shortcoming. Namely, the servicescape framework originates from research conducted in environmental psychology, which itself emulates from ecology and is the source of theoretical weakness".

Environmental stimuli	Environmental dimension	Holistic environment

Ambient conditions
• Temperature
• Air quality
• Noise
• Music
• Odor
Space/Function
• Layout
• Equipment
• Furnishings
Signs, symbols, and artifacts
• Signage
• Artifacts
• Style of décor

→ **Physical dimension**

• Employees
• Customers
• Social density
• Displayed emotions of others

→ **Social dimension**

→ **Perceived servicescape**

• Ethnic signs/symbols
• Ethnic objects/artifacts

→ **Socially-symbolic dimension**

• Being away
• Fascination
• Compatibility

→ **Natural dimension**

Figure 7 A framework for understanding four environmental dimensions of the servicescape (Rosenbaum & Massia, 2011, p.4)

Bitner (1992) left the investigation of the impact of natural and social stimuli within servicescapes for future research, and many researchers have heeded Bitner's (1992) recommendation to move beyond the physical dimension to other dimensions (Rosenbaum & Massia, 2011). Rosenbaum and Massia (2011) believe that their work completes Bitner's work and provides a thorough understanding of the environmental stimuli. Their work has moved Bitner's work forward, as servicescape represents the physical element, while their work includes social, socially symbolic, and natural environment dimensions that affect both customers and employees in the service industry. Nevertheless, they concluded that much theoretical and empirical work remains to be explored regarding the different influences of servicescapes' dimensions, and that additional under-unexplored servicescape elements still exist (Rosenbaum & Massia, 2011). The widespread critiques and deficiencies of previous models suggest that up to this date, there is no conceptual framework that is strong or comprehensive enough, and that further studies are still needed. Realizing that the framework that is mostly used and followed is originally deficient, it seems that the need for creating a new robust framework is essential, and that is what this study aims to achieve, particularly for the hotel industry.

Although servicescapes and atmospherics are usually used in similar research, some distinctions exist between them: for instance, they differ in origin because

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atmospheric retailing is older, applied methodologies are different, as servicescape studies usually use interpretive research, and atmospherics are usually concerned with detailed categorizations of certain cues (Venkatraman & Nelson, 2008). Also, studies that use the term atmospherics usually tend to measure the impact of certain environmental cues on emotional and behavioural reactions (Turley & Milliman, 2000; Lin, 2010). After understanding the origin and development of the established theories, and the commonly used frameworks with regard to the physical environment, an exploration of the two theoretical lenses of the study Service Dominant Logic (SDL) and Consumer Culture Theory (CCT) will be introduced next.

2.2.2 The theoritical lenses of the study: Service Dominant Logic (SDL) and Consumer Culture Theory (CCT)

This part explores two main theories applied in this study. These are Service dominant logic (SDL) (Vargo & Lusch, 2004) and Consumer culture theory (CCT) (Arnould & Thompson, 2005). The interest in these two theories is increasing but the relationship between them and servicescape is still not clear. Therefore, this study will address this gap and explore the concept of hotel interior design through the lens of SDL and CCT integration. These two theories will be discussed next.

2.2.2.1 Service Dominant Logic (SDL)

Vargo and Lusch (2004) set out to challenge the fundamental Goods Dominant (G-D) premise on which modern marketing has been based and introduced the service dominant logic (SDL). Although services were incorporated in the G-D logic, they are viewed differently in the SDL. In traditional G-D logic, services are viewed as intangible products, aids to the production of goods, or value-added activities (Lusch, Vargo, & OBrien, 2007). This suggests that the focus was on products. However, in SDL, products are operand resources and services are "the application of specialized competences (knowledge and skills) through deeds, processes, and performances for the benefit of another entity or the entity itself" (Vargo & Lusch 2004, p.2). According to SDL, firms can make value propositions, which are promises or benefits a customer might value (Nilsson& Ballantyne, 2014). However, customers and other beneficiaries do not assess the actual value of services at the time of purchase, but at

the time of use; hence, Vargo and Lush (2004) shifted the attention from the exchange value (at point of sale) to the value-in-use (Vargo & Lusch 2004). "Value-in-use is the phenomenological expression of the service experienced by a beneficiary (usually a customer) in particular contexts" (Nilsson & Ballantyne, 2014, p. 376).

Moreover, in SDL, organizational and customer resources can be classified into operant and operand resources. Operand resources are "resources on which an operation or act is performed to produce an effect, and operant resources are employed to act on operand resources (and other operant resources)" (Vargo and Lusch 2004, p.2). This suggests that in SDL, the customer is viewed as an operant resource that can act on other resources and who co-creates value as a collaborative partner (Vargo & Lusch 2004). Moreover, external environments including social, physical, technological, and legal are viewed as resources the firm draws upon for support by proactively co-creating them and are considered operand resources (Lusch et al., 2007).

SDL explains value as a judgment by service beneficiaries of the various operant resources in adapting and changing the operand resources for customer use (Vargo & Lusch, 2008). Nilsson and Ballantyne (2014) argue that "the servicescape is an operand resource from the point of view of the provider firm, part of a resource integration process in which the customer is also engaged and, as such, influential in establishing the provider's value proposition and the customer's service experience" (Nilsson, & Ballantyne, 2014, p. 377). This suggests that servicescape influences value creation outcomes as it detracts from or enhances any provider's value propositions, and supports or constrains resource integration between firms and customers.

Service providers try to make their value propositions clear but customers interpret the meanings of these prepositions individually and differently, and these meanings impact their expectations. Therefore, firms try to provide harmony of meanings between service quality, products, and the meaning derived from servicescape and its sensory characteristics (Nilsson & Ballantyne, 2014). Servicescape, its ambience, physical functionality, and symbolic projections are part of the meanings that customers associate with the perceived value propositions (Walter et al., 2010). For

example, pleasant servicescape design enhances customer expectations, while poor servicescape design can lower customers' expectations (Bitner, 1992).

Servicescape is usually divided into social and physical dimensions (e.g. Baker, 1986; Rosenbaum & Massia, 2011; Turley & Milliman, 2000). Looking through the SDL lens, which suggests how servicescape as an operand resource can create value, the physical dimension appears to be more effective and beneficial in this respect due to the difficulty in controlling the social variables of the servicescape. Social density refers to the continuous changes in social factors in service contexts (Rosenbaum & Massiah, 2011). These changes influence the interpretation of the servicescape and make it challenging for service providers to control the value creation process. To understand the value that servicescape can offer, its role will be discussed in details in part three of this chapter.

Vargo and Lush (2004) paid little attention to the role of servicescape in creating value and shaping customer experiences. Recently, Nilsson and Ballantyne (2014) examined the place of servicescape in SDL, but also suggested that further exploration is still required as they stated that "The individually and socially constructed meaning of physical place is overlooked. Put another way, S-D logic is silent on the enabling role of servicescape in resource integration and value creation. This emphasizes the importance of understanding service context in new ways" (Nilsson & Ballantyne, 2014, p. 376). Therefore, this study suggests exploring servicescape from the SDL perspective, to direct more attention to the role of servicescape and understand its impact, which should enhance theory and address the identified gaps.

2.2.2.2 Consumer Culture Theory (CCT)

Consumer culture theory refers to "a family of theoretical perspectives that address the dynamic relationships between consumer actions, the marketplace, and cultural meanings. It explores the heterogeneous distribution of meanings and the multiplicity of overlapping cultural groupings that exist within the broader sociohistoric frame of globalization and market capitalism" (Arnould & Thompson, 2005, p.868-869).

Arnould and Thompson (2005) argue that consumer culture means a social arrangement where markets mediate in the relation between social resources and the lived culture, and in the relation between material resources and meaningful lifestyles. CCT investigates wide influences that lead to certain kinds of identity projects, mainly the effects of economic and cultural globalization, and specifically the influence of particular cultural production systems such as trends and marketing communications (Arnould & Thompson, 2005). Furthermore, consumer culture makes some patterns of sense-making, interpretations and behaviours more probable than others through framing consumers' horizons of conceivable thoughts, feelings, and actions (Askegaard & Kjeldgaard 2002; Kozinets 2002). Consumer culture theorists perceive cultural texts like advertisements and films as identity and lifestyle instructions that form market place ideologies and idealize consumer types (Stern, 1988). Hence, managerial concerns have shifted to focus more on consumer meanings due to lifestyle and multicultural marketing, which made market researchers apply ethnographic methods more (Arnould & Thompson, 2005).

Despite the increasing popularity of CCT, there have been some common criticisms of it. For example, it is argued that consumer culture theorists contribute little to knowledge as they focus on particular contexts as ends in themselves (Simonson, Carmon, Dhar, Drolet, & Nowlis, 2001; Arnould & Thompson, 2005). Another criticism is that CCT is always associated with qualitative data collection and analysis methods (Arnould & Wallendorf 1994; Kozinets, 2002). However, that is because it focuses on sociocultural and experiential variables of consumption, which are more challenging to access through surveys and experiments (Sherry, 1991).

Arnould and Thompson (2005) identify four domains in which CCT contributes to consumer behaviour knowledge: (1) consumer identity projects, (2) marketplace cultures, (3) the sociohistoric patterning of consumption, and (4) mass-mediated marketplace ideologies and consumers' interpretive strategies. In consumer identity project studies, consumers are considered as identity makers and seekers (Arnould & Thompson, 2005). While in marketplace culture studies, the focus is on common consumption also referred to as the consumption world (Holt, 2002), the cultural world that characterizes consumers as they forge feelings of social commonality through what they buy (Kozinets 2002). Postindustrial socioeconomic development

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and globalization led to sociality and autonomy of lifestyle choices that rely on common lifestyle interests and leisure avocations (Hirschman, 1993). The sociohistoric patterning of consumption addresses the recognized social structures that usually influence consumption, such as community, class, gender and ethnicity (Arnould & Thompson, 2005). "Consumer research suggests that ethnic identities have, in some sense, become hypercultural in that the culture of origin is socially reconstructed as something consumable (costume, foods, crafts, music) as part of attempts to assert an anchoring for identity in fluid social contexts" (Arnould & Thompson, 2005, p. 874). Mass-mediated marketplace ideologies and consumers' interpretive strategies include the investigation of consumer idology and the meanings that influence consumers' thoughts and actions to dominate certain interests in society (Hirschman, 1993).

CCT explores how consumers transform and rework the different symbolic meanings encoded in various brands, retail settings, advertisements, or material goods to manifest personal and social circumstances and identity and lifestyle goals (Grayson & Martinec 2004; Holt 2002). Research on the design and management of servicescapes and their effects on consumer experiences has developed the theoretical understanding of structural predisposing (e.g. Price & Arnould, 1999; Price, Arnould, & Tierney 1995; Sherry 1991). These studies indicate how servicescapes transform cultural ideals into material realities. Servicescape design can direct consumers' mental attention and experiences, in the same way that store layout can direct consumers' physical movements (Arnould & Thompson, 2005).

Decorative cues and artefacts are used to create aesthetic impressions and meaning of places such as creating certain cultural themes (Zeithaml et al., 2009). Baker (1986) points out that scholars normally classify design elements into aesthetic (e.g. colour & material), or functional (e.g. architectural design), and a properly designed building connects and offers both functional and visual features (Cripps, 2013). Facility aesthetics are usually concerned with the use of architectural, interior, and decor design to make a service environment more attractive (Wakefield & Blodgett, 1996). Customers usually spend hours consciously and subconsciously observing facilities' interior, which will affect how they interpret it and their attitude toward the surrounding environment (Baker, 1986).

2.2.2.2.1 Semiotics

CCT research usually draws from semiotic and literary theories that explore symbolic meanings, cultural ideals, and ideological inducements (Hirschman 1988; Escalas & Stern 2003). "In this family of CCT studies, consumers are conceptualized as interpretive agents rather than as passive dupes" (Arnould & Thompson, 2005, p. 875). Semiotics is "the science of signs and how they convey meaning in their representation" (Baines, Fill, & Page, 2008, p. 846). The term, which originates from ancient Greece was associated with medical treatises in the past, but signs are currently regarded as anything that communicates about or stands for something else (e.g. language, artefacts, clothing) (Mick & Oswald, 2006). A sign is anything that includes sensory information (e.g. visual or sound), or cultural forms (e.g. film and architecture) and represents meaning and gives an impression of something (Baines et al., 2008). Signs may be also called symbols because they symbolize something to viewers (Baines et al., 2008).

The pioneers and frequently cited researchers in the filed of semiotics are Peirce (1995/1998), and Saussure (1983/1971/1913) (Mick & Oswald, 2006; Jaworski & Thurlow, 2010). Peirce and Saussure's work is used in marketing and helps in interpreting meanings, but there is some distinction between them (Mick & Oswald, 2006). Peirce often related semiotics to logic and focused on understanding how a rational interpretation of the world is grounded in signs, and how perception is shaped by semiotic relationships, especially symbolic and iconic (Mick & Oswald, 2006). On the other hand, Saussure believed that signs represent relationships between material elements, which he referred to as signifiers (e.g. sounds), and an abstract concept in the mind of speakers, which is denoted as the signified. These signs operate not in isolation but in context with other signs in a semiotic system or discourse and are constructed by a conscious act (Mick & Oswald, 2006).

Semiotic landscape is any (public) space to which humans consciously ascribe meaning through acts of socio-cultural interpretation" (Jaworski & Thurlow, 2010). It reflects the way people make sense of their social identity through their physical and social environment (Jaworski & Thurlow, 2010). Architecture and language form a multilayered landscape combining several semiotic modes including built

environment, music, photography, writing, images, and movement (Jaworski & Thurlow, 2010). Further to this, semiotics has been applied to develop new insights on meaning and communication in marketing and consumer behaviour (Mick & Oswald, 2006). It facilitates lifestyle and values segmentation based on the meanings shared by a group of customers (Mick & Oswald, 2006).

Servicescape from this perspective is a semiotic landscape, and its elements could be studied as semiotic symbols and cues that help customers to make sense of their surrounding environments. It is suggested, therefore, that relating servicescape to CCT is valuable and will enhance both CCT and servicescape research streams. The impact of hotel interior design as part of servicescapes from a CCT perspective is still not understood, and is therefore examined in this research.

2.2.2.2.2 Aesthetics

CCT research commonly focuses on hedonic, aesthetic, and ritualistic consumption and possession practices (e.g. Holbrook & Hirschman, 1982; Joy & Sherry 2003; Thompson 1996). Aesthetics was linked with philosophy in the past. However, lately beauty and aesthetics are considered in various aspects of life and are linked to expressiveness, novelty, intelligence, and how artwork touches the senses (Weggeman et al., 2007). Aesthetics are concerned with beauty, and designing to give pleasure through beauty (Stevenson, 2010). In spite of the major influence that aesthetic assessment has on design matters, few empirical studies have investigated this topic in marketing and especially in relation to consumer behaviour (Jansson-Boyd, 2010). The link between a product's aesthetic features and the consumer's emotional responses is established, but there is a lack of empirical support for the theory, or investigation of how and why such a response occurs (Kumar & Garg, 2010; Coates, 2003).

Physical aesthetics are defined as "cues in the social and physical environment in which people operate, and are therefore likely to call up a sense-making process" (Rafaeli & Vilnai, 2004a). Sense making is inspired by the artefact's characteristics such as colour and size, which are interpreted differently by individuals. Despite the significant role of aesthetic interpretation to organizations, the difference between

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what is considered aesthetic and how it is interpreted is rarely recognized. However, emotion is an important element in sense making as it is one of the most important responses that aesthetics generate (Rafaeli & Vilnai, 2004a). Conceptually, aesthetics are known to evoke emotions, impact essential behaviours (Bitner, 1992), and communicate an organization's values (Yanow, 1998).

Aesthetics, even in every day objects, are considered essential for modern retailing, as customers are becoming more visual and aestheticization is becoming more critical (Venkatesh & Meamber 2008). As the quality of products and services becomes more similar, aesthetic value plays an important role in making them more distinctive (Bloch, Brunel, & Arnold, 2003). Visual aesthetics strongly influence consumer perceptions and can be used as a source of competitive advantage and to gain recognition and attract customers (Bloch, 1995) and to differentiate (Desai, Radhakrishnan & Srinivasan, 2001). They can influence preferences (Orth & Malkewitz, 2008), and can evoke emotional responses (Norman, 2004). They also work as symbolic representations of product and service attributes such as ease of use, elegance, durability, and youthfulness (Forty, 1986).

Rafaeli and Vilnai (2004b) merged three bodies of literature to obtain a comprehensive understanding of artefacts' dimensions. These three bodies are: 1) Product and industrial design (e.g. Nasar, 1994), 2) Human factors engineering (e.g. Howell, 1994), 3) Marketing and semiotics (e.g. Aaker & Myers, 1987; & Hatch, 1997). Their research identifies three dimensions of artefact sense making: instrumentality, aesthetics, and symbolism (Rafaeli & Vilnai, 2004b). Instrumentality is associated with how and whether artefacts hinder and support specific activities, such as the role of physical places in achieving goals (Gibson, 1979). Symbolism is linked to the associations that aesthetics can elicit and communicate and it is a vital part of organizational, marketing, and advertising studies (Aaker & Myers 1987; Gagliardi 1992; & Hatch 1997). Aesthetics are linked to the sensory reactions toward what they represent, which are generally crucial in interpreting physical things (Nasar 1994). Aesthetics communicate the social and organizational values of organizations (Gagliardi, 1992; Yanow 1998; Pratt & Rafaeli 2001; & Stern 1988). According to Rafaeli and Vilnai (2004a), it is important to consider the three dimensions together when analysing artefacts, as using one dimension will provide an inadequate

understanding. Their theory is built on qualitative data collected from three groups of professionals who assessed the green colour of a public transportation bus. This shows that aesthetics are fundamental dimension of artefacts. Although their study was in a completely different context than the current research, it shows the importance of understanding the role of aesthetics. Having the fact that only one study was found that focused on this matter also indicates that the existence of a gap in knowledge that this study can help to fill, especially by considering artefacts as an important aspect of interior design.

This study is essentially concerned with centraity of visual product aesthetics (CVPA), defined as "the overall level of significance that visual aesthetics hold for a particular consumer in his/ her relationships with products (Bloch et al., 2003, p. 552)". Customers with high CVPA believe that the beauty of objects has great impact on their quality of life and help them satisfy their higher level needs (Yalch & Brunel, 1996). They also believe that pleasant designs are valuable for the whole society and the quality of environmental design influences their brand preference (Bloch et al., 2003). Another feature of CVPA is acumen, which is the ability to recognize, categorize and judge designs. Some individuals are endowed with more aesthetic taste and artistic sensibility than others (Bloch et al., 2003). Csikszentmihalyi and Robinson (1990) called the ability to recognize and analyse visual arts as having a "good eye" and suggested that this ability enables people to derive enjoyable experiences from visual stimuli. Csikszentmihalyi and Robinson (1990, p. 178) described aesthetic responses as "a state of intense enjoyment characterized by feelings of personal wholeness, a sense of discovery, and a sense of human connectedness". The commonly recognised aesthetic principles that compose the logic of art are: movement, balance, pattern, harmony, proportion, variety, movement and emphasis (Kim, 2006). The composition of these principles triggers emotional reactions (Kumar & Garg, 2010).

Aesthetics are normally researched in a product and environment design context and various environmental psychology research supports the importance of aesthetics for example, Bateson (1995), Nasar (1994), and Lang (1988) emphasize the role of organization aesthetics represented by architectural features. Considering that interior design is a form of aesthetics, and that little marketing literature has linked it to buyer

behaviour, despite its importance, it is suggested that there is a need to investigate its impact on consumer behaviour to gain better understanding. Despite the extensive studies that mention aesthetics, there is no evidence to suggest how the impact of aesthetics operates or how it can be managed. Consequently, understanding the emotional nature of aesthetic interpretation will improve the theoretical understanding of the aesthetics' contribution to organizations. Hence a clear gap exists for both academics and managers in this context. This study suggests that interior design is a form of aesthetics and therefore addresses this gap by exploring their emotional and behavioural impacts.

Recent CCT studies highlight that Servicescapes offer consumers various kinds of symbolized and temporal experiences through aesthetic appreciation (Joy & Sherry 2003). Since hotels are considered part of tourism, leisure and hedonic services, all the characteristics of these services seem relevant to hotels as well. Hedonic senses are linked to fantasies, aesthetic enjoyment, emotional responses and sensual pleasure (Slatten et al., 2009), "Hedonic services represent a multi-million dollar business" (Joseph-Mathews et al., 2009; p. 193), and they are: " fun, interesting, exciting, and non-practical experiences a visitor/consumer or patron attaches to a product, experience or service (Baker et al., 2002; p.197)". For this study, hotels are considered as hedonic services due to the positive emotions that customers can feel because of their appealing and artistic interior designs.

In this way, the research responds to concerns raised by recent researchers. For example, Joy and Li (2012, p. 159) argue that "in a period of cultures and consumption patterns both ever more fragmented and simultaneously ever more interconnected, CCT research, coupled with the critical approach endorsed by Graeber and Leve, affords an opportunity for cross-disciplinary study capable of shining light on areas along in darkness. The time for reflection afforded by CCT research is past due: new such research is eagerly awaited". It is well established in the marketing literature that consumers acquire products for their symbolic meanings (Rosenbaum, 2005). However, limited work in consumer research has focused on exploring the symbolic meanings of servicescapes and how the interpretations of their meanings may influence customers. Recognizing the wide opportunity for further investigation with regard to CCT and the importance of servicescape in sending

symbolic meanings, the current study explores what meanings servicescape elements and design features can symbolize or communicate to hotel customers.

2.2.2.3 Integrating SDL and CCT to study servicescapes

Academic communities related to SDL (Vargo & Lusch, 2004) and CCT (Arnould & Thompson, 2005) are viewed as "academic brands" (Cova, Ford, & Salle, 2009; Penaloza & Mish, 2011). Arnould (2006) proposes that SDL and CCT may be assimilated through integrating CCT insights regarding meaning into conceptualizations of value creation in SDL. He termed the relationship between these two as a "natural alliance". He asks "How do marketers manage to create 'value' consumers recognize as such? And, where does that 'value' come from and what makes that 'value' worth paying for? and answers that "CCT research on cultural theories of branding and retailing, myth, and consumer meaning more generally point us in the right direction, but much remains to be done" (Arnould, 2006, p. 295). In the same way Penaloza & Mish (2011, p. 27) propose that "In incorporating insights from SDL, CCT work can expand upon the latter's comprehensive consideration of value co-creation in systems to feature more explicitly the valuation of cultural meanings in the marketplace and the meanings inherent in market valuation in relation to social and environmental domains".

Drawing on the CTT and SDL theories in this research, the perspective of value creation processes in SDL is combined with the meaning creation process in CCT, to explore what meanings hotel interior design can convey to hotel guests, and how it influences their perceptions of value and shapes their experiences. The next part explores the established roles of servicescapes in different service industries. Viewing these roles from SDL and CCT perspectives suggests that these roles be considered as possible values that servicescapes could add to services from the SDL lens. This will help in understanding what servicescapes and their elements mean to customers from a CCT perspective.

2.3 Part Two: Context of the study: The hotel industry, design, globalization, and cosmopolitanism

This part will explain the context of the study. It will cover the hotel context, clarify the historical development of the industry, and explain the established knowledge in regard to hotel design and attributes. The lack of research in this competitive industry highlights great opportunities to explore it further. One of the main factors that influence hotels is globalization. Therefore, this concept, along with cosmopolitan consumers, will also be discussed.

2.3.1 Overview of the hotel industry

A hotel is defined as "an establishment offering accommodation and refreshment for travellers and a hotelier has a legal obligation to fulfil these basic needs" (Forster, 1993, p.17). The hotel product involves the physical building and its facilities including their style, status, and ambience, as well as refreshments delivery, which are delivered in accordance with service standards ranging from two star to luxury hotels (Forster, 1993). Hotels have the same characteristics as other services, which influence their marketing practices and marketing mix, including inseparability, intangibility, perishability, variability, and lack of ownership (Moriarty, Jones, Rowley, & Kupiec-Teahan, 2008). Hotels are also characterized by seasonality, which makes them a high-risk investment. They are also known for the high fixed costs of their facilities, staff, and properties, which makes it a challenging business to manage and maintain its profitability (Jeffrey & Barden, 2000). Therefore, hotel marketing involves managing the fluctuation of demand with regard to seasonality, and generating extra sales with minimum costs, working along with tourist boards (Moriarty et al., 2008). However, that the role of a hotel servicescape's design as part of the different marketing strategy is still vague and needs further investigation.

Forster (1993) argues that the configuration of hotel products remains the same even with the latest development and technological advances but what changes is the construction techniques and design capabilities that develop a hotel. Extant literature shows that previous studies of the hotel industry covered different variables, such as hotel choice attributes (e.g. Kim & Perdue, 2013), different types of travellers (e.g.

Yavas & Babakus, 2005), different types of hotels (e.g. Verma, Plaschka & Dev, 2005), and the role of gender in hotel choice (e.g., McCleary, Weaver & Lan, 1994). Servicescapes seem to be critical, as guests engage with them more than with the service provider, and they use physical cues to form a holistic picture of the hotel in their heads (Lin, 2004). Furthermore, although many hotel guests rely on star grading in their hotel choice, there are many ambiguities in the classification systems, as some grade bedrooms independently from the other facilities offered, for example, budget hotels that are classified as two star may offer better rooms and facilities than three star hotels (Forster, 1993). Since star grading is not always reliable, guests rely on other hotel features by which to choose and evaluate hotels. Which gives importance to the servicescape and its design.

Shortly after World War Two, around the middle of the twentieth century, tourism boomed tremendously because of the sudden availability of travelling methods and different destination choices (Jayawardena, et al., 2013). Even free soap, swimming pools and private bathrooms were a revolution at that time. Two Americans, Holiday Inns' Kemmons Wilson and Conrad Hilton pioneered the concept of hotel chains, and laid the foundations that current chain hotels follow to this day, including marketing systems, reservation sysytems, quality standards, management and franchising (Jayawardena, et al., 2013).

Presently, the hotel business is associated with entertainment as hoteliers are trying to create experiences rather than formal services. Jayawardena, et al. (2013) believe that hotel managers should have certain characteristics. For example they posit the view that "the general manager will be in the limelight, comparable to the captain of a ship, the conductor of an orchestra, or the star of a stage show" (Jayawardena, et al., 2013, p. 153). Apart from entertainment, modern hotel managers should be skilled in dealing with "ETHOS", that is, Environment, Technology, Human resources, Operations, and Security (McMillan & Rossiter, 2006). In addition, the tourism industry is dramatically increasing and becoming a contributor to the gross national product of many countries. This has increased the practice of tourist destinations marketing in both the private and public sectors (Riege & Perry, 2000). According to the World Tourism Organization's forecasts, international arrivals are predicted to reach more than 1.56 billion by 2020 (Nadiri & Hussain, 2005). With the increase in

tourism, the hotel sector is growing too in order to meet those demands.

The development of new populations and economies also shows the increased urge for travelling, which opens a chance for hoteliers to adopt strategies to attract and target this new international middle class. One key concept that hoteliers need to consider with the increasing trend is to spread cultural awareness among their employees (Jayawardena, et al., 2013). Consumers are also becoming more mobile and social, and with technological inventions such as smart phones and tablets, these characteristics are increasing dramatically, which demands that hoteliers and the travel industry in general keep track (Ramanathan & Ramarathan, 2011). However, some practitioners believe that it is more important to deal with costs and profits rather than counting likes, clicks, and followers in social media, because that is more reliable (Jayawardena, et al., 2013). Hotel reviews can be found in several sites, but websites that are dedicated to tourism can be generally categorised into two types: travel agencies that customers can consult, post, and book through (e.g. Booking and Expedia); or sites that are exclusively devoted to hotel customers' reviews (e.g. TripAdvisor) (Bulchand-Gidumal, Melian-Gonzalez & Lopez-Valcarcel, 2011). Several studies have indicated that hotels with decent online reviews are considered more trustworthy and more likely to be booked compared to hotels that have negative online reviews (Sparks & Browning, 2011; Ye, Law, Gu & Chen, 2011). This indicates that hotels should pay attention to the reviews that are written about them, as they have a direct impact on customers' preference and choice.

2.3.1.1 Hotel attributes

Lodging attributes in the hospitality literature have gained a lot of attention lately (Stumpf, Park, & Kim, 2014). However, until recent studies, researchers have not foused on the physical design of the hotel, but on service (e.g. Ramanathan & Ramarathan, 2011). This is the key gap for this study, which investigates how hotel servicescape's design can complement the service, and the significance of the hotel interior design as a hotel attribute. A variety of studies tried to identify hotel attributes. Some researchers studied the preferences of different guest segments (e.g. Jones &Chen, 2011), attributes of green hotels (e.g. Millar & Baloglu, 2011), and satisfaction and perceived quality attributes (e.g. Choi & Chu, 2001). For instance,

Stumpf et al. (2014) state that studies of lodging attributes generally investigate the attributes that influence hotel booking decisions, demand, guest satisfaction, and future intentions. The findings are typically influenced by various variables such as nationality (Shanahan & Hyman, 2007), gender (Meng & Uysal, 2008), age (Wei, Ruys & Muller, 1999), and purpose of travel (Chu & Choi, 2000).

Various researchers have used Importance-Performance Analysis (IPA) to classify hotels' important attributes (e.g. Chu & Choi, 2000), with regard to hotel selection and satisfaction. Recently, using the same approach, Mohsin and Lockyer (2010) have explored luxury hotels and have identified the importance of physical quality, as in room furnishings, value for money, and prompt response to reservations. In contrast, the main attributes identified by Hartline, Wooldridge and Jones (2003) are performance of front desk personnel, performance of housekeeping and parking, and performance of room service.

Ramanathan and Ramarathan (2011) found that, of six factors that matter to hotel guests using hotel websites reviews (cleanliness, customer service, value for money, family friendliness, food quality and room quality) value for money is the most critical. They proposed a classification for hotel service attributes, shown in Table 7.

Classification	Definition	Examples
Critical	Critical factors usually have high potential for compliments and high potential for complaints. An unsatisfactory performance in critical factors cannot be compensated by better performance in terms of other factors	Performance of front desk personnel in a hotel. Quietness of rooms in a hotel. Quality of food in restaurants
Desirable	Desirable factors add to the baseline perceptions of quality if they are good; otherwise they may tend to reduce quality perception but not to a point where overall quality is judged as poor	Performance of housekeeping in a hotel. Parking in a hotel
Satisfier	Satisfiers are those factors where unusually good performance elicits compliments from guests, while average or low performance will generally not elicit dissatisfaction from guests. These provide an incentive to improve performance as these performances will be rewarded by customers	Hotel lobbies. Large portions of food in restaurants
Dissatisfier	Dissatisfiers are those factors where unusually bad performance results in dissatisfaction, while average or low performance will generally not generate satisfaction from customers. Minimum performance in terms of these factors must be maintained, but these factors do not warrant additional efforts to achieve high performance as these efforts may be better spent on satisfier or critical factors that will be noticed by customers	Parking in a restaurant. Variety of credit card options in a restaurant
Neutral	Passive factors are generally not solicited by guests. Good performance in terms of these factors may not be noticed by customers, and bad performance may reduce perceptions of service quality but not to a point where overall quality is judged as poor	Performance of room service in a hotel. Performance of bell staff in a hotel

Table 2 Classification of hotel service attributes (Ramanthan & Ramanthan, 2011, p.11)

In addition, the "2012 North America hotel guest satisfaction index study" (J.D. Power and Associates, 2012; cited by Jayawardena, et al., 2013) reported that guest satisfaction was measured against the following primary areas: guestroom, food and beverage, cost and fees, hotel service, reservations, hotel facilities, and check-in/checkout. However, Jayawardena, et al. (2013) themselves have suggested the following concepts should be considered, in order for today's hotel to succeed: technology, social media and customer service, customer experience, the new global middle class, crisis management, and data management.

Kim and Perdue (2013) explored how customers choose hotels, and their findings indicated that customers rely on three types of attributes when choosing hotels: cognitive (e.g. price, food and service quality), sensory (e.g. general atmosphere, rooms' quality), and affective (e.g. comfort, safety and entertainment feelings). They

also point out that a good night's sleep is critical for business travellers, which makes comfortable beds and pillows the most important sensory attributes. Several researchers have shifted their emphasis from cognitive attributes to affective and sensory attributes (e.g. Barsky and Nash, 2002). Juwaheer (2004) included sensory factors such as hotel design, noises, bed comfort, and cleanliness, along with cognitive factors in their studies and found these attributes to be significant in choice intentions and patronage. In the same way, Callan and Bowman (2000) also considered sensory attributes in their hotels' study including hotel comfort, ambience, décor, and lighting. However, the discrepancies in hotel attributes studied or deemed important reflects the need for a simple theoretical framework that identifies those attributes.

One of the most critical attributes demanding service providers' attention is hotel hygiene. Customers believe that hygiene is the reason for many service experience failures; they expect a high standard as they see hygiene controllable and cheap (Barsky & Nash, 2002; Hooper et al., 2013). Lack of hygiene and sloppy looking hotel staff can influence guests' emotions negatively (Barsky & Nash, 2002). This is a well established critical factor of any servicescape, particularly where customers have to spend extended periods of time, for women, and families with children; and it is crucial in forming perceptions, as a controllable indicator of quality (Wakefield & Blodgett, 1996). This suggests that service providers should maintain their hygiene standards, yet, the relationship between hotel interior design and hygiene is still not clear.

Due to the competitive nature of the industry, lodging managers must understand their guests' needs and desires if they are to maintain their current customers and attract new ones (McMullen, 2006). Recently, the use of technology has been recognized as an added value for guests, and a chance to build loyalty, and enhance satisfaction (Bilgihan, 2012). In the 1990s hotels started to spend a lot of money on installing and upgrading technology to satisfy their customers, and guests were experiencing technologies in hotels before they became available for home use (Deeb & Murray, 2002). In-room entertainment, for example,video on demand, hi speed Wi-Fi, video games, and personalized welcoming messages on HD televisions is the fastest increasing revenue generation opportunity (Bilgihan, 2012).

Hooper et al. (2013) believe that equipment is a significant feature of servicescape, especially in the twenty-first century. For instance, defective computers and equipment lead to irritable, unsatisfied customers. With technology taking over, guests are serving themselves rather than being served by the hotel employees, which suggests that having user-friendly facilities is replacing the service (McMillan, 2008). Bilgihan (2012) explored the influence of hotel in-room entertainment technology facilities on guests and found that guests prefer all these types of amenities to be complimentary but would pay for gaming consoles. Bulchand-Gidumal et al. (2011) investigated the role of offering Wi-Fi on customers' online ratings and general satisfaction in twenty different destinations. They found that offering free Wi-Fi increased rating by eight percent and that is especially important to business travellers. Hence, they suggest that offering Wi-Fi and information and communication technologies (ICT) can increase customers' satisfaction (Bulchand-Gidumal et al., 2011). Similarly Sigala and Connolly (2004) believe that Wi-Fi is an important advancement for the hotel industry, while Wolff (2003) views it as a necessity and taken for granted since 2003. Other researchers believe that Wi-Fi is more important to increase service productivity and functionality rather than an added value for customers' experience (Muller, 2010). Nevertheless, the relationship between technology and hotel interior design is still not clear. While researchers have considered a variety of hotel attributes, this study focuses on hotel design. The next part explains the concept of hotel design and how it could be used as a new competitive tool.

2.3.1.2 Consumer segments in the hotel industry

Yelkur and Da-Costa (2001) believe that hotel segments should be classified according to their situation, usage, and use frequency; they also added purpose of travelling and divided that into leisure and business; then further categorized leisure travelling to family and romantic packages. Customers' purpose of travel and people they are travelling with, such as travelling as couples or with children, may influence the different expectations of hotels (Yavas & Babakus, 2005). Categorizing segments helps hoteliers to benefit greatly, especially by differential pricing (Yelkur & Da-Costa, 2001). For example, it is generally suggested that hotel customers who buy at full price are more loyal than those who buy due to sales and promotions, which is a technique to attract new customers but is not profitable in the long term. Companies

should therefore differentiate between loyal and non-loyal customers, to filter out the latter (Yelkur & Da-Costa, 2001).

Similarly, Barsky and Nash (2002) conducted a study in the hotel industry and reported that there are significant differences in hotel types and the emotions that they can evoke in different customer segments. They also suggested that these differences offer opportunities for attracting desired segments, disregarding unwanted segments, creating relationships with customers, and charging higher prices (Barsky & Nash, 2002). Evoking customers' loyalty may critically influence their recommendations and positive word of mouth, increase their return intentions, and make them less price sensitive (Barsky & Nash, 2002). They propose that different hotel types can evoke different sets of emotions that control customer loyalty. For example, they argue that emotions that evoke guest loyalty in luxury hotels are feeling relaxed, sophisticated, and pampered; while in mid-price hotels they are the feelings of being secure, comfortable, and welcome (Barsky & Nash, 2002). Nevertheless, their study has only focused on loyalty, while the current study is open to explore all the different emotions and behaviours that can be evoked by different hotel divisions.

Moreover, Jayawardena, et al. (2013) suggest that room division is a profitable feature in hotels, which has led to less service but more categorized designs such as airport pods, apartments and suites. The main categories of hotel accommodation segments are: luxury, upper scale, upscale, mid-scale full service, mid-scale limited service, economy/budget, and extended stay. However, this is a management perspective. In contrast, this study examines the different requirements of different hotel segments from customers' point of view.

Business and leisure are the two popular hotel segments; hence, several studies have explored the factors that influence their selection and general behaviours (Yavas & Babakus, 2005). For example, Taninecz (1990) found that location and cleanliness are the important factors that influence business travellers' hotel choice. On the other hand, Marshall (1993) and Lewis (1985) suggested that room rates, security, and personal interactions are the important factors for leisure travellers. Further to this, Knutson (1988) pointed out that both business and leisure travellers consider the same factors, which are location, prompt service, security, friendliness of employees,

comfort and cleanliness of rooms. Barsky and Labagh's (1992) study is consistent with this view, as their study revealed that both these segments consider rooms, employee attitudes, and location when choosing hotels. Consequently, Yavas and Babakus (2005) point out that whereas leisure and business travellers may differ in terms of demographic characteristics, they share similar hotel staying habits. Moreover, they both consider the same hotel attributes, albeit in different order and with different levels of importance, with the exception of the general amenities, which both traveller segments consider as the most critical factor (Yavas & Babakus, 2005).

Leisure travel is described as free from obligations and work and is about functional, utiliration, hedonic, and psychological needs, whereas business travel is concerned only with functional needs (Ettema & Schwanen, 2012). International leisure travellers outnumber business travellers; in 2011, travelling for leisure purposes accounted for 51% of all international arrivals, and travelling for professional reasons and for business accounted for only 15% (Stumpf et al., 2014). Despite that, as mentioned leisure and business are the most studied and compared segments. For example, previous studies examined the preferences of business versus leisure guests when choosing the hotel and proposed that location and hygiene are what matter to business travellers; while room rate, security, and personal interaction are the key attributes for leisure travellers (Yavas & Babakus, 2005).

According to Yavas and Babakus (2005) the order of preference for business travellers care more about convenience, service, room amenities and ambience, while for leisure travellers it is service, convenience, ambience and finally room amenities. However, the study of Chu and Choi (2000) pointed out that both guest types have similar preferences in hotel selection, which are service quality, room and front desk, value, and security. Moreover, McMullen (2006) notes that the majority of business travellers spend most of their time in the room and are expecting the available amenities to be better than what they have in their own homes and offices. Furthermore, luxury hotels are known to provide more technology facilities (McMullen, 2006). From the above, a consensus emerges that leisure and business travellers are the main traveller types. However, there is still a discrepancy in views regarding the differences and similarities between their charecterestics and

requirements. This intensifies the demand for more clarification. However, the important segment, that this study is concerned with is the cosmopolitan segment derived from globalization.

2.3.2 Design and architecture

Interest in designing attractive artificial environments has been manifested from ancient times, for example the magnificent temples of ancient Greece, the soaring cathedrals designed by medieval architects, and the royal palaces created by renaissance architects (Kotler, 1973). Subsequently, interest moved to the design of dignified working environments, before attention shifted toward designing retail and consumption places (Bitner, 1992). In leisure and hedonic services, the physical environment and its quality becomes the primary product (Kotler, 1973). Furthermore, interior design, decoration, and architecture have been practised for many years; however, the profession of the interior decorator appeared in the early twentieth century (Brooker & Stone, 2010).

Despite the difference between the terms interior design, interior decoration, and interior architecture, they are usually confused with each other. Interior architects are concerned with reforming existing structures to suit new functions, while interior decorators transform the look of existing spaces through light, colour, and surface finish without changing building structures. Interior designers on the other hand cross between the previous two and perform both jobs (Dodsworth, 2009).

Having said that, most of the existing literature on interior design that is found in specialized academic sources such as "the journal of interior design" focuses on the teaching of the interior design programs. The Interior Archetypes Research courses were introduced in 1997, to create a typology of modern design practices that originated from historical designs that cross style, time and cultural restrictions (Jennings, 2007). Typology is "concerned with those aspects of human production that can be grouped because of some inherent characteristics that make them similar" (Jennings, 2007, p. 48). A typology is " a flexible system that can accommodate the curricular values of various academic programs and the expertise of a range of scholars. It accommodates the high style and the vernacular, cross-cultural design

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systems, and aesthetic treatments. A typology is simply another way to understand the history of interiors—that is, the history of interior spaces and their contents. Typological classification helps to describe and criticize built work" (Jennings, 2007, p. 50). The current study focuses on the typology of servicescapes' interior design. Accordingly, the established typology of servicescapes, and specific design elements that were mainly derived from design, marketing and environmental psychology backgrounds will be explained next, to better understand the main influential variables of this study.

2.3.2.1 Established typology and dimensions of servicescapes

This part explores the established dimensions of servicescapes. Close examination of the literature and previous studies indicates that researchers usually categorize the surrounding environment according to generic and repeated dimensions. These dimensions are commonly divided under physical and social aspects. Table 2 illustrates the popular categorizations and dimensions of service environments in the literature.

Author	Dimensions of service environments
Kotler (1973)	• Visual • Aural • Olfactory • Tactile
Baker (1986)	• Ambient factors • Design factors • Social factors
Bitner (1992)	• Ambient conditions • Spatial layout and functionality • Sign, symbol, and artefacts
Berman and Evans (1995)	• Exterior cues • General interior • Design and layout cues • Point of purchase cues
Wakefield & Blodgett (1996)	• Layout accessibility • Facility aesthetics • Seating comfort • Electronic equipment/ displays • Facility cleanliness
Turley and Milliman (2000)	• Exterior cues • General interior • Design and layout cues • Point of purchase cues • Human variables
Slatten et al. (2009)	• Ambience • Interaction • Design
Joseph-Mathews, Bonn and Snepenger (2009)	• Ambience • Design and layout • Social
Rosenbaum and Massia (2011)	• Physical dimension • Social dimension • Socially symbolic dimension • Natural dimension

Table 3 The established dimensions of servicescapes (Author)

Specific elements that are studied under these dimensions differ from one study to another; these elements were not conceptually or experimentally supported, or methodologically justified. This highlights the need for a study that identifies hotels' significant interior design elements to better investigate their impact; this is one of the main gaps addressed by this study. Table 3 summarizes the elements most frequently mentioned in the literature. These will be discussed next.

Element	Authors
Ambient conditions	(e.g. Milliman, 1986; Bitner, 1992; Areni& Kim, 1993; Dubé et al., 1995, 2007; North & Hargreaves, 1996; Spangenberg et al., 1996, 2006; Chebat & Michon, 2003; Wilson, 2003).
Furniture	(e.g. Bitner, 1992; Rosenbaum& Massiah, 2011)
Space	(e.g. Bitner, 1992; Rosenbaum& Massiah, 2011)
Layout	(e.g. Bitner, 1992; Countryman & Jang, 2006; Rosenbaum& Massiah, 2011)
Colour	(e.g. Bellizzi & Hite, 1992; Crowley,1993; Turley & Milliman, 2000; Singh, 2006; Countryman & Jang, 2006; Funk & Ndubisi, 2006)
Lighting	(e.g. Areni & Kim, 1994; Turley & Milliman, 2000; Countryman & Jang, 2006)
Signs, symbols & artefacts	(e.g. Baker 1986; Bitner, 1992; Zeithaml et al., 2009; Rosenbaum& Massiah, 2011)

Table 4 The established elements of servicescapes (Author)

- **Ambient conditions**

Ambient conditions are stimuli in the background of an environment that have an impact on human sensations (Kotler, 1973; Turley & Milliman, 2000). These can be visual (e.g. colours), auditory (e.g. music), or related to scents (Mattila & Wirtz, 2001), or temperature (Reimer & Kuehn, 2005). Ambient conditions are concerned with service aspects that affect any of the five senses (Bitner, 1992). Bitner (1992) strongly emphasizes that ambience and atmosphere are different from servicescape in service settings. She believes that ambience is the interaction between individuals and the physical environment, while servicescape is the physical environment in which the service is delivered (Bitner, 1992). Others define ambient factors as the nonvisual conditions in the background of the environment that include several cues such as scent, light, and music (Baker et al., 1994). This view will be adopted for this study, as ambient conditions in the context of this study are concerned with auditory and olfactory cues but not the visual.

The interest in ambience has been increasing from hospitality and tourism managers and the attempt to provide a pleasant ambience involves different professional experts, such as hospitality managers, architects and designers (Heide et al., 2007). "Ambience has become a pivotal concern for tourism and hospitality managers worldwide. The relevance of and emphasis on ambience for creating a successful hospitality experience is evident from reading almost any travel- related journal or magazine… magazines frequently seem to give the impression that ambience is a key success factor directly linked to financial results" (Heide, Lardal, & Gronhaug 2007, p. 1315). However, despite management's interest, there is minimal empirical and theoretical research about ambience and its role in the hospitality industry (Heide et al., 2007). Addressing this gap, Heide et al. (2007) explored the knowledge of designers and hotel managers about improving their hotel ambience and concluded that they considered ambience by recognizing the importance of its factors (antecedents) and the risks and benefits related to it (consequences). In contrast, the present study aims to understand the ambience factors and consequences from customers' point of view, as this still forms a gap in knowledge.

Ambience has been viewed as a tool for changing buying behaviour and attitudes, gaining competitive advantage and gaining popularity (Heide et al., 2007). Ambient conditions can affect customers positively, but can also influence their behaviours negatively, if they are lacking or unsatisfactory (Baker, 1986). This suggests that ambient conditions are influential in changing behaviours and attitudes and offering a competitive advantage. However the concept is still ambiguous and difficult to grasp. Ambience factors are frequently studied individually, which has resulted in lack of understanding of the combined influence of these factors, especially in the hospitality industry (Heide et al., 2007). To fill this gap, the current study considers the holistic influence of ambient conditions as well as identifying the main key elements that could shape the holistic perception of customers.

Auditory cues, especially music, are important in influencing the holistic servicescape perception (Lin, 2004). Music as part of atmosphere and ambience is proved to impact customers' mood, service and product evaluations, customer decisions, and sales volume (Matilla & Wirtz, 2001). Wilson (2003) conducted a study in the restaurant industry investigating the impact of music on perceived atmosphere and purchase

intentions. They concluded that music has an effect on customers and that different music types (e.g. jazz, popular, and classical) result in differences in atmosphere perceptions, purchase choices, time spent in restaurants, and the amount of money that customers are willing to spend. These findings align with North and Hargreaves's (1996) study, which concluded that customers' perceptions of cafeterias are influenced by the type of music played there, and whether they like the cafeteria or not depends on their liking of the music played. Similarly, Milliman (1986) suggests that speed of music influences the speed of eating and dining in restaurants. Music may also influence product choice; for example, classical music is associated with high-priced purchases (Areni & Kim, 1993).

Customers are willing to spend more time and money in restaurants that they perceive play appropriate music, and restaurants can manipulate their environments by the type of music they choose to create pleasant and appropriate atmospheres. They can differentiate their establishments and position them differently too (Wilson, 2003). Therefore, music is an important and influential ambient variable in service settings and it is proved to be critical in restaurants. However, the role of ambient variables in the hotel context is still overlooked. Whether music is important in the hotel context or will have similar effects are still to be discovered, as none of these studies have examined the role of music in hotels.

Additionally, scent as an ambient variable induces a variety of customer interactions (e.g. bakery sale increase), and influences customers' evaluations, purchase intentions, revisiting, money and time spending (Matilla & Wirtz, 2001). Again, the role of scent in the hotel context is still not known, as these impacts emerged from studies in different industries. This suggests that exploring the role of ambience in hotels is still needed. However, whether ambient conditions are influential or not for hotel guests, and how they relate to hotel interior design should be understood first.

- **Furnishing**

Furnishing is concerned with the look and comfort of available furniture. Seating comfort is about the physical seat design and condition (e.g. seats with back or bench seats, padded or not, deteriorating or new), number of available seats, and the space

between seats (Wakefield & Blodgett, 1996). Although furnishing is a clear physical variable of any service environments, little research has examined hotel furnishing, so the perception of hotel furniture and its role for hotel costumers are still not understood.

- **Space and layout**

Space relates to the spatial relationships between different objects (e.g. furniture) in a space or an environment, Ideally, aisle spaces should be large enough to allow shoppers to browse freely and easily for example (Wakefield & Blodgett, 1996). Ceiling height impacts spatial perception more than a space's length or width, and high ceilings are associated with spaciousness, while low ceilings are linked to cosiness (Ching, 1996). Yet, the role and meaning of space for hotel guests is still ambiguous.

Layout on the other hand, is concerned with the positioning and arrangement of different equipment, furnishings and service areas, and the relationships between them in a space, and is concerned with flow of movement of customers within the servicescape too (Bitner, 1992). Having a user-friendly layout may improve service dependability, enable service delivery, and reduce search time for customers (Sulek & Lind, 1995). However, layouts in which customers cannot move freely and easily will make them frustrated (Bitner, 1992). A proper layout will allow service areas such as restrooms be more accessible, will permit ease in movement, entry and exit, and will also fulfil hedonic needs and make customers enjoy the primary offered service (Wakefield & Blodgett, 1996). This indicates that layout is important for customers. However, we do not know what it means to hotel guests.

- **Colour**

Eiseman (1998) argues that colour is critical in physical interior settings. It can be scientifically explained as follows " Colour is light carried on wavelengths absorbed by the eyes that the brain converts into colours that we see. Light can be decomposed into a spectrum of six distinct colours: red, orange, yellow, green, blue, and violet. The red has the longest wavelength whereas the violet the shortest. An object

appearing yellow absorbs all of the colours in the spectrum except the yellow light. This unabsorbed light is reflected back from the object into the eyes from where it travels to the brain where it is interpreted as yellow. The eyes are comprised of cones and rods that allow us to see colour and light, respectively." (Singh, 2006, p. 783).

Colours can contribute to differentiating from competitors, influencing appetite, evoking feelings and moods negatively or positively, and forming attitudes (Singh, 2006). Colours can also decrease waiting time perception, and make customers calm down (Singh, 2006). Colours have various roles and impacts apart from their role in forming visual appearance of objects and spaces, and they affect different individuals differently too. Different colours are associated with various religions and cultures; but blue is known to be the most popular and agreed-on colour among different cultures (Khouw, 2002). Some researchers argue that cool colours, especially blue, arouse pleasure and encourage customers to spend time and money (Bellize & Hite, 1992), while others believe that colourful and bright environments have an effect on pleasure and arousal and encourage customers' patronage (Summers & Hebert, 2001). With regard to the impact of colours on emotions, orange, blue, and yellow are found to be associated with happiness; while brown, black, and red are considered sad colours (Cimbalo, Beck & Sendziak, 1978). It is also found that colours are perceived differently between genders; men prefer grey, black, and white, while women are more tolerant to blue and red combinations (Khouw, 2002). Furthermore, red and yellow stimulate appetite, and help in gaining attention, which makes them the first choices for fast food restaurants (Singh, 2006). When used in lightings, colour influences the sense of time passage, as it seems slow under red light and quick in blue light (Singh, 2006). Finally, colours are known to evoke brands and are linked to brand associations, differentiation, and awareness (Khouw, 2002). However, the meaning and role of colour for hotel guests and its contribution to the overall design are still unknown.

- **Lighting**

Lighting affects cognitive abilities like memories and mood, and controls the appearance of colours (Singh, 2006). Lighting type can also influence the perception

of quality and definition of a space and it reflects on the perception of other elements such as colours and textures, and harmonizes with them (Ching, 1996). " The relationship between light and interior space is a mutually dependent one. Light renders space; without light, form, color, texture, and scale are unrecognizable. In return, space captures light—receiving it, shaping it, bending it, hiding it. As the prime animator of space" (Beever & Blossom, 2009, p.35). In addition, Stone and Irvine (1994) found that spaces with windows decrease boredom and make individuals perceive tasks more positively, compared to rooms without windows, due to the influence of natural light access to the space. Humans react immediately toward the combination of light and colours, as light influences the senses more than other individual material design elements. Nevertheless, after a while all the design elements work together, (i.e. colour, space, light, and material) to affect our psychological responses and physical movements (Poldma, 2009).

In the nineteenth century, department stores started using visual factors to transform ordinary products into desirable possessions (Kapferer & Bastien, 2009). Attractive consumption and luxury places include glass skylights that permit natural sunlight (Joy, Wang, Chan, Sherry & Cui, 2014). Poldma (2009) suggests that lamp manufacturers are not only selling bulbs anymore, but also entire design manipulations that can transform spaces with wide flexible choices. This suggests that lighting, especially natural lighting, has significant effect on individuals, but what is its importance in the hotel context?

- **Signs, symbols, and artefacts**

Signs, symbols, and artefacts are some of the important physical dimensions that service managers employ to communicate with customers and send different messages about the service, create brandscapes, or influence how customers move and behave. Examples of these are directions, department names, cautions and prohibitions rules, like "No smoking" signs (Rosenbaum & Massiah, 2011). These visual cues are important to convey messages to customers regarding how they should behave, and what level of service they should expect (Bitner, 1992). Nevertheless, what elements are relevant to the hotel context and matter to hotel guests is still not

known. Therefore, one of the main objectives of the current study is to identify the design elements that matter to hotel guests from their own point of view. These elements will be studied in detail in relation to the consumer culture theory later in this chapter.

- **Social**

Although this variable is not studied under the physical dimensions, many researchers have considered it a crucial part of the servicescape. Several previous studies have examined the social part of the servicescape by focusing on service employees or other customers (Lin & Liang, 2011). Although the current study focuses on the physical part rather than the social, as they both complement each other and form the holistic servicescape, it must be explained here.

Employees' behaviour plays an important role in creating customers' positive emotions and satisfaction. Pleasant emotions may increase when service employees have more eye contact with them, smile, greet and appreciate them, as customers consider these activities as part of the service (Pugh, 2001). Employees' messages, presence, attractiveness, and status all influence customers' mood (Mattila & Enz, 2002). Other customers in the service encounter may influence each other's emotions and perception of the social environment too, and that is called "customer climate" (Lin & Liang, 2011, p. 365). Other customers in the servicescape are perceived as part of it and they influence the service assessment (Baker, Parasuraman, Grewal, & Voss, 2002). Furthermore, positive emotions are triggered when other customers' behaviours and manners match their expectations and negative emotions occur when they do not. For example, positive interactions between customers lead to positive emotions, while noisy children lead to negative experiences of a place. Apart from behaviours, the appearance of other customers influences the perception too (Lin & Liang, 2011).

However, although social factors seem to be important, Lin and Liang (2011) claim that both design and ambient factors have more influence on customers' emotions and behaviours than social factors, including employees and customers. This suggests that understanding the role of physical elements on hotel guests is important. Different

studies have focused on different physical variables, and despite the influence that these cues may have in a hotel environment, little research has been conducted to identify the significant design elements and explore their role in a hotel context. Addressing this gap, the current study attempts to add to this research stream by identifying what hotel interior design elements are recognized the most by hotel guests, what meanings these elements present to customers, and which are the most influential and critical in forming their overall perception of design.

2.3.2.2 Hotel design

After understanding the general dimensions of servicescapes' design, this part will highlight the established literature on hotel design in specific. Hotel design is a continuous activity; for example, hotel bedrooms are refurbished every seven years due to wear and tear (West & Purvis, 1992). In addition, the higher a hotel is rated by the classification schemes, the higher customers' expectations will be for the service and design, which makes these hotels spend more on design in order to meet those expectations. This should be based on critical analysis of customers' profiles and behaviours (West & Purvis, 1992). However, hotel managers often rely on their personal tastes and former décor standards, without considering customers; this issue is a result of the criteria that hotels rely on to evaluate their design effectiveness, such as longevity, ease of maintenance, increase in room rates, and level of occupancy. Surprisingly, customer preference, perception and encouraging word of mouth are rarely considered, despite their direct link to profitability and the role of hotel design in its service and marketing (West & Purvis, 1992). For example, Lea (2008) points out that aesthetically aware hotels have increased their profits considerably in the last decades. This suggests the value of understanding customers and designing hotels and choosing their aesthetics according to customers' desires.

Dube and Renaghan (2000) believe that in order to have satisfied and loyal guests in the hotel industry, managers should create value. Yet, value creation is complicated as it differs from one guest to another. In their study they researched which hotel variables offer most value for customers, and concluded that physical attributes are crucial to fulfill customers' needs and expectations and therefore create value. Among

their leisure sample, physical attributes were the third most important dimension after the brand and location of the hotel. However, details of these physical attributes, and how and why hotels' design can create value for customers are still to be discovered.

The Design hotel group was established in the early 1990s because of believing in the importance of hotels' design (Strannegard & Strannegard, 2012). It markets and represents more than two hundred hotels in more than forty different countries. Each of these hotels is an original, authentic, aesthetic, extraordinary and independent hotel with emphasis on extravagant design and architecture. Design Hotels' motto is ''Be a local, wherever you are'' They believe that to be culturally authentic is important, they seek to be aesthetically original within their culture and customs, and not be standard everywhere and lose their identity (Strannegard & Strannegard, 2012). These types of hotels have not compromised their service quality but rather they provide high standards of service along with the best possible aesthetic features because they believe that these matter to customers. This does not necessarily mean changing the architecture or heavy expenditure, but rather paying attention to simple tasks like new carpeting and adding decorative touches that will increase attractiveness (Wakefield & Blodgett, 1996).

The work of Strannegard and Strannegard (2012) illustrates the significance of hotel design and how it is considered and practised by hotel managers in real life. They report that the Nordic Light Hotel in Stockholm, which is a member of the above mentioned Design hotel group, has two full time employees with specific jobs: the first is a full time designer who gives aesthetic guidelines on everything from textiles and furniture, to paper clips. Her main aim is to maintain the hotel brand, including improvements and repairs are needed as a result of daily usage (e.g. stained and scratched surfaces and surroundings) (Strannegard & Strannegard, 2012). The second employee is the guest experience manager who deals with the aesthetics of services, for example, how food is served, rooms are cleaned; and added touches like the folded toilet paper and chocolate on pillows. He is also concerned with the unique complimentary products that the hotel offers to guests, such as soaps and lip balm, which are packaged and produced in a luxurious manner (Strannegard & Strannegard, 2012).

This is clear evidence to suggest that in practice, hotel managers believe in the importance of aesthetics, as providing pleasant surroundings and products will maintain their brand and give them a unique competitive advantage. Interestingly, even services can be aestheticized, as the above example illustrates. However, empirical evidence of the benefits of offering pleasant hotel interior designs is not underpinned by a theoretical foundation; this study contributes in remedying this anomaly.

Boutique hotels are another practical example that illustrates how design can contribute to the hotel industry. These hotels are also known as lifestyle or design hotels, and their main aim is to be style conscious and unique. Their concept founder is Ian Schrager, and they began in 1978 with the opening of Blakes hotel in London (Strannegard & Strannegard, 2012). Initially their target segment was trend conscious customers and the main difference between these hotels and chain hotels is that it is always known what to expect from chain hotels, while boutique hotel always offer an element of surprise. Nevertheless, nowadays both boutique and corporate hotels are using aesthetics to differentiate their offerings (Lea, 2008). This suggests that the concepts of a boutique hotel have spread to other types of hotels too.

An important role in this respect is played by a hotel's landscaping architecture and design, defined as "the practical art and science of adapting land for customer use and enjoyment, based on the premises that land use and beauty are compatible and that neither is complete without the other. It includes the planned combination of living plants, such as flowers, grass, ground cover, shrubs, trees, and vines, as well as natural features such as rocks and stones. It may also include reflecting pools, fountains, outdoor artwork, gazebos, screen walls, benches, or fences" (Masoudi et al., 2013, p. 833). In order to offer pleasant and efficient designs, hotel managers are encouraged to consult design experts to achieve the desired goals professionally and benefit from all the mentioned positive outcomes. Design experts specialize in creating and improving ambience (Heide et al., 2007), an art form that requires both a surprise element and talent. Architects use various terms such as "total architecture" and "synthesis" when creating ambience; and they use six tools to create it: colour, furnishing, proportion, shape, texture and material and lighting (Heide et al., 2007). Proportion and shape are used to transform an open space into a different and

individual setting, colour and textures are associated with the material characteristics, while lighting reinforces specific atmospheres, and finally furnishing completes the overall composition (Heide et al., 2007). Forster (1993) suggests three main factors that influence hotel design in general: market factors (e.g. trends, customer requirements, competition); new technology factors (e.g. enabling new services, choice of materials); and statutory requirement (e.g. legislation, construction requirements).

Design's objectives are to highly satisfy the target customers and increase profits for the firm, by effective combination of the main elements of the design mix, namely, quality, performance, appearance, durability and cost (Kotler & Rath, 1984). Quality does not necessarily mean optimal quality, but rather, a wise choice of an affordable quality among all the different available workmanship and materials, because this is visible to customers; performance refers to the ability of design to provide the functions required by customers; appearance is associated with a unique pleasant look, which is critical in differentiation and competition; durability is linked to the sustainability of performance, look, and quality; and finally cost means that designers should work within budget (Kotler & Rath, 1984). Little research has studied hotel design, and even those studies that did, have failed to identify its antecedents and break design into specific elements, to fully capture their influence. This study addresses this gap by investigating what constitutes hotel interior design and what elements are the most significant from customers' point of view. In summary, a lack of theoretical research regarding hotel interior design as part of hotels' core strategies still exists, which reinforces the need for the current study to establish a robust theory that addresses this gap and can be used for future research. The next part will discuss the concept of globalization and cosmopolitan consumers, to gain a comprehensive understanding of the salience of these factors to the current study.

2.3.3 Globalization and Cosmopolitan consumers

Consumer culture describes the global connections whereby global mediascape and transnational capital's forces are replacing local cultures (Wilk 1995). The concept of globalization assumes that individuals desire the same lifestyles and products irrespective of geographic location, and that companies can use the same strategy for

all countries (Zhou & Belk, 2004). It is built on the increasing similarity in the needs and habits of international customers and the homogenization of international markets (Mattila, 1999). It simply means that the world has become one common marketplace (Liu, Guillet, Xiao, & Law, 2014).

The hospitality industry is the core of international business globalization, and among the service industries, hotels are the most globalized (Whitla, Walters, & Davies, 2007; Yu, Byun, & Lee, 2013). Globalization is a strategic concept for well-established international hotels. Some of the recognized benefits of hotel globalization are savings in marketing resources, more administrative efficiency, consistency in brand delivery, building brand recognition universally and increase in sales (Liu et al., 2014). Hotel design, name, slogan, and logo as marketing elements enable global consumers to recognize international hotels easily (Whitla et al., 2007). Mass media have become globally available due to the development of new technology, and this along with international tourism and labour mobility, has made cultures available globally, and made consumer needs more homogeneous (Alden, Steenkamp, & Batra, 2006).

Hofstede (2003) suggests that products and services provided by interational hotels can be customized to each country because travellers seek unique services that reflect the local cultures and customs. However, the recognition that international consumer behaviour differences are inexorably fading with the globalization of markets has increased the interest in global market segmentation, which depends on identifying and serving similar groups of consumers regardless of country boundaries (Bolton & Myers, 2003). Consumer oriented strategies that depend on customers' attitudes and values have proven to be more efficient and successful than demographic variables in international segmentation (Cleveland et al., 2011). Globalization has generated cosmopolitan consumers.

Cosmopolitans are "world-minded consumers. These are individuals holding a specific set of attitudes, beliefs, and skills, namely an openness toward and ability to engage in divergent cultural encounters, coupled with more international and less provincial self-perceptions" (Cleveland et al., 2011, p. 247). The increasing exchanges of cultures, countries, and individuals universally have blurred the

distinction between home and away (Arnett, 2002). Although cosmopolitans commonly belong to the elite class and are charecterised by their wide contact with other cultures through travelling, these are not preconditions for cosmopolitans any more, as cosmopolitan values can develop, and acculturation can be experienced without leaving the native country due to the global media today (Craig & Douglas, 2006; Cleveland et al., 2011). Nevertheless, high education levels make individuals more global consumers and less likely to follow local behaviours, as they are exposed to different cultural perspectives (Keillor, Amico & Horton, 2001).

Robertson (1996) developed the term "glocalization" which means that global forces do not replace locality, yet the similarities and differences among individuals are both important in modern life. Ritzer (2003, p. 193) defines glocalization as "the interpenetration of the global and the local, resulting in unique outcomes in different geographic areas". Cleveland et al. (2011) argue that strong ethnic identity does not prevent a strong global identity. This suggests that global identities complement ethnic cultures and do not replace them. Given that hotels are the most globalized industry and that globalization is related to CCT, it was important in conducting this study to choose cosmopolitan customers, especially as minimal research has linked hotel servicescape, globalization, and CCT.

2.4 Part Three: Understanding servicescapes

Following the context and theoretical background of the study, this part will investigate the concept of servicescapes in more details. It starts with an explanation of the perception of the servicescapes, their different roles, and finally the established literature of consumer emotions and behaviours in servicescapes.

2.4.1 The perception of servicescape

This section explores different theories related to customers' perception, especially the Gestalt approach, to understand how customers perceive their surrounding environments. This is relevant to the study because understanding how individuals make sense of their surrounding environment and what it means to them helps in

understanding the importance of hotel interior design to guests. Perception is defined as "a function of multiple sources of input from the environment and from one's own predisposition, expectations, motives, and knowledge gleaned from past learning experiences (Lin, 2004, p. 164)", or "The process by which an individual selects, organizes, and interprets stimuli into a meaningful and coherent picture of the world…it is a highly individual process based on each person's own needs, values, and expectations." (Schiffman, Kanuk, & Hansen, 2012, p.159).

Dube et al. (2007) suggest that individuals' responses to environments rely on integrating multisensory information and processing it through ambient and focal modes that interact together. Ambient perception happens holistically and warns observers of the key elements that they should pay attention to, while the focal perception works selectively by increasing attention to the selected elements and disregarding the unwanted elements (Dube et al., 2007).

Humans perceive the visual environment in a complicated manner, because their brains cannot process all the received visual information (Frey, Honey, & Konig 2008). Therefore, they target separate parts of the environment for close analysis, which means that the brain divides the received information into manageable portions (Frey et al., 2008). Individuals do not assess the servicescape based on a single stimulus, but rather they evaluate it holistically, by combining separate cues that they receive through their sensory systems to form the whole picture, before making detailed judgments (Lin, 2004). Additionally, overt and covert visual attention depend on the eye movement; overt refers to directing the gaze to an interesting thing and focusing on it, while covert means a shift in attention without a consequent shift of the gaze attention (Frey et al., 2008). Individual formation of a mental image can be seen through micro or macro perspectives. The micro is concerned with gestalt theory and influences at an individual level, while the macro is concerned with variables that are out of the individual's control (Lin, 2004). These are illustrated in Figure 8.
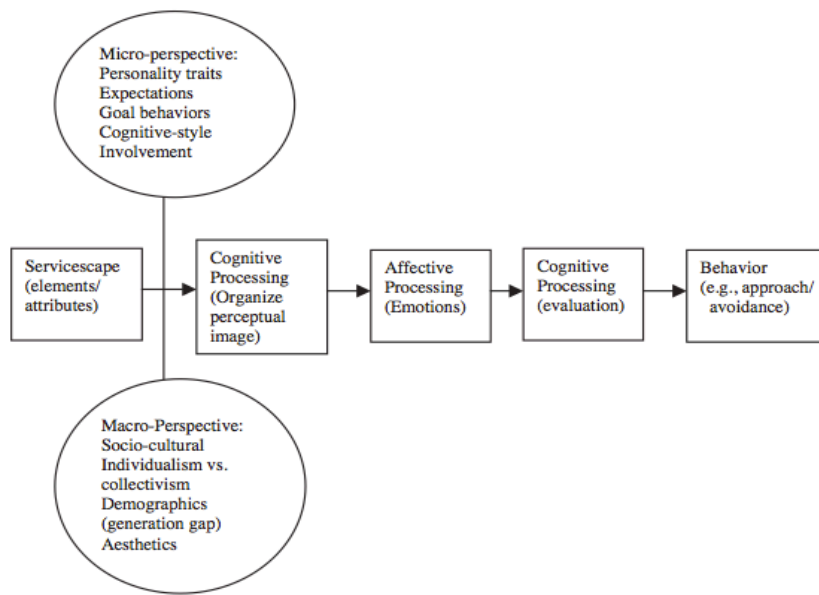
Figure 8 Consumers' evaluation of servicescape (Lin, 2004, p. 167)

The conscious process of visual design evaluation works from the first impression to the final judgment (Bloch, 1995). Customers' first impression is usually formed based on appearance (Wakefield & Blodgett, 1996). This first impression creates a lasting impression that determines if a product is considered for buying or not (Bloch, 1995). Moreover, it is recognized that physical design is capable of attracting customers' attention as well as forming first impressions (Slatten et al., 2009), as individuals judge diverse visual elements in a short time (Grill-Spector & Kanwisher, 2005). Singh (2006) claims that individuals take 90 seconds to form a first impression of a person or a product. Furthermore, 62 to 90 per cent of this will depend on colours (Singh, 2006). Ampuero and Vila (2006) believe that the extrinsic cues are the first thing customers see before buying. Although customers react and separate stimuli in their minds differently, they do not separate a product from its package but judge or choose it as a whole, especially in competitive environments (Ahmed, Ahmed, & Salman, 2005). In this case, servicescape creates a first impression and may have a great impact on the whole hotel stay, as guests will not separate the décor from the other elements of the service. However, the relation between service environments and creating impressions, especially in a hotel context is still to be discovered.

Design cues and aesthetic features may determine customers' initial reactions toward products because of their first impression, since the evaluation of visual properties usually takes only milliseconds (Kumar & Garg, 2010). Therefore, interior design

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may be the fastest cue to form the first impression that will eventually result in lasting outcomes. This implies that service providers should offer physical cues that form positive and pleasant first impressions.

The "Gestalt theory", was established in the early twentieth century, by German psychologists, Kurt Koffka, Max Wertheimer, and Wolfgang Kohler, is the most popular theory used to capture customers' perception of physical environments (Lin, 2004). The main gestalt characteristic as stated by Lin (2004) is that it emphasizes the role of the overall structure and the relationship between components in producing perceptual organization. This approach also explains that "the perception of the whole dominates the perception of its parts. The basic Gestalt theme is that the whole is different from the sum of its parts" (Lin, 2004, p.165).

Gestalt theory suggests six principles that hotel guests use to make sense of the physical environment (Schiffman, 2001):
(1) Proximity/nearness: elements are grouped according to the distance between them.
(2) Similarity: elements are grouped according to their physical similarity.
(3) Continuity: elements that point to the same direction are grouped together.
(4) Common fate: elements that move in the same direction are grouped together.
(5) Symmetry: elements are grouped according to their symmetrical and natural balance.
(6) Closure: group elements that are enclosed or form a complete figure (Schiffman, 2001).

Hutchings and Luo (2010) suggest another perception identification; they claim that all spaces, scenes, and objects are visually assessed through five expectations which are: safety (e.g. is using this product or being in this space safe or not), identification (what are the properties of this object or space), usefulness (how useful is this space or object) pleasantness (the pleasant feeling due to involvement with this object or space), and satisfaction (the satisfaction after the involvement). Hutchings and Luo (2010) also propose that spaces could be characterized using scales and contraries that are linked to size, ceiling height, enclosed or open air, darkness and light, noisy or silent, the use of artificial or natural plants, high or low textures, decorated or plain,

new or old, sophisticated or basic, clean or dirty, and finally attributes of colour specifications, including very colourful or not, soft or hard, and warm or cool.

Moreover, customers are known to prefer harmony in design, which is defined as the level of shaping coherence and unity in the visual resources of a composition (Kim, 2006). This supports the traditional gestalt cognitive theory that suggests that humans like to see things that feel, look, and sound as if they belong together (Kumar & Garg, 2010). Hekkert (2006) argues that humans make sense of meanings and objects as a "whole" by categorising, classifying and understanding relations of partial information. For example, when guests enter a hotel lobby, they notice and perceive all the different available components such as front desk, customers, employees, furniture, lighting, colours, artwork, and walls, as well as the exterior and other sensory inputs including scents and music, before they make their overall evaluation and form the final image of the lobby in their minds. This is also called contextual effect which simply means grouping information together to form a united picture; and that the evaluation of a lodging servicescape will depend on people themselves, the surrounding environment, and the interrelation between them (Lin, 2004). Further to this, customers use their emotions as valuable signals, basing their decisions on what they see, smell, taste, and touch in their surroundings (Kang, Boger, Back, & Madera, 2011). This indicates that individuals perceive their surrounding environment holistically, despite the different categorizations and division of its elements, after a while. This also highlights the discrepancy in views and the need for a clear simple theory that explains how customers perceive their environments, especially in the hotel context. This is another significant gap that needs to be addressed by this study.

Brains receive sensory inputs or external stimuli (sight, sounds, smells, tastes, and textures) through the five senses. However, individuals process this information differently as they interpret the meaning of a stimulus according to their unique needs, bases, and experiences (Solomon, 2013). Sensory marketing is a new area of marketing that pays more attention to the impact of sensations on experiences. Figure 9 explains the perceptual process of consumers. According to this figure, exposure is the first step, which occurs when different stimuli come within the sensory receptors. Then, the processing activity is devotetd to a particular stimulus in the attention step, and finally interpretation is the meanings we assign to sensory stimuli according to

expectations and learned patterns (Solomon, 2013). Unique sensory qualities help products and services to stand out from the competition, especially if they can create unique favourable association with the sensation (Solomon, 2013). This indicates that sensory experiences are important and influential in hedonic consumption. However, the role of hotel interior design as sensory stimuli and how customers receive it and interpret it are still not understood.
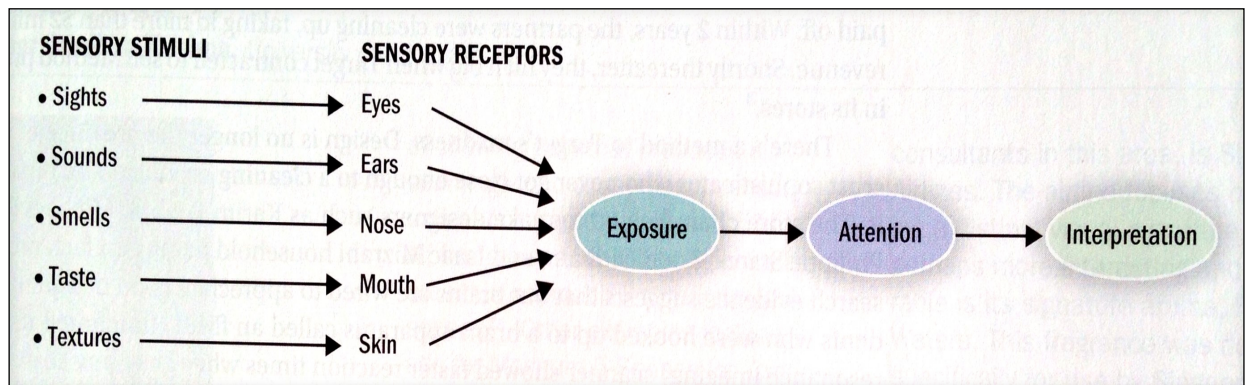
Figure 9 An overview of the perceptual process (Solomon, 2013, p. 71)

In summary, previous research, especially from gestalt psychology prespective, suggests that individuals respond to different environments and surroundings holistically (Bitner, 1992; Orth, Heinrich, & Malkewitz, 2012). This indicates that the nature of a space cannot be delivered or communicated by an isolated interior design element; all elements should be considered together (Dube et al., 2007). Interior designers choose and mix different design elements such as furniture, texture, colour, light, scheme, and layout to shape holistic schemes (Kotler, 1973). Even though humans perceive their surrounding environment and make sense of it holistically, researchers argue that the causes and effects of behaviour in any servicescape can be identified and isolated and that each factor can impact customers independently, and interact with the other elements (Bitner, 1992). However, this literature does not explain how customers perceive interior design in a hotel context. The next part will cover the Consumer Culture theory (CCT) and Service Dominance Logic (SDL), as the current research was conducted through these two lenses.

2.4.2 The role of servicescapes

This part aims to review the established roles of servicescapes in the literature, to better understand their impacts. Understanding the benefits attributed to servicescapes in general assists in understanding the significance of hotel interior design, especially as this study is concerned mainly with the impact and benefits of physical design. Therefore, this part will help in appreciating the value of servicescape with regard to SDL, and its meaning from a CCT perspective, especially in a hotel context.

Esslinger (2009) asserts the need for firms to understand the critical role of design in shaping business strategies. This is because "the focus of marketing is value creation rather than value distribution, and facilitation and support of a value-creating process rather than simply distributing ready-made value to customers (Gronroos, 2000, p. 25). In this study, physical design, represented by the physical components of the servicescape's interior design, is assumed to have an impact in creating value. Nevertheless, there is a lack of research regarding the role of interior design in creating value and meaning in the hotel context. Therefore, the current study will provide a better understanding of the main impacts of interior design has in the hotel industry.

Interior design can be seen as a way in which service suppliers can provide customers with the necessary resources for value creation, which according to Gronoos (2006) is basically the supplier's role. Studying servicescape from a SDL perspective suggests that servicescape is an important operand resource that can influence the perceived value of customers. In SDL in comparison to GDL, goods and services are seen as integrated, and customers are considered as actively involved co-creators (Vargo & Lush, 2008). Co-creation occurs when operant resources (e.g. knowledge on how to do things) act on other operant resources or operand (e.g. physical resources and goods) resources, which produce customer experience or value in use (Walter et al., 2010). Customer perceived value is the outcome of customers' comparison between the sacrifices and costs that they pay and the perceived benefits they obtain from a service (Ryu, Lee, & Kim, 2012). Servicescape is important for hotel perceived value (Mattila & Enz, 2002) and the physical elements in particular are proved to be important in building customer perceived value (Han & Ryu, 2009). This is

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significant because customers perceived value is considered to be a consistent predictor of customers' satisfaction and behavioural intentions (Ryu & Jang, 2008). Freemantle (1998) suggests that many companies have failed to succeed due to failing to do things that customers like, and that liking is the beneficial added emotional value, which increases the probability of buying and hence, it is the critical factor in a business's success. Thus, psychological understanding of aesthetics and design is particularly relevant to managerial activities (Reimann, et. al, 2010). For this reason, the next part will discuss the established impacts of servicescape and how they assist in value creation (SDL) and symbolizing meanings (CCT).

2.4.2.1 Servicescape: The tangible cue

Services are distinguished from goods because of their charecteristics, such as inseparability, intangibility, perishability, and heterogeneity (Zeithaml & Bitner; Parasuraman, Zeithaml, & Berry, 1988). The impact of physical environment in different services such as hotels (e.g. Countryman & Jang, 2006), restaurants (e.g. Millman, 1986), healthcare (e.g. Whitehouse et al., 2001), and leisure (e.g. Wakefield & Blodgett, 1996) has been documented in the service literature.

Jang and Namkung (2009) point out that customers make judgments by using physical elements in the environment as tangible cues. Although a main characteristic of services is that they provide intangible services and products, some service sectors such as hotels and restaurants have highly tangible and visual components, and designing unique and creative service environments can attract guests, provide a competitive advantage, and help in targeting different segments (Masoudi et al., 2013). From a SDL lens, these tangible cues are perceived as operand resources that add value to services, while CCT suggests they convey meaning to customers.

Ward, Bitner and Barnes (1992) beleive that the servicescape is to services what packaging is to products. It represents the quality and the total image of the service (Bitner, 1992). This indicates that understanding the role of products' packaging will help in understanding the role of the servicescape. Tangible cues are vital in creating expectations and offering information for customers (Ward et al., 1992). This is especially so, as services are simultaneous in consumption and production, as

meaning that customers are usually required to be in the service place before making their purchase decision. Ahmed et al. (2005) suggest that companies can maximise their profitability and add value by meeting their customers' needs, which can be done by understanding what customers are looking for and what is important to them in the package functionally (e.g. convenience), visually (e.g. colour), and ethically (e.g. green). Again, these concepts may be adapted in the service sector through interior design and aesthetic elements.

Service settings comprise of physical controllable objective factors that influence customers, as well as subjective uncontrollable stimuli that are hard to measure (Edvardsson, Enquist, & Johnston, 2010). The physical factors are the easiest to grasp and control because they are measurable and observable (Zeithaml et al., 2009). According to Crane and Clarke (1988) physical facilities and personal referrals are the most common cues by which people evaluate a service. Yet, what is considered under physical facilities remains uncertain. In light of this, there is a need for understanding what elements hotel guests rely on as their tangible cues, and what value and meaning hotel interior design offer to the service.

2.4.2.2 Servicescape as a quality indicator

The role of servicescape is increasing in importance due to the confirmation of its direct and indirect overall and specific effects on the perceived service quality, especially in hedonic services (Reimer & Kuehn, 2005). Service perceived quality is defined as "the result of an evaluation process, [in which] the consumer compares his expectations with his perception of the service received; in other words, he places the perceived service and the expected service opposite one another" (Gronroos, 1984, p. 37).

Ha and Jang (2012) report that atmospherics are indicators of the service quality, especially in restaurants, as they influence customers' perception of service quality regardless of the factual quality level. In turn, this perception influences their behaviours, which indicates that quality perception is a mediator between atmospherics and customer behaviours (Ha & Jang, 2012). In turn, Ladhari (2009)

proposes that emotional satisfaction is the mediator between perceived quality and buying behaviour. This suggests that providing better environments will increase the level of quality that customers ascribe tofood and services (Ha & Jang, 2012). This will affect their emotions and eventually their behavioural intentions. This shows that physical environments and designs are critical indicators of service quality.

Higher service quality allows service providers to gain a competitive advantage by differentiating themselves, improves their efficiency, increases profitability, and enlarges market share (Mei, Dean, & White, 1999). Besides, service quality enhances customer satisfaction, positive word of mouth and return intentions (Ladhari, 2009). Another reason why perceived quality is important is that it indicates customers' future behaviours and decision making (Ha, & Jang, 2012). Service quality is critically important in the hospitality industry and a significant opportunity for having a competitive and a differentiating factor among hospitality businesses that offer similar services and operate within the same industry (Nadiri & Hussain, 2005).

Leisure service such as theatres, amusement parks, cruises, and hotels require customers to spend extended time in the physical surrounding. The servicescape's perceived quality will influence their satisfaction, and therefore how long they are willing to stay in the service setting and how much money they will spend (Wakefield & Blodgett, 1996). For instance, in an upscale restaurant, while food quality and service personnel are the crucial factors that customers consider when evaluating the restaurant, interior design and architecture will also influence their assessment of the restaurant, how long they will stay in it, and whether they will return to it or not (Wakefield & Blodgett, 1996).

Tangible cues including the design and appearance of the servicescape impact customers' perceptions of the expected services. Therefore, such cues are included in the service quality "SERVQUAL" framework (Parasuraman et al., 1988; Pollack, 2009). This suggests that environmental design is key element for service quality perceptions and evaluations, as well as service expectations. The most commonly recognized service dimensions are those proposed by Parasuraman et al. (1988), which are:

1) Tangibles: physical surroundings including subjects like employees' appearance and objects, like design cues.

2) Responsiveness: the efficiency and speed of service performance.

3) Reliability: the accuracy of the provided service.

4) Assurance: trustworthiness and confidence of employees' behaviours.

5) Empathy: personal and individual service.

Subsequent studies applying the "SERVQUAL" framework in various contexts have generated different explanations of the dimensionality of service quality, as shown in Table 4.

SERVQUAL dimensions	Reference
1. Tangibles 2. Empathy 3. Reliability 4. Assurance 5. Responsiveness	(Parasuraman, Zeithaml, & Berry, 1988)
1. Tangibles 1. Courtesy & competence of the personnel 2. Communication & transactions 3. Knowing & understanding the customer 4. Problem solutions 5. Accuracy of hotel reservations 6. Accuracy & speed of service	(Akan,1995)
1. Tangibiles 2. Reliability 3. Employees	(Mei, Dean, & White, 1999)
1. Tangibiles 2. Reliability 3. Responsiveness 4. Confidence 5. Communication	(Ladhari, 2009)

Table 5 The established dimensions of service quality (Author)

It is interesting to note that tangibles is a key element in all service quality studies, especially in the hospitality industry, where the physical environment is considered the main tangible cue. Therefore, the servicescape's design plays a fundamental role in perceptions and judgment of quality. This suggests that reflecting and representing quality through servicescape is one of the main value propositions that servicescape can add to services from a SDL perspective, and that it is an important factor in

conveying quality meanings to customers with regard to CCT. Realizing the great influence of service quality, businesses, particularly in the hospitality industry, should realize how it can affect their success. Nevertheless, previous research has mostly focused on different contexts (mainly restaurants), and did not investigate the role of interior design as a servicescape tangible cue, nor the relationship between hotel interior design and perceived quality. Hence, the role of the servicescape's design as a quality indicator in the hotel industry is still insufficiently understood.

2.4.2.3 Servicescape as experience creator

According to the value-in-use concept, both customers and firms directly or indirectly create the customer experience together (Vargo & Lusch, 2008). Customers' experiences are defined as "processes that create cognitive, emotional, and behavioural responses, resulting in a mental mark, or a memory" (Johnston and Clark, 2001; cited by Slatten et al., 2009, p.722), or "the customer's direct and indirect experience of the service process, the organisation, the facilities and how the customer interacts with the service firm's representatives and other customers" (Walter et al., p. 238). According to Vargo and Lush (2004) the physical environment is an important factor for customer experiences because most services occur in an environment, where the customer is present during the service co-creation process. Hence, servicescape is an essential resource in creating value and shaping customers' experiences.

In tourism and hospitality in particular, experiential marketing has increased recently (Axelson & Swan, 2010). With the recent competition in the hotel industry, functional value on its own has become an insufficient means by which to compete and differentiate (Verma & Plaschka, 2003). However, creating pleasant experiences that exceed customers' cognitive, sensory and affective expectations is an opportunity to differentiate and have a long-term competitive advantage (Kim & Perdue, 2013), and increase customer loyalty (Axelson & Swan, 2010). Yavas and Babakus (2005) suggest six factors that shape the hotel experience: facilities, price, location, food, cleanliness and customer service. Most previous studies have statistically examined these factors with regard to loyalty (Chao, 2008). In general, both service and

physical qualities work together to satisfy customers. (Ekinci et al., 2008). Intangible factors (referred to here as operant resources) are associated with the service and include the care and understanding provided by hotel management, assurance and transaction convenience (Ramanathan & Ramarathan, 2011). On the other hand, tangible cues (operand resources in the context of this study) are related to the quality and availability of physical facilities such as bathrobes, coffee facilities, swimming pools, and gyms, as well as the appearance of the hotel employees (Ramanathan & Ramarathan, 2011). This suggests that physical design and the offered touches play a major role in creating customers' experiences, especially in the hotel context.

Knutson, Beck, Kim and Cha (2009) explained various principles that characterize experiences; for example, they are internal in nature, they demand participation and involvement by individuals because even genuine visualizations and descriptions can never match being in the place or doing the actual activity, and they are individualized, as different individuals come with different backgrounds, attitudes, situations, and values (Knutson et al., 2009). Additionally, Knutson and Beck (2003) propose four primary factors that contribute to the buying experience: perceptions and expectations of service quality, the consumer's experience with the company, value, and satisfaction.

Moreover, Frow and Payne (2007) suggest that in order to understand customers' experiences, two perspectives should be considered: experiential and cognitive processing perspectives. Although cognitive models have failed to explain how satisfaction is related to services (Slatten et al., 2009), the customer experience has so far been researched from either a cognition dimension or in terms of quality of service delivery (Martin, Oneill, Hubbard & Palmer, 2008). In contrast, this study focuses on experiences that are characterized by positive emotions due to favourable aesthetic and appealing interior designs.

Positive emotional reactions that create positive customer experiences are a maintainable differentiator factor in service sector competition (Slatten, et al., 2009). This indicates that generating memorable experiences in a hedonic context such as the hospitality service sector, is crucial to attract customers and retain them, and in order to measure these experiences, customers' emotions should be considered (Yelkur &

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Da-Costa, 2001). Apart from the role of employees, which has been heavily researched in relation to the customer experience, there are other factors that could impact this experience, such as architecture, temperature, lighting, music, interaction with other customers and sound (Slatten et al., 2009).

However, design in service settings, which is the observable, physical and operand element, is the most important factor that evokes customer experiences and has a direct impact on their feeling of joy and therefore their loyalty (Slatten et al., 2009). Service atmosphere is also clearly important in building the customer experience (Reimer & Kuehn, 2005). This suggests that interior design influences customer experiences as its elements encompass both design and atmospheric elements. Hence, if hotel managers can evoke positive emotions and experiences through their designs, they can therefore use that as a competitive advantage and can control their customers' behaviours.

A stream of hospitality literature focuses on correcting negative service experiences. On the other hand, there is lack of research on how to create pleasant service experiences in the first place (Torres & Kline, 2013). The hotel stay becomes a memorable experience when customers are delighted (Torres & Kline, 2013). Can hotel interior design be a reason for having delighted customers? Addressing this gap, the current research aids understanding of the importance of hotel servicescape, as an operand resource, in creating positive customer experiences, and thereby generating positive outcomes.

2.4.2.4 Servicescape and corporate identity

Knittel-Ammerschuber (2005) suggests that design and architecture are tangible representations of an organization's culture and attitude. Design and architecture represent the organization's identity, organizational philosophy and its founders (Robinson, 2005), and send messages about its stakeholders (Cripps, 2013). Hoeken and Ruikes (2005) argue that an organization identity is expressed through four concepts: personality, behaviour, communication, and symbolism. Personality refers to the organizations' values, behaviour refers to how an organization acts, communication reflects what an organization is telling its viewers, and finally

symbolism is their physical choices through which they represent their organization (Hoeken & Ruikes, 2005). The organization's reputation is also part of its identity (Davies & Miles, 1998). Kotler (1973) suggests that atmosphere may serve as an attention- creating medium, message- creating medium, and an affect-creating medium. This suggests that the atmosphere of servicescapes can help organizations in differentiating themselves and arouse reactions that contribute positively to their customers' purchase probability. Therefore, marketers should manipulate their environments to convert behavioural intentions to buying behaviours. An organization's identity is associated with increasing sales, performance, loyalty, reputation, retention, awareness, prestige and market share (Simoes, Dibb & Fisk 2005). As a result, Cripps (2013) argues that managers and leaders should consider art and architecture as critical forces in shaping customers' perceptions of organizations' identity. For example art works and art collections as parts of design are symbolic of corporate identity (Hoeken & Ruikes, 2005). In fact, organizations that acknowledged this have consciously added the art variable to their marketing mix (Kottasz, Bennett, Savani & Ali-Choudhury, 2008). In addition, cultural artefacts have even more effect. According to Higgins, McAllaster, Certo & Gilbert (2006), cultural artefacts include six main types: values, myths, rewards, ceremony/ritual, physical environment, and language systems.

Managers can use physical signals of servicecapes such as symbols, signs and artefacts including decorative items and artwork as a communication tool that send messages and represents meanings of places (Rosenbaum & Massiah, 2011). Therefore, choosing the personality and the vision that managers want to convey will help in determining the appropriate interior design for their services. Design is a tool that expresses brand values to the public and that is why it is considered a link in a brand's chain (De-Mozota, 2003). It is not only about looking good, but it also helps in building brand symbols (Esslinger, 2009). Thompson and Arsel (2004) believe that monikers and logos as signs in servicescapes can help in corporate branding and creating "brandscapes", as designing unique servicescapes creates brand image and brand equity in customers' minds and differentiates services from others. For example, soft lighting, a wooden floor, bold furniture and signage are physical elements and atmospherics in the environment that can create a brand image and evoke emotions, as certain brand meanings can be conveyed through employing

atmospherics (Joseph-Mathews et al., 2009). According to Bloch (1995) the convenience of a space, its furnishing and layout are important factors of the environment's designscape that affect consumers' decisions. They assess the designscape to understand different places identity and meanings, which makes it a tool for firms to tell stories about themselves, although the reaction of customers is difficult to control (Rosenbaum & Massiah, 2011).

Brand image is "a higher-order type of association that is more deeply felt, connected to self, and 'socially' impacted, as opposed to perceived product quality which is a lower order type of association that can be more easily altered (e.g. via verifiable product design efforts)" (Homer, 2008, p. 718). Furthermore, Low and Lamb (2000) defined brand image as "the reasoned or emotional perceptions consumers associate to specific brands" (Low & Lamb, 2000, p. 352). As mentioned earlier, physical design has a direct effect on brand image. For example, physical design can also be used to represent an establishment as luxurious. A study conducted by Joy et al. (2014) on luxury stores, especially Louis Vuitton, concluded that such stores are becoming hybrid institutions including elements from museums and art galleries, characterizing and differentiating themselves by interior design and skillful use of lighting. Even merchandise is displayed as art objects. Art is a recognized social and aesthetic indicator of luxury (Kapferer & Bastien, 2009). Moreover, beauty and pleasure are always linked to luxury, and successful directors of these brands are required to have artistic charisma and leadership style (Dion & Arnould 2011).

It is recognized that physical design makes corporate strategies visible (De-Mozota, 2003), reflects the corporate image (Weggeman et al., 2007), and positions establishments differently. This encourages leaders to consider design in their core strategies. It explains how servicescape relates to CCT by representing the different meanings of corporate identity, and also indicates how from a SDLperspective, servicescape can be manipulated as an operand resource that creates value. Despite the established relation between the servicescape's design and corporate image, the role of hotel interior design in reflecting the hotel identity is still overlooked, which heightens the need for further exploration of the meanings hotel interior design can convey, and how it represents the hotel's identity.

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2.4.2.5 Servicescape and marketing

Creating an influential atmosphere and design makes the difference between business success and failure, which makes it a critical marketing strategy (Turley & Milliman, 2000). Companies seek to differentiate their market offerings to gain a competitive advantage, make profits, and attract customers (Desai et al., 2001; Prahalad & Ramaswamy, 2004). This could be achieved through designing favourable service environments (Pareigis, Edvardsson & Enquist., 2011) because of the strong influence that the service environment has on consumer behaviour. Therefore, servicescapes may be considered a differentiating key through which service providers can compete. Thus they should guarantee that their service environments are appealing to their customers (Lin & Liang, 2011). This indicates that due to the increasing competition and the difficulty of differentiating service offerings, service providers can make efforts to create appealing service environments, which may be used as a competitive advantage and a fertile opportunity to differentiate (Lin & Liang, 2011). However, although servicescape design can add value and may confer competitive advantage, the relevance of this in the hotel industry still lacks theoretical support.

One area where servicescape may be relevant is in segmentation. Companies that apply the appropriate segmentation can benefit from potential sales increase in the future (Yelkur & Da-Costa, 2001). Markey, Ott, and Toit (2007) state that over five years, businesses that succeeded in targeting and reaching their exact segment increased their profits by fifteen per cent; on the other hand, businesses that failed to reach their exact segment increased their profits by five per cent only. This means that organisations should identify their customers in order to deliver the right product or service that fit them, to achieve higher profits. In the context of this study different aesthetic features and varied décor styles could be positioning elements to target the chosen segment. Recently, hotels have tried to offer customized services that match individual customers' requirements by assessing the needs of different customers, such as business or leisure travellers, in order to modify their service delivery accordingly. Service providers who understand the different needs and expectations of their customers can provide higher quality customized services (Mattila & Enz, 2002). One way to customize is through offering different designs.

Servicescape is also pertinent to pricing, especially in the current environmrnt where E-commerce influences pricing because of the intense competition and customers' ability to make instant comparisons (Yelkur & Da-Costa, 2001). Customers browse online and compare the available options mostly depending on photos, evaluate the options in relation to price and then choose the product that they believe offers the best value for money (Kotler & Rath, 1984). There is evidence that customers are willing to pay higher prices for better-looking products and services (Ladhari, 2009). This suggests that firms can offer different designs at different prices, and can attract customers who are willing to pay by offering them better designs. This means that physical design is an important marketing segmentation tool. The importance of marketing segmentation is increasing, especially with globalization, and servicescape offers service providers a tool to target their chosen segment, because service environments can be designed differently according to the different tastes, expectations, and requirements of their chosen segment (Lin, 2004). If such a strategy is efficiently applied, then the business will benefit and profits will increase. However, how hotel interior design may contribute to their marketing strategies and segmentation is stil not fully understood.

2.4.2.6 The role of servicescape in different service industries
2.4.2.6.1 Dinescape

Dining and restaurants are the most studied sector with regard to their physical environments (Jang & Namkung, 2009). Dining's servicescape is a significant part of the dining experience as it affects customers' emotions and creates mood (Jang & Namkung, 2009). In this respect, many studies have focused on the servicescape of dining and restaurants, to such an extent that a study suggested the term "Dinescape" (Ryu & Jang, 2008).

Several studies have examined the factors that influence customers' evaluation of restaurant quality, and the most popular models were DINESCAPE (Ryu and Jang, 2008) and DINESERV (Stevens, Knutson & Patton, 1995). Customers use the physical environment, food, and customer service as cues to judge the service quality, and the combination of these elements leads to satisfied and loyal customers (Jang &

Namkung, 2009). The primary factors that drive restaurant brand image and that may damage the image if they fail to deliver consistent messages are restaurant location, interior design and décor, service quality, food quality, and waiting time (Ryu & Jang, 2008). Although different studies explored different influential factors, some seem to be significant and are repeated in most of them such as atmosphere (Ryu & Jang, 2008), price (Han & Ryu, 2009), physical environment (Susskind & Chan, 2000), and indeed the food quality (Sulek & Hensley, 2004). Nevertheless, physical environment, food, service, and personnel attitudes are the most critical (Marinkovic, Senic, Ivkov, Dimitrovski & Bjelic, 2014).

Ryu, Lee and Kim (2012) conducted a study in a restaurant to examine the influence of food, service, and physical environment on the restaurant image, customer satisfaction, perceived value, and behavioural intentions. They reported that these factors were very important in shaping the restaurant image and perceived value which leads to customer satisfaction, which is a predictor of the behavioural intentions. They highlight that customer perceived value is the greatest mediator between emotional responses and behavioural intentions (Ryu et al., 2012). Additionally, Marinkovic et al. (2014) examined the impact of restaurants' atmosphere, interaction quality, and price on satisfaction and revisit intentions. They concluded that atmosphere and interaction quality were critical in customer satisfaction but price was not, although all three factors influence revisiting intentions. Ambience conditions including temperature, aroma, and music were found to be important in influencing guests' emotions and behavioural intentions (Marinkovic et al., 2014). It is evident that in the hospitality industry, customers seek psychological satisfaction within the social and emotional interaction (Levy, 2010). Thus, customers choose restaurants for different reasons such as hygiene, service, food, atmosphere, and value for money (Cousins, Foskett & Gillespie, 2002). Price is viewed monetarily as the actual set price for the service, and subjectively in terms of customer's experince and its perception of value (Han & Ryu, 2009). Restaurant prices are important to the extent that they could attract or deter customers, especially when they are perceived as an indicator for quality (Lewis & Shoemaker, 1997). Some researchers argue that fairness of price leads to satisfaction, while unfair prices cause dissatisfaction (Bei & Chiao, 2001). However, Jani and Han's (2011) restaurant study indicated that price does not affect satisfaction. Thus, the importance of price and its

influence on satisfaction is debatable, whereas the physical environment is agreed to be significant in all studies.

As explained above, the extensive literature on restaurants shows that a restaurant's servicescape is a critical factor in forming the dining experience. It may influence customers' choice, satisfaction, money spent in the restaurant, repatronage and recommendation (Milliman, 1986; Wakefield & Blodgett, 1996; Masoudi et al., 2013). However, to date, it is not clear whether hotel physical designs produce similar outcomes. The current study addresses this gap by investigating the different outcomes of hotel design.

2.4.2.6.2 Healthscape

Hutton and Richardson (1995) named healthcare facilities as 'Healthscape' modifying Bitner's (1992) servicescape framework, and combining it with Kotler's (1973) atmospherics. Various studies have explored the effect of natural cues on humans in a healthcare context. Medical and psychology researchers, for example, have studied the impact of hospital gardens on patients (Whitehouse et al., 2001). Recently, marketing researchers have become interested in this matter too. They are trying to understand the influence of the servicescape's natural stimuli on customers, its life restoration qualities, and the influences on approach and avoidance behaviours (Rosenbaum, 2009).

Kaplan's (1995) "Attention restoration theory (ART)" explores the restorative impact of servicescapes' natural stimuli, which are proved to help in different mental conditions and relieve stress (Kaplan, 1995). "According to ART, a person's ability to direct attention in thought and perception to challenging or unpleasant, but nonetheless important, environmental stimuli is a biological mechanism that becomes fatigued with use (Rosenbaum & Massiah, 2011, p. 479)". There are some symptoms that result from daily stress and are associated with directed attention fatigue, such as increased risk of accidents, difficulties with planning, and lower mental competence; and these symptoms increase when individuals focus on unpleasant stimuli for a long

time. However, these can be remedied and healed through focusing on natural stimuli instead, especially when spending time in beach, grass, park, and garden areas.

Han (2007) states that natural environments help people by offering them three general restorative stimuli: compatibility, being away, and fascination. Compatibility is when the natural setting or surrounding is able to give a human a sense of person-place congruency or sense of belonging (Morrin & Chebat, 2005) so they can act smoothly and openly without embarrassment or constraints. Being away is when the natural surrounding environment gives people the feeling that they are momentarily escaping to a different place and taking a break from their daily life, even if they are not far in distance (Rosenbaum & Massiah, 2011). Finally, fascination is when the person's attention is captured in a setting and can be held effortlessly (Kaplan, 1995). Examples of the most popular destinations for restorative purposes are botanical gardens, mountains, the seaside, and lakes (Kaplan, 1995).

Evidence of such restorative effects is reported in various contexts. For example, university students who overlook natural views from their rooms seem to perform better academically than those who overlook manufactured settings (Iwasaki, 2003). Also, hospital patients recover faster when they are exposed to appealing natural landscapes (Velarde, Fry & Tveit, 2007). The implication is that service facilities should consider the ART theory and the health potential by including natural cues in their designs. The aim of so doing is to create a restorative environment, fascinate customers and offer them the chance to escape and feel comfortable in their service encounters. This will eventually have a positive effect on them and on the service providers and managers too. In addition to natural cues, historically colours have been related to health and since then healing with colours has been common (Singh, 2006). For example, it is found that red increases blood pressure and energises the liver, orange increases calcium metabolism and strengthens the lungs, and purple lowers blood pressure (Singh, 2006). Blue is the most effective in stimulating the sympathetic nervous system, while green and red are the least effective. Interestingly this evidence contradicts the widespread beliefs that blue is associated with calmness and red with increasing metabolic state (Bellize & Hite, 1992). To date, however, the influence of natural cues on hotel guests is still unknown, and whether it captures their attention or whether it is considered as a design element or not is still to be discovered.

2.4.3 Consumer emotions and behaviours in servicescapes

2.4.3.1 Consumer emotions in servicescapes

Emotion is defined as: "a mental state of readiness that arises from cognitive appraisals of events or thoughts; [it] has a phenomenological tone; is accompanied by physiological processes; is often expressed physically (e.g., in gestures, posture, facial features); and may result in specific actions to affirm or cope with the emotions, depending on its nature and meaning for the person having it (Bagozzi, Gopinath, & Nyer, 1999, p. 184)". "Service emotions" are feelings resulting from the service encounter (Jani & Han, 2011). Consumption emotions are the emotional reaction provoked during the consumption process (Westbrook & Oliver, 1991). Studies have examined specific emotions such as joy and anger, or discussed emotions generally, such as positive and negative emotions (Westbrook & Oliver, 1991). Human beings are the most emotional species and that their emotions have a crucial influence on their everyday lives (Norman, 2004). There is research interest in the role of emotions in areas such as retailing, advertising, and buying behaviour; because consumption emotions may be mediators or indicators of customers' reactions (Ladhari, 2009). However, emotions do not exist without physical impacts and influences that drive them and generate them (Clay, 1908). Design and various physical artefacts are among these influences, as they create positive emotional responses (Jordan, 2003), and change emotional conditions. In turn, these conditions influence how minds solve problems and make decisions (Norman, 2004). In this study, the interior design of the hotel's servicescape is seen as a physical cue that influences emotions.

Emotions are a critical variable that influences customers, as they contribute in influencing choices among alternatives that may potentially satisfy customers' needs (Kim & Perdue, 2013). Nevertheless, although understanding customer choice is crucial for marketing success (e.g. Kotler, 1973), traditional choice models ignore the role of emotions and depend on cognitive evaluations (Pham, 1998). Such models ignore the types of products and services that rely tremendously on satisfying the emotional and aesthetic needs of customers (Kim & Perdue, 2013). In the hospitality sector, in particular, creating satisfying pleasant experiences that trigger positive emotions is essential (Lashley, 2008). Hence, it is important to understand customers and their emotions, in order to produce products and services that satisfy these needs.

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In recent years many academics have focused on customers' emotions and service experiences (Edvardsson, 2005), especially on how arousing positive emotions can enrich service experiences (Volo, 2009). This arousal is also known to increase satisfaction and bonding (Burns & Neisner, 2006), and build customer loyalty (Bagozzi et al., 1999). This indicates that researchers realized that customers' decisions are not always purely rational decisions based on utilitarian characteristics, but include emotional decisions that are evoked as a result of different marketing stimuli, brands, services, and products (Laros & Steenkamp, 2005). When studying emotions, especially with regard to consumer behaviour, they must be investigated with regard to their structure and content (Bagozzi et al., 1999).

Although numerous studies have examined customer emotions toward advertising (Batra & Stayman, 1990), great attention has been paid to emotions and their positive impact in the service context too. For example they were researched with regard to forming service experiences (Richins, 1997; Oliver, 1997; Mattila & Enz, 2002), consumption experiences (Westbrook, 1987), perceptions (Baker et al., 2002; Chang, 2000; Tsai & Huang, 2002), behavioural intentions (Baker ,Levy, & Grewal 1992; Sherman, Mathur,& Smith 1997), , price perceptions (Grewal & Baker, 1994), perceived value (Babin, Darden, & Griffin, 1994), spending levels, spending time amount, and revisiting intentions (Donovan & Rossiter, 1982; Yoo, Park, & MacInnis 1998). In contrast, negative emotions can occur, which will decrease both hedonic, and utilitarian value, and will influence consumer behaviour negatively (Babin & Attaway, 2000). An example of these behaviours is making customers less patient in waiting for services (Baker & Cameron, 1996). Table 5 illustrates examples of previous studies that have used emotions as their main variable.

Reference	Emotion measure used	Resulting structure
Edell and Burke (1987)	Edell and Burke (1987)	Upbeat, negative, and warm
Holbrook and Batra (1987)	Holbrook and Batra (1987)	Pleasure, arousal, and domination
Westbrook (1987)	Izard (1977)	Positive and negative affect
Olney et al. (1991)	Mehrabian and Russell (1974)	Pleasure and arousal
Holbrook and Gardner (1993)	Russell et al. (1989)	Pleasure and arousal
Mano and Oliver (1993)	Watson et al. (1988); Mano (1991)	Upbeat, negative and warm Positive and negative
Oliver (1993)	Izard (1977)	Positive and negative affect
Derbaix (1995)	Derbaix (1995)	Positive and negative affect
Steenkamp et al. (1996)	Mehrabian and Russell (1974)	Arousal
Nyer (1997)	Shaver et al. (1987)	Anger, joy/satisfaction, and sadness
Richins (1997)	Richins (1997)	Anger, discontent, worry, sadness, fear, shame, envy, loneliness, romantic love, love, peacefulness, contentment, optimism, joy, excitement, and surprise
Dube and Morgan (1998)	Watson et al. (1988)	Positive and negative affect
Phillips and Baumgartner (2002)	Edell and Burke (1987)	Positive and negative affect
Ruth et al. (2002)	Shaver et al. (1987)	Love, happiness, pride, gratitude, fear, anger, sadness, guilt, uneasiness, and embarrassment
Smith and Bolton (2002)	Smith and Bolton (2002)	Anger, discontent, disappointment, self-pity, and anxiety

Table 6 Overview of consumer research using emotions as a main variable (Laros & Steenkamp, 2005, p.1438)

The role of emotions is recognized; a study conducted by Kumar and Garg (2010) explored the link between harmony as an aesthetic principle and cognitive appraisals. It implied that customer emotions and aesthetic properties are linked together. The relationship between product design and emotions can be understood by focusing on either the design features and how customers respond to them (Orth & Malkewitz, 2008), or the psychological process of customer responses toward aesthetic information (Norman, 2004).

A study done by Mattila and Enz (2002) suggests that even in short service duration, customers' emotions and mood states affect their judgement toward the whole experience and the service provider. This indicates that emotions influence the judgment not only of service quality but of the whole experience. Customers' emotions have been considered as fundamental elements in understanding their perceptions toward service experiences because they evaluate experiences according to their emotional state (Mattila & Enz, 2002; Richins, 1997). Moreover, emotions have a strong impact on buying decisions, especially when there is a lack of cognitive information, specifically, for products chosen based on hedonic feeling, or when customers will be spending long hours in a service setting (Pham, 1998).

Traditionally, product design has been associated with functionality and performance. However, the establishment of design oriented companies such as Dyson and Apple

has changed this notion, as product design is now considered to be a strategic tool that creates customers' emotional value and influences their preferences. This has led businesses to believe in the power of design and employ it in their core strategies (Noble & Kumar, 2008). Emotional reaction is influenced by different individual factors such as customer goals, gender, culture and expertise (Bloch, 1995).

Emotions considerably influence the thinking process and encourage human motivation. Positive emotions in service encounters lead to positive reaction, less critical thinking, increased evaluation level of a service, spreading positive word of mouth and retention (Bitner 1992; Mattila & Enz, 2002). Functional design attributes may lead to satisfaction, and meet customers' expectations but that is not a long-term benefit. On the other hand, emotional value that design can trigger may offer the customer life time value by creating commitment, loyalty, and positive word of mouth; indeed, effective composition of different design elements may lead to functional differentiation and emotional value creation (Noble & Kumar, 2008).

2.4.3.1.1 How do servicescapes arouse emotions?

After realizing the importance of emotions, the relationship between these emotions and physical environments and why emotions are relevant must be understood. Different objects, persons, and events may trigger different emotions in customers, and these various emotions can be displayed in body gestures, voice tone, face expressions, and language (Mattila & Enz, 2002). In particular, the cues and ambient conditions in a servicescape influence the experience positively and lead to pleasant emotions by creating a sense of harmony with the overall décor of the place (Liu & Jang, 2009). Atmosphere has a substantial role in service settings as it provoke emotions and sensations, conveys the comfort and intimacy of the place, and influences perception and satisfaction, especially in dining experiences (Marinkovic et al., 2014). Colour and music are very important atmospheric elements that are able to provoke emotional reactions too (Ladhari, 2009). A pleasant environment can evoke excitement and reduce pressure, while unpleasant environments can influence customers' emotions negatively, such as causing anger (Baker et al., 2002).

Positive emotions in service facilities are evoked when the minimum expected standards are met and more effort is put into understanding customers and their needs, while negative emotions result when service providers fail to meet minimum expectations (Price, Arnould & Deibler, 1995). People make sense of reality by the experiential affective as well as the rational cognitive means (Kim & Perdue, 2013). In the case of hospitality guests, for example, they require services that not only provide logical value, but also engage with the senses by triggering fun, and feelings of excitement (Kim & Perdue, 2013). Although beautiful objects are historically proved to trigger significant responses in customers (Bloch et al., 2003), some designs can induce negative feelings like disgust or dislike, and trigger critical arguments (Bloch et al., 2003).

Commonly experienced emotions are produced due to different cognitive appraisals such as certainty, attention activity, responsibility, effort, pleasantness, and situation control; with the initial appraisals being pleasantness and attentional activities (Smith & Ellsworth, 1985). Subconsciously, the mentioned appraisals determine the need for more conscious and mental involvement, leading the customer to gather more information, classify the product information, interpret its meaning, evaluate it, and then fully make an aesthetic judgment and respond emotionally (Kumar & Garg, 2010). These cognitive appraisals may be used to explain how product design evokes emotions (Smith & Ellsworth, 1985). According to Desment (2002) product design triggers fourteen different emotions, which are: inspiration, desire, amusement, fascination, admiration, satisfaction, dissatisfaction, boredom, disappointment, contempt, disgust, pleasant surprise, unpleasant surprise and indignation. Nevertheless, it is still debatable whether emotions precede cognition or the opposite way around in individuals' different evaluation processes (Lin, 2004). In the servicescape context, some researchers argue that cognitive tastes come first (Lazarus, 1999), while others believe that emotional states come first, which indicates that confusion still exists (Pham, Cohen, Pracejus & Hughes, 2001).

The relationship between design and emotion has been suggested before (Norman, 2004), but has not been linked to business outcomes. Noble and Kumar (2008) suggest that design can create three kinds of value that are associated with emotions: affective, social, and altruistic value. Affective value refers to the emotions provoked

by using certain products, while the social value is the ability of products to help customers achieve their social goals such as social status, and improvement of self esteem, and finally altruistic value is products' ability to make customers feel that they are ethically and morally good, such as when they use green products or contribute to charity (Noble & Kumar, 2008). The importance of design depends on the reactions that these designs can produce. Positive emotions are strongly linked to positive marketing outcomes such as loyalty, attachment, and commitment (Noble & Kumar, 2008). This linkage explains the practice of emotional manipulation by creating designs, that focus predominantly on style and aesthetics rather than functional characteristics, to such an extent that the satisfaction offered due to pleasant design may outweigh functional deficits. Customers are documented to pay higher prices to possess such products (Julier, 2000).

Pre-consumption emotion seems to have a strong effect on customers too, as they enter a service encounter with a previous mood state (Kim & Mattila, 2010). For example, positive prior mood states will be associated with travelling for tourism or a wedding, while negative prior emotions occur when going to funerals and hospitals (Brown & Kirmani, 1999). Wang and Beise-Zee (2013) believe that work context controls business travellers' emotions before and during the service as they can feel psychologically exhausted, physically fatigued, frustrated and stressed (Rosenbaum & Massiah, 2011).

2.4.3.1.2 Types of consumers' emotions in servicescapes

Emotions can either be reactive or goal-directed. Reactive emotions are the emotional reactions of customers, which vary and depend on the service experience, while goal-directed emotions are the conscious feelings that customers are seeking to experience in services (Martin et al., 2008). Although emotion has been defined variously and widely from different angles, the important and appropriate aspects through which emotions should be defined are not agreed on (Desmet, 2002). Also, due to the crucial role emotions have on consumers' decision making, understanding the relation between designs, colours and emotional responses is essential for businesses and marketers (Norbert, 2000), and emotional value is a central goal for designers (Norman, 2004). The implication of this is that businesses can utilize these concepts

to change their consumers' behaviour by designing appealing services that generate positive emotions and therefore pleasurable and joyful experiences that lead to positive behaviours. However, to what extent is this relevant to the hotel industry is still vague.

Studies on the elicited emotional responses due to a consumption experience have reported that in service encounters these emotions are provoked due to both the utilitarian value and the pleasure of the consumption process (Kempf, 1999). Further to this, the role of atmospherics is greater in hedonic services because these services focus more on emotional arousal (Wakefield & Blodgett ,1994). Besides, customers stay longer in these kinds of service settings (Ha, & Jang, 2012). This indicates that in hedonic consumption conditions, environment elements become more important and influential on customers' satisfaction and behaviours (Bitner, 1992). This leads to considering hotels as a hedonic service that is logically linked to the guests' emotional reactions (Lashley, 2008), and also highlights the importance of the servicescapes in the hotel context.

Reviewing the literature on hedonic services suggests the importance of emotion (Slatten et al., 2009), as tourism is a hedonic service that can arouse sensations, emotions and experience reactions, which are the intangible core of services (Barsky & Nash, 2002; Otto & Ritchie, 1996; Slatten, et al., 2009). The atmosphere of hedonic services also arouses joy in customers' feelings (Barsky & Nash, 2002; Otto & Ritchie, 1996).

2.4.3.1.3 Servicesscape and satisfaction

Satisfaction is defined as "the individual's perception of the performance of the product or service in relation to his or her expectations" (Torres & Kline, 2013, p. 643). Customers expect aesthetic designs in service environments, and when the design meets their expectations and they perceive it as appealing, it leads to satisfaction. This can happen for several reasons, such as the delight of an aesthetic surrounding and the thought that service providers are concerned with their customers (Baker et al., 2002). The theoretical support for the relationship between physical environments and satisfaction is strong, suggesting that satisfaction is an important

value that servicescapes can offer to customers. Satisfying customers is key to businesses success (Ladhari, 2009). For example, satisfied customers usually do not look for alternatives and information or yield to competitor offerings (Lin & Liang, 2011). Customer satisfaction is able to increase market share, profitability, and return on investments (Hackl & Westlund, 2000). Nevertheless, theoretical support for how hotel design can influence their guests' satisfaction, and how that will influence hotel profitability is still lacking.

The relationship between satisfaction and emotion has been debated in previous studies with regard to considering satisfaction as an emotional concept or an evaluative assessment construct (Ladhari, 2009). Cronin, Brady & Hult (2000) believe that satisfaction in service environments depends on both the emotional and cognitive bases. Moreover, Nyer (1997) claims that satisfaction and joy can be considered as one factor and are positively associated with one another especially in service encounters. Satisfaction in modern marketing can be categorized into two types: transaction satisfaction that depends on the customer's judgment of an experience as a result of one specific purchase; and overall satisfaction, based on total experiences that depend on several previous purchases (Jones & Suh, 2000).

Mattila and Oneill (2003) strongly believe that price is a significant predictor of guests' satisfaction and highlight three factors that influence this satisfaction; staff attentiveness, guest room cleanliness, and maintenance. Nevertheless, the factors that are generally considered crucial in most of the literature are customer service and family friendliness. Both of these are service oriented (operant resources), which suggests a gap in understanding of the role of physical hotel design on the hotel selection process and satisfaction. Additionally, the relationship between physical environment and satisfaction has not been demonstrated in the hotel context, which heightens the need to explore the impact of hotel interior design on guests' satisfaction.

There has, however, been an increasing interest in the role of customer delight in the hospitality industry (Magnini, Crotts, & Zehrer, 2011). Although satisfaction and delight are separate notions, they are both emotions (Magnini et al., 2011). Some scholars believe that exceeding satisfaction may lead to delight, especially when hotel

experiences go beyond satisfaction for hotel guests (Torres & Kline, 2013). Others consider that an element of surprise is necessary to reach the delight level, especially with it being an important element in arousing positive emotions (Berman, 2005). Another view is that the strong emotions of pleasure and joy are critical for feelings of delight (Magnini et al., 2011). Generally, customer delight fulfills self-esteem, justice, and security. Customer delight is usually considered with regard to the disconfirmation paradigm or human emotions (Kumar, Olshavsky & King, 2001), or human needs fulfillment (Schneider & Bowen, 1999). Hotel guests express their happiness and delight when they experience extraordinary and unexpected things (Torres & Kline, 2013).

Torres and Kline (2013) have identified factors that can lead to delighted guests in a hotel context by analysing hotel feedback forms provided by customers. They concluded that the most repeatedly mentioned employee behaviours are being extra friendly, professional, able to solve problems, and taking care of customers. Moreover, they established that there are several types of delight: fulfillment, comparative, professional, charismatic, and problem resolution delight (Torres & Kline, 2013). However, feedback forms usually do not capture customers' emotions and can only show their perception toward hotel processing strategies (Barsky & Nash, 2002). Moreover, their study disregarded the role of the hotel's servicescape in creating delighted customers. This supports the value of the current study in investigating hotel interior design and whether it can lead to customers' delight or not.

Torres and Kline (2013) suggest that it is crucial to understand hotel customers' emotions better, especially the positive ones, to have the ability to improve operational effectiveness and impact customers' behaviours positively. This is specially so, in view of the contradictory findings in previous studies with regard to the relationship between satisfaction, word of mouth and loyalty. Emotions in hotel experiences are "hotel guests' self-declared mood state measured immediately after the service encounter and their displayed emotions during the interaction (Ladhari, 2009, p.311)". Hotel guest emotions are known to be evoked by grand architecture, employees, or other guests. Despite the clear role that triggering positive emotions for hotel guests has, no previous research has explored customers' emotions as a management tool. Moreover, in practice, when hotel managers ask guests for

feedback regarding the hotel stay, they do not ask how they felt during their stay, yet understanding guests' emotions may help them predict customers behaviour much more (Barsky & Nash, 2002). For instance, customers' emotions influence their purchases because how they feel toward a certain product or service will determine whether to buy it or not. Besides, these emotions will highly affect their satisfaction and repeating intentions (Barsky & Nash, 2002). Mattila and Enz (2002) believe that these emotions are significant in evaluating hotel service providers and the service environment itself.

As the above review, there has been an increasing interest in the role of emotions in understanding buying behaviours and consumption experiences (Mattila & Enz, 2002). Scholars are encouraged to pay more attention to the relationship between emotions and services because understanding customers' emotions in different experiences helps in defining satisfaction (Westbrook, 1987). Also, because customers are directly engaged in services, their emotions in the service encounter are more significant than toward advertising or daily shopping experiences, especially for services that last longer (Price et al., 1995). This justifies this study in examining the role of hotel interior design in evoking these significant emotions, especially as previous research has proved the ability of physical environments and servicescapes in particular to influence emotions (e.g. Kempf, 1999; Noble & Kumar, 2008). In view of the deficiency of previous measurement scales, and disagreements in descriptions and identifications of service emotions in previous studies, the following questions are asked:

❖ What is the impact of hotel interior design on customers' emotions?
❖ What emotions are triggered as a result of the hotel physical environment?

2.4.3.1.4 Measures of consumption emotions

In the attempt to understand different consumption emotions, researchers have identified sets of basic primary emotions and suggested several measures of consumption emotional responses over the years. Table 6 summarizes the most popular.

Common measures of consumption emotions	Explanation
"The differential emotional scale (Izard,1992)"	This theory argues that survival instincts drive the basic emotions and propose a scale that include ten emotions which are interest, enjoyment, anger, surprise, fear, distress, disgust, contempt, guilt, and shame (Barsky & Nash, 2002).
"Consumption emotion set (Richins,1997)"	This emotional set includes 43 emotional descriptions such as, angry, nervous, scared, worried, embarrassed, fulfilled, happy, optimistic, hopeful, excited, joyful, surprised, and amazed (Richins, 1997).
"The eight primary dimensions (Plutchik,1980)"	These eight basic emotions are joy, surprise, fear, acceptance, anger, disgust, sadness, and expectancy (Ladhari, 2009).
"Three dimensions in SOR model (Mehrabian & Russell, 1974)"	This model explored individuals' emotional responses toward environments and consisted of three primary emotions which are pleasure, arousal, and dominance (Mehrabian & Russell, 1974).
"Hierarchical consumer emotions model (Laros & Steenkamp, 2005)"	Their model comprises four basic negative emotions (shame, fear, anger, and sadness), and four basic positive emotions (love, pride, happiness, and contentment)(Ladhari, 2009).

Table 7 Measures of consumption emotions (Author)

Scholars have criticized the mentioned theories for having the negative emotions dominating, and on the ground that various daily everyday emotions are absent (e.g. Barsky & Nash, 2002). Richins (1997) argued that the previous emotion scales were incoherent because they ignored central emotions in people's lives such as the feeling of love. Besides, the terms used in these scales such as contemptuous, are unfamiliar and not part of customers' daily vocabulary. The clear limitation of the SOR scale is that it measures the general emotional state rather than specific experienced emotions (Richins, 1997). Finally, emotions are context-specific and may differ greatly. Thus, using and generalizing existing emotion measures to assess emotions is a shortcoming, especially in consumption contexts (Richins, 1997).

Consequently, Barsky and Nash (2002) point out that more in-depth knowledge about customers' emotions is still required. Acknowledging this and the widely existing disagreement, none of these emotional measurements seem to be robust enough, with approved emotional descriptions, to apply in this study. Addressing this gap, in depth

data will be collected to identify emotions that may result in a hotel context to develop a theoretical framework that will better help understanding the concept and can be used for future studies.

2.4.3.2 Consumer's behaviours in servicescapes

Behavioural intentions are "the likelihood of one's engaging in a particular behaviour (Oliver, 1997, p. 974), while consumer behaviour is defined as: "the behaviours that consumers display in searching for, purchasing, using, evaluating and disposing of products and services that they expect will satisfy their needs (Schiffman, Kanuk, &Hansen, 2012; p. 2)". Individuals buy products and choose services for different reasons, and different influences such as demographic differences may lead customers to vary in their buying behaviours and preferences (Williams, 2002). Moreover, customers' perceptions of products and services may be affected by factorssuch as packaging, price, quality, brand image, brand position, reputation, and place of purchase (Mason, 2007). One other fundamental factor that impacts customers' behaviours and their buying intentions is the physical environment (Joseph-Mathews, et. al., 2009; Orth et. al., 2012). Favourable physical surroundings are reported to induce consumers' passion, supporting behaviour, attachment, loyalty, and positive word of mouth (Noble & Kumar, 2008).

Environmental elements such as scent, music, lighting, and fabrics work together in triggering arousal and pleasure, which then lead to buying and behavioural intentions (Baker et al., 2002), influence product and service preferences (Orth & Malkewitz, 2008), increase the probability of purchasing (Kotler,1973), lead to spending more time and money (Donovan & Rossiter, 1982), increase re-patronage intentions (Wakefield & Brodgett, 1996), increase the desire to stay more and longer (Wakefield & Brodgett, 1996), increase recommendation to others (Ladhari, 2009), and increase the willingness to pay higher prices for services (Bloch, Brunel, & Arnold, 2003).

The influence of art on behaviour has been explained in terms of the logic of art and the existence of universal aesthetic principles; the evolutionary logic of how these principles form and why; and finally the physiological mechanisms involved

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(Ramachandran & Hirstein, 1999). These theories are relevant for marketing because of the emotional impact of that design on consumers' decision making (Kumar & Garg, 2010). A study by Wakefield and Blodgett (1996) examined the impact of the football stadiums' aesthetics, cleanliness, electronic equipment, seating comfort, and layout accessibility on customers satisfaction and perceived quality and how in turn that may influence the amount of time they would stay and their intention to return. Their study concluded that a leisure servicescape is an important determinant of customers' behavioural intentions, especially re-patronage and the amount of time customers spend in a service facility.

Behavioural intentions can be broadly categorised into two types, favourable and unfavourable. Favourable behaviours include positive word of mouth, loyalty, paying premium prices, and spending more money with the company. On the other hand, unfavourable behaviours include spending less money with the company, leaving the company, and negative word of mouth (Ladhari, 2009). The SOR model by Mehrabian and Russell (1974), referred to earlier, is widely cited with regard to the influence of servicescapes on emotional states that leads to approach- avoidance responces and this relationship is confirmed in the literature (e.g. Donovan and Rossiter, 1982; Joseph-Mathews et al., 2009). Yalch and Spangenberg (2000) suggest that based on the type of behaviours, approach-avoidance behaviours can be grouped into four categories: time, exploration, communication, and satisfaction. These categories are exemplified by, Mehrabian and Russell (1974), Donovan and Rossiter (1982), and Bitner (1992), who categorized these responses as follows: 1. The physical desire to stay in (approach) or leave (avoid) an environment. 2. The willingness to explore (approach) or remain inanimate (avoid) in the environment. 3. The desire to communicate with others (approach) or avoid communication with others (avoid) in the environment. 4. The enhancement (approach) or hindrance (avoid) of satisfaction with the service providers. The specific behaviours that were commonly studied as outcomes of the environment elements will be discussed next.

Word of mouth is one of the common behavioural outcomes that has been studied before (Jayawardena et al., 2013). Positive word of mouth is defined as "saying positive things and recommending the service to others (Ladhari, 2009, p. 313), and recommendation is "readiness to communicate about a service provider offered by an

existing customer who is perceived not to obtain monetary gain from so doing (Host & Knie-Andersen, 2004, p. 31)". Host and Knie-Andersen (2004) describe customers who recommend a service and spread positive word of mouth as ambassadors of the company and thus, they believe that they represent value for the company. As mentioned earlier, a pleasant physical environment leads to positive word of mouth (e.g. Noble & Kumar, 2008). Jayawardena, et al. (2013) claim that creating a memorable, pleasant experience will lead to positive tweets from customers. This shows that physical environments may lead to pleasant experiences and eventually positive word of mouth in many ways, including traditional word of mouth and the new form of word of mouth using social media applications such as twitter. However, there is still a clear gap in knowledge regarding the relationship between hotel physical design and guests' word of mouth.

Another behavior examined is loyalty, defined as "a commitment to patronize a product or service consistently in the future, despite the marketing efforts of competitors (Torres & Kline, 2013, p. 645). Customer loyalty influences their preference and therefore increases profitability (Ladhari, 2009). Although customer satisfaction has been widely studied, the relationship between satisfaction and loyalty remains debatable and questionable (Skogland & Siguaw, 2004). Literature suggests that loyalty can be behavioural and attitudinal; as a result individuals may be attitudinally loyal but not behaviourally and vice-versa. For example, that customers may be mentally loyal but not repeat a visit. Attracting and retaining customers is crucial for profits and success. Yet, customer loyalty demands strong desire and availability of choices, even in the hotel industry where the number of people travelling is increasing and number of available hotels is booming too (Nunes & Spelman, 2008). As a result, Haywood (1988) suggest that hotels can encourage loyalty by continuity, and can apply continuity through making the patronage process easy (e.g. reservations), making it easy for customers to find products and services that suit them, and finally showing customers how hotels can facilitate their different desires, especially in specific periods (e.g. Valentine's day packaging) (Knutson et al., 2009). However, the role of hotel physical design on loyalty is still unclear.

The length of time customers spend in the service facility is very important, because the more time customers spend, the more money they are likely to spend (Oneill,

1992). Therefore, service managers should increase their efforts to create pleasant satisfying servicescapes to encourage customers to stay for longer and spend more in turn. A theoretical base for this relationship in a hotel context is still unavailable, and is one of the contributions of this study.

Willingness to pay more is defined as "the intention of a customer to pay a higher price than competitors charge for the benefits that the customer currently receives from the service provider (Ladhari, 2009, p. 314)". White and Yu (2005) believe that positive emotions such as happiness are positively linked with the willingness to pay higher prices. In the same way Barsky and Nash (2002) argue that hotels that can trigger strong positive emotions in their customers may easily charge higher room rates without facing any resistance from them. This suggests that providing pleasant designs leads to satisfaction, and gives the opportunity to charge higher prices as customers are willing to pay higher prices for better designs, especially those that will influence their emotions positively.

Another behavior frequently researched is revisiting, is the customers' continued engagement with the same service provider in the future (Ryu et al., 2012). This behaviour is a well-established managerial goal and a key element of loyalty as it provides long-term profitability (Marinkovic et al., 2014). Buying behaviour and retaining customers have gained clear attention in recent studies (Yoo, Lee, & Bai, 2011), because keeping and retaining customers is more cost-effective than attracting new customers by measuring their lifetime value (Torres & Kline, 2013). Whether customers repeat the visit or not, is a key consideration for service providers and managers. Some customers may initially visit a service establishment because they are interested in the primary service but that does not guarantee that they would repeat the visit, because if they are not satisfied with the physical design of the service environment, they may not re-patronize. Hence, it is suggested that service prviders should always evaluate their physical servicescapes by customers' comments, visual inspections, and by comparison with competitors to fully satisfy customers and encourage them to return (Wakefield & Blodgett, 1996).

In summary, the goal of service providers is to encourage favourable behavioural intentions in customers, to make them revisit and spread positive word of mouth and

be loyal toward the service provider (Jani & Han, 2013). In the hotel context in particular, if these intentions are positive, then customers are likely to spread positive word of mouth about the hotel and revisit it, which eventually will increase hotel profits (Jani & Han, 2013). Ekinci et al. (2008) propose that a tidy interior and pleasant atmosphere are significant antecedents of customers' revisiting intentions, and satisfaction is also proved to be an important antecedent for revisiting intentions (Quintal & Polczynski, 2010). Given the competitive nature of the market, practitioners and researchers need to find ways to generate guests' positive behavioural intentions, because these behaviours are critical for hotels' success (Jani & Han, 2013). Hence, the present study proposes that the concept of servicescape and hotel interior design may offer a pleasant permanent offering that contributes to the formation of favourable behavioural intentions.

Nevertheless, the literature review revealed a lack of explanation of the role of hotel physical design on all the mentioned behaviours; on the other hand, studies that have supported a positive relationship between servicescapes and behavioural outcomes, did not discuss the hotel context. Conversely, previous studies that explored buying behaviours in a hotel context did not examine them with regard to hotels' physical design. Therefore, the following questions are asked:

- ❖ What is the impact of hotel interior design on customers' behaviours?
- ❖ What behavioural outcomes can be induced as a result of hotel interior design

Servicescapes have a great impact on several marketing activities; this suggests that organizations can manipulate that to achieve their goals. One crucial reason why physical settings are very important is due to their ability to evoke customers' emotions and therefore impact their behaviours. This relationship is widely established and will be discussed next.

2.4.3.3 The affirmative relationship between consumers' emotions and behaviours

The empirical and theoretical evidence has proposed that a positively perceived environment triggers positive emotions that lead to positive behavioural intentions

(Ha, & Jang, 2012). Kotler (1973) argued that environmental cues within the service environment, such as colour, noise, scent, and shapes, can trigger certain emotions that will in turn influence purchasing probability. Mehrabian and Russell (1974) also agree that servicescape's cues can be manipulated to generate certain behaviours. Although Kotler (1973) was the first to suggest the concept of manipulating environmental cues to influence consumer behaviour, several studies have considered this approach (e.g. Hooper, Coughlan & Mullen, 2013). This indicates that in the hotel industry customers' emotions may help in predicting their behavioural intentions, such as their ability to pay higher prices or recommend to others, which highlights the importance of manipulating these emotions (Ladhari, 2009).

Emotions have been shown to affect a variety of consumer behaviours, including time spent at store (Mummalaneni, 2005), desire to leave a store (Chebat & Michon, 2003), word of mouth (Mummalaneni, 2005; White & Yu, 2005), spending levels (Donovan & Rossiter, 1982), and retail choice and preference (Chebat & Michon, 2003). Nevertheless, although several studies have agreed on the influence emotions have on customers behaviours, there is not a definite clear theory regarding the relationship between them (Bigne, Andreu, & Gnoth, 2005). On the other hand, in applied practices, many researchers such as Baker et al. (2002) believe that physical environments including colour, lighting, signs, style, décor, and layout have great impact on customers' emotions and behaviours. As a result, different organizations try to control their physical environment to increase customers' positive and affective behaviours (Bitner, 1992).

Furthermore, the relationship between behavioural intentions and satisfaction has been reported to have a positive impact on the profitability of the hospitality industry (Han, Back & Barrett, 2010). Research attention has been directed to the relationship between emotional responses and cognitive evaluations (Bigne, Mattila, & Andreu, 2008). Affective process or emotional response has been studied in relation to consumer behaviour, which has increased the focus of several researchers in the field. For example, several studies have focused on customers' responses toward advertising (Batra & Stayman, 1990), some explored the emotion generated by use of specific products (e.g. Mehrabian & Wixen 1986), or aroused by certain services (e.g.

Oliver 1994). Others examined the relationship between satisfaction and consumption emotions (e.g. Westbrook 1987).

In general, previous studies have established that emotions have critical impact on consumer behaviour (e.g. Richins, 1997). The influence of servicescapes on customers' emotions and therefore their behaviours was also confirmed (e.g. Ha, & Jang, 2012). Examples of these behaviours are time spent, repeating intentions, and spending levels (Donovan & Rossiter, 1982; Lin & Liang, 2011). However, to date, a conceptual framework that explains the relationship between customers' emotions and behaviours in the hotel context and especially as an outcome of the hotel interior design is still not available. Addressing this gap is one of the main objectives of this study. The next part will review the literature related to the context of the study, including the hotel industry and globalization.

2.5 Summary of research gaps and research questions

This chapter has identified the main gaps in knowledge, which gave rise to the research questions. A lack of theoretical research regarding hotel design as part of the hotel marketing core strategies was highlighted. This reinforces the need for the current study to establish a robust theory that addresses this gap and may be used for future research and studies. The main identified gaps are as follows: First, although there is an increasing interest in SDL and CCT among marketing research, they have been studied separately. Several researchers have called for their integration, but to date only a few researchers have responded to their calls (Arnould, 2006; Penaloza & Mish, 2011). In addition, the role of servicescapes and their interior design in these two theories is still not understood. Therefore, this research integrates these two theories. In particular, the value creation concept of SDL is linked to the meaning creation concept in CCT to explore the role of hotel interior design through their lenses. Integrating them with regard to the context of this study also means that the role of servicescapes and, in particular, interior design in specific should be incorporated in these two theories.

Second, the discrepancy in views toward the perception and different divisions of the servicescapes has heightened the need to understand how customers perceive interior design in a hotel context. In addition most of the studies carried out on the impact of servicescapes' elements on buying behaviour have tended to focus on single elements such as colour (e.g. Funk & Ndubisi, 2006), music (e.g. Dube et al., 1995, 2007), or lighting (Areni & Kim, 1994). This suggests that little is known about the holistic impact of servicescapes and points to a need to investigate the influence of the servicescape as a whole, or a mixture of several dimensions of it, as several researchers have highlighted (Reimer & Kuehn, 2005; Spangenberg et al., 2005, 2006; Ezeh & Harris, 2007; Walter et al., 2010).

Third, minimal consumer research has been conducted to identify the specific important interior design elements or break down the physical design factor in services, especially from a consumer perspective. A gap still exists in understanding the dimensions of physical environments. Conceptually previous models that used servicescapes and atmospheric elements were not grounded (e.g. Countryman & Jang, 2006; Orth & Malkewitz, 2008). In other words, a theoretical basis for interior design elements within the hotel context is lacking. Studying these elements through the CCT lens suggests that these elements symbolize meanings for customers. However, what meanings hotel interior design can convey are still not clear. Understanding these elements will provide a base for exploring what customers consider part of the hotel interior design. This in turn will assist in comprehending the significant cues in servicescapes that are influential, and that should be considered by hotel marketers and managers.

Fourth, a clear gap was identified in understanding of the role of hotel interior design especially in how it complements the service. Studying it through SDL may clarify how hotel design acts as an operand resource and creates value but what value hotel interior design can create or add to the hotel industry have not been explored. Particularly, how design elements provoke and impact emotions, what behaviours result from these emotions, and the relation between these and value creation, is yet to be discovered. This indicates the need for research in the services sector regarding value creation, emotional effects and behavioural intentions, especially on the design of services' physical facilities and their impact on customers' emotional reactions

(Slatten et al., 2009; Kumar & Garg, 2010; Coates, 2003). Research is required on how interior design aspects relate to environmental psychology and different emotions in order to understand the interior design consumer behaviour interface (Orth, Heinrich, & Malkewitz, 2012). In the same way, Rosenbaum and Massiah (2011) called for further theoretical research to investigate the impact of natural, social, symbolic and physical stimuli on consumer behaviour (Rosenbaum& Massiah, 2011). This highlights the demand to reveal the different emotions and behaviours that result as an outcome of service physical facilities and hotel interior design in particular.

Finally, regarding the context and sample of the study, researchers have spent considerable effort on different service settings, especially retail (e.g. Lin & Liang, 2011), and restaurants (e.g. Jang & Namkung, 2009), but have expended much less effort on hotels, although a great amount of money is spent in them, and competition is increasing in this industry (Barsky & Nash, 2002; Ramanathan & Ramarathan, 2011). Although several roles of servicescapes and designs are established in various service settings, up to this date, the role of hotel interior design has not been investigated. This justifies the need for the current study and the choice of the hotel industry specifically. Apart from this, the globalization concept is widely spreading and among the service industries, hotels are the most globalized (Whitla et al., 2007; Yu et al., 2013). This globalization has generated a new segment, which is cosmopolitan consumers (Cleveland et al., 2011). Nevertheless, there is still a lack of understanding of these consumers and how they perceive or are influenced by the hotel interior design. Therefore, this study focuses on this segment and explores the concept of hotel interior design from their perspective.

Addressing these research gaps, the current study is intended to build a robust base that will fill the gaps in knowledge and may be used for future research. The key point is that the gathered information reflects cosmopolitan consumers' point of view and is interpreted through the lenses of SDL and CCT. Accordingly, reviewing the literature and recognizing the gaps have highlighted the need to answer these questions:

❖ How do cosmopolitan consumers perceive interior design in a hotel context?
❖ What hotel interior design elements are the most influential, especially in

creating value for customers and conveying meanings to them?

❖ What is the role of hotel interior design, and what impacts does it have?

2.6 Summary

In summary, it should be acknowledged at the end of this chapter that the study could have taken a number of directions i.e. segmentation, supply side differentiation, and branding through design study. However, this chapter has brought together previous studies and theories from different disciplines and backgrounds, including design, architecture, services, psychology, and marketing to understand the importance of servicescapes in general and how customers perceive them. This review has highlighted clear gaps in knowledge and great opportunities to explore further. It was revealed that there is a lack of research in the hotel industry, and that the relationship between design and business success is still vague. Therefore, the study will focus purely on consumer perceptions, as this is the area that is least well addressed in previous research especially cosmopolitan segment. Due to the need to for deep and rich information, a qualitative research with a phenomenological strategy was considered appropriate for the current study. Therefore, the next chapter will explain the methodology applied for this study.

CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

The aim of this study is to examine the perception and role of interior design in the hotel context from cosmopolitan consumers' point of view. Although the role of interior design is clear in daily life and managerial activities, minimal consumer research in the hotel industry has been conducted to identify the influential elements of interior design and capture their impact on customers, especially the emotional and behavioural outcomes. Consumer perceptions toward interior design are subjective, as these are constructed in their minds. Therefore, they may have different perceptions toward it. To address the aims of the research, rich data that could help in understanding the phenomena in more details is required. As a result, an interpretivist research paradigm was employed, and qualitative data were collected through semi-structured interviews. The aim of this chapter is to explain why this was considered the most suitable approach to fully address the purpose of the research, and how it was implemented.

Methodology is an important step of every research. It is the process that explains how the research must be done, by choosing the best methods and techniques that seem relevant to the research topic and problem (Bryman, 2008). Mcgivern (2003) argues that a research design is the key to building a good quality research and defines it as the framework of the research. Therefore, since high quality research depends on the choice of an appropriate methodology, this chapter links theory to the empirical work conducted to address the research questions. This chapter will first discuss the research philosophy of this study. Next it will identify the employed research approach and strategy, followed by the research methods. Then the data collection procedure and data analysis process will be discussed. Finally, quality and ethical considerations will be explained.

3.2 Research Philosophy

It is important to start a research with philosophical assumptions about the required knowledge that should be developed from the research (Creswell, 2003). These philosophical assumptions should include both ontological and epistemological ones. Ontology is about the form and nature of reality and how the researcher views the way the world operates (House, 1991). According to the ontological assumption the researcher can apply either an objectivist perspective, which means that social phenomena are assumed to exist independently of social actors, or a subjectivist perspective that views social phenomena as a direct consequence of social actors' actions (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). From an objectivist perspective reality is not mediated by our senses, however from a subjective perspective reality is individually constructed, there are as many realities as individuals (Frowe, 2001). On the other hand, epistemology can be defined as the "branch of philosophy that studies the nature of knowledge and what constitutes acceptable knowledge in a field of study" (Saunders et al., 2012, p. 591). It is concerned with the study of knowledge and what is considered valid in it (Collis & Hussey, 2003). These two types of philosophical assumptions may also have an effect on the choice of research paradigm.

There are many definitions of a paradigm in the literature and three are offered here. According to Collis and Hussey (2003), a paradigm is "the progress of scientific practice based on people's philosophies and assumptions about the world and the nature of knowledge" (Collis & Hussey, 2003, p. 46). In the same way, Creswell (2007) argue that "stating a knowledge claim means that researchers start a project with certain assumptions about how they will learn and what they will learn during their inquiry. These claims might be called paradigms" (Creswell, 2007: p.6). He also argues that the term paradigm is sometimes interchanged with the term philosophy. Neuman (2006) describes a paradigm as "a general organizing framework for theory and research that includes basic assumptions, key issues, models of quality research, and methods for seeking answers" (Neuman, 2006, p. 81). According to these definitions, the research paradigm is a set of belief. Researchers on research methodology distinguish between two extreme paradigms: the positivistic and the interpretivist. The first paradigm is usually associated with quantitative research and the second with qualitative research (Bryman & Bell 2003; Flick 2014; Collis &

Hussey 2003; Neumanm, 2006). As a result, researchers should be aware of the main differences between paradigms before choosing the ones that will be applied in their research.

Positivism can be defined as "an epistemological position that advocates the application of the methods of the natural sciences to the study of social reality and beyond" (Bryman & Bell, 2003, p. 14). Positivism focuses on measurement of social phenomena (Collis & Hussey, 2003). This approach requires the researcher to be objective (Bryman, 2008). The methodology in a positivist research should be highly structured and the research should be conducted in a value-free way (Saunders et al., 2009). In addition, the positivist paradigm produces quantitative data that is extremely precise and reliable, is based on large samples, tests hypothesise, and has findings which can be generalised from the sample to the population (Hussey & Hussey, 1997).

On the other hand, the interpretivist paradigm focuses on the meaning of social phenomena (Collis & Hussey, 2003). This paradigm can be defined as "an epistemological position that requires the social scientist to grasp the subjective meaning of social action" (Bryman & Bell, 2003, p. 570). The interpretivist paradigm requires the researcher to be subjective, as the researcher cannot be separated from the study and will be part of it (Bryman, 2008). Other concepts that must be considered by the researcher when choosing the interpretivist paradigm are differences among respondents, which is what makes this type of research different from research about objects, and that the research will be value bound (House, 1991).

Interpretivism produces qualitative data that is rich and subjective, uses small samples, and generates theories (Hussey & Hussey, 1997). The validity of generalising the results of an interpretivist study is debatable as some argue that it is impossible to generalise this type of study (Guba & Lincoln, 1994), while others believe that the result of an interpretivist study can be generalised (Hussey & Hussey, 1997; Williams, 2000). Whether the research can be generalised or not depends on how the research has been carried out in terms of the methodology, how the sample is chosen and whether the researcher can support the argument that his or her research can be generalised.

Comparing both the paradigms discussed above, it can be concluded that the ontology of positivism makes a separation between reality and the researcher, while interpretivism considers reality and researcher to be inseparable as the researcher is part of the study (Weber, 2004). In addition, the epistemology of positivism suggests that objective reality exists beyond the human mind, whereas interpretivism suggests that knowledge of the world is intentionally constituted through a person`s lived experience (Scotland, 2012). After understanding the main differences and features of the available paradigms, and considering the aims and objectives of the current study, the interpretivist paradigm was adopted in this study and the justification for this will be explained in the next section.

3.2.1 Justification for adopting the interpretivist paradigm

The main objective of this study is to understand how hotel guests perceive their surrounding environment and what impacts hotel interior design has on them. This research is exploratory in nature, and interpretivism is the most appropriate paradigm to apply. This paradigm was chosen firstly because this paradigm is known to produce in-depth information that helps to provide an understanding of people's feelings and behaviours and what things mean to them (House, 1991; Rowlands, 2005; Scotland, 2012;). Further to this, the interpretivist paradigm concentrates on understanding the meaning of a phenomenon rather than the measurement (Burrell & Morgan, 1979; Bryman, & Bell, 2003), which is consistent with the aim of this study.

Secondly, as has been discussed in the literature review chapter, previous research showed a lack of deep undrestaning in this area of research. Hence, there was a need to gather rich qualitative data that would aid better understanding of the concept, especially because the perceptions and role of hotel design from customers' point of view have been overlooked. To better understand the perceptions of customers, it was essential to have direct interaction with them in order to achieve deep understanding of this phenomenon from their perspective (Baker, Wuest, & Stern, 1992; Goulding, 1999). In such situations, the researcher is integral part of the world being studied and the distance between the researcher and the research is minimised. This made the

interpretivist approach suitable for this research and qualitative data was collected through interviews.

3.3 Research approach

There are two research approaches: the inductive and the deductive (Easterby-Smith, Golden-Biddle & Locke, 2008). The inductive approach can be defined as "a study in which theory is developed from the observation of empirical reality; thus general inferences are induced from particular instances" (Collis & Hussey, 2003, p. 349), while the deductive can be defined as "a study in which a conceptual and theoretical structure is developed which is then tested by empirical observation; thus particular instances are deduced from general inferences" (Collis & Hussey, 2003, p. 346). According to Kalof, Dan, and Dietz (2008), the deductive approach is used to test theory, and the inductive is used to develop a theory. This indicates that the deductive approach is usually linked to the positivist paradigm, as this requires the researcher to be objective; while the inductive approach is linked with the interptivist paradigm and the researcher who follows this approach should be subjective (Whetten, 1989; Weber, 2004).

The interpretivist paradigm was chosen for this research and qualitative data were collected through interviews. In addition, the aim of this research was to develop a theory after collection and analysis of the data. The collected data was expected to assist in building a robust framework as the final outcome of this study. As a result, the inductive approach was more appropriate for this research as it was not the aim to test an existing theory because of the lack of studies in this area of research; but to shed light on understanding cosmopolitan consumers' insights toward hotel interior design, and to develop a theory based on collected data. Hence, the inductive approach was used for this research and the justification for that will be explained next.

3.3.1 Rationale behind choosing inductive approach

There is a clear shortage of strong contributions and novel ideas in management studies. The common traditional approach in organization studies is the focus on construct elaboration. Constructs are abstract theoretical formulations about

phenomena of interest, and the purpose of these formulations is to operationalize and quantify their variables (Edwards & Bagozzi, 2000). However, this approach hinders theorists from concept development (Gioia, Corley & Hamilton, 2013). A concept is a "less well-specified notion capturing qualities that describe or explain a phenomenon of theoretical interest. Put simply, in our way of thinking, concepts are precursors to constructs in making sense of organizational worlds—whether as practitioners living in those worlds, researchers trying to investigate them, or theorists working to model them." (Gioia et al., 2013, p. 16). In order to address this gap in concept development, the essence of experiences need to be understood, and their processes explained within the nature of social world (Langley, 1999). In the same way, Alvesson and Sandberg (2014) criticize the common focus on construct elaboration as potentially hindering the development of imaginative and interesting research and having dominating norms of knowledge instead.

Consequenly, there are two proposed ways to solve this problem: problematization (Alvesson & Sandberg, 2013) and box- breaking (Alvesson & Sandberg, 2013). Problematization involves "questioning the assumptions underlying one's own meta-theoretical position. The ambition is of course not to totally undo one's own position, but only to unpack it sufficiently so that some of one's ordinary held assumptions can be scrutinized and reconsidered in the process of constructing novel research questions" (Alvesson & Sandberg, 2013, p. 145). On the other hand, box-breaking research is "an alternative strategy for how researchers and institutions can move away from the prevalent box mode research and thereby able to generate more imaginative and influential research. Box-breaking research trajectories encourage researchers to broaden their intellectual territory and research competence by moving beyond their specific research boxes to also consider the resources and ideas of other research boxes and intellectual terrains" (Alvesson & Sandberg, 2014, p.2).

As this study's final outcome the development of the "Hotelscape" framework, illustrates, this study was concerned to develop concept rather than test constructs. Therefore, an inductive approach was found more suitable. Prior to collecting data, the established theories of physical environments (e.g. SOR, servicescape) were problematized and their assumptions challenged. This problematization heightened the need for further investigations and rich data. Moreover, the "Hotelscape"

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framework may be considered as "box-breaking" as it adds new insights that were not understood before, and it is interesting because it integrates different disciplines (e.g. art, psychology, business) and theories (e.g. SDL, CCT, Servicescape) from various backgrounds, it explores a new interesting sample (cosmopolitan consumers), and examines an overlooked context (hotel industry). Finally, the role and benefits of design for business success is a new topic that has been little studied in the past especially in a hotel context.

3.4 Research strategy

According to the methodological literature, there are two main categories of research strategies; the first category is quantitative while the second category is qualitative (Hennink et al., 2011; Bryman & Bell, 2003; Easterby-Smith et al., 2008). There are several differences that influence the choice of a qualitative or a quantitative research strategy. Both of these strategies have advantages and shortcomings, and various phenomena require different methods and techniques in research (Saunders et al., 2009). The objective of quantitative research is to quantify data and extrapolate results to a broader population; hence data are numbers and a large sample of representative cases is required (Hennink et al., 2011). In addition, quantitative research is related to the deductive approach that tests theories (Bryman, 2012). Due to using large samples the findings can be generalised to a broader population, and this type of research leads to identification of frequencies, correlations or statistical patterns.

In contrast, qualitative research is research that provides understanding and explanation of a research problem (Rowlands, 2005). It also helps in understanding behaviours, beliefs, and experiences, and few participants are needed to gain in depth information (Bryman & Bell, 2003). It normally emphasizes words rather than numbers in collecting and analysing the data. It is also associated with the inductive approach, as this strategy helps in generating theory (Scotland, 2012). In addition, qualitative research is used for wide applications, especially understanding how people make decisions, their behaviours, opinions, and emotions, and what meanings they give to their experiences, from the participants' own view (Hennink et al., 2011). Qualitative research is a "set of interpretive activities that seeks to understand the

situated meaning behind actions and behaviours, and relies heavily on the researcher as a unique interpreter of the data" (Sinkovics & Alfoldi, 2012, p. 818). Although it is argued that qualitative research results cannot be generalized, it is important in understanding and solving problems in business, especially in consumer behaviour, decision making, and initial discoveries (Batra, 2014). The ontological assumption of this strategy is that reality is subjective and that participants may have different views toward the reality, while the epistemological assumption is that the researcher is part of what is being researched (House, 1991). Taking into consideration the research aim, which was to understand how hotel guests perceive the hotel servicescape, and how it influences them from their own point of view, and what meanings they interpret from design elements, the appropriate research strategy for this study was qualitative.

3.4.1 Qualitative research strategies

According to Creswell (2003) the research strategies that are associated with a qualitative approach are ethnography, grounded theory, case study, phenomenology, and biography. Saunders et al. (2009) say that "no research strategy is inherently superior or inferior to any other" (Saunders et al., 2012, p.141). Thus, different strategies serve different objectives, and researchers should consider which strategy can best answer their research questions. Each of these strategies has different focus. For example the focus of biography is exploring the life of an individual, while phenomenology focuses in understanding the essence of experiences with a phenomenon (Creswell, 1998). The case study focuses on developing an in-depth analysis of a single case or multiple cases, while the focus of grounded theory is developing a theory grounded in data from the field (Creswell, 1998). After comparing these different strategies, phenomenology was chosen as it suited the purpose of this research best, as will be explained and justified next.

3.4.2 Phenomenology

Phenomenology was introduced by Husserl (1859-1838) as a new way of doing philosophy (Finlay, 2009). Later theorists, such as Heidegger (1889-1976), have altered the phenomenological movement, by focusing on a more methodological approach and elaborating existential and hermeneutic (interpretive) dimensions rather

than focusing on the essences and consciousness of phenomena from a philosophical perspective (Finlay, 2009).

Phenomenology is "a qualitative method that focuses on human experience as a topic in its own right. It is concerned with meaning and the way in which meaning arises in experience" (Kafle, 2013, p. 182). Phenomenology aims to "focus on people's perceptions of the world in which they live in and what it means to them; a focus on people's lived experience" (Langdridge, 2007, p.4). Phenemonology "does not intend to capture a rigid categorization of experiences but to present the underlying structures supporting the development of a theoretical understanding without suppressing the variability within consumer experiences" (Nuttavuthisit, 2014, p. 434). Phenomenology as methodology and philosophy is used in consumer and organizational research in order to develop understanding of difficult issues that may not be understood directly in surface responses (Goulding, 2005). The experiences and views of the participants themselves are the only legitimate source of data for a phenomenologist, and these views are taken as facts. Therefore, participants cannot take part in the research unless they have lived the experience under study (Goulding, 2005). Any situation, object, experience or event that a person can hear, see, smell, taste touch, or live through is a legitimate topic for phenomenological examination (Seamon, 2000). This suggests that hotel interior design is a phenomenon that can be studied phenomenologically.

Phenomenology is classified into three main categories: transcendental (psychological) phenomenology, hermeneutic phenomenology, and existential phenomenology (Seamon, 2000; Kafle, 2013). Transcendental phenomenology is the original form of philosophical phenomenology; it focuses less on researcher interpretations and relies more on bracketing and experience descriptions of participants (Creswell, 2007). Existential phenomenology is concerned with the specific experiences of specific groups and individuals in actual places and situations (Seamon, 2000). Hermeneutic phenomenology focuses on the "subjective experience of individuals and groups. It is an attempt to unveil the world as experienced by the subject through their life world stories" (Kafle, 2013, p. 186). Hence, it is about understanding texts, focusing on uncovering meaning, and avoiding prior knowledge.

Phenemenology is relevant to marketing because "marketers need models to analyze and interpret how consumers perceive products in relation to themselves" (Walker & Olson, 1991, p. 111). Hence, it bridges the gap between marketing opportunities latent in participant perceptions and consumers' awareness of their life circumstances and their views toward them (Arnold & Fischer, 1994). It helps in finding meanings (Gummesson, 2003). It also contributes to the quality movement, which supports hearing the voice of customers because understanding customers and their needs is an increasingly valuable concept in recent research (Thompson, 1997). Generally, "phenomenology contributes to practice theory by giving primacy to the unique nature of the individual experience of value, which cannot be understood solely by observable routinized behaviours. Phenomenological mental interpretations are intended to reveal experience from the individual's perspective" (Helkkula, Kelleher & Pihlstrom, 2012, p. 564).

3.4.3 Justification for adopting phenomenology

As discussed above, phenomenology targets the subjective experiences of individuals' daily lives. This approach is normally used to understand interpretations and meanings in relation to a certain phenomenon (Thompson, 1997). This study was concerned with inductively exploring and understanding perceptions and meanings, and not intended to deductively test theories or hypotheses. This position fits with phenomenology (Kafle, 2013). Ontologically, this study is based on a subjectivist view of multiple realities, that are internal to social actors. Therefore, a phenomenological approach was appropriate to achieve the research objectives for several reasons, which will be discussed next.

This study is sought to better understand the perceptions and symbolized meanings of hotel interior design from consumers' previous hotel experiences. Such an approach provides better information for research that seeks more explanations and alternative insights of phenomena (Goulding, 2005), that is, subjective experiences and how people make sense of them (Helkkula et al., 2012). In this study, hotel interior design was the phenomenon of interest, and the study sought to examine perceptions toward

it depending on consumers' previous hotel experiences, as this phenomenon required further understanding and explanation.

One of the main objectives of this study was to explore consumer perception toward hotel interior design. "Phenomenology presents perception as a process of embodied, essentially interpretive, looking. Perceptual themes can recur, thereby forming a pattern across an individual's or group's experience" (Wilson, 2012, p. 234). That is why the interpretations and perceptions of consumers from their previous experiences is required, which would facilitate more understanding of human and social activities. Phenomenology provided a subjectivist position that appreciated the viewpoints of individuals and assisted in reaching participant shared understanding of the hotel interior design phenomenon.

The interest in place and time has increased significantly among social scientists, especially from phenomenological traditions, as they believe that these help in achieving an understanding of the human interaction with the culture and the environment and the relationship between place and cultural identity. (e.g. Rowley & Slack,1999; Seamon, 2000) . "Place cannot be viewed objectively, but only subjectively through the participant's lens, and so any generalization is at best imperfect" (Rowley & Slack,1999, p. 365). Phenomenologists study individuals carefully in order to discover the deeper meaning of the "lived" experience in terms of the individual's relationship with space, time, and personal history (Goulding, 2005). Marketing management theories suggest that the environment can be clearly defined and then analysed in an objective way (Ardley, 2011). From a phenomenological perspective, the environment is subjectively perceived and constructed by managers as individual performances and their social knowledge becomes their environment (Smircich & Stubbart, 1985). This emphasizes the interplay between memory, place, space, and time (Rowley & Slack,1999). The phenomenological approach offers an original way of looking at the person-environment relationship and understanding and identifying its complexity (Seamon, 2000). Design and architecture induce instinctive discovery and awareness and that is why phenomenological approach is one of the ways to regenerate designers' interest in environment-behaviour research (Seamon, 2000). Since this study was concerned to explore the relationship between individuals and the hotel environment, and realizing that the relationship between individuals and

environments is best studied through phenomenology, this was another reason for choosing it.

Moreover, this study was concerned with experience, which has been characterized as a phenomenological experience, pertinent to the value in interpretive consumer research, SDL and CCT (Holbrook & Hirschman, 1982; Helkkula, Kelleher, & Pihlstrom, 2012). In such research, it has been argued that "the foundational premises of service-dominant (S-D) logic indicate that value is individually and phenomenologically (experientially) determined, while positing that value co-creation takes place in actor networks, where social and economic actors integrate resources" (Helkkula et al., 2012, p. 555). The term phenomenological experience is topical in SDL discourse, which states that "Value is always uniquely and phenomenologically determined by the beneficiary" (Vargo & Lusch, 2008, p.9). This indicates that if study examines experiences from an SDL perspective, they should be considered as phenomenological (experiential) and meaning laden. Accordingly, since this study explored the phenomenon of hotel design through the lenses of SDL and CCT, the use of phenomenology was supported.

Furthermore, other studies within the same research topic stream that include servicescape, SDL, and CCT have applied phenomenological methodologies too. A study by Batra (2014) to explore the role of airport servicescape employed a phenomenology- based methodology, with data collected through semi-structured interviews. Acknowledging that one of the main objectives of this study was to explore the role of hotel servicescape and particularly the interior design element, phenomenology seemed to be the best strategy.

Oakes, Patterson, and Oakes (2013) conducted a study to evaluate the experience of music in service environments. They stated that "In order to comprehend the shopping experience through the eyes and ears of consumers, the interpretive nature of the current study is designed to gain vicarious access to the rich phenomenology of their perceptions, experiences and memories" (Oakes et al., 2013, p.42). Similarly, this study required rich data, and investigated a specific variable in the service environment. The current study explored the experience and perception of interior

design in the hotel context which is a service environment, and from consumers' point of view too. This also supports the choice of interpretive phenomenology.

A recently published study by Nuttavuthisit (2014) explored consumers' interaction and formulation of aesthetic experiences in retail environments. This study "sought to facilitate participants' articulation of the meanings of their own experiences" (Nuttavuthisit, 2014, p. 433) and followed an interpretive phenomenology, in the belief that this method helps in exploring the various ways in which consumers interact with the retail environment, especially when considering the variability of individual differences. Nuttavuthisit's study is related to the research interest of the current study, and both sought to explore the meanings of participants' own experiences and their interaction with specific environments. Finding related studies that employed and advocated phenomenology for this kind of research topic reinforced the choice of phenomenology.

Another reason for choosing phenomenology was the increasing interest in organizational and managerial research in using this approach, as it provides better and deeper understanding. Phenomenology is useful in marketing studies because "there is a requirement to better understand the processes whereby marketing managers construct their own interpretations of marketing realities, rather than viewing activity through the restricted lens of traditional theory. Important aspects of phenomenology revolve around understanding the softer experiential truths of marketers, where reality is not structured by a technocratic discourse" (Ardley, 2011, p.631). The research of Craig Thompson has highlighted the use of phenomenology in the field of marketing (Thompson, 1997, 1998; Thompson, Locander & Pollio 1989; Thompson, Locander & Pollio, 1990).

 Finally, this study used interviews as a data collection method, and this is one of the confirmed tools of phenomenology (Ardley, 2011). The research methods will be explained later in this chapter, but the sampling strategy will be explained first.

3.5 Sampling

Malhotra and Birks (2007) define the sampling frame as a list of elements that represent the target population and divide sampling techniques into two types: probability and non-probability. In the probability technique the chance of each population element being excluded is equal, and is zero (Zikmund, 2003). On the other hand, in non-probability sampling, there is a chance of being excluded, which is not equal for each population element (Zikmund, 2003). This research adopted the interpretivist paradigm and it collected qualitative data through interviews. The qualitative strategy requires small sample and it is difficult to follow a probability technique (Collis & Hussey, 2013). Accordingly, non-probability sampling was followed. There are four forms of non-probability sampling: snowball sampling, convenience sampling, judgemental, sampling, and quota sampling (Saunders et al., 2009). The sampling frame for this research was non-probability, and quota sampling was chosen for this study. this is a two-stage constrained judgemental sampling technique. The first stage involves developing control measures or categories of population elements, while in the second stage, sample elements are chosen based on judgement or convenience (Malhotra, 2004).

The main criteria set for this research sample were first, being Saudi, second, being cosmopolitan, third, travelling abroad (outbound from Saudi Arabia) at least twice a year, and fourth, having a minimum of five different hotel stays in their past. Cosmopolitans represent cultural openness and flexibility; they are "individuals' who adapt to and interact with people of different cultures, imbibe diverse cultural values, openness, and favour associating with multiple cultures They show respect and sensitivity towards other cultures and are willing to accept those values. Their lifestyle is influenced by different cultures" (Khare, 2014, p. 436). Although cosmopolitanism is a significant consumer orientation, the phenomenon remains mainly overlooked. A cosmopolitan consumer orientation demonstrates how individuals consider the world as their market place, intentionally seeking to buy places, products, services and experiences originating from other cultures than their own (Caldwell, Blackwell, & Tulloch, 2006, p.126).

The rationale behind choosing Saudi Arabian participants was firstly because the researcher is Saudi, which made it easier for her to get access to and deal with Saudi participants, and secondly because the sample criteria matched Saudi customers, who are known for their wide travelling and big spending abroad, including choosing the best hotels around the world, especially in their summer holidays. Travellers from the Gulf region in general are widely known for being among the most valuable customers for countries around the world in the tourism sector (Khan, 2014). Many news items and documentaries have proved that Saudi Arabians in particular are the world's leading spenders abroad, and a survey by Visa that was conducted in 2013 has confirmed that (Alarabiya, 2013). Saudis' summer holiday is usually between June and August. The number of Saudis travelling abroad during the summer holiday was counted at twelve million travellers (Albawaba, 2013), and the Saudi Commission for Tourism & Antiquities (SCTA) has reported that outbound trips in 2014 reached 5.5 million, and the outbound spending of Saudis exceeded SR29.6 billion (US $7.9 billion), 32.7% of which was during their summer holiday (Odedra, 2014).

After matching the four identified criteria, the researcher judged whether participants would be considered for interviewing or not based on preliminary phone calls made prior to the interviews to decide on the place and time for the actual interview session. Participants were reached in several public places such as firms, banks, universities and schools. A snowball technique, in which subsequent participants are found from information provided by initial participants, was also followed. In other words, once participants took part in the research, they were asked to recommend other participants who matched the criteria and might be willing to take part in the study. The researcher then contacted these recommended participants, after obtaining their permission to do so to proceed with the interview process. This technique has helped in affording access to more participants in less time.

One of the main criteria of the chosen sample was being cosmopolitan, which gave them much in common with many travellers with the same criterion from different countries, because cultural influences were found to be minimal, compared to others, such as frequent travelling and extensive experience of hotels. Thirty-seven participants were interviewed for this study. Interviews were stopped when the

researcher reached saturation point, that is, when it was recognized that no new information was emerging (Seidman, 2006). At the last two interviews (thirty sixth and thirty seventh interview) the researcher realised that same ideas, answers, and concepts are repeated and no new information or interesting data were added, hence, the interviews were stopped at thirty-seven. The next section will discuss the actual sample for this research.

3.5.1 Overview of research participants

The thirty-seven participants who took part in this research had diverse demographic characteristics, including males, females, singles, couples, and families. Sixteen males and twenty-one females took part in the research. Table 8 illustrates the main characteristics of these participants. These include their age, gender, occupation, marital status, the number of their yearly travel times, and finally the purpose of their travel as in leisure (L), business (B), or both (L&B).

Participant	Age	Gender	Occupation	Marital status	Yearly travel	Purpose
1	55	M	Architect	Married	6	L & B
2	35	M	Head of investment	Married	6	L & B
3	45	M	CEO of training company	Married	24	L & B
4	40	F	Risk assurance manager	Single	2	L & B
5	30	M	Brand manager	Married	5	L & B
6	29	F	PhD Student	Single	2	L
7	28	M	Doctor	Married	3	L
8	29	M	Project manager	Single	7	L & B
9	27	M	Communication engineer	Single	5	L & B
10	18	M	Student	Single	3	L
11	54	F	Teacher	Married	3	L
12	27	F	Third Secretary	Single	2	L
13	25	F	Teacher	Single	3	L
14	29	F	Housewife	Married	4	L
15	58	M	Banker	Married	2	L & B
16	50	M	Bank chief officer	Married	3	L & B
17	19	F	Student	Single	2	L
18	27	F	Housewife	Married	6	L
19	29	F	Housewife	Married	3	L
20	19	M	Student	Single	4	L & B
21	32	M	Pharmacist	Married	3	L
22	26	F	University supervisor	Single	3	L
23	28	F	Translator	Single	3	L
24	24	F	Housewife	Married	2	L
25	30	F	Nutritionist	Single	3	L
26	42	F	Housewife	Married	2	L
27	18	M	Student	Single	3	L
28	28	F	Housewife	Married	2	L
29	26	F	Banker	Single	3	L
30	32	F	Housewife	Married	2	L
31	28	F	Housewife	Married	3	L
32	34	F	Teacher	Married	2	L
33	25	M	Lieutenant	Single	2	L
34	18	M	Student	Single	3	L
35	45	F	Head teacher	Married	3	L & B
36	30	F	Teacher	Single	2	L
37	30	M	PhD Student	Married	5	L

Table 8 Overview of research participants

3.6 Research methods

In choosing research methods, the researcher must choose between mono method, which is a single technique in collecting and analysing the data or multi-method, which involves using more than one technique together (Malhotra & Birks, 2007). Research could be a multi-method quantitative study if several quantitative methods are used at the same study to collect and analyse the data, or a multi-method qualitative study if the several methods that are chosen are qualitative methods. However, the use of both qualitative and quantitative methods in research is termed mixed methods (Creswell, 2003). As mentioned earlier, a qualitative method was employed, and this research used only a single qualitative technique. Mason (2002) suggests linking research methods to research questions to choose the best methods that can help answering these questions. The current research is focussed on a very specific research question that is aimed to understand the perceptions of consumers toward the hotel interior design. This suggests the need for a single qualitative technique to gather deep and rich data and be able to analyse it within the time limit of the study. There are several qualitative research methods, however the three most common qualitative research methods are focus group, observation, and interview (Hennink et al., 2011; Malhotra & Birks, 2007; Easterby-Smith et al., 2008; Sekaran, 2003). These three methods will be discussed in the following paragraphs.

The first method is Focus group, which is a qualitative method that was developed by Paul Lazarsfeld and Robert Merton (Hines, 2000). Threfall (1999) argues that focus group was discovered in the late 1931s and defines it as discussion of a topic in a group of individuals chosen by the researcher, which will generate new ideas and answer research questions. However, the collected data will be broad, general, and a collective view of group of people rather than specific, personal and rich (Powell & Single 1996). Focus groups are suitable to explore new topics and gain diverse different views in a limited time and at one sitting, and are mainly used to assess group behaviours and how participants may influence each other. It is appropriate for mixed method research (Hines, 2000). This research, however, applied only one method, and although one of the main objectives was to reveal the different behaviours that may occur in a hotel environment, the focus was on individual and personal behaviours rather than group behaviours or behaviours that are influenced by others. In addition, the main drawbacks that led the researcher to reject this method

are the participants' influence on each other, as some participants may dominate, social pressure and lack of confidentiality (Saunders et al., 2009). These may decrease the credibility and clarity of individual views. Also, participants may not speak freely or they may influence each other's opinions, and information might not be very rich. Therefore this method was concidered inappropriate for this research.

The second method is observation, which involves systematic observation and recording of people's interactions, behaviours, and actions in their own socio-cultural context (Hennink et al., 2011). Observation is usually conducted to study new topics, provide study context, explore people's actions, interactions, and silent social norms, and it is usually used to complement other methods (Sekaran, 2003). The limitations of observation are that it is time consuming, requires a skilled observer, and results differ according to different contexts (Collis & Hussey, 2013). This indicates that different contexts and previous experiences may influence and change the results greatly. The ontological assumption that is associated with observation is mainly the need to observe people actions and interactions, while the epistemological position is about gathering data by participating in and observing real life situations (Mason, 2002). The current research mainly focused on the influences of hotel interior design on customers, especially their emotions and behaviours, depending on their perceptions and previous experiences in hotel visits, which made this research method less suitable to apply. Besides, it is difficult to observe emotions and attitudes.

The third method is interviews, which are conversations with a purpose (Robson, 1993). Specifically, they are a "special kind of knowledge producing conversations" (Hennink et al., 2011, p. 109). They are usually applied to gain individual and personal experiences regarding certain topics or issues (Malhotra & Birks, 2007). Qualitative interviews are most appropriate when the ontological position of a research is about exploring perceptions and understanding individuals' views, interpretations and previous experiences (Mason, 2002). Moreover, epistemologically, interviews allow a meaningful and genuine way to generate data by interacting with participants in an appropriate way by asking, listening and judging (Mason, 2002).

The main advantages of in-depth interviews are that they are considered a straightforward, adaptable, flexible and potentially rich method of collecting data

(Robson, 1993). Face to face interviews also enable exploration of interesting responses and underlying motives through nonverbal messages, which self-administered questionnaires cannot offer (Robson, 1993). They are also a way to gain personal experiences, feelings, and life stories of people (Bowen, 2005). On the other hand, interviews' disadvantages are that they are time consuming, lack standardization, and it is difficult to rule out biases (Robson, 1993). They also require a lot of transcription and special skills and flexibility from interviewers so that they can react promptly and differently according to participants' responses (Malhotra & Birks, 2007). However, these drawbacks could be overcome in comparison to the advantages of this method and the valuable rich data that it can produce. With exploring customers' perceptions and interpretation of the hotel context being the main aim of this research, the choice of interviews was supported. Hence, data were collected though semi-structured interviews.

3.6.1 Rationale behind choosing interviews

The research strategy for this study is phenomenology, which usually implements in-depth interview as the main tool of research (Ardley, 2011). Semi-structured interview are used to obtain "both retrospective and real-time accounts by those people experiencing the phenomenon of theoretical interest" (Gioia et al., 2013,p.19). Additionally, the main reasons for conducting in-depth interviews are to identify individuals' emotions, feelings, perceptions, beliefs, motivations for people's behaviours and decisions, the meanings they attach to experiences, and the surrounding context of their lives (Bowen, 2005; Robson, 1993; Mason, 2002). Bearing in mind the main aim of the research, which was to identify customers' perceptions of the hotel servicescape and understand the different emotions and behaviours that they experience in a hotel context, and what other influences a hotel can have, especially in value creation and conveying meanings, in-depth interviews were the most appropriate method to apply, in order to capture these and address the research questions.

Taking into account the general differences, strengths, and weaknesses of the different research methods, and by considering the aim and questions of this study, interviews were considered the most appropriate to use for the purpose of this study. This is because they would provide rich information, participants would be able to discuss

freely, and the element of external influence, such as other participants in focus groups; or the context of hotel environments in observation, would not apply. This would help in collecting rich and deep data which would help the researcher to develop more robust theory. Following Mason (2002), the chart in Table 9 summarises the link between research questions, data sources and methods, and the justification for choosing or rejecting them.

Research questions	Data sources and research methods	Justification of choice
• How do cosmopolitan consumers perceive interior design in a hotel context?	Chosen research method: Semi-structured interviews	• Interviews will provide rich data about customers' perceptions based on their previous hotel visits and experiences.
• What hotel interior design elements are the most influential, especially in creating value for customers and conveying meanings to them?	Rejected research methods: Focus group Observation	• The reasons to reject focus group method: social pressure and lack of confidentiality as participants may not speak freely or they may influence each others opinions.
• What is the role of hotel interior design, and what impacts does it have?	Data source: Hotel cosmopolitan consumers but not in the hotel context.	• The reasons to reject observation method: difficulty of observing attitudes, emotions and perceptions, and the impact of different contexts and situations on the results.

Table 9 Research questions, data sources, and research methods. (Adopted from Mason, 2002) (Author)

3.7 Data collection procedure

After acknowledging the justification for choosing the interviewing method, this section will give details regarding the actual procedure of the data collection. Data collection is "interrelated activities aimed at gathering good information to answer emerging research questions" (Creswell, 2007, p. 118). The research data were collected in Saudi Arabia through thirty-seven semi-structured face-to-face interviews. Both males and females were interviewed. All participants were travelling abroad (outbound from Saudi Arabia) at least twice a year. This section includes preparing the interview questions 'guideline', piloting the interviews, and the actual

interview sessions.

3.7.1 Interview guideline

An interview guide is "a list of questions used by the interviewer, mainly as a memory aide during the interview (Hennink et al., 2011, p.112)". A typical interview guide is structured as follows: introduction, opening questions, key questions, and closing questions (Saunders et al., 2009). The first part includes introduction questions which are usually general and provide background on the interviewees. They are easy to answer and make them more comfortable. Opening questions are broadly related to the key topics, while key questions are the central part of interview guide and their aim is to collect the core data. The final part is closing questions that conclude the interview and include asking the interviewees if they would like to add any more information (Hennink et al., 2011).

The degree of formality and structure differentiate interview types, which are fully structured, semi structured, and unstructured (Collis & Hussey, 2013). As discussed previously, this research used semi-structured interviews. This type of interview requires the interviewer to prepare questions prior to the interview but it is possible to change their order, their wording, modify them depending on each interview (Robson, 1993). A semi-structured interview guideline was developed to control and speed data collection, establish trust with participants and encourage them to speak freely and tell their stories, by asking open, non-leading questions (Bowen, 2005). Interview questions should not be long, double- barrelled, leading, biased, or use unfamiliar words (Robson, 1993). These issues were considered while preparing the interview guideline. Hence, all interviews were based on a carefully developed interview guide and followed similar phenomenological interview approaches to previous studies. For example, when Nuttavuthisit (2014) explored the aesthetic experiences of retail environments, the interviews began with general information about the visit. Then participants were asked to describe their overall impressions and experiences which lead to further dialogue elaborating on specific experiences through rich descriptive methods (e.g. referring to incidents, telling stories) (Nuttavuthisit, 2014). Consistent with the phenomenological approach the interviews of the current study relied on the participants' comments and a flexible interview guideline. The interview guideline for

this research can be seen in Appendix one. The guideline was divided into six main topics, as follows:

The first topic: included general questions regarding the interviewees' backgrounds, including their different demographic variables, such as their age, education, and occupation.

The second topic: explored interviewees' travelling experiences in general, including the places they usually visited, their purpose of travelling, and the people they travelled with.

The third topic: discussed participants` hotel choice process, and what hotels they liked or disliked and the reasons behind that, to identify if they would mention the hotel design and to understand their insights regarding the hotel context.

The fourth topic: identified the main design elements that mattered to participants in a hotel design, by asking them what grabbed their attention, what they required, and how hotels can differentiate themselves.

The fifth topic: was designed to explore the general influence of hotel design on participants, its meaning and its value, especially regarding the impact of hotel designs on their emotions, and what type of emotions they recalled or associated with hotel designs.

The sixth topic: was concerned with the relationship between hotel designs and their behavioural outcomes, and to identify the most significant behaviours that can be encouraged by hotel designs.

3.7.2 Piloting interviews

Before conducting the actual interview, researchers should pilot their interviews with small samples to better understand if their structure and question guide is clear (Seidman, 2006; Bryman, 2012). It may also alert them to elements that may support or detract the objectives of their studies. Hence, the researcher piloted the interview guideline with two participants who were willing to take part. The first was a PhD

researcher in his final year, and his feedback was fruitful due to his theoretical expertise in qualitative research, and the main procedures and rules that must be considered by PhD researchers. The second participant was a construction engineer and interior designer, who had travelled the world, so she had great expertise in hotels, and interior design. The reason behind choosing this person was to see whether the interview questions would encourage such a person to share her experiences and talk about the required information and to examine whether the questions were suitable for the purpose of the study and to answer the identified research questions.

3.7.3 The actual interview sessions

The researcher travelled to Saudi Arabia and conducted all thirty-seven face-to-face interviews there. An official letter from the University of Hull was presented to all interviewees, which stated that the researcher was a PhD student and was collecting data for academic purposes. The research topic and objectives were also explained to the interviewees, and they were asked to sign the consent form for their agreement to take part of the study and to audio record the interview. The average duration of interviews was an hour. The easiness of interviews varied; some were easier than others, especially due to the cultural constraints, as it is easier for a female researcher to get access to and interview other females, rather than men from outside the family circle, which is more challenging. Nevertheless, the researcher managed to interview both males and females, especially because the chosen sample were open minded and well travelled, so they were more flexible and easy to deal with. Nevertheless, cultural constraints explain why there were more females than males.

It is important for interviews to be held in a comfortable and quiet physical environment, and hence it is better to ask interviewees where they would prefer to be interviewed (King & Horrocks, 2010). Therefore, all thirty-seven participants were asked about their preference of interview location. As a result, some interviews were conducted in their own homes, their work place, or the researcher's home. All interviewees were interviewed individually and privately in locations that they chose when appointments were made with them over the phone. Therefore, all interviews were in suitable locations that were comfortable for the researcher and the participants, which helped the interviews to go smoothly. The interviews did not take place in an actual hotel environment, and the researcher relied on their previous

experience in different hotels. This is consistent with phenomenology, which relies on participants' experiences for data. Also, because of the influence of context, various factors in actual hotel settings, including temperature, noise and smell, could have affected the results when studying the impact of hotel interior design in different hotel settings, especially when trying to focus on the physical part of the design (Countryman & Jang, 2006). Additionally, if particepants had been interviewed in a hotel, its branding and guests' prior experiences of it could have affected the outcomes.

It is considered good practice in most qualitative research to record interviews in full and then copy them into computer to start transcribing them, and in order to do so, it is essential to get the interviewees' approval and consent to record the interviews (Creswell, 2007). Recording interviews gives participants confidence that their words will be treated responsibly, and researchers can always return to the source to check accuracy (Seidman, 2006). All interviews were audio recorded on two devices to have a backup copy, and these were conducted after obtaining the interviewees' approval and consent. These recordings helped in transcribing and writing the full transcripts without having to rely on memory and risk missing some points. The researcher transcribed them soon after the interviews, so she could still remember what had happened during the interviews. Rather than rely solely on the audio recording and her memory, the researcher also took notes and written memos, to grasp a full understanding of the information and gather as much deep information as possible.

Gibbs (2007) suggests that writing notes is a creative activity, as notes can be transferred into ideas, which can be the start of data analysis. It can be done through writing field notes and coding memos. Field notes are simultaneous mental notes that take place in the research setting or soon after it, which is the first step in qualitative analysis. It is important to differentiate between the actual facts and words that were used by participants and the researcher's reflection on them (Gibbs, 2007). For this research, the researcher wrote notes both during and after the interviews and these notes helped her generate ideas, remember new and interesting ideas, reflect some questions to participants at the end of the interview, and raise different interview questions and topics that could be discussed in later interviews. The researcher wrote

these notes in English, separately from the answers of the interviewees, and used them in the analysis process.

3.8 Data analysis procedure

The process of qualitative data analysis is defined as a "process of systematically searching and arranging the interview transcripts, field notes and other materials that you accumulate to increase your own understanding of them and to enable you to present what you have discovered to others" (Bogden & Biklen, 1982, p. 145). There are different steps for analysing the qualitative data (Saunders et al. 2009; Malhotra & Birks, 2007). Saunders et al. (2009) propose a process which consists of three stages: condensation, grouping and ordering. According to Saunders et al. (2009), the first step suggests that data should be transcribed and then meaning should be summarised, while the second step includes categorisation of the meaning. The final step is to structure meanings using narratives (Saunders et al. 2009). Interpretation of marketing research relies on the interpretation of textual data from part to whole (Arnold & Fischer, 1994; Thompson, 1997). This suggests how the transcripts of the interviews are firstly read as a whole to gain a holistic sense, and to gain integrated understanding of the consumption meanings conveyed by these texts. The second phase includes the researcher's search for patterns, similarities, and differences across the various interview transcripts (Thompson, 1997; Thompson et al., 1990). Analysis is conducted by "scrutinizing the text for meaning "units" which describe the central aspects of the experience. These are then synthesised to provide a general description of the "whole"" (Goulding, 2005, p. 304). This suggests that in phenomenology, the analysis process is similar to the general thematic analysis process of most qualitative research, and this was applied for the current research too.

Thompson et al. (1989) suggest three methodological criteria of phenomenological interpretation: the emic approach, autonomy of the text, and bracketing. The Eeic approach means that interpretation relies on participants' own terms rather than the researcher's terms. Autonomy of the text means that the interview transcripts are treated as an autonomous body of data that reflects respondents' lived experiences without corroborating their descriptions with external verifications. Bracketing means to isolate previous theoretical notions about the phenomena understudy, so as to focus

on respondents' lived experiences. However, the ability of researchers to bracket is sometimes doubted and challenging (Thompson et al., 1989). Inevitably, qualitative analysis is directed and influenced by former studies, concepts, and frameworks, regardless of many researchers' claims that qualitative data analysis should be inductive and researchers should delete any previous knowledge from their minds (Gibbs, 2007). For the researcher to interpret the data with a blank mind is not realistic; however, a recommended way to reduce the impact of previous knowledge on the research results is for the researcher to reflect on his/her position. As stated by Kafle (2013, p. 190), "In using this approach we accept the difficulty of bracketing. To overcome this difficulty we acknowledge our implicit assumptions and attempt to make them explicit". Therefore, this will be discussed in detail later in this chapter, in the discussion of reflexivity.

Although some researchers believe that qualitative data analysis is about "office" process, including handling the data by sorting, retrieving, and indexing the data, and others claim that it is about interpretation, most researchers agree that it involves both handling and interpretation of the data (e.g. Gibbs, 2007; Seidman, 2006; Zikmund, 2003). As a result, "analysis involves working with data, organising them, breaking them into manageable units, synthesising them, searching for patterns, discovering what is important and what is to be learned, and deciding what you will tell others" (Bogden & Biklen, 1982, p. 145).

For this reason and since the approach of this study was phenomenological, the researcher analysed the data with an open mind by investigating new phenomena, interesting ideas and quotes, yet took into consideration the fundamental phenomenon of interior design and her previous reading, gaps in knowledge, and the research questions that were identified; as she believes that each research study must have some direction to decide what the questions will be about. This previous knowledge did not give answers, but it helped to provide the researcher with some form of focus and guidance.

One of the discussions to be made in analysing the data was whether to use paper-based or computer-based based approaches. Paper based and computer based approaches can be used individually or together when coding and analysing data

(King & Horrocks, 2010). Bryman and Bell (2007) support that by highlighting three stages that can be followed while coding, with reference to use of the NVIVO computer program: firstly, reading through both the printed interviews and document viewer in the NVIVO program; secondly identifying relevant codes. Lastly coding the transcribed interviews through NVIVO by recognising relevant and repeated chunks of text that codes apply to and putting them under the right code, which is called a node in NVIVO. These stages were followed by the researcher for analysing the data of the current study.

Qualitative data software does not take over the task of interpretation, but facilitates research. NVIVO software increases the efficiency and speed of the interpretation process. It can provide structure, and store data in orderly way, so it only assists, while interpretation depends on the researcher's abilities (Gummesson, 2003). Thus, NVIVO does not supplant learning from data, but it provides a set of tools that help in managing and analysing qualitative data by organising it, providing rapid access to theoretical knowledge and their sources in the original transcripts, and ensuring that the coding process is done in a rigorous way (Bazeley & Jackson, 2013). Apart from these reasons, NVIVO was also chosen in preference to the manual cut and paste approach, as the original interview scripts remain intact, the location and source of quotations are preserved and it is easy to go back and view them within the whole script, and paragraphs can easily be coded under several nodes (Bazeley & Jackson, 2013).

The NVIVO report, which has all the relevant chunks of text (quotations) from the various transcribed interviews under each identified code (node) is very helpful and useful for the stage after coding when interpreting the data, as the researcher can compare and contrast the different discussions and views regarding each identified code. Therefore, the researcher combined both manual and computer techniques by printing the transcripts, reading them several times to have a grasp of the data and identify the first possible codes. This then led to the critical coding process, which was done using the NVIVO computer program. During the analysis process, the researcher first prepared the data and then started the coding process. These will be discussed in the next section.

3.8.1 Preparing the data

Preparing qualitative data for analysis starts with transcribing the data, and every researcher has their own way and techniques that make it easier for him/her to go back to and use to build arguments and reach conclusions (Collis & Hussey, 2013). Transcription is producing a tidy typed copy of the interview recordings, field notes and observations. It is the most popular form of qualitative data that is usually used for analysis as it makes the recorded data easier to deal with, and it is easier to code from transcripts rather than audio and video recording (Easterby-Smith et al., 2008). Interpreting the rich data from interview transcripts is relevant to phenomenological research because "Language is the central medium for transmitting meaning and as such provides a methodological orientation for a phenomenology of social life that is concerned with the relation between language use and the objects of experience. The meaning of a word is taken to be what it references, corresponds with, or stands for in the real world. This is based on the premise that the essential task of language is to convey information and describe "reality"" (Goulding, 2005, p. 302). Words and languages are prerequisites for social life. Individuals name events and things to help in understanding and communicating with others (Gummesson, 2003). As a result, the first step in analysing the qualitative data for this research was to transcribe the thirty-seven recorded interviews by typing each interview in a separate Word document, and attach the written notes and memos for each interviewee with their transcribed interview.

Participants had the choice of conducting the interview in English or Arabic languages. Although all thirty-seven interviewees spoke English fluently, some of them preferred to be interviewed in their first language, Arabic, as they felt that they would be able to explain themselves better and elaborate more, which was clearly better for the research. Hence, although most of the thirty-seven interviews were conducted in English, twelve were in Arabic and therefore required translation. Saunders et al. (2012) suggest that translation into different languages requires care and should pay attention to keeping the precise meanings of the individual words and the groups of words as phrases, and their specific meanings in daily life, as some would mean different things in different contexts, languages, or cultures. Parallel translation is one of the recommended methods to ensure the accuracy of the research translation, where the research questions are translated into the other language by two

translators, and their versions compared to create a final version (Easterby-Smith et al., 2008; Zikmund, 2003). This helps in creating a final version with good and accurate wording that is similar to the original (Saunders et al., 2009). For this reason, a translator who is fluent in both languages Arabic and English alongside with the researcher, translated the interview guideline before the interviews were conducted and also translated interviews scripts to compare them together and ensure that the accuracy of the the researcher's translation. They detected some mistakes and made all the required corrections. The researcher starts the coding process after the transcripts had been done. The coding process which involves the actual analysis will be discussed next.

3.8.2 The coding process

Richards (2009) argues that qualitative coding helps to gather all information about a certain code or idea from different materials and sources, compare how different researchers interpret data, and reflect what these codes mean in the context of a particular study. Moreover, Harding (2013) suggests that codes help in recognising commonalities, differences, and relationships between cases. In the same way, Gibbs (2007) emphasises that coding in qualitative research is about handling and organizing the large volume of data by stating what the analysed data are about. It provides a focused thinking toward interpretation by distinguishing text parts that have similar theoretical ideas or phenomena to categorize the text and create thematic ideas that create a framework. This will eventually help the researcher to manage their data in a structured way.

Coding can be driven by a concept or by the data (Harding, 2013). Concept driven coding means categories that codes symbolize may come from previous studies, literature, and interview topics, along with reading through the transcripts (Richards, 2009). In phenomenology and hermeneutic approaches, researchers tend to look for certain kinds of phenomena while reading (Gibbs, 2007). In contrast, data driven coding is done by pulling out theories from the data itself rather than imposing previous interpretations; although this seems unrealistic as researchers cannot separate themselves when they are part of the world that they are observing (Gibbs, 2007). In reality most researchers move and mix between these two approaches; the point is to try not to be closed minded and rely only on specific codes that were identified

previously, nor to challengingly start with a completely blank mind, as this is not realistic, but to analyse by having a starting point (previous expected codes) to realise what to look for when reading texts and have an open mind to identify new interesting ideas and codes that were not expected (Gibbs, 2007).

According to Harding (2013), a priori (codes that are of interest before the research starts) and empirical (codes derived while reading the data) are not separate, as researchers' previous understanding of the research topic will affect their decisions, as well as new ideas that will emerge while conducting the study and analysing the data. Accordingly, the researcher has followed both techniques together in the coding process. In other words, some codes were expected and discussed as main interview topics, while other identified codes were completely new and not expected.

Several qualitative researchers who have followed Strauss and Corbin (1990) theories in grounded approaches have recommended three stages in coding: open coding, axial coding, and selective coding (e.g. Gibbs, 2007; Bryman & Bell, 2007). The first step, open coding, involves reading the data reflectively and breaking up the data. The second step, axial coding, involves linking and categorising codes and putting them back together. The final step is selective coding where the researcher selects the core thematic category on which to focus the study and develop theory. A theme is "an implicit topic that organizes a group of repeating ideas" (Auerbach & Silverstein, 2003,p.38). Conceptual themes are usually drawn from different codes and parts of the transcripts, involve interpretation, may not be noticed from the first reading, examine relationships between various data elements, and allow researchers to build theory (Harding, 2013). In the same way, Gioia et al. (2013) suggest a process in which concepts are developed. Informant terms, codes, and categories emerge early in the research; therefore, interviewing and analysis tend to proceed together (Langley, 1999). This leads to the second phase, which is finding differences and similarities among the categories, by grouping them together in axial codes. The point of axial coding is to reduce the codes to a more manageable number. Then researchers should then ask themselves if the emerging themes suggest concepts that might help in explaining and describing the phenomenon under study (Gioia et al., 2013). Richards (2009) describes a similar process using different terminology. His stages are descriptive coding, which involves storing information without interpretation; topic

coding; which is associated with the research questions and the relevant gathered data that was reflected with regard to these questions; and finally analytical coding, which comes from the interpretation and reflection on data meaning.

Therefore, regardless of the justification and technique of choosing each code, the data for this research was coded according to a combination of reasons and following various qualitative theories and arguments that were explained earlier. These codes were then grouped together according to their commonality and relationships to create axial codes; and finally conceptual themes were developed by interpreting and linking selected key codes. Table 10 on the next page demonstrates the identified codes for this study.

Conceptual themes	Axial codes	Open codes	
		Codes	Sub codes
The perception of hotel interior design	Design aesthetic look vs. design functionality The holistic perception	Functional Aesthetic Holistic	
The elements of hotel interior deisgn	Key elements	Colours Furniture Lighting Layout Style	
	Supplementary elements	Space Ambient conditions Artefacts Staff uniform Technology Natural cues Complimentary items Big windows	
Hotel design vs. hotel attributes	Hotel attributes	Location Hygiene Star rating Pricing Service Website photos Membership Facilities Brand name	
Creating value for customers	Hotel interior design as an emotion influencer	Relaxation Entertainment Satisfaction	
	Hotel interior design as an influence on buying behaviour	Time spend Word of mouth Loyalty Price sensitivity Social interactions	
Creating value for hotels	Hotel interior design as a marketing segmentation tool	Traveller types	Business Leisure Sleeping Family
		Hotel types	Luxury Resort Boutique
	Hotel interior design as a competitive advantage	Differentiating key Customers' choice	
Conveying meanings (symbolism)	The role of hotel interior design in forming perceptions	First impression Perception of the city Perception of the service Hotel lobby Hotel photos	
	Hotel interior design as a quality & hygiene indicator	Quality indicator Hygiene indicator	
Shaping experiences	The impact of hotel interior design on memories	Memories Employees' behaviour Negative emotions	
	The impact of hotel interior deisgn on employees' performance		

Table 10 The identified codes of this study

As shown in Table 10, forty-seven codes emerged from the data and seven conceptual themes were identified, on which the final theory was built (design perception, design elements, hotel design vs. hotel attributes, creating value for customers, creating value for hotels, symbolizing meanings, and shaping experiences). A few codes were eliminated because they were not significant to the research topic and did not add any valuable insights. They arose because participants sometimes digressed while being interviewed. Although this research is about the hotel context, the main focus is on the hotel design in particular, how it is perceived, and how it influences customers and hotels. Thus, some of the final conceptual themes, such as hotel design vs. hotel attributes, was used briefly while analysing the data to justify the importance of the hotel design in comparison to the other hotel attributes and how it influences the hotel choice. The findings of this research will be discussed comprehensively in the next chapter.

3.9 Managing the quality of the research

According to the methodology literature, the quality of any research can be achieved by considering its validity and reliability (Zikmund, 2003; Aaker, Kumar, & Day, 2001; Angen, 2000). Validity is the "ability of a scale to measure what was intended to be measured" (Zikmund, 2003, p. 333), while reliability means that the result of the study is the same over time (Aaker et al., 2001). These concepts were originally created from the quantitative tradition and they are traditionally associated with qualitative research (Neuman, 2006). In addition, reflexivity is another concept that can enhance the quality of qualitative research and is one of the main requirements to conduct rigorous phenomenological research. Reflexivity is "acknowledging the input of the researchers in actively co-constructing the situation which they want to study. It also alludes to the use to which such insights can be put in making sense of or interpreting data" (Flick, 2014, p. 542). As a result validity, reliability, and reflexivity will be discussed next.

3.9.1 Validity in qualitative research
Qualitative research validation is regarded as a judgment of the research quality, the findings' accuracy, and the detailed descriptions that are associated with presenting the qualitative data (Creswell, 2007). The term credibility is also used to judge the

research validity in qualitative research (Glaser & Strauss, 2009), and several researchers have recommended various strategies that increase the validity of research. Peer review or external audits is one of the suggested validation strategies; it includes external checking of the research process and the produced product (Creswell, 2007). Another recommendation is clarifying the researcher's position, biases, and assumptions that may influence the research interpretation or approach to the study (Merriam, 1988). Wolcott (1990) suggests several considerations that guarantee validity in research. For example, researchers should listen more than talking while gathering data in the field, create notes that are as precise as possible, start the writing stage early, provide enough data, and finally, produce as comprehensive and honest a report as possible (Wolcott, 1990). Glaser and Strauss (2009) believe that readers can judge the research credibility depending on their assessment of how the researcher has reached his/her conclusions, and how much the readers were caught up with the detailed conveyed description of the research so that they feel as if they were part of the research and disposed toward the researcher final theory. Finally, research validation includes ethical and substantive validation. Ethical validation is associated with the political and ethical implications and the overall underlying moral assumptions; while substantive validation is understanding the researcher's self reflection and own understanding regarding the topic and how completely they documented the research process (Angen, 2000).

Taking these suggestions into account and aiming to increase the validity of the current research, the researcher audio recorded all interviews so she could listen more while conducting the interviews. She started the writing stage early, by transcribing each interview immediately after each interview had been conducted. Also, the researcher has tried to explain, justify, and document every detail in the research process, as well as discussing the gathered data in detail, in an attempt to make it more credible for readers. In addition, she made sure that her supervisors were continuously updated and informed about the research process so that they could check it and give their feedback as external auditors, and they were consulted throughout the research process. Moreover, the researcher has declared that she has conducted the current research with an open mind, and tried not to be biased or selective but rather, interpreted the data professionally. Another strategy adopted by the researcher was asking the same questions while conducting the interviews in

different ways, to recognise if participants would answer in the same way and offer the same information. This helped the researcher to distinguish the accurate and genuine given information. Apart from this, another translator checked the interviews translated by the researcher to ensure the accuracy and quality of translation. As a result, the researcher has written a completely candid thesis that includes rich and genuine information.

3.9.2 Reliability in Qualitative Research

The reliability of qualitative research depends on the data being explicated in such a way that it is easy to distinguish where the researcher's interpretation starts and what their inputs are (Flick, 2014); in other words, the level of data's dependability. Several suggestions may increase the reliability of qualitative research. One is to recheck and compare different interviews that the researcher has conducted with their transcripts and check and assess the interview guide (Merriam, 1988). A high level of documentation also enhances the reliability of the research and can be achieved through good quality recording of the interviews and detailed field notes (Angen, 2000). Both of these methods were applied; as mentioned earlier, the interviews were audio recorded using two recording devices, and the researcher took notes and wrote memos during and after conducting each interview.

Another strategy that can help in increasing the research reliability and was also used by the researcher for the current research is the use of computer programs (Creswell, 2007). NVIVO software was used for this research. Although it did not influence the interpretation of the data, it helped in managing and coding the data in a consistent way. Apart from this, the researcher maintained consistency and reliability in the coding phase by creating a codebook, which is a list of codes, their definition, and their application. These definitions of codes and what kind of information is linked or related to each code, or even the analytic idea that it refers to, ensure that codes are reliable and are used in a consistent way (Gibbs, 2007).

3.9.3 Reflexivity

As mentioned earlier, one of the concepts associated with phenomenology is bracketing, which was shown to be challenging (Thompson et al., 1989; Kafle, 2013). The simplest way to overcome this challenge is by clarifying the reflexivity of the researcher. It is challenging for a qualitative researcher to be fully objective and to

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separate what is in their minds from previous experiences and information while conducting the research. Reflexivity and clarifying where the researcher comes from and what values, beliefs, and previous experiences are in his or her mind, especially with regard to the research topic, is the best way to overcome this challenge (Wolcott, 1990). Therefore, the researcher will highlight some points that may have an influence.

First, the researcher has a mixed background of both art and marketing, which influenced the area of interest and particularly the research topic. Studying, reading, and working in both these areas has revealed that there is lack of connection between the two fields and that business professionals do not appreciate the significant importance of art and design and how they can use it to improve their businesses. Despite the clear application of an assumed link between aesthetics and mood or behaviour in daily life, intensive reading in these areas and reviewing the literature has also highlighted the clear gap in knowledge and theories to support this. As a consequence, the researcher was keen to explore the interrelationship between design and business and to develop a theoretical framework that can be used for further studies.

Further to this, the researcher has travelled widely in the past and has visited more than twenty different countries with various hotels, and she was always interested in this industry and the application and use of art and design in it, which encouraged her to focus on this industry, especially because theoretically, the role of design was overlooked in the past with regard to the hotel industry. This information does not mean that the researcher is biased in any way, but rather it is a strength and positive point, because the knowledge she acquired and the open mind she developed due to intensive travelling, meant that she was more keen about the study, interpreted it deeply, and was able to understand various concepts that a researcher with less travelling experience may not notice or grasp. Additionally, Kvale (2007) argues that "acknowledged subjective perspective may, however, come to highlight specific aspects of the phenomenon being investigated and bring new dimensions forward, contributing to a multi-perspectival construction of knowledge" (Kvale, 2007, p.86). This justifies the importance of mentioning the researcher's background and what may have an input in the study. Furthermore, although the researcher's qualitative

skills were limited at the beginning of the study, she has developed these skills through her four years of conducting the research, by taking various modules, and attending workshops on qualitative research in general and NVIVO in specific. She also read about qualitative research, interviewing and data analysis to familiarize herself with these techniques and improve her skills further.

3.10 Ethical considerations

Almost all research involves ethical issues; however researchers should attempt to resolve these issues or minimise any risk involving them. As a result, it is important to understand research ethics. Therefore, the researcher will evaluate the ethical implications of this research in this section. Ethics in business research can be defined as "a code of conduct or expected societal norm of behaviour while conducting research" (Sekaran, 2003, p. 17). The researcher should consider all ethical aspects that may occur during the research. Therefore, before collecting the data, the researcher filled up an ethical approval form and submitted it to the research committee at the University of Hull, where she is studying. She also followed the various recommendations and considerations regarding any ethical issues that may occur throughout the research in order to minimise them and produce an ethical, reliable research. These different ethical considerations will be discussed next.

The ethical principles that should be considered in the research process are: integrity and objectivity of the researcher, respect for others, avoiding harm, privacy of participants, voluntary participation, freedom to withdraw, informed consent, and finally anonymity of participants (Saunders et al., 2009). Thompson et al. (1989) recommend that phenomenological interviewers should obtain informed consent, protect participant confidentiality, provide the context in which participants described their experiences in detail, ask descriptive questions, and use participants' own words when asking follow-up questions. However, Gioia et al. (2013) argue that researchers should promise ''anonymity'' rather than ''confidentiality,'' because that would preclude most reporting, but they agree that they should use participants own terms to help understand their lived experiences better. In the same way, Beauchamp and Childress (1983) suggest four main principles in ethics: autonomy, beneficence, nonmaleficence, and justice. According to these principles, researchers should respect

the rights of the individual, do good, not do harm, and make sure that equity is maintained. On the other hand, Diener and Crandall (1978) highlight four practices that must be avoided by any researcher: lack of informed consent, invasion of privacy, deception, and harm to participants. This suggests that there are several possible unethical practices that can occur when conducting research, such as putting pressure on participants to take part in the research, asking humiliating questions, deceiving and misleading participants, not preserving privacy of information, and causing stress to respondents, physically or mentally (Sekaran, 2003). Consequently, the researcher took these into consideration and tried to avoid these practices. Applying the mentioned ethical principles is a contentious process that should be considered throughout all research stages (Auerbach & Silverstein, 2003). Therefore, each of the main ethical principles and how ethical issues were considered and unethical practices avoided will be disused next.

The first ethical principle is Informed Consent. This means that participants have the right to be fully informed about the research that they will be taking part in, and they have the right to look at the research result (Miller & Brewer, 2003). In this study, the researcher interviewed thirty-seven participants. She made sure to achieve informed consent; here "research [is] conducted in such a way that participants have complete understanding, at all times, of what the research is about and the implications for themselves in being involved" (Noaks & Wincup, 2004, p. 45). Particepants were given a consent formwhich explained that potential respondents were being researched and the intentions of the research; it also specified that respondents had the right to withdraw at any time (Denzin & Lincoln, 1998). Thus, respondents were briefly informed that the purpose of the study was to examine the impact of interior design in the hotel context; then they were politely asked to sign the consent form before taking part in the study. They took part voluntarily, and they had the right to withdraw at any time. The researcher also gave assurances that if any respondent chose to stop or leave the interview, their data would be destroyed. These practices were applied to avoid any lack of informed consent, which is one of the ethical issues raised by Diener and Crandall (1978).

The second ethical principle is privacy and anonymity. Miller and Brewer (2003) strongly believe that "one of the most important aspects of social research is the

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protection of the participants' identity" (Miller, & Brewer, 2003, p. 97). In the same way, Saunders et al. (2009) recommend keeping respondents' identities generalised, and only reporting personal information about respondents if they give their permission. Thus, respondents' information was anonymised, and the only data reported is the core gathered information that is related to the research topic and will affect the conclusions and findings of the study. Privacy and anonymity is a crucial aspect of the research and one of the key responsibilities of the researcher is to guard the respondents' confidentiality (Sekaran, 2003). Thus the researcher has coded each respondent as (Interviewee#1, Interviewee#2, etc.) and used these codes in the thesis to keep their names and identities anonymous.

The research topic is neither personal nor sensitive, as it investigated how customers perceived the hotel interior design and its. Therefore, the respondents were relaxed and open when the data was being collected (Zikmund, 2003). However, there was a high chance that respondents would name hotels and talk about their experiences with these hotels. In this case, the researcher focused on the elements and their experience and has not named the mentioned hotels in the thesis, to protect the privacy of these hotels, as it is important to protect the privacy not only of individuals, but also of organisations (Saunders et al., 2009). Further to this, as the researcher spent an average of an hour with each respondent for each interview, the respondents provided a huge amount of information and an extensive story, some of whih was personal. The researcher therefore made sure to exclude any personal data, to avoid any invasion of privacy.

The third ethical principle is deception. Impartiality is crucial in social research (Sekaran, 2003). Therefore, the researcher has acted in an honest and trustworthy way by making sure not to misrepresent the data or select specific data to report while neglecting others. Being fair and truthful in presenting the data will result in accurate and honest conclusions (Bryman, & Bell, 2003). The researcher also maintained objectivity by collecting data fully and accurately and not being selective in recording data according to personal preferences (Saunders et al., 2009). To better avoid deception, the researcher audio recorded the interviews after getting the permission of each respondent, so the researcher could later transcribe each interview from the recorder as it was, and did not depend on her notes or memory of the interview. In

addition, the researcher made sure to back up the recorder by using two recording devices; furthermore no recording was carried out secretly or without getting permission from the respondents. The fourth and final ethical principle is harm. The researcher avoided any form of harm by considering the appropriateness of language and questions (Denzin, & Lincoln, 1998). In addition, the researcher avoided asking humiliating questions, misleading participants, and causing stress for respondents physically or mentally (Sekaran, 2003). As a result, the researcher acted openly, truthfully and objectively.

In summary, to ensure ethical compliance, all data was anonymised and it was used for the research purpose only. All respondents were asked to sign the consent form before taking part in the study. This clarified that potential respondents were aware that they were being researched and that they understood the intentions of the research (Denzin & Lincoln, 1998). The researcher avoided any form of harm by considering the appropriate language and questions, as well as avoiding deception when collecting the data, and she maintained objectivity at this stage by collecting data fully and accurately and not being selective in recording the data according to personal preferences (Saunders et al., 2009). No access to data was given to other parties except the researcher and the examiners of the research, if needed.

3.11 Summary

In conclusion, this chapter has explained the methodology development and the data collection methods that were employed to answer the research questions. It clarified that the research philosophy was interpretivism, the research approach was inductive, and the research strategy was phenomenology. The rationale behind choosing this research design was mainly due to the need for rich information to understand consumers' perceptions in-depth. Therefore, the most appropriate research method for collecting the data was semi-structured face-to-face interviews. Accordingly, thirty-seven interviews were conducted in Saudi Arabia. The chapter has explained in detail the data collection process and data analysis procedure, which involved a mixed approach of both paper based and NVIVO software. The final part of the chapter addressed the ethical considerations of the research and the various measures taken to

enhance the research quality. Figure 11 summarises the research design for this study. This chapter has explained how the research was conducted, and how the data was collected, what strategies were used to analyse the gathered data, and what codes were identified. The next chapter, therefore, will explain and discuss the findings of the study with regard to the identified codes in order to develop the final framework of the study.
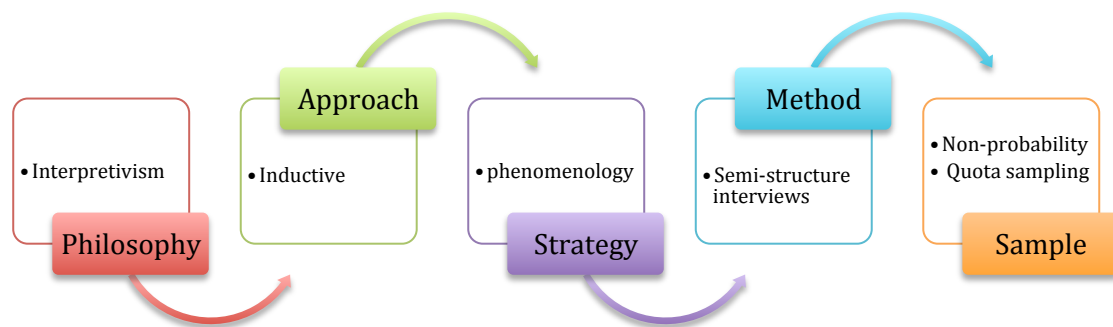
Figure 10 Summary of research design

CHAPTER FOUR: FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the data and identified codes, interprets their meanings, discusses them, and finally relates them to the extant literature. The findings are interpreted through the lens of three main theories that were discussed in the literature review chapter, which are Servicescape (Bitner, 1992), SDL (Vargo & Lusch, 2004), and CCT (Arnould & Thompson, 2005). As a result, this chapter provides the foundation for building and developing the "Hotelscape" framework in the last part of this chapter.

Based on the analysis of the conducted thirty-seven interviews, forty-seven codes and seven conceptual themes (design perception, design elements, hotel design vs. hotel attributes, creating value for customers, creating value for hotels, symbolizing meanings, and shaping experiences) have emerged from the data on which the final theory was built. Table 11 illustrates how the conceptual themes are categorised for analysis and discussion in this chapter. Part one includes the design perception and design elements, and it is called the concept of hotel interior design, while part two includes the remaining conceptual themes and it is called the role of hotel interior design.

Part	Conceptual themes	Axial codes
Part one: The concept of hotel interior design	The perception of hotel interior design	The holistic perception Design aesthetic look vs. design functionality
	The elements of hotel interior design	Key elements
		Supplementary elements
Part two: The role of hotel interior design	Hotel design vs. hotel attributes	Hotel attributes
	Creating value for customers	Hotel interior design as an emotion influencer
		Hotel interior design as an influence on buying behaviour
	Creating value for hotels	Hotel interior design as a competitive advantage
		Hotel interior design as a marketing segmentation tool
	Conveying meanings (symbolism)	The role of hotel interior design in forming perceptions
		Hotel interior design as a quality & hygiene indicator
	Shaping experiences	The impact of hotel interior deisgn on employees' performance
		The impact of hotel interior design on memories

Table 11 The categorization of the codes in the findings and discussion chapter
(Author)

Therefore, the headings of this chapter represent the conceptual themes that have emerged from the data. Accordingly, to better understand the constructs of the current study and answer the research questions, the chapter is divided into three main parts. The first part explores the perception of hotel designs, and identifies the significant elements that shape their designs from cosmopolitan consumers' point of view. These elements are the most influential in creating value with regard to SDL, in creating meaning with regard to CCT, and in shaping experiences. The second part investigates the role and impact of hotel design on both customers and hotels. The third part is the final outcome of parts one and two. It includes the development of the "Hotelscape" framework. Figure 12 provides an overview of the current chapter and clarifies the research questions that each part is intended to answer.
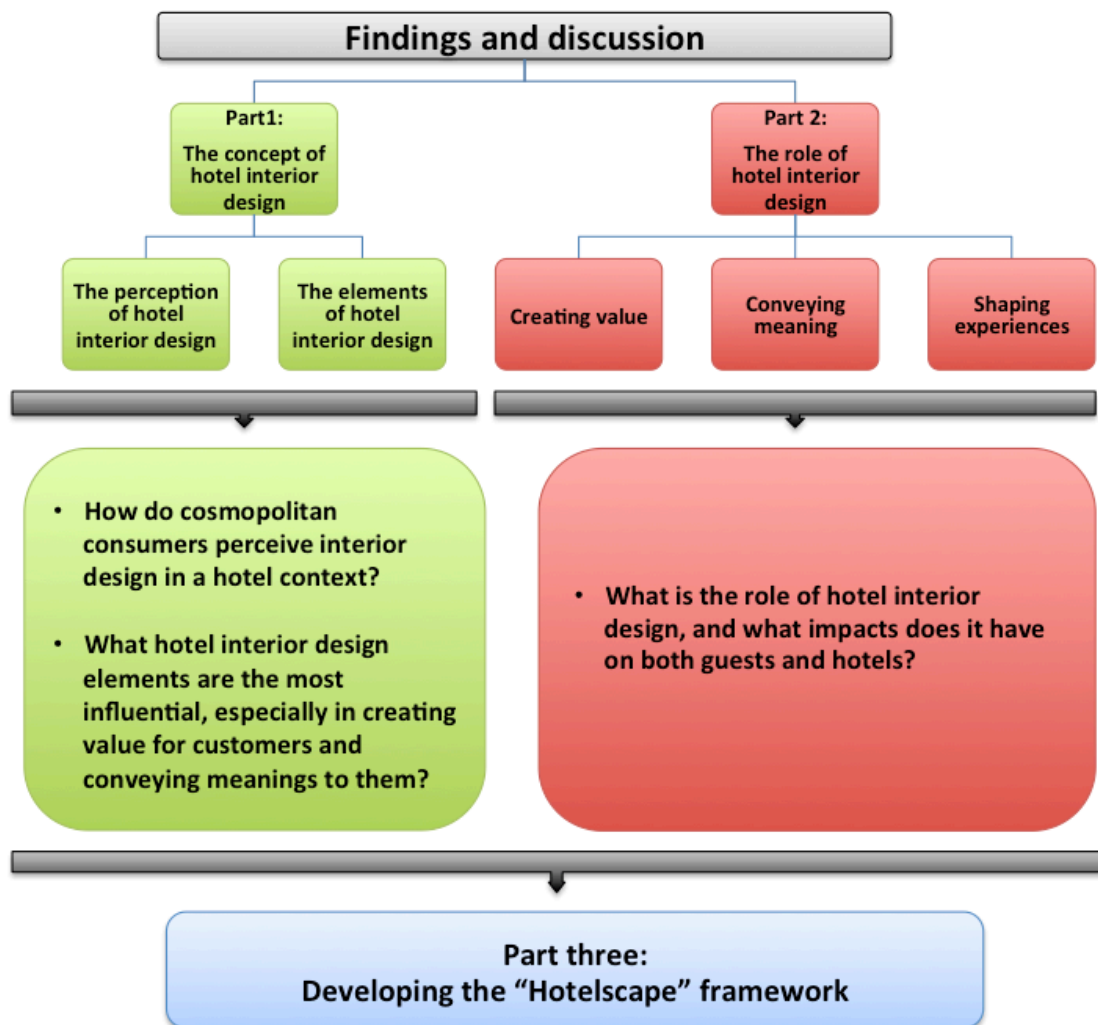
Figure 11 Overview of the findings and discussion chapter (Author)

4.2 Part one: The concept of hotel interior design

4.2.1 Introduction

Guests engage more with the hotel's physical servicescape than with the service provider (Lin, 2004). Reviewing the literature indicates that the importance of physical environments is well established in different industries such as retails (e.g. Lin& Liang, 2011), restaurants (e.g. Milliman 1986; Jang & Namkung, 2009; Ryu & Jang, 2008), and healthscpaes (Hutton & Richardson, 1995; Whitehouse et al., 2001; Han, 2007). However, the literature suggests that there is still a lack of research that supports the importance of the service physical design in the hotel industry, which justifies the importance of the current study. Hotel design is important to its guests (West & Purvis, 1992; Lea, 2008). Therefore, it is important to grasp the hotel design concept. This part analyses and discusses how cosmopolitan hotel guests perceive the hotel design, and identifies the most significant elements that constitute the hotel design from their point of view. As a result, this part will answer the following research questions:

❖ How do cosmopolitan consumers perceive interior design in a hotel context?
❖ What hotel interior design elements are the most influential, especially in creating value for customers and conveying meanings to them?

4.2.2 The perception of hotel interior design

4.2.2.1 The holistic concept

Theory suggests that humans make sense of their surroundings as a whole by categorising and understanding the relations between partial information (Hekkert, 2006). This means that their brains divide the environment into separate parts (Frey et al., 2008). Then they combine these cues to form a holistic picture, and judge the service environment holistically (Lin, 2004). More specifically, Orth et al. (2012) argue that interior design is perceived and judged holistically. The findings revealed that hotel guests perceive the servicescape holistically, especially as a first impression. As emphasized by this interviewee:

"In your first visit to a hotel you focus on everything." Interviewee# 14

Analysis indicates that some design elements are more important and influential in forming holistic perception and impression. Hotel guests differ in personalities and interests, which makes different guests focus on and look for different things (Yelkur & Da-Costa, 2001). There was a general agreement among interviewees about how they perceive hotel design holistically. Yet, discussions made them identify the most design elements that grabbed their attention and affected their overall perception, conveyed meanings to them, and added value to them. Interestingly, customers who had an interest in décor, art, design, and architecture focused more on details and could elaborate more on this matter. This was pointed out by the following interviewees:

> *"If a person is interested in décor and architecture, like myself, he will notice details more than others and consider it more when choosing the hotel." Interviewee#1*

> *"I feel that I'm really interested in décor and art so that has enriched me. I pay attention to details and adapt things that I like in my own home." Interviewee#11*

4.2.2.2 Design aesthetic look vs. design functionality

Baker (1986) argues that scholars normally categorize design elements into aesthetic (e.g. colour and material), or functional (e.g. architectural design). A well designed building offers both functional and aesthetic features (Cripps, 2013). The findings align with the concept that design is about both aesthetic appearance and functionality but adds new insight. Theory suggests this concept relates to the properties of the building itself, while the findings suggest that these aspects are important for all the specific design elements within the general design of the building, including furniture, lighting, layout, and arrangement.

An interesting dimension that the findings revealed is how customers' perception toward the hotel design is shaped by both the look and the functionality of the design.

It is interesting because this dimension has not been studied before with regard to the hotel industry, nor to the specific design constructs within a building. Interviewees illustrated this by saying:

> "I care about design because it impacts how I use the room, like if it is spacious and there is space for everything then I can put my luggage and don't need to put it in the way, also if there isn't a seating area then I will have to do everything on my bed, so space, placement and layout are important. It matters in the basic things and not the details, like the room design importance from colour and layout. I will use the layout. Colours will affect me but I will not be using it. I will give it 8/10." Interviewee#23

> "Modern, but design for me is about comfort and not only the style... I do look into the interior design of the hotel, basically the type of chairs that they use, if it's comfortable, the bed, the use of electric plugs and sockets... Design plays a role in making it relaxing and comfortable due to the type of furniture and colours." Interviewee#3

> "Comfortable bed. Seating area in the bedroom is important. The choice of closets and whether it's spacious or not. From the design, you can tell if they care and thought about their guests or not...Comfort is important, so not only the look, sometimes furniture looks nice but is not comfortable... Size and height of bed; some beds I had to climb to reach. Quality of mattress." Interviewee#13

Hotel guests mentioned the look and the functionality of the design together and described it as nice and comfortable, while what they were referring to was the look and functionality of the space. Additionally, functionality was often described by and associated with comfort and convenience, but the findings revealed that they are both equally important and that they complement each other to form the overall holistic view toward the hotel design. Therefore, hotel designers should consider both the look that the guests will enjoy looking at, and the functionality that the guests will enjoy using, to create a completely satisfying and appealing design. Figure 13 illustrates this concept.
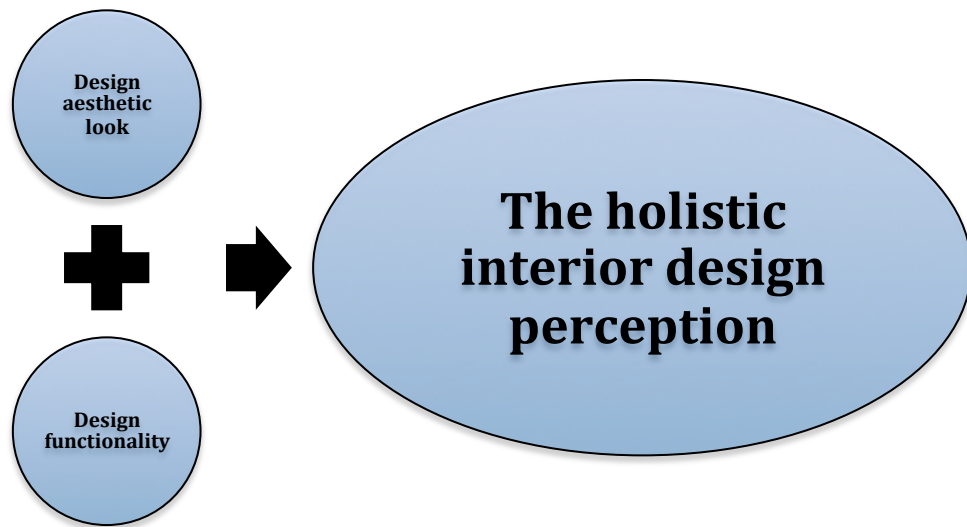
Figure 12 The holistic design perception (Author)

The importance of balancing between being unique and offering a convenient design is a new insight that was pointed out by this study. Several interviewees mentioned that complicated designs are not practical and comfortable, so hotels should avoid them in bedrooms, and balance between being unique without sacrificing practicality. However, they can keep such features in the lobby as uniqueness in lobby design is appreciated. Unusual designs in the lobby grab attention, but not in bedrooms. The following statements illustrate this opinion:

"Hotels can differentiate themselves by design, it should be renovated and up to date even if the style was classic, and the services that they provide. Design in a way can be part of service too, and I may prefer a hotel rather than another because of its design, for example there is xxx hotel in LA, it's nice, 5 stars, everyone likes it. But I tried it once and I will never repeat it because its design was confusing for me, TV like a mirror, shower splashes everywhere, the lighting is too dim, so its not comfortable for the eyes, dark colours, so it's not comfortable It's nice to see because it's different but not to stay more than 2 days. So this is a design that I didn't like." Interviewee#23

"I hated xxx in Milano, because it has a strange art deco design and even in the toilet I couldn't turn on and use the sink easily. They had strange beds. Green,

red colours. Wasn't comfortable. Seating and space in the lobby was strangely divided. Somewhere I can go for a cup of coffee but can't stay there for long time; after a while you will feel uncomfortable because of the colour and distribution..Feeing of discomfort. No cosiness, hotels that are so driven with craziness and creativity of the room that they make it uncomfortable for the guest to stay in; it's not an art gallery after all, it's a bedroom." Interviewee#9

"I don't like too much colours and design. Something ordinary but has a touch of the unusual, so you can sleep well." Interviewee#17

Individuals' responses to environments rely on integrating multisensory information and processing it (Dube et al., 2007). Humans perceive the visual environment in a complicated manner. The brain divides the received information into manageable portions (Frey et al., 2008). Reviewing the literature indicates that individuals perceive their environment holistically and suggests specific categorizations that form the overall perception. With time they fragment the holistic design and start to recognize the different elements that form the overall design. This suggests that the findings align with the holistic concept but adds insights in two respects: first that the holistic perception is only a first phase, and second, that hotel guests rely on both the look and functionality of the hotel design, and they are equally important in forming their holistic perceptions. The look and functionality are characteristics of the specific design elements, which will be discussed next.

4.2.3 The elements of hotel interior design

Design elements in the context of this research means the rudiments that construct hotel design from cosmopolitan consumers' point of view. These elements are considered as operand resources that co-create value from a SDL perspective, and are controllable elements that symbolise meanings about the hotel and its offering from a CCT perspective. As mentioned in previous chapters, design has great impact on customers (e.g. Kotler, 1973; Bitner, 1992). However, although some specific design elements were identified in the literature, there is still a lack of theory that breaks hotel design into specific detailed elements, and investigates how hotels' customers perceive them, therefore, interviewees were asked to discuss this.   As a result,

different antecedents emerged from the data, that can be categorised into key elements that are crucial in forming guests' perception and affecting their satisfaction, and supplementary elements that add value to hotel guests but the lack of them can be tolerated in some cases. Another main difference between the key elements and the supplementary elements is that the key elements are concerned with both the aesthetic appearance and the functional influence, whether emotional or physical, while the supplementary elements usually add value to the aesthetic, visual part. Lighting and colour are the most significant elements and these two elements are not expensive to offer, which is good news for hotel managers who are giving little attention to design, due to its cost. The following statements support this:

"Having said that, colours and lighting are the most important, pastel colours with daylight and dome lighting will give a very relaxing atmosphere. These are the two important elements." Interviewee#4

"Colours of rooms and walls, this is the most important thing that designers should focus on. Lighting, which I consider as art, impacts the décor of the room." Interviewee#13

All the identified elements seem to influence guests in different ways but with the key elements being more influential. Figure 14 summarises these elements, which will be explained next.

Key elements	Supplementary elements
Colour	Space
Lighting	Ambient conditions
Furniture	Technology
Style	Complemantry items
Layout & distribution	Artifacts
	Staff uniform
	The use of glass and big windows
	Natural cues
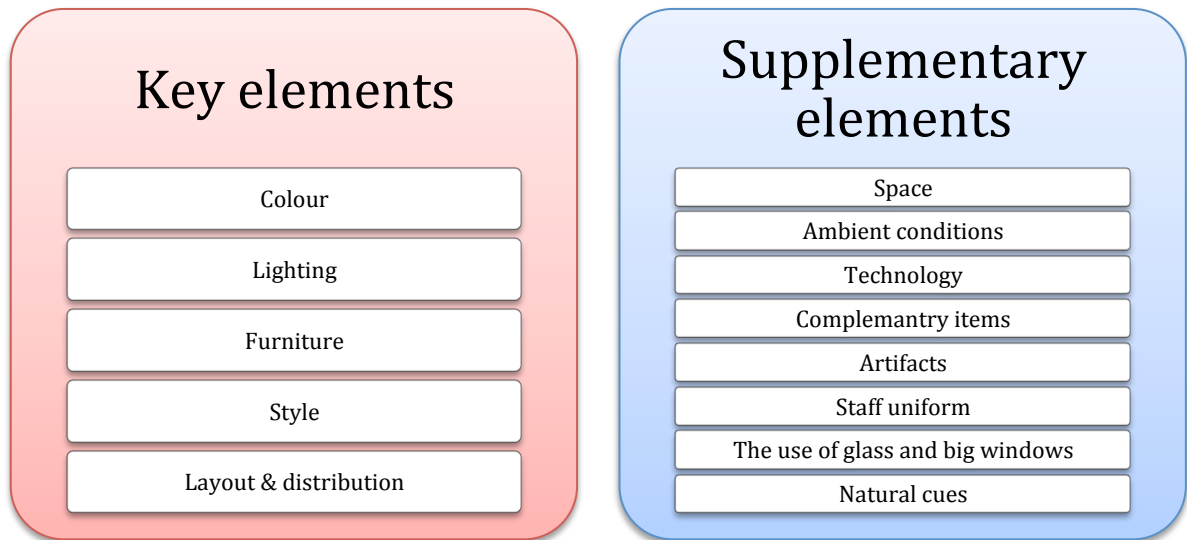
Figure 13 Key elements vs. supplementary elements (Author)

4.2.3.1 Key elements

- **Colour**

The importance of the colour factor in the physical interior is well recognised in different sciences (Eiseman, 1998; Singh, 2006). However, its importance and benefits to the hotel industry is a new insight that came out of this study. Although some studies have associated certain colours with certain feelings, they contain contradictions. For example Bellize and Hite (1992) associate cool colours with pleasure, while Summers and Hebert (2001) associate pleasure with bright colours. Additionally, some researchers believe that colours are perceived differently between genders (Cimbalo et al., 1978; Khouw, 2002). However, the findings contradict this and show that different genders can prefer the same colours. According to the data it is a matter of different tastes and no demographic variable seems to have a clear effect on colour preference in hotel design, which was unexpected. The findings on this point are summarized in Table 12.

Preference in hotel colours	Unpopular hotel colours	Gender	Age
White, light blue, pastel colours, brown, beige, green		F	26
Colours matters too I prefer bright colours like beige and white with the linens		F	28
Natural colours, anything related to nature, sandy, green, black, brown, beige, yellow, white, and navy		M	58
My wife likes the colour of lavender so its nice, peach, light blue, light green, not dark, white is nice but the upkeep of it is difficult		M	50
Light, pastel, beige, white		F	30
Nature colours, green, off-white, light blue. White is the king of colours,		F	42
Warm colours, from dark red, dark yellow		M	18
Brownish, yellow, off-white		M	27
I like rich colours,, Dark green, dark red, beige deep rich beige. Little gold White sheets	Don't like gloomy or bright colours,	F	26
Brown, white, natural colours, beige		F	28
White, soft calm neutral colours,	Don't like striking colours	F	27
Light colours, prefer beige mostly, white is very nice in hotels gives you feeling that the room is clean and new, comfortable		F	32
Colours matter too. I prefer light colours like beige and white fol the linens		F	29
Bright colours, black, grey, white, and brown		M	30
Light and bright colours, blue, green, yellow, purple, beige not dark colours, I also like white and pink		F	43
Light, pastel, blue beige, greys.	Dark are depressive	F	25
Mix between blacks and white		M	29
I prefer beige, dark pink, dark colours, and gold	I don't like striking modern colours like red and yellow	F	29
White, pink, beige	Especially colours, if they are dark I will be depressed	F	24
Modern colours mix of blue, yellow, orange, red. Multi colours that are designed and matched together and not one colour dominating		M	30
I usually prefer blue colours, brown		M	45
Green, white, blue and light blue, pastel colours	If you have grey and brown colours I will feel depression	M	55
Prefer pastel colours, white and off-white colours.		F	40
Light, pastel, beige, white		F	30
Colours should be calm not crazy and wild, must be in harmony, not too bright		M	55
Like dark, black, grey, white		M	32
Yellow, beige, brown, white		M	18
I like contrast and surprises in colours, I like to see colours matched which are not usually put together		F	54
In room, brown and beige and have 1 wall bright green or red that contrasts and makes you happy.		F	29
White, light blue, pastels, brown, beige, green		F	26
Shining, yellow, green, colours that give you a life, red, orange		M	25
Red, white		F	27

Table 12 Colour preferences of research participants (Author)

Although colour is the most significant factor and the first mentioned when discussing hotel design with participants, different participants preferred different colours. This suggests that it is difficult to specify certain preferred colours that hotel designers should use. However, several interviewees complained about dark colours and associated them with depression and some colours may affect hotel guests negatively by pushing them away from the hotel and making them not enjoy their stay and not want to spend time in the hotel. These interviewees confirmed this:

> *"Colours impact me greatly, dark colours make me just want to sleep in the hotel and not want to go back to the hotel, but when I like the design I want to stay more in the room and order room service. So design affects how much time I spend in the hotel." Interviewee#6*

> *Some hotels are very modern, which is annoying or very dark which is depressing, like black modern hotels." Interviewee# 30*

On the other hand, natural and pastel colours seem to be more popular among hotel guests. Interviewees illustrated this by saying:

> *"Personality plays a major role in choosing colours or feeling comfortable around certain colours but a mid group of colours that most people like are brownish, yellow, off-white. These are calm colours that you just can't go wrong with. Sometimes a sophisticated interior design helps you to be calm and feel relaxed." Interviewee#9*

> *"In my opinion, natural colours meet the taste of most people, and last for a long time, compared to modern furniture and modern colours, whichyou have to change more often according to the trend of that year." Interviewee#15*

Further to this, there were mixed views regarding unexpected, surprising colours. Some would like them, such as these interviewees:

> *"I like contrast and surprises in colours, I like to see colours matched which are not usually put together. Something different. Yellow, green, gold." Interviewee#11*

"Red, places I like have a red element, it's a rich welcoming colour, what matches red but not in rooms." Interviewee#12

Others would not, such as the following interviewee:

"The room has to be reasonable size, good service, have some taste into it like colouring and stuff like that, I don't like to go for a hotel where you will find a red wall for example, or colours that blind you, I like light colours, a nicely decorated, calm place. It does not have to be very fancy but it has to have a touch of class into it, so it can be basic but with some touches, to me its much better than something fancy with ugly colours." Interviewee#16

This summarises that having harmonious colours is a key concept, and trying to find a colour palette that will satisfy most tastes is very challenging, Table 12 showed the different preferences in colours, where white is found to be the most popular among participants. The implication of this is that hoteliers should recognise the importance of the colour variable for their guests and, although tastes differ, they should focus more on white, light, and natural colours, as the findings proved that they are preferable. The significance of colours lies in their impact on attitudes, emotions, and especially perceptions.

- **Lighting**

There was general agreement among interviewees about the importance of natural lighting, and adjustable lighting, and they considered them key elements in the hotel design. Singh (2006) claims that lighting affects the mood and the memory. The findings support this claim, as lighting is found to affect the mood greatly:

"Lighting, how much light is available and amount of natural light that enters the place, it impacts the mood… Lighting plays a major role in décor." Interviewee#11

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"Comfort is always the key, if it's comfortable and cosy it will make your whole trip more pleasant, it will affect your trip. Once I stayed in xxx in Paris. The rooms were dark and like staying in a cage, I like a great deal of light coming in. I hate low lighting; I couldn't stay there more than two days. So lighting really affects your mood. Having the right lighting and distribution of electricity in the room plays a big role in how comfortable you are in this hotel. I like it controllable, where I can choose bright or dim, and in different places like ceiling, and side lamps." Interviewee#12

This suggests that findings agree with the importance of lighting in influencing the mood but adds two interesting concepts: first, the importance of lighting as part of the holistic hotel design, as it can influence the guests' comfort or even push them away from the hotel. Second, the great fondness for natural lighting, in contrast with dark and dim lighting, which hotel guests do not prefer.

- **Furniture**

Scarce research has focused on the impact of hotel furniture. In fact, the study by Countryman and Jang (2006) claims that furniture is not significant for hotel lobby design. Opposing this claim, the findings revealed that furniture is another crucial variable for hotel design. Wakefield and Blodgett (1996) argue that generally furniture is concerned with its comfort and look; the findings align with this view and prove its importance for hotel furniture in particular, because the data shows that the hotel furniture's aesthetic appearance and functionality are equally important for hotel guests, especially comfortable beds that encourage a good night sleep and the comfort of guests. The majority would describe pleasing furniture as nice and comfortable. The following interviewees commented on this by saying:

"Comfort is important so not only the look. Sometimes furniture looks nice but is not comfortable. Making you comfortable is the most important part; first and foremost bed and chairs should be comfortable. Then the placement of TV and desk." Interviewee#10

> *"To bring customers again you should have a good room, have a nice and comfortable bed." Interviewee#1*

Another significant effect of the furniture is its influence on Internet booking, as hotel guests rely greatly on the website photos, and the furniture is the clearest and easiest factor to judge on, which suggests its significance in forming customers' perceptions. One interviewee confirmed this:

> *"I will see the pictures before booking; I compare choice of furniture, if it looks better in quality and more comfortable and the colours of course." Interviewee#10*

Apart from the design photos, the furniture helps in forming the overall impression of the hotel, and there was general agreement among interviewees regarding the importance of the continuous hotel renovation, which can be seen and represented by the available furniture. The following interviewees explained this:

> *"The entrance grabs my attention most; I went to a hotel once where the furniture looked very used so it needed to be renovated. The used materials in making the chairs, beds, sheets, curtains. Some objects look expensive from the material used and the way it's designed. That makes it luxurious." Interviewee#27*

> *"Room quality means it has to show no wear and tear and not have dilapidated furniture, like broken or marked; they should always renovate. And I should always feel like the first guest to use this room." Interviewee#22*

This suggests that furniture is a key element in the hotel design from customers' point of view, and that they judge it due to its comfort and aesthetic look, which adds new insight to theory. Additionally, the findings revealed that hotel furniture influences guests' impression and online booking, which are significant implications for hotel managers to consider as well.

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- **Style**

The importance of style in the different servicescapes has been recognised before (Bitner, 1992; Countryman & Jang, 2006; Rosenbaum& Massiah, 2011). Nevertheless, its importance for shaping the hotel design is a new perception that is revealed by the findings of this study. The hotel design style is proven to be a significant element. However, there were mixed views regarding the style preference. Interestingly, demographic variables seem to have no impact on these different preferences in style but personalities and different tastes do. As a consequence, an interviewee who represents the majority recommended the following:

"To keep it safe design-wise, they should choose smartly. Every city even in Riyadh the 60 s-80 s fashions were dead after a few years, they look ugly after a few years, just out of place. So they should use smartly, so that what you choose would look nice everywhere, in every era. Gives you a sense of royalty, neat, clean, just beautiful. It mixes between modern and classic." Interviewee#9

The two most popular styles and most mentioned were classical and modern. Guests who preferred a classical hotel style believed that the modern is neither comfortable nor practical, and can be tolerated only in short stays. They added that classical style, especially historical, is associated with luxury and nobility. On the other hand, hotel guests who preferred a modern style believed that it represents hygiene and development. The following statements clearly explain these views:

"Sometimes modern, but classic has soul in it and gives you the sense that the hotel is alive. Both depend on the hotel. Some hotels are old and haven't changed things so you respect the old architecture and old furniture. A hotel in Switzerland called xxx has this room that everyone has stayed in, John Kennedy, singers.. a lot of famous people and they haven't changed a thing in it, so has history. They are maintaining what they have. You won't accept a cramped modern hotel but in this it was great because of the history. Walls can speak, that is good enough. Because we had a tour and they told us the stories of that hotel. Every room you stay in, they tell you who stayed in it before." Interviewee."#27

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"Some hotels are very modern, which is annoying or very dark which is depressing, like black modern hotels…I like Castles, hotels with history, hotels that make you feel that you entered a castle. Luxury, I like to feel like a princess on my holidays for a change because my daily life is not luxurious, I feel it is me time where I can enjoy and see beautiful scenery… Classic gives more atmosphere of luxury and royalty, modern is boring and not luxurious…I don't like modern hotels, I prefer classic. I wouldn't feel like repeating a modern hotel because I didn't feel comfortable in it. While if it was classic and according to my preference and what I love, then I would like to repeat it." Interviewee."#30

"Modern hotels are more clean and you can tell if it is clean or not, and classic are more luxurious. But I prefer modern." Interviewee."#13

Regardless of the general style of the hotel, uniqueness and unexpected touches are usually appreciated, especially in the hotel lobby, as mentioned previously. For example the following interviewee mentioned that:

"The xxx hotel in Las Vegas, the lobby was very creative, the ceiling was like real sky, the breakfast place was great, so it was unique. So lobby, services, presentation of things are more important than the brand name. Sometimes un famous hotels offer better things than branded hotels….In general, Las Vegas is known for its unique hotels. One was like a forest, where you can hear animal noises. Another is called xxx, it has pyramids inside the hotel, another with sky and stars inside. Another with water everywhere, Another with flower creations and a floral theme, so they are unique, not like the usual standard hotels." Interviewee#32

According to Higgins et al. (2006) cultural artefacts include six main types: values, myths, rewards, ceremony/ritual, physical environment, and language systems. The findings prove that cultural artefacts in servicescape are influential and beneficial in the hotel context, because apart from uniqueness, culturally themed hotel designs and

cultural touches are highly valued by hotel guests. In fact, cultural design can be the unique design that hotels can apply, as hotels in different countries can represent the country that they are in, and the differences among different countries and cultures are undoubtedly diverse and distinctive. The following statements reflect this opinion:

"Reflecting the culture of the country is very important, whether they are known for food or special trees, it will be a good attractive point for the hotel to have a cultural theme and it touches so that you feel that you are in that particular place of the world." Interviewee#2

"Being unique and different is very important, a welcoming feeling, design should be extended from the culture or the city, there has to be a link, I don't like to see a modern hotel in an old city like Venice. When you wake up you want to sea something related, to recognise where you are." Interviewee#12

In summary, although modern and classic were the most popular hotel design styles from customers' point of view, adding unique and cultural touches adds a lot of value, as agreed by the majority of participants. This is a new dimension that came out of the study and was not perceived before, as the hotel style was not examined with regard to the hotel industry, nor the emerged implications that were explained above.

- **Layout and distribution**

The importance of the layout factor for several servicescapes is established. For example, it is suggested that offering a convenient layout has a positive effect on customers, such as reducing the search time and enabling the service delivery (Sulek & Lind, 1995), and increasing the customers' enjoyment of the offered service (Wakefield & Blodgett, 1996). On the other hand, the layout of servicescapes can frustrate customers if they cannot move easily and freely (Bitner, 1992). Interestingly, the importance of hotels' layout is a new interesting dimension that was freequently mentioned and noticed by interviewees, and the majority agreed on its significance in forming the overall hotel design and its influence on their comfort and satisfaction. Having said that, the importance of layout in the hotel context is related to the

functionality and accessibility of the design and how it can be used. The following interviewees highlighted this:

> *"The comfort felt comfortable, the look made me comfortable, when you enter a room and lie on the bed you say "God what a wonderful room!", because of the brightness and quality of furniture, space for movement, space for luggage, everything located in its right place. Cosy at the same time. Layout and distribution is important, TV, bed, chairs with table at the side. Sometimes you enter a spacious room but don't feel comfortable because things in the room are not well arranged and laid out." Interviewee#35*

> *"I like details and care about them. Like location of TV according to the bed. Details that attract my attention are when things are hidden so that the room does not look busy, such as iron board and coffee machine in cupboards…space distribution is very important, they have everything but it has to be in the right place, you don't feel a lot of things in the room… Designers have studied the layout and direction of bed, with colours and light very well. To reflect positively Interviewee#4*

4.2.3.2 Supplementary elements

- **Space**

This factor was studied in the retail environment and proved to have influence on customers' convenience (Wakefield & Blodgett, 1996) perception, and evaluation (Ching, 1996). However, the impact of the space factor in the hotel servicescape, and its influence on its guests is a new dimension that was not understood before. Nevertheless, the findings reveled interesting views. For example, space was mentioned by the majority of interviewees, especially in describing their ideal hotels, and its influence on hotel guests was critical as part of luxurious hotels designs. Its importance depends on the airy and positive feeling that guests have as a result of being in a spacious place.

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Despite the general agreement about the importance of the hotel space, especially in forming first impressions, there were mixed views regarding the level of its importance compared to the other essential design elements. Several interviewees commented that a small space could be tolerated if other things are available and especially in cities with a lot of activities, and on short trips, while others insisted on the importance of spacious hotels, and this contradiction is the reason for considering it a supplementary design element. This interviewee reflected this view:

> *"It's very important for the bedroom to be spacious. Like London hotels are so annoying because the rooms are small, and the view is not great. Xxx hotel is not bad but still I wasn't happy because the rooms were small in size, but at least, in a place like London I will be out most of the time and use it mostly for sleeping only, and it's the only place I can tolerate that because of this reason. But I don't feel happy, comfortable or satisfied." Interviewee#11*

- **Ambient conditions**

These are nonvisual conditions in the background of the environment felt by different senses. Despite managements' clear increasing interest in these constructs, there is still a lack of empirical and theoretical research about ambience and its role in the hotel context (Heide et al., 2007). It is interesting to note that from particepants' point of view, the findings showed that these conditions are perceived and considered part of the hotel design and the two main ambient conditions that were discussed are related to the different scents and sounds in the hotel environment.

- **Scents**

Scent has been studied with regard to the retail servicescape and proved to induce different customers interactions and influence customers' evaluations, purchase intentions, revisiting, money and time spending (Matilla & Wirtz, 2001). However, up to this point this variable was not studied with regard to the hotel context. The findings do support the importance of different available scents in the hotel servicescape, especially in forming the guests' first impression from the first smell they recognize when they enter a hotel. However, it seems that the main role of hotel

scent is to judge the hygiene standard, which suggests that the evaluation of hygiene from the available smell comes first, followed by extra pleasant smells such as flowers and candles. The first is crucial because it will make customers stay or leave the hotel, while the second will impact their enjoyment and is considered as an added value.

Different pleasant aromas were pointed out by participants, and the most important smell that greatly influences a hotel guest is the smell of hygiene; in the same way, bad or dirty odours will alienate hotel guests. Other examples of nice aromas are flowers, coffee, baking, and scented candles or oils, especially in the entrance, as that will influence the first impression and the perception of the place greatly. Although smells are intangible, they have as great an impact as other tangible cues when forming the whole atmosphere and especially as a hotel design component. The following interviewees confirmed the importance of this factor:

> *"What grabs my attention is the smell of the hotel, big sofas in the lobby."* *Interviewee#25*

> *"The smell of coffee and baking bread in the morning are very welcoming."* *Interviewee#12*

> *"xxx hotel had a great interior. All hotels in Las Vegas have interesting designs but this had also great service and large rooms, the design is incredible. It was like a garden full of fresh flowers that they change every day, nice smell."* *Interviewee#19*

- **Sound**

As previously mentioned, the role of music in the hotel servicescape has not been studied before. However, it is claimed that music has great influence on guests in the dining industry, including inducing them to spend more time and money and influencing their perception. Wilson (2003). The findings of the current study highlight the importance of music in the hotel and align with the importance and impact of played pleasant music in the hotel, and that guests may stay for longer and

enjoy their stay more because of the music especially live piano music. Interestingly music was considered one of the hotel design elements from hotel guests' point of view, while in previous research it was part of the environment but not specifically part of the design. This suggests that the ambient conditions are key variables in building the overall hotel design. Considering ambient conditions part of the hotel interior design in specific rather than part of the overall environment is a new difference and insight that adds to the existing theory.

Interviewees commented on the different noises that they could hear in their hotel stays. Although this factor is intangible, it is found that it is noticed by hotel guests and that sounds and aromas and different physical tangible factors work together to form the whole design. Interviewees confirmed that soundproof and isolated walls are very important in making the guest comfortable, and that the availability of music is relaxing and entertaining, as highlighted by the following statements:

> *"Piano in a lobby gives you a sense of relaxation and slight entertainment, it doesn't seem bland and I consider it part of design." Interviewee#27*

> *" Sometimes you feel that the breakfast in the hotel is an experience, when you sit, and there is music, we stay more than an hour, decoration of the restaurant, and its colours. Noise in hotels is very important, regardless of space and busyness, it is important to have noise free walls." Interviewee#4*

This suggests that despite the ambient conditions being intangible, hotel guests perceive them and consider them parts of the hotel design. Scents are fundamentally important as a hygiene indicator, and other pleasant aromas add value; while regarding the sounds, soundproof walls are fundamentally important and music is an added value.

- **Technology**

Recently, the use of technology has been recognized as an added value for guests, and a chance to build loyalty, enhance satisfaction, and increase revenue (Bilgihan, 2012). Since the 1990s, hotels have started to spend a lot of money on installing and upgrading their offered technology to satisfy their customers (Deeb & Murray, 2002).

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Similarly Sigala and Connolly (2004) believe that Wi-Fi is an important advancement for the hotel industry. Wolff (2003) views it as a necessity and taken for granted since 2003; and pointed out that Wi-Fi is the most important IT system that guests care about.

The findings support the importance of technology and Wi-Fi for the hotel industry. However, what was interesting and not expected is that hotel guests consider the use of technology and the offered different gadgets and devices part of the perceived hotel design. Additionally, hotel guests use these variables as important criteria by which to judge and compare hotels, especially for guests who are interested in this matter. These include the different Media, mp3, I pads, plasma televisions, availability of electricity sockets, Wi-Fi, and controlling things through remote controls. The following statements illustrate this opinion and highlight the important technology aspects for hotel guests:

> *"A Tokyo hotel stuck in my mind because of its spacious rooms, technology in bathrooms, good customer service, I like technology; they also offered an I pad to each room. You could control AC and curtains through the I pad." Interviewee#24*

> *"Distribution of small elements in the room like light switches, correctly placed or not, electricity switches, it plays a role and gives you an impression if the room is well planned or not." Interviewee#18*

> *"A safe box should be in every room. Because of modern life, they should offer free Wi-Fi, plasma or LCD TV in the room to replace old TVs, Old TVs are ugly and not clear. They should provide international TV channels and consider different languages... Temperature of the room is important, it has to be moderate and adjustable, not like central ac." Interviewee#37*

- **Complimentary items**

A very interesting new dimension that came out of the data is the positive impact that complimentary items have on hotel guests. Examples of these items include free

drinks, food, bathrobes, and toiletries. The majority of interviewees mentioned some of these items when explaining a satisfying hotel stay, and they considered them part of the tangible design elements. The following statements illustrate this idea:

"All the extra little things that they put in the room, treats, fruit, oils, all these are enjoyable little treats…They could give you small extra things that make the difference." Interviewee#29

"I think if you put something unexpected even if it was a small thing in your journey, the satisfaction level will be higher. Small things play a big factor, like an iPod player can make an impression, even if not intentionally done in the hotel, when a guest feels that somebody is thinking about his needs, put some thought in the room, even if I won't be using all these little things, like a tooth brush. Small things are a big satisfaction factor and make a big impression." Interviewee#9

This adds to theory as it adds new insight to the hotel industry. It also suggests that hotels can satisfy their guests and gain their admiration by offering them complimentary items that do not cost much but are highly appreciated by their guests as a positive gesture and a special touch.

- **Artefacts**

Artefacts are clear physical dimensions of servicescapes (Bitner, 1992; Rosenbaum & Massiah, 2011). Visual aesthetics influence perceptions and attract customers (Bloch 1995), help in differentiating (Desai, Radhakrishnan & Srinivasan, 2001), can influence preferences (Orth & Malkewitz, 2008), and can evoke emotional responses (Norman, 2004). Findings suggest that artefacts are even more important in the hotel servicescape. This dimension is very important in transforming a standard looking hotel to an aesthetically appealing hotel, adding some artefact touches and elements such as art works, paintings, sculptures, or photos, gives the guest the impression that effort and thought has been put into the hotel and that it is unique. The majority of interviewees agreed on this and considered it a main factor for hotel design. Nevertheless, they expressed their thoughts and views differently. Some considered

them important because they grab attention, and some mentioned that they shape the hotel's identity. The following statements illustrate this opinion:

" Touches like pieces of art, paintings, different things in the lounge, these kinds of touches are important. They stop you and catch your eyes… statues, wall art, unique furniture, because all human beings when they see something a lot, it won't attract them but when something is unique it makes them say woow …xxx in Dubai for example , I liked its very nice design, it is unique and on the beach, huge art and accessory pieces in the entrance, several good restaurants because it is big, it has a lot of facilities within the hotel, I think everyone chooses it for it's design. Nice cafes, nice decoration and design in the walls, even the ceiling has drawings." Interviewee#6

"Sometimes when I look at a painting that I like I really enjoy it and feel happy. The same with interior design, if it is really nice and a lot of work is put into it, then yes it will pay off…. Like when you choose jewellery, when you choose nice interior design it's like a piece of art. Even if it is simple it will be artistic." Interviewee#15

This indicates that when adding and considering the different mentioned artefacts in a hotel's design, this may attract hotel guests' attention, influence their choice and preference, and increase enjoyment and happiness. Although these are extra touches, their influence is found to be more important than expected and hotel guests seem to appreciate art and design more than hotel managers may think.

- **Staff uniform**

It is evident that lack of hygiene and sloppy looking hotel staff can influence guests' emotions negatively (Barsky & Nash, 2002). Findings agree with the importance of the professionalism and cleanliness of hotel staff, but it was not predictable that staff uniform is perceived as part of the overall hotel design. This definitely adds a new interesting insight to both the hospitality and the design theory, as considering the clothing of the staff part of the hotel design and decoration and expecting it to be part of the whole hotel theme is a new notion. The interesting point is that hotels usually

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use interior designers and architects to design their hotels, but the staff uniform falls under neither of these two areas of expertise or professions. The majority of participants believed that staff uniform should match the overall theme of the hotel design, and added that the professional and tidy look of the staff will greatly influence their perception and impression toward the hotel. The following views support this concept:

> *"It's not a matter of good design, it's a matter of smart design, should be relaxing, eye catching, eye relaxing, temperature, music people, even the way people are dressed within the hotel part of design all correlated."* *Interviewee#2*

> *"Colours can grab when mixed, spaces, lighting, staff uniform, represent the hotel. If staff look good and wear formally where you can recognize them and represent high standard." Interviewee#5*

This suggests that hotels should pay attention to this factor, as it could affect guests and it is easy to apply. It is interesting as this factor was not mentioned in previous studies, and it was not expected to be perceived by the hotel guests as part of the hotel design.

- **The use of glass and big windows**

The importance and role of using glass, represented by big windows, in the hotel design is a new dimension that was not perceived before; it might be because these are associated with modern properties that are recently becoming more popular. The findings highlighted their importance due to several factors, they make a space feel more airy, they permit a large amount of natural lighting, and they make the view more accessible. Having said that, recently, there has been an increasing interest in the retail industry regarding including glass skylights that permit natural lighting to attract customers to luxurious retail outlets (Joy et al., 2014). Moreover, Stone and Irvine (1994) suggested that spaces with windows decrease boredom and make individuals perceive tasks positively in comparison with rooms without windows. This suggests that big windows are aesthetically and functionally important in retails

and hotels. Interviewees reflected the importance of the use of glass and big windows in hotels as follows:

"The more open and glass in the lobby the more relaxing the hotel is, you are able to see outdoors and sunny natural light even if they don't have a good view, even in rooms. Some hotels in Europe, you feel like in jail because they are closed and the opposite of this." Interviewee#2

"Interior design plays a role in the view because if the windows are not big for example, customers will not be able to see the view from their room. Interior design makes the view accessible. Because I'm not saying that I see this view when I'm outside, I see it from my room, you can see things while you are still in your bed." Interviewee#4

"Big windows are very important to make places bright, they even reflect differently on the furniture. Bright natural light affects me a lot. Usually a lot of glass makes a place airy and not gloomy. It is an important factor, when you first wake up. You want to see the sunlight, you don't want to feel that you are sitting in a box. So big windows where you can see the sunlight and the city that you are in." Interviewee#19

This indicates that the availability of glass and big windows makes a positive noticeable difference to hotel guests, for making the outside views more accessible, making the place more airy, and lightsome.

- **Natural cues**

The use of greenery and water, like fountains and waterfalls, makes a positive difference to hotel customers, especially the use of fresh flowers. This adds new insight, because this dimension was studied by different sciences and industries before such as the medical researchers, who have been studied the impact of hospital gardens on patients (Whitehouse et al., 2001), or psychologists who suggested that university students who overlook natural views from their rooms seem to perform better academically (Iwasaki, 2003). However, the perception of natural cues in the

hotel industry is a new idea, and it was not expected to matter much to hotel guests, nor to be considered as part of the hotel physical design, before this study. Interestingly, the majority of interviewees stressed the importance of different natural cues in the hotel and indicated that these had positive effects on them. The most mentioned natural cue was the use of fresh flowers, greenery, and water. This interviewee summarised the majority's view regarding this matter as follows:

"Also small details and small add on but it does make a difference such as decorating the rooms with fresh natural flowers as they give a very nice feeling to a room. Flowers make me feel refreshed, I appreciate flowers and like freshly cut flowers, the colours are nice to look at and the smell is good…Flowers, greenery, natural light, water, waterfalls, make me feel alive." Interviewee#12

In summary, this part clarified how hotel guests perceive the hotel design, and that it is about both the look and the functionality of the hotel design, and has identified the most significant design elements that shape the overall holistic hotel design from customers' point of view. The elements were categorised into key elements and supplementary elements according to their weight and importance. Some were recognised in previous studies, some were acknowledged but in different industries, and some added new insights, filling a gap in knowledge and providing implications for hoteliers. The important elements can be summarised by the following statement:

"We travel to feel the change, so everything should be beautiful to feel that, like having soft sheets and bedding, comfortable mattress and pillows, cushions. Smell of the room is nice, clean room, it has an atmosphere where you feel it's your room and not that this room is accommodated by many people, slippers, side lamps, fruit, art. It has a life, it's alive…It is pleasant when you enter a room and find side lamps, cushions, art, slippers, bathrobe, candles, flowers, fruit, water, chocolate. These things form the atmosphere of the room's décor. So if you want a hotel with an atmosphere and not the usual standard hotel, it must have flowers, art, and candles." Interviewee#30

Additionally, it is found that different design elements can be a reason to hate and change the hotel. As explained by the mentioned interviewee, the size, layout, and

smell were significant reasons to reject hotels, while pleasant views and proper lighting and atmosphere are reasons to be satisfied and happy in the hotel. As pointed out by this interviewee:

"We had to change hotels three times in Turkey, because we didn't like them for different reasons. Their hotels are like European in size but super cramped. Because the first called xxx and the rooms were very small. The second hotel's rooms were huge but the rooms were ugly and bad, even smelled badly. And we used to go out as soon as we woke up and stay out as much as possible because we didn't want to go back for this. The third hotel, called xxx was great, it had an awesome breakfast area, it was on the roof, the view was on the Bosporus river so a great view and food, lots of sunlight, so it was great environment… The third hotel was great. I was happy, because the breakfast place was great, I used to wake up early so that I didnt miss the experience. I don't usually wake up early, it was very relaxing." Interviewee#27

Finally, an interesting outcome of the study is that there was general agreement on most hotel design factors, regardless of the different ages, genders, and occupations of participants, which adds to knowledge and makes the task of hotel designers easier, as most of the main significant factors are agreed on, despite specific tastes and properties. After realising how hotel guests perceive its design and what design elements form the overall design, the next part will discuss the significant role of hotel design, and what it has to offer for the hotel industry to provide the foundation to develop the "Hotelscape" framework.

4.3 Part Two: The role of hotel interior design

It is important to understand the significance of design to the hotel context, especially in comparison to the other common hotel attributes to justify the importance of the study and the rationale behind focusing on the design concept. Therefore, the next section will review this.

4.3.1 Hotel design vs. hotel attributes

Due to the high competition and the need to differentiate in the hotel industry (Nadiri & Hussain, 2005), it is essential for the success of the hotel business, to understand what hotel guests' needs are, and what influence their choice process, and the most effective way to understand that is by knowing the guests' perceptions of the overall surrounding hotel environment (Yavas & Babakus, 2005). Reviewing the current literature has clarified the discrepancy and division regarding the hotel attributes that are summarized in Table 13. Participants were asked about how they make their hotel choices and about the factors that would determine their choice of hotel, to recognise if the hotel design will be mentioned or not and understand its weight and importance for the hotel industry from cosmopolitan consumers' point of view. All interviewees mentioned the hotel design and highlighted other factors that influenced their choices and mattered to them as well. Table 13 illustrates the different hotel attributes that are recognised in the literature, and the attributes that have emerged from the findings.

Attributes that were identified from the literature review	Attributes that has emerged from the findings
Callan and Bowman's (2000): • Hotel comfort. • Hotel ambience. • Hotel décor, and lighting.	
Hartline, Wooldridge and Jones (2003): • Performance of front desk personnel. • Performance of housekeeping. • Parking. • Performance of room service.	• Design • Service • Location • Star rating • Hygiene • Price • Brand name • Loyalty memberships • Website photos • Facilities
Mattila and Oneill (2003) • Price • Staff attentiveness. • Guest room cleanliness. • Maintenance.	
Juwaheer (2004): • Hotel design. • Hotel noises. • Bed comfort.	
Mohsin and Lockyer (2010): • The physical quality as in room furnishings. • Value for money. • The prompt response on reservations.	
Ramanathan and Ramarathan (2011): • Cleanliness. • Customer service. • Value for money. • Family friendless. • Food quality and room quality.	
Kim and Perdue (2013): • Cognitive attributes (e.g., price, service and food quality, and national brand). • Affective attributes (e.g., comfortable feeling and entertaining) • Sensory attributes (e.g., room quality, overall atmosphere)	

Table 13 Established hotel attributes vs. findings hotel attributes (Author)

The findings revealed ten hotel attributes that influence hotel choice, which are: hygiene, price, loyalty membership, facilities, brand name, website photos, location, star rate, service, and design. Interestingly, comparing these attributes to the hotel

design factor from customers' point of view revealed that hotel design is more important than hotel prices, as customers are willing to reduce their trip to be able to afford a pricy hotel whose design they prefer. It is more important than location, as they would sacrifice the distance if they could not find a hotel with a satisfying design. It is more important than hotel brand name and star rating, as the hotel itself and what it has to offer is becoming more important, especially due to the increasing competition; and it is more important than loyalty membership, which the majority did not find useful. Furthermore, hotel design is equally important to the hotel website photos, because the interest in internet booking is increasing and customers may choose a hotel over another due to its photos, and the importance continues until they arrive the hotel and they compare the photos to reality to make their final judgment.

Hotel design is equally important to the hotel service. This is interesting because the key point is to acknowledge that hotel design complements hotel service. The latter was believed to be the main product of the hotel industry and many studies have focused on it; this study revealed new perceptions toward the hotel design that were not recognised before. This suggests that the findings support the SDL perspective that suggests how services as operant resources and physical servicescapes as operand resources complement each other (Vargo & Lusch 2004).

Hygiene was the only factor that is more important than the hotel interior design and that hotel customers are not willing to sacrifice for anything. The role of hygiene is well established in dinescapes (Jang & Namkung, 2009; Ryu et al., 2012), but acknowledging its importance in the hotel industry too adds new insight. Table 14 summarises these insights; the chosen quotations represent the views of the majority of participants.

	Relationship	Other factors	Quotes
Hotel interior design	>	Location	*"Location has to be close to the activities I'm travelling for, 5 stars, brand name, the interior and exterior look. If I didn't find an elegant hotel I won't stay even if it's close. The look matters 96%". Interviewee # 22*
	>	Star rating	*"I stay in 4-5 star hotels, sometimes I stay in 4 because it's newer, some old classical 5 star hotels give me the feeling of depression." Interviewee#28*
	<	Hygiene	*"Design makes a difference but not dramatically like the difference that hygiene can make." Interviewee#32*
	>	Pricing	*"If it's so pricy I may decrease the length of stay in order to stay in a nice place." Interviewee #11* *"I would pay more for design because I want to enjoy it, and it makes me smile." Interviewee#15*
	>	Brand names	*"The xxx hotel has touches that you don't see in other hotels. That is why we enjoy it more than the xxx in Bahrain, although it is more fancy." Interviewee #16*
	>	Loyalty memberships and cards	*"I used to have, it was with the xxx but I stopped useing them because they are useless." Interviewee#9*
	=	Website photos	*"Design of rooms that I look for in website photos plays a big factor when choosing the hotel." Interviewee#9*
	Un known	Facilities	*Not applicable*
	=	Service	*"I don't use services a lot. I only use housekeeping, they are stacked up together 50%- 50%, and they both hold each other up. Can't have one without the other." Interviewee# 27*

Table 14 Hotel interior design vs. other hotel attributes (Author)

This suggests that the design factor is fundamental for the hotel industry, and it is surprising that this factor has not been studied before, due to the crucial role and importance it seems to have for hotel customers. It might be because most studies were done from a management point of view and in different industries (e.g. Kotler, 1973, Bitner, 1992; Donovan & Rossiter, 1982; Turley & Milliman, 2000; Rosenbaum &Massia, 2011). This highlights the importance and originality of the

current study, which shifts the interest into a different direction that considers and appreciates more the benefits of design and what it has to offer, especially in a competitive industry like the hotel industry.

After realising that hotel design is significant in comparison to the other hotel attributes, how hotel guests perceive the hotel design and what design elements are more influential in the hotel design, this part explores the role of hotel design. It clarifies the different significant impacts of considering and applying pleasant designs by hoteliers, from cosmopolitan consumers' point of view. This study focuses on three benefits. First the role of hotel design elements in symbolizing meanings from CCT perspective (Arnould & Thompson, 2005). Second, the impact of hotel design elements in co-creating value for customers and hoteliers by considering these elements as operand resources through the lens of SDL (Vargo & Lusch, 2004). And third the role of hotel design elements in shaping experiences, which contributes to both SDL and CCT. The influences that will be discussed next are not an outcome of the design factor alone, but the most influenced by the hotel design factor, as the weight and impact of design in triggering these outcomes is much more than those of the other hotel attributes. This part will answer the third question: What is the role of hotel interior design, and what impacts does it have?

4.3.2 Creating value

Studying hotel interior design from a SDL perspective suggests that it is an important operand resource that can influence the perceived value of customers, and can add value to hotels' offerings (Nilsson & Ballantyne, 2014). The servicescape is significant for hotel perceived value (Mattila & Enz, 2002) and the physical elements in particular are important in building customer perceived value (Han & Ryu, 2009). Its elements are the easiest to grasp and control because they are measurable and observable (Zeithaml et al., 2009). It is important for hoteliers to understand what value hotel design can offer them, so they can manipulate it and include it in their strategies. If hotels realise how customers think toward hotels or how they process their decision process, they will be able to attract more customers and satisfy them better. It is also important for researchers, especially those who are interested in SDL, to acknowledge the place of servicescape and its design and how it integrates with

services. Accordingly, this part is divided into two main aspects: first, creating value for customers, that includes the impact of hotel interior design on customer's emotions and behaviours. The second part is creating value for hotels, and that includes the use of hotel interior design as a marketing segmentation tool, and as a competitive advantage. These influences are from cosmopolitan consumers' perspective and will be discussed in detail next.

4.3.2.1 Creating value for customers

4.3.2.1.1 Hotel interior design as an emotion influencer

Emotion is an important element in sense making as it is one of the most important responses that artefacts generate (Rafaeli & Vilnai, 2004a). The relationship between design and emotion has been suggested before (Norman, 2004), but has not been linked to business outcomes or specific industries. A pleasant environment can evoke positive emotions, while unpleasant environments can influence customers' emotions negatively (Baker et al., 2002). Despite the clear role that triggering positive emotions for hotel guests has, no previous research has explored the customers' emotions as a management tool. Practically, hotel managers always ask their guests for feedback regarding the hotel stay process but not how they felt during their stay. Understanding, emotions may help managers predicting customer responses (Barsky & Nash, 2002). However, little research has paid attention to the role of emotion during service experiences (Ladhari, 2009).

This indicates that the relation between an environment and emotions is well established; however what specific emotions can result as an outcome of the hotel design and how hotels can benefit from them are still vague. Therefore, interviewees were asked about this to address one of the main identified gaps in the literature, which is understanding the role of hotel interior design in customers' emotions and what emotions can be aroused as a result of it. As a result, the findings clarified the various influenced emotions in detail but these are categorised under three main emotions, which are relaxation, satisfaction, and entertainment.

Emotions do not exist without physical factors that trigger and influence them (Clay, 1908). The findings supported this claim strongly and revealed many emotional

responses that hotel designs can provoke. Researchers have not given these much attention, nor have they focused on their role before, especially in a hotel context. Additionally, it is suggested that hotel design elements are the physical factors that provoke emotions but some interviewees referred to them directly, while others did so indirectly. One interviewee simply expressed that:

"People react to what they see, and it affects their state of mind greatly."
Interviewee#27

Several participants mentioned design and acknowledged its direct influence. These participants were more keen on design and were fully aware of its role. For example they clearly stated that:

" Décor makes you have positive and pleasant feelings." Interviewee#11

"Design makes you happy, energetic, work better. It will change the way I think more than my behaviour so I will be thinking positively, have more ideas, make better judgments, see the bright side of things, it makes me and encourages me to smile, be friendly. Relaxation." Interviewee#1

On the other hand, other participants referred to design indirectly, using different adjectives and descriptions that identify design, as they seemed to be less interested in the general concept of design and aesthetics, but they were also affected by it, such as:

" If you see a good thing in front of you, it makes you feel comfortable, happy."
Interviewee#14

"If I see something really nice, I will feel nice, then I will act nice."
Interviewee#5

In fact, the majority of participants agreed that hotel design affects their feelings and expressed different types of these feelings, which will be presented next. It is noteworthy that the specific identified emotions that are influenced by hotel design

create a new theory that will fill the clear gap that was identified previously. Eventually hotel managers will be able to benefit from and rely on this theoretical insight.

The influenced emotions

Merhabian and Russell (1974) claim that an environment can evoke primary emotional responses, which are dominance, pleasure, and arousal. Slatten et al. (2009) agree on the pleasure concept, suggesting that Joy is the main emotional outcome of the environment. The data supports the view that joy or pleasure is a key positive emotional outcome of the hotel servicescape, but clearly takes it further by identifying other types of emotions too. As mentioned in the literature review chapter, hotels are considered hedonic services that make design even more relevant in them, and this suggests that positive emotions are essential requirement in such environments.

A. Satisfaction

Customers expect aesthetic designs in servicescapes, and when the design meets their expectations and they perceive it as an appealing design that leads to satisfaction, which happens for several reasons, the delight of an aesthetic surrounding and the thought that service providers are concerned with their customers (Baker et al., 2002). This indicates that the theoretical support for the relationship between servicescapes and satisfaction is strong. The findings support this argument and emphasize the impact of hotel interior design on customers' satisfaction. Researchers argue that the atmosphere of hedonic services arouses customers' feeling of joy (Barsky and Nash, 2002; Otto and Ritchie, 1996). The findings were consistent with this view and suggest that one of the significant feelings that are stimulated due to the hotel atmosphere is the feeling of joy. Appealing hotel design can cause or prevent the feeling of happiness on its own, as these interviewees expressed:

> *"It's not normal to be sad in a good designed hotel!! Basically change your mood towards happiness or not." Interviewee#27*

"Happiness and feeling psychologically and emotionally satisfied is the main role of design. A beautiful hotel makes me psychologically fulfilled and emotionally satisfied."Interviewee#6

The interpretation of data has revealed that the feeling of pleasure or joy was described differently by interviewees, as they may express their joyful feelings by being in a good mood or satisfied. This indicates that joy, satisfaction and emotional happiness are similar and mean the same thing in the context of this study, as participants described their happiness in different ways. Despite that, the majority of participants mentioned the feeling of happiness at some point during the interviews, and considered these positive emotions the ultimate goal of their satisfying travelling and pleasant hotel stays.

Hotel design can make customers feel proud in different ways; proud of making the right choice, or being able to afford such a hotel. For example, interviewee#15 explained how he felt proud because he could afford to stay in seven star hotels, and described their great designs, which impacted his perception and feeling toward them. He stated:

" The hotels in Paris and Switzerland made me proud to be in such a hotel. It's something that not anybody can do because they are seven stars. But when it is five stars, a lot of people can do it." Interviewee#15

Interviewee#29 supported this opinion and added that staying in fancy and appealing designed hotels is rewarding. She said:

" You feel that you have a lot of money, when you are spoiled or staying somewhere fancy, you feel, even if it was a brief feeling, that this is a lifestyle. It is very rewarding, you feel that all the hard work has paid off. That this is what you deserve for all the blood and sweat that you have shed, and all the work, no matter what you do in life. Very rewarding." Interviewee#29

The following statements explain a different perspective of feeling proud, which is feeling proud due to making the right hotel choice, and interestingly design seems to be

the key reason, especially when guests find out that the hotel photos that they have relied on when choosing the hotel are genuine and that the reality matches or even exceeds the image.

> *" I felt that I did something good in my life meaning choosing such a hotel that every one dreams of, it is a very good achievement, it was expensive and I didn't regret it and I wouldn't mind even paying more, I did right in choosing this hotel, it was eye catching, relaxing, ticked all the boxes. Even if you see the marble used in the lobby you will know that it is very luxurious hotel." Interviewee#2*

> *" I feel amazing, like I don't want to leave the room, happy and satisfied for selecting the hotel because I did that myself, especially in a place like Dubai where they have thousands of hotels and I made the right choice, and when I find that the pictures match reality."Interviewee#5*

This highlights a new insight; feeling proud as a result of the hotel design is a clear illustration of satisfaction and it is a new concept, and hotels should manipulate that by enhancing these emotions, especially in places where there is high competition, like Dubai and Las Vegas.

B. Enjoyment and entertainment

An interesting dimension that came out of the study is considering hotel design entertaining, and that hotel guests will be entertained in a beautifully designed hotel as much as if they were taking part in other common entertaining activities such as watching a movie or attending a play in a theatre. This view is clearly reflected by these interviewees:

> *"I consider design as entertainment, so I will be entertained."Interviewee#23*

> *" Having a beautiful ceiling or fountain will give me the feeling of leisure and entertainment, and I can work at the same time. Some people go to art galleries*

and museums to have fun, I believe that hotels can be the same, where you can work and have fun."Interviewee#20

This suggests that hotel design does not only trigger positive emotions but its value extends to being an entertaining resource too, which is a valuable construct. Furthermore, these statements indicate that hotel design can impact the enjoyment of the whole trip. Although this interviewee did not mention the term design, it was implied by describing its characteristics. Others referred to design directly:

"Personally I think that the hotel is the most important thing in the journey, if you go out and enjoy your time and go back to a bad hotel it will be a nightmare, the cosiness, comfort, tidiness, cleanliness of the room plays big factor in me enjoying the trip and holiday." Interviewee#9

" Pleasant design gives you a good mood that will make you enjoy your vacation and makes you a better person." Interviewee#17

And finally this statement indicates how being in a nicely designed hotel can transform normal activities and make them special:

"Drinking coffee in a comfortable and nicely decorated place takes me somewhere else, I live the moment, enjoy, even the taste of coffee will be different.. Usual food and drinks taste differently in beautiful places." Interviewee#11

Realising how hotel design offer value through transforming normal daily activities to meaningful special activities explain how it adds value to their hotel stays and experiences.

C. Relaxation and comfort

Regardless of the purpose of travel, customers always like to feel cosy and relaxed, as these two emotions were repeated and mentioned often during the interviews. They like to feel the change but feel as comfortable as a person would feel at home if possible.

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Interviewees pointed out that design is a main factor in creating this kind of positive emotion. One interviewee commented:

"The things that will make me relaxed and comfortable are the furniture, decoration, view, relaxing music." Interviewee#2

Others gave examples of previous stays and how design that feels cozy can influence their relaxation level and affect them by stating:

"xxx in Paris, heavily classical, while I'm not a classical guy, there's something amazing about this hotel, I have no explanation, I just love it, it feels like home, makes you happy, feel related to it. Cosiness in the hotel plays a big factor. I do not like such modern hotels that you don't feel comfortable in your room… To be honest I hate hotels where I have to wear slippers when I walk in my room."Interviewee#9

The findings revealed that the feeling of comfort and relaxation in a hotel will rely on both the look and the functionality of different design elements. Interestingly, colours seem to be the most influential in the feeling of comfort. One interviewee confirmed this:

" Comfort that comes from comfortable beds or colours, comfort in general, location, service, sometimes you repeat a hotel because you feel comfortable based on the interior design, especially colours. Arrangement of furniture, like if it has the correct pieces or is cramped, size of bed, linen." Interviewee#18

Many consumers travel to relax and take a break from their daily routines, another interesting emotion that hotel design can provoke is stress relief (Barsky & Nash, 2002). Many interviewees claimed that hotel design can help them relieve their stress, and colours seem to be one of the most influential factors. The following statements explain this:

"It can shift your emotions, if you enter a pleasantly decorated place while feeling sad and depressed, after a while you will start thinking that what gave you the negative feelings isn't worth it. So you go out of the place with a new positive happy character and personality. Especially colours. You feel related in the place, you miss it, and it sticks because of all the memories it kept." *Interviewee#11*

"If you have a stressful day and enter a beautiful place it will lessen your stress, and make it go away… You feel more calm and accept the tiredness of the trip, not fatigued, it absorbs tiredness… The type of art will impact your feelings if you see abstract art you will have abstract feelings." *Interviewee#20*

Acknowledging that hotel design can relax guests and release their stress highlights another value that can be associated with hotel design. The findings revealed that being in a nicely decorated hotel is rewarding and spoiling to the extent that customers reward themselves by choosing such hotels. This point of view adds new insight and can benefit hotels as they can market themselves as a valuable reward that their guests deserve. The following statements explain how guests can spoil themselves with beautifully designed hotels:

"Spoiling and enjoying myself, you want to do something good for yourself as a gift or present, I feel it's a treat to myself when it's up to my expectations." *Interviewee#4*

"Decorated nicely or extravagantly because that does give u good feeling and that place is extra luxurious and extravagant, so you will feel different than your home, as a place like this will make you feel polished and spoiled..A hotel that spoils you is an ideal hotel." *Interviewee#29*

In summary, it is important to note that the reason for the minimal reflection on previous theory is the lack of theory with regard to the specific emotions that can be triggered by the hotel design. As a consequence, the detailed revealed emotions add new insight, because they were not identified before, except for

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the feeling of joy, which was recognised in other industries and the findings supported that joy is a significant emotion in the hotel context too. Triggering positive emotions is an important value that customers seek in their travelling and their hotel stays. The role of hotel interior design in triggering such valuable emotions adds new insight and can enhance hoteliers' understanding of the value and impact of interior design in the hotel context from a cosmopolitan perspective.

4.3.2.1.2 Hotel interior design as an influence on buying behaviour

Kotler (1974) was the first to suggest the concept of manipulating environmental cues to influence consumer behaviour. Since then, servicescapes in general have been known to influence customers' behaviours and their buying intentions (Baker et al., 2002; Joseph-Mathews, et al., 2009; Orth et al., 2012). Pleasant physical designs may lead to customers' attachment, loyalty, and positive word of mouth (Noble & Kumar, 2008). Although servicescapes and their elements are known to influence customers' behaviours in different service industries, up to this study their role in the hotel context and how hotel designs can influence customers buying behaviours were not theoretically evidenced, because the concept is ambiguous and difficult to grasp and hence few studies have focused on the concept (Heide et al., 2007). The findings revealed new insights that will help understanding the impact of hotel design on customers' buying behaviours, which will fill the gap in knowledge and help hoteliers at the same time. Despite the variety of behaviours that were revealed in the interviews, some behaviours are more common and more critical. These are: time spend, word of mouth, tolerance, social interactions, price sensitivity, and loyalty and retention. These will be discussed next.

A. Time spend

The length of time customers spend in the service facility is very important, because the more time customers spend, the more money they are likely to spend, and this positive relationship is well recognized (Oneill, 1992). According to Bowen and Shoemaker (1998) hotels can increase profits from loyal customers as they purchase more food and beverages compared to non-loyal customers. The findings revealed

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that satisfied and happy customers will spend more time in the hotel, which will result in their purchasing more food and drinks from the hotel. This will increase profits; regardless whether these customers were loyal and coming back or not.

Moreover, a few interviewees reported that being in a pleasant designed hotel would have an impact on their appetite, as they noticed that they would eat more. They even stated that the usual food and drinks would taste differently in beautiful places, which made them enjoy eating and drinking more. Some believed that this is an outcome of the design. For example, when one interviewee was asked how she felt in a previous visit to a hotel whose design she liked, she answered:

> *"I felt calm, relaxed, happy. Drinking coffee in a comfortable and a nice decorated place takes me somewhere else, I live the moment, enjoy, even the taste of coffee will be different, you remember nice memories, people you love, you can call someone you love and tell him that you wish that he was with you or write him a message, pleasant emotions, make you feel you want to stay longer in the place, extend the stay." Interviewee#11*

Others thought that design influenced their emotions, which was then reflected in their appetite. One interviewee expressed this by stating:

> *"The mood that you are on a vacation and relieved from everything, very positive and affects my appetite. I feel it's a healthy place." Interviewee#4*

Hotels can benefit from this phenomenon, as they can also attract customers who are not staying in the hotel itself to visit, try, and spend in their lobbies, cafes, lounges and restaurants. Interestingly the findings suggest that the amount of time that customers spend in a hotel because of its design is the most critical behavioural outcome of a hotel design. However, this behaviour was not mentioned in previous theories or studies, while all interviewees stressed it in this study. This can simply be seen in Figure 15 and an interviewee simply explained this:

> *"Some designs make you want to stay in the room while some designs just make you want to stay out. Design influences you to stay more in the room and in the*

hotel or not, some will attract you and some will push you away."
Interviewee#2

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┌──────────┐   ┌──────────┐   ┌──────────┐   ┌──────────┐   ┌──────────┐
│ Pleasant │   │ Happy &  │   │  Spend   │   │ Purchase │   │          │
│ interior │ ▷ │satisfied │ ▷ │more time │ ▷ │more food │ ▷ │ Increase │
│  design  │   │customers │   │ in the   │   │    &     │   │ profits  │
│          │   │          │   │ hotel &  │   │ bevarages│   │          │
│          │   │          │   │  open    │   │          │   │          │
│          │   │          │   │ appetite │   │          │   │          │
└──────────┘   └──────────┘   └──────────┘   └──────────┘   └──────────┘
```
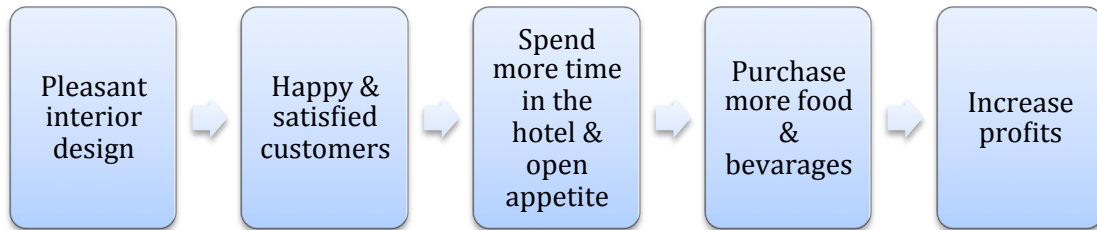
Figure 14 The influence of hotel interior design on the amount of time that customers
spend in hotels

The majority of interviewees agreed that the hotel design would either make them
want to spend more time in the hotel or would make them want to use it only to sleep
and spend most of their time outside the hotel. Their gender seemed to make no
difference. Nevertheless, customers travelling for leisure would spend considerably
more time in the hotel as an outcome of its design in comparison to business
travellers. They may also be planning ahead to stay more in the hotel, which makes
them choose a hotel with a design they find appealing in order to feel comfortable in
it and enjoy it. One interviewee expressed this as follows:

> *" If I am going for relaxing, design will be the first thing I look for, because I'll*
> *be spending most of the time in the hotel. So design should be calm and not*
> *extreme, no weird colours and stuff like that." Interviewee#8*

Moreover, there was a general consensus among interviewees that spending more
time in the hotel as a result of a pleasant design will encourage them to use more
facilities of the hotel. This was stated by this interviewee, who emphasized the
importance of colours as part of the overall design:

> *"Colours impact me greatly, dark colours make me want to use the hotel for*
> *sleeping only and I don't want to go back for the hotel, but when I like its design*
> *I want to stay more in the room and order room service. So design affects how*
> *much time I spend in the hotel. If you feel relaxed and comfortable you will feel*

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open to do anything, stay more. You may want to do something new, or you can feel like a prisoner and not want to do anything and want to leave quickly." Interviewee#19

The influenced time spent not only means that customers will spend more time in the hotel but it will also encourage them to extend their stay. An interviewee explicitly stated this:

" If the hotel is not good, I come for sleep, can't enjoy the room. But when I like it I will stay longer in the hotel and room, I may also extend my stay… Last time in Miami USA, xxx hotel I was very happy in the hotel and it's decoration and view played major role, I extended my stay for three days and had to pay double the price because it was a late booking and I didn't mind." Interviewee#28

Although the relation between the time spend and increase in purchases is well established (e.g. Donovan & Rossiter, 1982; Yoo et al., 1998), the role of pleasant hotel designs in making customers spend a longer time in the hotel, extending their stay, and their impact on increasing appetite are new insights that were not perceived before, and will certainly enrich theory of the hotel industry. They also highlight a managerial implication; if hoteliers realise the importance of their design offerings and how these can influence customers, they can attract them and encourage them to stay more, extend their stay, purchase more food and drinks, and use more facilities. As mentioned earlier, they can also benefit from customers who are not staying in the hotel by attracting them to use and purchase from the hotel eateries.

B. Word of mouth

Pleasant servicescapes lead to positive word of mouth (e.g. Noble & Kumar, 2008). Similarly, Ladhari (2009) believes that customers who are satisfied due to the servicescape may be encouraged to recommend these services for others. In specific, Bowen and Chen (2011) argue that hotel guests prefer and trust personal information as it reduces their risks and increases hotel reliability, which justifies the importance of word of mouth in the hotel industry. The findings fully support previous literature as word of mouth was pointed out by the majority of interviewees in different forms;

recommending hotels to others, writing reviews on the hotel website, providing feedback to the hotel, or even following others' recommendations when choosing the hotel. One interviewee expressed this as follows:

"I usually choose chain hotels, xxx, I know the standard quality offered by these chain hotels, unless someone recommended a certain hotel in the city I'm going to, I will choose these… I recommend and follow others recommendations when visiting new cities, and usually the lobby and space of rooms will be the things that I recommend to others." Interviewee#3

This suggests that recommendations may influence customers more than their loyalty, and hotel design can be a main factor for customers to recommend the hotel for others and to make customers look forward to visit certain recommended hotels. Therefore, hotels can benefit by attracting customers through investing in their design, as that would result in having positive word of mouth. Word of mouth stimulates individuals' curiosity and excitement to go and visit places. One interviewee mentioned that she had heard a lot about the xxx hotel in Paris which made her decide to visit it as one of her main goals. Besides, the hotel design was one of the major reasons that attracted her to visit it. She stated:

"I once chose a hotel in Paris called xxx, I heard about its luxury and ancient history so it attracted me and I went there out of curiosity, I really enjoyed it because I've seen something different and knew the difference between the old classic and new decoration, added to my experience… I usually collect business cards of hotels and places that I like so that I can repeat them and recommend them." Interviewee#11

While this interviewee mentioned the use of business cards as a tool to help her repeat and recommend hotels, others mentioned photographing the hotels and hotel parts and designs that they liked. Some would use them as souvenirs, to show others, or some would post them on line and on social media, as pointed out by this interviewee:

"I felt spoiled, relaxed, see something new, do something new that not everybody see. I have something to talk about, and took pictures of every corner

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of the room to show them when I go back… Of course I recommend all the time, say strengths and weaknesses. Even if I go to a country for the first time I will ask my friends and see what they recommend." Interviewee#14

Several studies have indicated that hotels with decent online reviews are considered more trustworthy and have higher chances to be booked compared to hotels that have negative online reviews (e.g. Sparks & Browning, 2011; Ye et al., 2011). The findings showed that genuine hotel photos that demonstrate pleasant hotel design features have the same impact, and posting personal photos is a different type of hotel reviews. In fact, there has been an increasing interest in social marketing where taking photos of unique design touches by hotel customers and posting them on line using social media applications such as Instagram, Facebook, and Twitter may help in marketing and promoting the hotel. It is considered a new form of word of mouth and certainly adds a new insight to theory, as this form of word of mouth was not recognised in previous literature with regard to the hotel industry. Although hotels can have their own accounts in these applications, the photos that are posted by customers themselves would be more reliable and trusted by other customers. One interviewee confirmed this:

"I rely on websites, based on location, reviews of travellers on websites. I look for real pictures that customers post, I don't rely on photos that are posted by the hotel. I try to match description of rooms with photos, like if they mention that a coffee machine is available, and then I try to find it in the picture. I also look for photos of the parking, swimming pool, breakfast restaurant, quality of items." Interviewee#21

Additionally, the majority of interviewees raised the issue of using realistic and genuine photos in the hotel websites and how that impacts their satisfaction, trust, and loyalty greatly when customers visit the hotel and find that the photos they have seen match reality and therefore match their expectations. Previous theory suggests that customers consider previous hotel experiences as an interesting topic to share and discuss with others (Noble & Kumar, 2008), especially positive experiences, as satisfied customers would like to recommend to others (Soderlund, 1998). The findings confirmed this, as interviewees seemed to be genuinely willing to recommend the hotels that they liked to their loved ones, as they would like them to

try and live the same pleasant experiences, and hotel design plays a major role in that, as explained by this interviewee:

> *"When you tell others about it and talk to your friends who visit hotels about a hotel you have tried, you have to mention design, when you like a hotel and they ask you why? you will start by imagining yourself in that hotel, the interior design and the colours that you have seen. Because unlike other hotels, this is a unique thing that you focus on, so when you recommend a hotel you have to mention the design and start by describing it." Interviewee#34*

Understanding the role of hotel design in stimulating customers' word of mouth, it appears that hoteliers can benefit from this as an influential marketing activity to attract new customers, have a competitive advantage, and reduce their marketing costs. In addition the new insights that have emerged from the data are the role of pleasant design in encouraging the new form of word of mouth which is the use of the social media, and acknowledging that design is a crucial factor that hotel guests use to recommend them to others or follow their recommendations.

C. Loyalty and repatronage

Having loyal customers in the hotel industry is very challenging (Bowen & Chen, 2011). Several previous studies suggest that satisfaction, loyalty and profitability have a positive correlation due to increasing sales, and reducing marketing costs (e.g. Soderlund, 1998; Bowen & Chen, 2011). However, according to the findings, satisfied customers would recommend the hotel regardless of their loyalty. Interestingly satisfaction is linked to positive word of mouth but does not always lead to or guarantee repetition, especially when there are various choices of hotels that offer the same standards. This suggests that the findings support that having loyal customers is difficult and that satisfied customers would decrease marketing costs and help promote the hotel but disagree with the theory that they should be loyal and repeat the visit to do that. Figure 16 summarises this.

| Pleasant interior design | → | Happy & satisfied customers | → | Positive word of mouth | → | Reduce marketing costs | → | Increase profits |
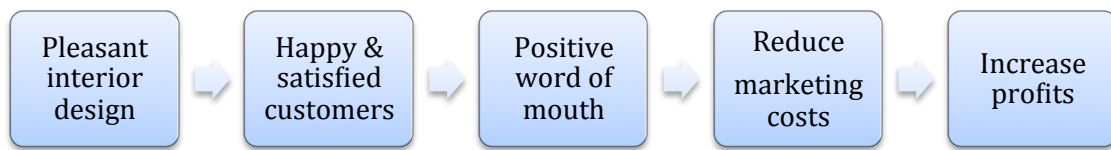
Figure 15 The influence of hotel interior design on word of mouth (Author)

Loyalty and retention behaviour is the area most examined in previous studies (Ladhari, 2009; Torres & Kline, 2013). Theory suggests that retention in the hotel industry depends on the relationship between customers and hotel employees and how they perceive it, and on the high level of satisfaction that leads to emotional commitment with the firm (Pugh, 2001). Additionally, it is suggested that satisfied customers usually do not look for alternatives and information or yield to competitor offerings (Lin & Liang, 2011). The findings contradict this, because there were mixed views about this. More interviewees confirmed that they would be loyal and repeat a hotel that they liked, but some preferred to look for alternatives, to change and try different hotels, regardless of their experience. Table 15 illustrates examples of interviewees' responses toward hotel repatronage especially with regard to their designs.

Repeat	Not repeat
"I repeat because by default it will come to your mind first." Interviewee#4	*"I never repeat, always look for new then compare."* Interviewee#14
"Good design compensated for the bad service. In spite I'll go back there so design affect more." Interviewee#10	*"I go to Dubai yearly and stay in different hotels in same standard. To see something different and new."* Interviewee#22
"If I was really happy and enjoyed the stay I would prefer to repeat this hotel rather than going somewhere new." Interviewee#11	*"I like to change but same standard."* Interviewee#26
"If we really enjoy a hotel and want to repeat the joy and how I felt, I wont look into the price." Interviewee#15	*"If the area is stacked with hotels I may like to change."* Interviewee#27
"I will repeat that hotel, I rarely change even in cities with a lot of choices, I'm loyal and change is difficult for me." Interviewee#16	*"Like in Dubai they always have new hotels so I stay in different hotels even in the same trip, and don't repeat to see the new hotels every time."* Interviewee#32
"I would repeat the one in Las-Vegas and Rome for the design." Interviewee#19	*"I do not repeat, try something else, see something new."* Interviewee#33
"If it's nice and like it, I will never change." Interviewee#28	
"If I like a hotel, I stick to it." Interviewee#29	
"I will miss going to that hotel to repeat the experience and do the same thing again." Interviewee#30	
"I repeat because I remember the pleasant feelings and want to feel them again." Interviewee#36	
"I usually repeat because I don't like to take risks. I like to feel same feelings again." Interviewee#37	

Table 15 Examples of interviewees' responses toward hotel repatronage

Some interviewees stated that design by itself is a reason to repeat the hotel, while others believed that a mixture of factors that form the whole experience, including design, hotel name, and service, will result together in repeating the hotel or not. It is very difficult to predict hotel customers' retention pattern as the same satisfied guest would be loyal and repeat sometimes and not at other times, as explained by this customer:

"If we really enjoy a hotel and want to repeat the joy and how I felt, I won't look into the price.. Repetition depends on the city, if it has many choices or not, I will repeat if there is nothing of a similar standard in the same area. I like to try something different but within the same standards.. An expression I believe in, is if you want to check the success and quality of the job that you are doing, the only thing that will confirm that you are successful, is when you see customers coming back, and products don't. This is ABC, if you are happy you will go back to the hotel, I am a loyal customer to quality and a good service. And that is why I repeat.. I like to repeat a hotel that makes me smile. Some specific hotels that you really had good time in and enjoyed will make me think twice about changing the hotel, if I really liked it and enjoyed it." Interviewee#15*

This suggests that hotels should always try to raise their standards and offer an added value to maintain their customers and make it harder for them to choose another hotel. Interviewees added that hotels can offer differently designed rooms or floors in order to maintain their loyal customers, and non-loyal customers too who are willing to change hotels, as they can stay in the same hotel but try differently designed rooms and that would make them feel the change while repeating the same hotel. This interviewee confirmed this view:

"Something unique is having different styles in different rooms, so when you repeat the hotel you would have the same standard but feel the change at the same time, as you can choose another styled room within the same hotel every time you visit, instead of taking the risk and trying a new different hotel, and that will attract more people to try their other styles." Interviewee# 37*

Although hotel design is influential enough for some interviewees to repeat the hotel stay and others not, the majority of them agreed that hotel design is crucial enough to reject a hotel when choosing for the first time or for repeating. This shows that hotel design plays a clearer role in attracting than in maintaining customers, and this is a new finding that was not reported before. These statements clarify this:

"Space and layout have to fit, so it impacts but not necessarily the extra decoration, if I don't like a hotel's layout I will ask to change the room and never go back to that hotel." Interviewee#16

"I don't like modern hotels, I prefer classic. I wouldn't feel like repeating a modern hotel because I didn't feel comfortable in it. While if it was classic and according to my preference and what I love, then I would like to repeat it." Interviewee#30

In summary, literature suggests that loyalty can be behavioural and attitudinal; as a result individuals may be attitudinally loyal but not behaviourally and vice-versa (Torres & Kline, 2013). This suggests that customers may be mentally loyal but not act or repeat a visit accordingly. The findings support this, as hotel design does influence customers loyalty and retention to some extent but it can not be guaranteed that it would make them repeat the hotel, even if they were satisfied and had a pleasant experience, although it usually guarantees positive word of mouth. Hence, hotel design can attract customers but can only retain some of them. Nevertheless, the new perceptions that were not identified before are that hotel design is critical for making guests prefer or reject a hotel, and that offering different room designs within the same standard may encourage guests to repeat the hotel. These are value applications that theory and hoteliers should acknowledge.

D. Social interactions

The impact of hotel design on customers' communication and interaction was also another significant behavioural outcome that was pointed out by the majority of interviewees. Influencing positive behaviours creates value to hoteliers and customers because individuals will prefer factors that impact their behaviours positively and hoteliers can benefit from these positive outcomes. Participants stated that being in a pleasantly designed hotel will influence how they communicate and interact with the people they are travelling with and with the staff that work in the hotel itself. Interviewees explained communication differently: smiling, being friendly, greeting, and being romantic. These interviewees explained this:

"Good mood, it reflects on me, my kids, the way I treat my husband, my impression of the city, whether I decide to repeat or not, because I am in a good mood, also when I am in a bad mood I will be frustrated and that will reflect on my behaviour with my family." Interviewee#26

"It affects how I treat everyone related to the hotel, I'll be happy with everyone, treat everyone in a good manner, the staff I mean. I'll smile. Wanting to go back again sometime, I will tell my friends about it. Not only staff, I will be happy with everyone, waking up and being a morning person when you usually are not, this happens when you wake up in a very beautiful place, this changes your personality and character. You will be well mannered with the people you are travelling with, proud knowing you made the right decision." Interviewee#34

The interviewees revealed that they should behave in a classy manner in luxurious and sophisticated designed hotels and argued that this type of design would have an impact on their behaviour by making them more refined, as highlighted by the following interviewees:

"In a 7 star hotel, you have to watch everything that you are doing and what you are wearing and dressing, how you act. Because you feel that everybody there is watching you. While in a five star hotel you are more relaxed." Interviewee#15

"Another hotel in Switzerland, is like a palace, when you enter you feel that you are a VIP person, staff are gentle, you have to stay quiet, I feel that I can't scream or talk loudly, have to behave because of the way it's designed." Interviewee#17

Hotel design can even encourage romantic bahaviours and transform a normal trip to a romantic get away, especially for couples that are travelling or staying in hotels for this purpose. In daily life, many hotels offer special packages for honeymooners or couple trips and offer certain designed touches that make it more attractive for them, but there is lack of theoretical evidence that supports this. However, filling this gap, many interviewees have mentioned that design has made them more romantic, and that

certain design elements have the ability to arouse these behaviours. For example, the following interviewees expressed this view:

> "I felt very happy, relaxed, romantic, all candles at night and dinner by the sea... I felt closer to my husband, he was more calm, he didn't think about work, it changed my mood, I needed that trip, freedom, fun all the time. If I like things in a hotel, I take photos then copy things in my own home." Interviewee#31

> "Relaxed, happy, if the design is romantic I will feel love." Interviewee#37

This indicates that hotel design affects guests' and hotel staff communication greatly, and the new emerged communications that can enrich theory, are the romantic and sophisticated communication forms. Other than that, the positive and negative influences on communication forms of behaviours that were mentioned support extant literature.

Customers' tolerance is another new dimension that has emerged from the data and was not perceived before. Research interviewees believed that their tolerance could be affected by the hotel design, as they believed that being in a relaxing nice place would put them in a better mood, which would make them more patient and easy going and they would not allow small things to ruin their mood. This was pointed out by this interviewee:

> "I will be happier and my mood will be better, even the staff, tolerance margin will be higher, if you are happy or not. For example if you are happy about everything and satisfied, and ordered something you can give them more time, and let things go, be in a better mood when you start your day or plan, when you start your day happy in a better mood, energised, it will affect somehow, not in a dramatic way, but it plays a role in doing what you are travelling to do, even business." Interviewee#9

E. Price sensitivity

Décor and artefacts as part of the servicescape are the most influential factors in driving customers' price perception and value (Ryu, et al., 2012). Satisfying servicescapes may lead customers to pay higher prices for services (Bloch, Brunel, & Arnold, 2003; Ladhari, 2009). There were mixed views about how design will influence how much money customers are willing to pay for the hotel or how much they think it is worth. The majority of interviewees highlighted that they were willing to pay more for the design, which aligns with previous theory. The new insight that has emerged from the findings is the different measures that hotel guests can take and consider, for paying a premium. For example, several interviewees mentioned that they would sacrifice the length of their holiday in order to stay in a hotel that they liked and whose design they preferred. An interviewee explicitly mentioned this:

> *"Design will make me pay higher, but usually if I have time I can see from the pictures what is worth it more and compare to see the differences. So design is worth paying more. If I have a certain budget, I prefer to stay 2 weeks in a luxurious well-designed hotel than staying a month in a standard hotel because I feel that it will be a different experience, and reflect positively on me. I choose due to design." Interviewee#4*

On the other hand, one interviewee believed that if design was the only difference between two hotels, they would not pay more for it. The interviewee commented:

> *"People now are more into budget travelling, no one is willing to pay high prices no matter how luxurious or nice the hotel is, that's why hotels keep putting offers and loyalty cards, they are struggling." Interviewee#9*

The diversity in opinions might be due difference in interests, Interviewees who were interested in design and appreciated the difference it made to them would stay in a hotel with a pleasant design and were willing to pay higher price for it, to the extent that they would decrease the length of their stay if they could not afford it. However, the opposed view was from interviewees who believed that service is much more important and that they could always get better prices due to hotels' competition and

offers. They also believed that design alone is an added value but not worth paying more for. This suggests that even if customers would prefer to be in nicely designed hotels, when it comes to reality and paying time, some would prioritise other factors as more important to pay for. However, if they were given the choice of two hotels with the same price but a different level of design, they would prefer and choose the nicely designed hotel. This suggests that hotels can offer pleasant designs at affordable prices, so they can benefit from the positive effects like positive word of mouth, loyalty, customers spending more time there, without having to lose due to the price. However, the findings clearly show that several participants were willing to pay premium prices for the design, to the extent that they would reduce their stay if cost was constraint, just to be in their preferred designed hotels.

4.3.2.2 Creating value for hoteliers

This section explores the different benefits that hotel design can offer to the industry to highlight the opportunities that hoteliers can take advantage of, and to acknowledge the overlooked value of the design concept in the hotel industry theoretically too. SDL suggests that value is judged by customers when they use a service (Vargo & Lusch 2004, p.2), and that firms can make value propositions, which are promises or benefits a customer might value (Nilsson & Ballantyne, 2014). However, the findings indicate that hotel design can also create value for service providers, and highlight ways in which design can contribute to their offerings. The triggered emotions that encourage positive behaviours are examples of the positive impact that hotel interior design has on hotels. More positive impacts will be discussed next.

4.3.2.2.1 Hotel interior design as a competitive advantage

It is suggested that servicescapes may be considered as a differentiating key through which service providers can compete (Lin & Liang, 2011). This indicates that with the increasing competition and the difficulty of differentiating service offerings, service providers can consider creating appealing servicescapes as a fertile opportunity to differentiate (Lin & Liang, 2011). Although these proposals are suggested from managers' point of view and with regard to different industries, hotel cosmopolitan consumers supported these opinions. As one might expect, due to the increasing competition in the hotel industry, customers compare and choose among different hotels for various reasons. The hotel design factor in particular, can be utilised by

hotels to attract customers and compete through offering unique designs and therefore gain a competitive advantage. Interviewees strongly supported this opinion and stated:

"I recommend that hotels should invest in design and differentiate themselves through it, because everyone wants to see nice stuff." Interviewee#5

"We have chosen hotels for their designs so many times, such as a boutique hotel where everything was of white, all the interiors. The idea of everything white is interesting… Design makes a big difference, when you go to a hotel you want something new to see and experience that you don't do in your house, try something luxurious and cool." Interviewee#14

"Sometimes you go for a hotel just for its design and architecture… Some hotels are known for their design and architecture so it can be a way to differentiate and stand out with all the competition in this industry."Interviewee#15

These extracts clearly indicate that offering unique and satisfying hotel designs can make customers choose one hotel over another, which makes design a potential differentiator and success factor, especially in highly competitive industries (Jeffrey & Barden, 2000). The design of the service itself is a new concept that was not mentioned before. The basic services that customers usually expect from hotels can be designed aesthetically and offered differently in a way that communicates added value for customers. This suggests that the services can exploit design to make their service offerings more attractive and competitive too. An example of a successful hotel that applied this concept (the Nordic Light Hotel in Stockholm) was mentioned previously in the literature review chapter (Strannegard & Strannegard, 2012). There is minimal evidence in the extant literature that supports this notion, which makes the findings of this study more significant as it could be used as the theoretical ground for the exploitation of design. Interviewees mentioned that the design of facilities and offered food and drinks and how they could be aestheticized made a difference to them. Several interviewees suggested various ways of aestheticizing the offered services that they recalled from their previous hotel stays and that left a mark in their memories, because they meant so much. Hoteliers can easily apply them and leave a positive mark in their guests' minds too. Examples of these are highlighted below:

"Unusual and strange things like different and new styles of chairs, colours, the way they dress, smell, unique cutlery, glasses, trays, new big things. The way they serve things, uniforms, just be different, don't be the same." Interviewee#33

"Design should be unique and like a theme for the whole hotel, furniture, uniform, entrance, rooms, lobby. This makes it unique and attract people. But it also depends on how they present it." Interviewee#21

"I learn even from the way they present food. So it affects you in many ways, your mood, personality, your home, your clothing, your food, and your memories." Intervewee#11

This suggests that what matters is not only what a hotel offers to guests but also how they present it, and this is where the design and aesthetic touches make the difference. This clarifies how design can complement service from a SDL lens (Walter et al., 2010). Additionally, uniqueness and originality is considered as a key differentiating point, as two hotels can offer the same service or facility but succeed due to the way they present it. Therefore, the findings suggested that hotels' general design and the design of their services may be a strong competitive advantage and a source of added value for hotels.

4.3.2.2.2 Hotel interior design as a marketing segmentation tool

The interest in providing customised services for hotel guests has increased. Hotels customized service delivery that matches individual customers' requirements, based on assessing the different customers' situation and needs, such as being business or leisure travellers in order to modify service delivery according to these differences (Mattila & Enz, 2002). Categorizing segments can greatly benefit hoteliers (Yelkur & Da-Costa, 2001). The data confirms the importance of understanding different customers' needs. Moreover, it implies the value of offering them customised designs and not only customized services, or even customizing the different services through the design features. This is a new dimension that came out of this study, as targeting

and satisfying different hotel segments by their design preferences is a new concept that was not identified before.

Findings indicate that hotel design is a crucial variable in categorising the guests into different segments and then attracting and targeting them through offering different design styles and elements that match their requirements and fulfil their needs. This also adds a new insight as hotels were usually categorised with regard to other variables from managers' point of view (e.g. Knutson, 1988; Taninecz, 1990; Barsky & Nash, 2002). Understanding cosmopolitan hotel guests better and categorising them according to their different design needs add new insight to theory and practice. Another noteworthy suggestion that the findings imply is that the same hotel can also offer different design styles, colours, or accommodation types to satisfy and meet various requirements or tastes at the same time. Interviewees illustrated this by saying:

> *"There were different divisions to the hotel, you can choose one of three, the one I chose had an Arabian feel to it, the decoration had an Arabian style that I usually like in decoration. The walls were decorated very nicely, the bathrooms were luxurious, the beds were large, had a lot of details." Interviewee#29*

> *"I remember a hotel in Salt-lake City called xxx, in USA that offers different designs for different rooms and they ask you what is your preference in colours, which is unique. I will always remember because the minute you go they will ask you what is your favourite colour and try to provide you with a room in your favourite colour. Very touchy." Interviewee#16*

These show practical examples from the hotel industry where hotels provided different styled rooms or different colours so various customers can choose differently according to their preferences. According to the interviewees, this greatly touched them and made these hotels stick in their minds because they felt the hotels respected and acknowledged the different preferences and tastes among their guests, and tried to fulfil them. Another interesting benefit of offering differently styled rooms is to persuade guests to stay again at the hotel, in order to try different offerings, as mentioned earlier in relation to loyalty and repatronage. Additionally it is recommended that hotels

should have clear segments, as their whole strategy including their design will differ accordingly. Guests can easily identify the kind of hotel (e.g. business or family oriented) and all guests would like to feel that their chosen hotel is tailored to their needs. This interviewee explicitly mentioned this:

> *"Usually in this industry, the first impression lasts, and it's very important to notice that this is a service industry, and if you get it right from the first time, you will always get it right, this is why you see more turnover in specific hotels, so service oriented, how the hotel is positioning themselves, as a family hotel, business hotel, to be very focused. The category of the hotel has to be very clear, people immediately notice the target segment... if the hotel is smart enough, design is part of the whole game, it should not contradict with their segmentation, so guests can be loyal, like if a hotel is positioning themselves as a family hotel and they have risky accesses, and dangerous things...Design is the centre of the elements and perception, and will impact how hotels position themselves, and the profitability of the hotel at the end; because it's all about perception, it's a service industry. Design is part of their service."*
> *Interviewee#2*

The positioning of hotels and making their design offerings communicate their orientation help and add value for hoteliers by representing their identity and image through design. It also symbolize meanings to hotel guests, for example, they would perceive it as family friendly or not from the different design cues that are available in the hotel, in line with the CCT. Simple touches and customizations by the hotel mean a lot to their guests; understanding their guests and how they view hotels will make that easier for them. The next section will identify the differences among four identified guest categories that were revealed by the interviewees: business, leisure, family, and sleeping travellers.

Traveller types

Yelkur and Da-Costa (2001) believe that hotel segments should be classified according to their situation, usage, use frequency; and purpose of travelling. In addition, the purpose of travel and people they are travelling with such as travelling as

couples or with children may influence the different expectations of hotels (Yavas & Babakus, 2005). The findings align with the distinction among hotel guest segments, and identified four traveller types that have emerged from the data. With regard to the design factor, the data suggests categorizing hotel segments according to either usage or companionship factors. Business and leisure are the two popular hotel segments (Barsky & Nash, 2002). Considering the different design expectations and requirements, the findings agree with these two segments and add two more, which are sleeping, and family segments.

- **Business travellers**

Business travellers care about business facilities and functional rooms and expect the available amenities to be better than what they have in their own homes and offices (McMullen, 2006). Corporate rate affects most customers when choosing hotels for business travellers, as prices will be more attractive. There was a general agreement among interviewees that design is more important in leisure trips than in business trips. As stated by this interviewee:

> *"The first thing that will differ when I travel for business is location, all business needs, like concierge, cars- transportation, internet, gym, design and nature are not that important in business trips if I have these things. It is more important in leisure trips." Interviewee#2*

However, a few interviewees considered the hotel design as important in both purposes of travelling, especially for those who may use the hotel venues and require their meetings and function areas to be to a certain standard. Hence, the design of these areas is as important as the room design for this segment. As explained by this interviewee:

> *"Business trips depend too because if we want to meet people it is required to be in a nice hotel so if we want to invite people…Usually design is required in leisure travelling but there are some exceptions…sometimes when travelling for business, I choose hotels that offer corporate rates for the organisation that I am working with…. Purpose of travel impacts whether to choose a hotel for its*

service or design, for business, I choose service, while with the family I choose design …When I went to The Czech Republic, we went for the MIF meeting of all banks world wide, we had to arrange for a meeting room; every bank tries to impress other banks. In this case we chose hotels that would be more impressive rather than choosing due to price. It depend on the trip." Interviewee#15

The findings indicate that design is more important for leisure travellers, but there are still design requirements and features for the business travellers that hotels can provide to attract and satisfy them, for example, the design of their business centres and meeting venues. Hence, they can modify design to serve the requirements of this segment.

- **Leisure travellers**

International leisure travellers outnumber business travellers (Stumpf et al., 2014). This suggests that it is an important segment to understand. Leisure travel is about functional, hedonic, and psychological needs (Ettema & Schwanen, 2012). Findings indicate that hotels can serve these needs through their design features. There was a general consensus among interviewees that they considered hotel design more in their leisure trips rather than other purposes, as being surrounded by a pleasant design would be part of the entertainment and would affect them greatly. They even specifically acknowledged the importance of hotel design for honeymooners and couples' trips where they travelled to revive their relationships and celebrate special occasions. This indicates that those guests were aware of the great impact that hotel design had on them, or they would not have considered it in their decision process:

"I work and study a lot so my plan is to find a relaxing hotel. If this is my plan I look for a well-designed hotel, as I don't want to move a lot. Because it is something for your eyes, as if it is food or nutrition for your eyes, soul and spirit, because when you sit and watch the sea or greenery or nice décor, you can sit for three hours watching. Some design rooms like a forest by using wooden floors and balconies that make the room enjoyable to stay in. so even if you order food or snacks you enjoy it more when you are in a nice place. Colours of furniture and style makes a difference." Interviewee#4

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The data emerged that hotel design is very influential and co-creates value for leisure travellers. They choose hotels with certain designs that they believe will make the difference and have impact on their hedonic experience as they look for hotels that will enhance their satisfaction, enjoyment, and relaxation. The implication of this is that hotel design is fundamental for this segment and since it is a wide segment, hoteliers should try to understand them better and manipulate their hotel servicescapes that satisfy their needs.

- **Family travellers**

Facilities for this segment are crucial, as participants mentioned and design can influence facilities. Design of family hotels will differ from other hotel types especially functionally. Parents will look for safety and security, more than the look (Mattila & Oneill, 2003). Nevertheless, the look adds value and attracts customers even when traveling as a family with children. For example, complimentary items tailored for children, and children's areas with appropriate designs, are appreciated and perceived as added value gestures by hotel providers. Hotels may also try to satisfy both parents and children by offering designs that can please and entertain them both. Yet, designers should not customize to families to the extent that they lose attractiveness and aesthetic touches that will be noticed and enjoyed by parents (Ramanathan & Ramarathan, 2011). Another interesting point that was highlighted by interviewees is the availability of a "kids club", where the hotel can take care of the children while their parents take a break and designing these types of clubs is crucial for making the parents trust the place and make them feel that their children are in safe hands. One interviewee confirmed this:

> *"With the family the best hotel was in Austria, xxx family owned resort in the middle of the Alps, nice for adults and kids. Tailor made for family members. Play ground, ponies and horse school, skiing school, swimming pools, activities for everyone, spa… I choose a hotel according to location, design, price, family friendly when with the family, whereby make sure that hotel will take care of my kids if I want to go for dinner with my wife … Very important in resorts to have a kids club or babysitters, so parents can enjoy too." Interviewee#2*

There were mixed views about the luxurious style preference when travelling with children. The majority of interviewees highlighted that they would rather stay in less luxurious and more practical simple hotels when travelling with children and stay in luxurious and fancy hotels when travelling as couples with their partners. Interviewees explicitly mentioned this:

> *"Design-wise I don't like to go to luxurious hotels with my kids because I will be worried that they might ruin or damage anything, like break valuable pieces or dirty silk fabrics. So I prefer to go practical hotels with a kids club, but sometimes I take them to luxury hotels. Décor of room doesn't matter for kids but the location near to activities they want matters." Interviewee#30*

> *"With my daughter now I care for room service so we can dine in when we come back early, baby sitting, kitchenette; with her I need a bigger space, I won't go to a very expensive hotel with my baby because I wont enjoy it to the max." Interviewee#31*

On the other hand, some interviewees believed that they would still prefer to stay in a luxurious hotel even with their children and that they were not willing to sacrifice that, as stated by these interviewees:

> *"I don't sacrifice the hotel because I am with my daughter. The one in Rome was for honeymooners and we enjoyed it with her, my daughter is quiet." Interviewee#19*

> *"When with my daughter I feel happy but not relaxed because I don't want her to ruin anything. Even with our daughter, we will not sacrifice the quality, we will choose best hotels and we will take care of her. And we will choose best hotel coz at the end of the day she will eat from that hotel and sleep in their cot, a nice crib. So it has to be of a high standard…It needs a kitchenette, to remove sharp things and ornaments; good hotels will remove things and make the place child friendly because they are flexible." Interviewee#14*

A smart hotel may try to satisfy family needs, while keeping in mind the adults' needs too (Ramanathan & Ramarathan, 2011). This suggests that hotel design elements and factors can be customized to make the hotel appeal as a family friendly hotel, paying attention to the use of materials, electricity sockets, and sharp edges all will make a difference. For example, some hotels offer a family bedroom where the children's sleeping area is somewhat separated but connected and has access to the parents' room at the same time, and the designers offer this value too.

- **Sleeping travellers**

This type of traveller was not identified by previous studies. The data demonstrated the existence of this type, who use the hotel for sleeping at night only and spend most of the day outside the hotel. Usually such hotels are in key locations and surrounded by attractions and activities that the guests will spend their time enjoying, such as shopping destinations or airport hotels. Although a comfortable bed and a good night's sleep is their ultimate requirement of a hotel, having a well designed hotel or a hotel that continues the outside theme inside the hotel will make their guests derive maximum enjoyment and have a complete experience, yet this would be an unexpected added value from such hotels. The difference between a sleeping hotel and a leisure hotel is clearly explained by these interviewees:

> *"Hotel role depends on the purpose of the journey. Sometimes I don't stay in the hotel so it doesn't matter much, its only for sleeping, like in big cities, while sometimes I stay more so it is a very important part of my journey, so like resorts and islands…Sometimes, like in airport transit, I stay in the hotel to sleep only. Also on busy business trips where you will spend most of the time outside the hotel for business meetings….If I go with the family to Disney, most of the time we will be in Disney doing activities too, so the hotel will be for sleeping only." Interviewee#7*
>
> *" Depends on purpose, like anniversary and romantic holiday, or travelling to island resorts like the Seychelles or Maldives, The hotel is a major factor, but when I travel to go around and stay most of the time outside and use the hotel for sleeping only, then decoration becomes less important." Interviewee#37*

This indicates that hotels that target this type of traveller invest their money in location and offer minimal standard design; they even market themselves as sleeping hotels, but they are usually in the best locations and at reasonable prices, so customers will not regret paying high prices for facilities they have not used. Hotels can utilize their design elements to offer comfortable sleeping environments that will satisfy this segment.

Classifying traveller types according to their design requirements adds new insight and offer managerial implications. The traveller types identified by this study belong to the main category of cosmopolitan consumers, and the emerged classification is applicable for hotel guests from any geographic location, as the identified requirements are global lifestyle differences and not cultural. Understanding the different segments can help in satisfying them better and benefit from applying appropriate market segmentation. This study suggests that design is a valuable marketing segmentation tool that hotels can benefit from. Participants have also identified different hotel types, which will be discussed next.

Hotel types

Regardless of the personal preference in hotel types, the majority based their preference on several reasons with design being the key influential element. For example, some would choose boutique hotels for their unique designs, luxury for extravagant designs, or resorts for their relaxing designs, and these types of hotels were the most mentioned by interviewees. The next part will discuss the most common criteria and descriptions of these types of hotels from cosmopolitan customers' point of view, to better understand how customers view different hotel types, categorize them, and choose them.

- **Boutique hotels**

These hotels are mainly preferred for their uniqueness, cosiness and friendly hospitality, and they are especially popular among customers who are interested in and looking for unique designs. These types of hotels usually rely on offering special designs and reflect the cultural identity of their location (Strannegard & Strannegard, 2012). This

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reason makes customers feel the difference and change in their travelling, as chain standard hotels on the other hand, are usually the same in every location, and customers will not notice the difference or change in chain hotels. Several interviewees considered boutique hotels their favourite type of hotels for the mentioned reasons. They stated:

"Boutique, cosy and always something special, people there are friendly while in big hotels and branded they always have people in and out so it doesn't matter. Price lower, try new things, design always special and different in terms of interiors such as one I tried in Paris." Interviewee #14

"I like boutique hotels, great beautiful rooms are like boutique rooms, modern, automatic, room design, that we can see that they have paid money to do, design of the bed, counter, furniture, colours, big bathroom, special things, foldable chairs and beds, you will remember these things. Three part toilet, glass bath, and things you don't find in usual hotels. They don't have other facilities so the room is usually great#25

Most interviewees agreed that boutique hotel guests are not expecting a high standard service but rather friendly staff and unique design features that will form a special experience. The popularity of boutique hotels that was recognized by the data was not expected. The reasons for the preference for boutique hotels, and the strong association of design with such hotels are new insights.

- **Luxury**

Luxury hotels are popular (Barsky & Nash, 2002). The findings suggest that this type of hotel is considered as a reward to its guests; several interviewees mentioned that they rewarded themselves with luxurious hotels, especially on short trips, because of high prices, and on special and romantic occasions due to the influence that these hotels have on their guest's mood and behaviour. Interviewees explicitly described the common criteria of a luxurious hotel as follows:

"Luxurious room will be spacious with a large bathroom, high quality bed sheets and beds, high quality media in the room, usually great location and view, definitely luxurious décor…Everything starting from your door, to your closet, bathrobe, crystals in the bathroom, curtains. You will enjoy that luxury… Luxury gives your vacation a taste of richness, a higher grade than staying in your own bedroom in home …xxx in Abu Dhabi, was the best hotel I've been to… It was designed as a palace and you get the experience of living in a palace, huge in size, very different experience, oriental decoration, butler for the room, dressing room, décor was great… Great Architecture, from entrance to rooms so 50% , another thing is the service, like your own butler and car, special items of food like gold cake and chocolate, true luxury … Design is part of the luxury that hotels provide." Interviewee #25

"Usually luxury is costly but they give to take, meaning they are investing in the design to attract customers and gain profits, work in ceiling, walls, lighting, colours, wood work …What grabs attention the most is hygiene, luxury of the entrance, their choice of furniture and interior decoration, you can see décor that is artistic, creative and costly, that shows that they have invested in their décor." Interviewee#22

Interestingly, even customers who preferred this type of hotel extensively described their luxurious design, which suggests that design is one of the main features that differentiates this type of hotels from customers' point of view. This indicates that it is a matter of taste, whether guests would prefer a luxurious style or a cozy warm style, but ultimately design is a main feature to differentiate hotels and categorise them and even choose between them, from customers' point of view. This also highlights how design is a valuable construct that hotels can befit from, as it position hotels and represent their image differently in the eyes of consumers.

- **Resorts**

Hospitality guests require services that provide value, and engage with senses by triggering fun, and feelings of excitement (Kim & Perdue, 2013). The findings revealed that the main reason for choosing resorts is to get away and relax, especially

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for busy business people who want their holiday to be completely the opposite of their daily lifestyle, as well as for honeymooners who want to focus on their precious time together. Additionally, interviewees seemed to believe that design consideration is a must in resorts as guests will obviously spend longer hours there compared to other hotel types and that explains why they need to be surrounded by pleasant designs. This is in line with how customers' tendency to engage with their environment more than the staff (Price et al., 1995; Lin, 2004). Regardless of the design style, it is important to choose a pleasant design because of the length of time that spent in the resort and the positive emotions that design can trigger. Interviewees illustrated this by saying:

"Resorts and quiet areas should focus on design more than inside busy cities and shopping destinations where they should invest more on location and services. Unique design and furniture should be complemented with a quiet area, nice view, so all become together to make it attractive. Hotels inside busy cities should not focus on design as much as resorts." Interviewee#21

"Design is the most important thing, because that's what you see along with comfort that you feel, I don't usually use hotel services, and that's what makes design more important to me as I use it. Especially in resorts, it is very important as you stay a long time in the hotel and use their facilities, like restaurants." Interviewee#31

In summary, classifying hotel types according to their designs from cosmopolitan consumers perspective adds new insights. The findings revealed that customers added to the hotel managers' categorisation. As discussed in the literature, the most common traveller types are leisure and business, but this study added family and sleeping as new categories. Interestingly design is one of the main criteria that they rely on for their categorisation. The most popular hotel types from customers' point of view are boutique hotels, luxurious hotels, and resorts. Acknowledging this categorisation supports that value of design for the hotel industry and can help hoteliers to understand their guests better and give them guidance on how different elements are perceived and influence the position of the hotel. The perceived value of hotel design is also linked to how hotel guests interpret their surroundings and how different

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design elements symbolize different meanings to them. This concept will be discussed next.

4.3.3 Conveying meanings (symbolism)

CCT explores how consumers transform and rework the different symbolic meanings encoded in various brands, retail settings, advertisements, or material goods to manifest personal and social circumstances and identity and lifestyle goals (Grayson & Martinec, 2004; Holt 2002). Servicescape design can direct consumers' mental attention, experiences, in the same way that store layout can direct consumers' physical movements (Arnould & Thompson, 2005). Design creates aesthetic impressions and meaning of places such as creating certain cultural themes (Zeithaml et al., 2009). Customers usually spend hours consciously and subconsciously observing the facilities' interior, which will eventually impact how they interpret it and their attitude toward the surrounding environment (Baker, 1986). Therefore, from this perspective, servicescapes and their elements for the context of this study are considered as semiotic landscape that symbolize meanings to customers and help them make sense of their surrounding environments. Up to this date, the role of design elements in conveying meanings was not understood, but the findings of this study revealed interesting insights that will be explained next.

4.3.3.1 The role of hotel interior design in forming perceptions

Physical facilities are the most common cues to evaluate different services (Crane & Clarke, 1988). Customers make judgments by using physical elements as tangible cues to rely on (Jang & Namkung, 2009). In addition, customers' first impression is usually formed based on the facilities' appearance (Wakefield & Blodgett, 1996). Physical design is one of the main factors that form customers' first impression (Slattenet al., 2009). The findings align with this and indicate that hotel interior design is one of the most significant tangible cues that guests use. These specific tangible elements were discussed in the previous part. Hotel guests use these tangible cues to form their first impression about the hotel and the visited city or country in general, especially if the hotel has a cultural theme or touches that will familiarise the guests with the place that they are in. The physical design of the hotel is important because it is the guest's first contact with the hotel, even before they try the hotel

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services or facilities. There was general agreement among interviewees regarding the importance of hotel design in shaping their first impression, and the following statements illustrate this:

> *"Interior design starts and triggers all the emotions that stay with you for the whole trip. Because it's the first place you go to after the airport, the first place that you will experience, the first people that you will meet, the first impression that you are going to take about the city or wherever you are. ..First impressions always trigger emotions, and whether you are going to like it, enjoy it, how you will behave, so it's a start point." Interviewee#4*

Moreover, interviewees stated that the hotel design would greatly influence their feelings and perception toward the city; one interviewee expressed this as follows:

> *"Design gave great impression, café had a balcony view on the see, felt relaxed, enjoying the city, felt I should come back again, a hotel impacts what you see in the city. It affects how you feel toward the city you are in." Interviewee#10*

The hotel lobby and restaurants are the most critical parts of every hotel that guests focus on, and the most significant parts in building customers' perception. The design of hotel lobbies is the most influential due to its great impact in shaping customers' first impression because it is the first thing that they see, even before they try the hotel service or facilities. The first impression will last for the whole stay and will influence customers' emotions and behaviours greatly. This aligns with theory that first impressions are lasting (Bloch, 1995). The hotel lobby is even found to be critical for its role as an indicator of the hotel hygiene, standards, and services. The following statement explains how the lobby and entrance design influences customers' perception toward the hotel service:

> *"Lobby and reception gives an indication, if small it will mean that service is not good, whereas if it's big it gives the impression that a lot of staff are available to help you faster." Interviewee#19*

The hotel lobby gives opportunity for hotels to be unique and differentiate themselves, which would be more challenging in other parts of the hotel especially bedrooms, which are usually standard and almost similar in the majority of hotels. The following statements reflect this view:

> *"Most room designs are standard and the same everywhere but the difference is in the lobby, which gives you pleasant feelings and happiness, joy, entertainment, so you feel the change." Interviewee#32*

> *"The lobby accounts for 60% of the whole experience because it gives a first impression, an identity. The more spacious, high ceiling and sophisticated the lobby is, this can play a big role in making the guest experience. It's easy to build on after that. From my point of view you can put less effort in the room if you have proper experience and impression in the entrance of the hotel. If the entrance was not satisfactory, guests would be already off the mood so doesn't matter how much effort you do after that." Interviewee#9*

This indicates that despite the importance of the general hotel design, it is highly important to invest more in the hotel lobby due to its great impact on the first impression of hotel guests, especially due to the greater opportunity to differentiate in comparison with the standard offering in the bedrooms and other parts of the hotel. The hotel lobby conveys meanings for customers in many ways. It influences their judgment toward the hotel service and offered standards when they interpret the different meanings that the hotel design elements can communicate and symbolize to guests.

Another interesting role of the general hotel design in shaping customers' perceptions is its role in creating expectations, especially with regard to the hotel design photos on their websites or other social media. The importance of this factor is increasing due to the increase in people booking online. Although SDL suggests the value in use concept (Vargo & Lusch 2004), findings suggest that hotel design creates value even before purchase and use, through influencing customer's preference and choice process. Customers usually compare different hotel photos, especially those that are posted by the customers themselves, and the main factor that is illustrated by these photos and that

hotel guests are evaluating is the hotel design. For example, these interviewees reflected this view:

"I may choose because of pictures so it highly affects my preference."
Interviewee#6

"Design of rooms that I look for in website photos is a big factor when choosing the hotel." Interviewee#9

This indicates that the hotel guests use its design to form a perception about its service too, and stress the importance of the first impression and how it could last and influence the whole hotel visit. Hence, hotel design is significant, especially as the first impression. This is a new dimension, as the specific role of hotel design in forming perceptions and first impressions was not identified before.

Interpreting the role of hotel interior design in shaping customers' perceptions from a SDL perspective highlights a value opportunity for both hotels and customers. Hotels can control customers' perceptions through the designs that they offer; and provide value for customers as they use these tangible cues as indicators to make their assessments. Evidence of this impact also contributes to CCT, by showing how hotel design elements convey meanings that shape these perceptions. It is recommended that the hotel lobby be considered a key part of the hotel, due to its wider impact, which is not solely a matter of its pleasant aesthetic appeal. Its design also influences the first impression and general perception of the hotel, is used as an indicator of quality, and can be a competitive advantage. Finally, the hotel design photos that are posted on hotels' websites or in other social media applications proved to be essential for creating expectations and forming perceptions toward the hotel, which influence customers' preference and choice before visiting it.

4.3.3.2 Hotel interior design as a quality and hygiene indicator

The interrelation between servicescapes and the perceived quality is acknowledged in theory and practice. For example, Ha and Jang (2012) report that atmospherics are indicators of service quality, especially in restaurants, as they form customers' perception of service qualit. Similarly, servicescape is found to be a critical quality

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indicator in hedonic services (Reimer & Kuehn, 2005). The data support this notion and stress the important role of the servicescape's design in the hotel industry as a quality indicator. Hotel design elements are considered symbols that convey meanings, and examples of the important meanings that hotel interior designs elements can symbolize are the quality and hygiene standards of the hotel. Interviewees believe that the different hotel design elements could send them meanings and give them an indication of the overall quality of the hotel and the effort that had been put in to it. This view is explained by the following statements:

> *"xxx in New York city, they tried to be luxurious but in the wrong direction. I pay attention to detail. They paid a lot on design and furniture but the finishing is xxx. Finishing line, quality and type of wood, material they're choosing, it's a shame, you can't cheat customers, even if they are not specialised they will pay attention to these things." Interviewee#9*

> *"Design is a main issue, and hotels are not focusing on these areas, especially that they are focusing on the exterior buildings, but in the inside there are problems with the layout and design, they use cheap material and furniture, which gives a bad impression about the hotel. Even internationally, use of furniture and type of decoration does make a lot of difference in giving an impression about the hotel." Interviewee#5*

Not only do hotel guests use the hotel design factors to judge the quality, but hygiene is another crucial factor that hotel guests can predict from the overall hotel design. Barsky and Nash (2012) believe that the hygiene factor is the most controllable, and that customers consider it a reason for a service experience success or failure. In addition, the minimum expectation from any service provider will be the hygiene variable (Hooper et al., 2013). Supporting the extant theory, the findings stress the significance of this factor, especially in the hotel industry. Hygiene standards of hotels make their customers feel safe and comfortable and the hotel design is the major indicator that communicates the hotel's hygiene standard. The first scent that customers smell when they enter a hotel is the simplest indication of that. The following statements illustrate this opinion:

"The hotel is your first place and impression about the city, it's very important, gives you an idea about the people of that country, their interest in tourists, their hygiene standard, this first impression will make you feel relaxed and comfortable." Interviewee#13

"What grabs attention the most is hygiene, luxury of the entrance, by their choice of furniture and interior decoration, you can see décor that is artistic creative and costly, that shows that they have invested in their décor…I will choose a hotel for its design because interior design gives me comfort and makes me psychologically and emotionally satisfied. When you are in a clean, pleasant place it affects you." Interviewee#22

White colour is another part of the overall design that symbolizes different meanings. For example, it is very important for all hotel guests, especially for bed linen, not only because of its aesthetic look and its refreshing feeling, but because it represents the hygiene standard of hotels. Interviewees explicitly mentioned this:

"Light and pastel walls because that makes rooms spacious. White sheets show you how clean it is, make you trust their hygiene and feel safe." Interviewee#11

"White is the king of colours, gives space and makes me emotionally comfortable." Interviewee#26

This suggests that hotel design is not only an aesthetic added value feature but rather a significant influential factor that has great impact on customers. The importance of hotel design as a quality and hygiene indicator adds new insight to theory because most previous studies were concerned with other industries like dining, for example. Hence, this fills the gap in knowledge as well as making hoteliers realise the importance of hotel design more. Quality and hygiene standards are important factors in influencing the overall hotel experience. The role of hotel interior design in shaping experiences will be explained next.

4.3.4 Shaping experiences

The role of hotel interior design in shaping experiences contributes to both SDL and CCT. Creating experiences aligns with the value-in-use concept with regard to SDL, where both customers and firms directly or indirectly create the customer experience together (Vargo & Lusch, 2008). Findings suggest that hotel servicescape is an important operand resource that has a great impact in influencing the experience. But this impact can be direct or indirect. With regard to CCT, the research on the design and management of servicescapes and their affects on consumer experiences have developed the theoretical understanding of structural predisposing (e.g. Price & Arnould 1999; Price, Arnould, & Tierney 1995; Sherry 1991). These studies indicate how servicescapes transform cultural ideals into material realities and how servicescapes' design can direct consumers' experiences (Arnould & Thompson, 2005). Reviewing the literature indicates that design in service a setting is a very important factor that evokes customer experiences (Slatten et al., 2009). The findings agree with the importance of hotel design in creating special experiences through the value in use concept with regard to SDL, and through understanding how servicescapes can direct consumer experiences by their symbolism, from a CCT perspective.

The majority of previous researchers such as Jordan (2003) and Norman (2004) argue that design in general can create positive emotions but few have studied the possible negative emotional outcomes of designs. Negative emotions can ruin the hotel experience, decrease both hedonic and utilitarian value, and will influence consumer behaviour negatively (Babin & Attaway, 2000). The findings revealed that hotel design may influence customers positively or negatively, as these participants explained:

> *"It depends on the design, but hotel design can fluctuate your feeling from being sad to being happy." Interviewee#33*

> *"The one in Germany with dark colours made me angry, while the one with wood work and flowers in an Austrian hotel, I was happy and calm." Interviewee#36*

This suggests that the negative emotions provoked should also be studied. Positive emotions in service facilities are evoked when the minimum expected standards are met and more effort is put into understanding customers and their needs, while negative emotions result when service providers fail to meet minimum expectations (Price et al., 1995). Understanding the negative emotions will help in preventing them, in order to create the best value. Negative emotions can occur in an environment due to its atmospheric features, which will influence customers negatively (Babin & Attaway, 2000; Baker, Parasuraman, grewal, & Voss, 2002). Several common negative emotions that customers can feel when hotel design does not match their expectations, and that influence their experiences negatively, have emerged from the data. One interviewee expressed this as follows:

"If you wake up in a bad place you will have a bad day. When you look at the mirror and that is what surrounding you, that will affect you and you have a bad mood."Interviewee#8

The findings indicated that dark colour is the most influential design element when it comes to the feeling of depression. The following interviewees confirmed this:

"If you have grey and brown colours I will feel depressed, like xxx hotel in Dubai, everything dark and dull." Interviewee#1

"Especially colours, if they are dark I will be depressed." Intervieww#24

Many participants described bad designs as prisons, due to lack of light and space. The following interviewees expressed this view by stating:

"I don't like hotels that over exaggerate with the design like xxx in Dubai for example, material and colours are annoying, colourful and gold...xxx hotel in Dubai is not relaxing, it's for partying. I'm looking for something relaxing and calm... The more open and glass in the lobby the more relaxing the hotel is, able to see outdoors and sunny natural light even if they don't have a good view, even in rooms. Some hotels in Europe you feel like in jail because it's closed and the opposite of this." Interviewee#2

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"Once I stayed in xxx in Paris. The rooms were dark and like staying in a cage, I like a great deal of light coming in. I hate low lighting; I couldn't stay there more than two days. So lighting really affects your mood. Having the right lighting and distribution of electricity in the room plays a big role in how comfortable you are in this hotel." Interviewee#18

This shows the difference between participants' reactions toward pleasant hotel designs and unpleasant hotel designs and the impact on their experiences. Apart from this, the findings revealed two main factors that are related to customers' experiences and will be discussed next: the impact of hotel employees' performance on customers' experiences, and the impact of customers' experiences on their memories.

4.3.4.1 The impact of hotel interior design on employees' performance

It is important to have satisfied employees in order to have satisfied customers (Mattila & Enz, 2002), because hotel employees, as the service providers, play a major role in forming the overall customer experience. Bitner (1992) argues that the servicescape will influence both customers and employees. Only a few interviewees pointed out the impact of hotel design on staff behaviour and communication. The findings agreed on the strong influence that the servicescape has on both customers and employees but has added a new insight. In the past, theory argued that the servicescape's design will have a direct impact on both employees and customers, but the findings suggested that this is not the only way to look at it and not the only impact. The findings suggested that hotel design may not only influence the mood and service of the staff directly, because of the servicescape that they are working in, but will also influence them indirectly. This is because offering pleasant design will satisfy guests, who will in turn treat employees fairly and induced a satisfied reaction. Figure 17 summarises this idea as explained by this interviewee:

"Interior design makes a difference, but exterior doesn't. If they have nice interior design they will have more guests and guests will be happy. Also it will reflect on the service of people working in the hotel, impact everything quality and service, encourage people to be comfortable and happy, because one of the

reasons is having a good environment you will have quality guests, hence you will have good service. Regarding the staff, if you have good interior design, then you will have quality guests that will treat staff in a good manner, therefore the service will be reflected positively. Interior design will impact psychologically everyone within the hotel, staff and guests, from the moment you enter, that can make you smile and normally that will affect everyone around you." Interviewee#2
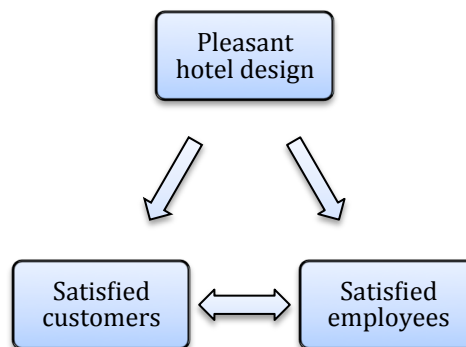

Figure 16 The impact of pleasant hotel design on customers' and employees' satisfaction (Author)

This suggests that pleasant hotel design will satisfy customers, and also satisfy employees, which will be reflected in their service and eventually result in customer satisfaction and impact the overall experience. This is an example of how hotel interior design can shape experiences indirectly, through influencing hotel staff as a moderator.

4.3.4.2 The impact of hotel interior design on memories

Guests' experiences will linger in guests' memories, which will then encourage customers to revisit the hotel in the future, to have the same experience and feelings again. This interviewee explained:

"I repeat if I miss it, and had pleasant memories in it, so its experience was a good thing. For example, if a hotel has a lobby with an enjoyable café and we always have coffee in it I will miss going to that hotel to repeat the experience and do the same thing again. Drink the same coffee in the same beautiful place. Sometimes my kids enjoy a hotel so I want to repeat it so we can all enjoy it again." Interviewee#3

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The impact of hotel design on customers' memories is a new dimension that was not perceived before. According to the interviewees, staying in and experiencing a pleasantly designed hotel will make this hotel linger in the memory of customers. This will affect their attitudes even after the end of the trip, and would certainly affect their word of mouth. Interviewees illustrated this by saying:

"I will always remember these hotels because they are art from the inside, they are really beautiful... Art and design in hotels means a lot, it keeps an impression, keeps a touch for you, so you always remember how neat and beautiful the place was, well decorated, it adds value, that's why you see some hotels are more expensive than others, they paid a lot of money to make it extravagant." Interviewee#16

"Honeymooners should choose unique designs and themes, because if they connect that with the memories it is worth it. Design will be saved in their mind, because the hotel was unique in design... Design plays a major role in memories, so it depends on the purpose of travel, honeymooners should choose a unique theme hotel. Unique design attracts generally."Interviewee#21

Additionally, there was a general agreement among interviewees of both genders and different ages about how hotel designs inspired them to copy same design ideas in their own homes, as these are symbols that helped them in keeping the memories of their pleasant visits and trying to maintain the positive emotions that they experienced in these well designed places. This view was reflected by these interviewees:

"Design makes it a positive experience, you want to copy things in your own home, when you see something that really attract your eyes and you like it very much, you take a picture of it and do something similar in your home. If you see a piece of art, you go and ask where they got it from and try to get the same and take it with you. So these are the things that you take with you." Interviewee#16

"Sometimes I like things in hotels and realise their positive affect on my mood, like white colours and the use of mirrors so I used these ideas when I redecorated my bedroom to feel same feelings that I had there." Interviewee#36

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If design did not affect them greatly they would not have taken the trouble to copy the same ideas in their own homes but because they acknowledged how positively these atmospheric elements made them feel, they wanted to maintain the same positive emotions. This is interesting as it explains how good hotel design lingers the guests' memories and stimulates guests' emotions. Hoteliers can benefit from this concept by offering designs that evoke pleasant emotions. The finding also shows that hotel guests are consciously aware of the positive influence that hotel design has on their attitudes and memories. This is a new dimension that was not identified before. Design was expected to influence guests during their stay, but that it may have a continuous effect even after the visit is a new insight, especially if it will influence guests' word of mouth and repetition intentions and make special occasions more special and enjoyable.

Realising the role of holistic hotel interior design and its specific elements (e.g. colour, scent) in shaping experiences can help hoteliers to control their offered designs to create positive experiences that will eventually influence their success as service providers. In summary, this part has discussed how hotel interior design creates value for customers and hotels, how it symbolizes meanings and shapes experiences. These main roles encompass several impacts and influences, and highlight the significance of interior design in the hotel industry. The next part will explain the development of the "Hotelscape" framework.

4.4 Part Three: Developing the "Hotelscape" framework

This part presents the "Hotelscape" framework, explains its development, and highlights its contribution. This framework is the outcome of the identified key findings and their relation to the extant literature discussed in previous parts. Gioia et al. (2013) argue that in order to achieve a "qualitative rigor" and develop concepts, the link between the data and the new insights must be demonstrated. Therefore, based on the previous parts, a comprehensive framework has been developed to combine and demonstrate all the key findings of this research which were previously discussed in the first two parts of this chapter and will be briefly discussed next.

4.4.1 Summary of key findings

This part revises the key findings that built the introduced framework. The data has emerged several interesting and valuable information. The data explained how hotel guests perceive hotel design and what specific elements construct their holistic perception. The findings revealed that customers perceive the hotel design holistically but rely on its functionality and aesthetic appearance to form their overall perceptions. With time, customers will notice the detailed elements that formed their first overall perception. The emerged elements that were found to be the most significant and influential were categorised into two categories: key elements (colour, lighting, furniture, style, and layout) and supplementary design elements (space, ambient conditions, technology, complimentary items, artefacts, staff uniform, big windows, and natural cues). The findings also clarified the different roles and impact of the hotel design on customers and hotels. Through the lenses of CCT, SDL, and servicescape, and with keeping in mind that it is a marketing study, the three main roles of hotel interior design were found to be shaping experiences, symbolizing meanings, and creating value. Hotel design creates value for hotels through offering them a competitive advantage, and a marketing segmentation tool, while the value for customers is created by triggering positive emotions (relaxation, entertainment, and satisfaction) that will in turn influence their behaviours (time spend, loyalty, social interactions, price sensitivity, and word of mouth). Ultimately, all the outcomes will benefit hotels, because utilizing hotel design can help hotels to compete and have a competitive advantage, by representing their standards through design, and targeting customer segments aesthetically. Apart from this, influencing guests positively and satisfying them will lead to positive emotions and behaviours that will benefit the hotel too. Accordingly, hotels should manipulate their hotel servicescapes to maximize their value and profits. The "Hotelscape" framework that will be presented next, is developed therefore to offer guidance for hoteliers and fill the existing gaps in knowledge in this area.

4.4.2 The "Hotelscape" framework

The "Hotelscape" simply explains the integration of the design concept and its application in the hotel industry, by identifying the most significant elements of hotel interior design, and clarifying their impacts through the lens of servicescape, SDL, and CCT. The term "Hotelscape" is inspired by the terms servicescape (Bitner, 1992), dinescape (Ryu & Jang, 2008), brandscape (Thompson & Arsel, 2004), and healthscape (Hutton &Richardson, 1995).

First, the "Hotelscape" explains how cosmopolitan consumers perceive the hotel interior design. Their perception is formed by the aesthetic and functional design characteristics. With time, they start to recognize the specific elements and distinguish individual detailed elements, which are the same elements that formed the original holistic perception. These elements are divided into key elements, which are fundamental in building the hotel design, and supplementary ones that add value and complement the key elements in building the overall design. The identified key elements are colour, lighting, furniture, style, and layout and distribution. The supplementary elements are space, ambient conditions, technology, complementary items, artefacts, staff uniform, the use of glass and big windows, and natural cues.

Second, the "Hotelscape" reveals the role of hotel interior design. This role comprises the impact of the holistic perception as well as the impact of certain influential design elements. The role is interpreted with regard to three main theories (SDL, CCT, and servicescape), which results in recognizing three main benefits, creating value, symbolizing meanings, and shaping experiences. Hotel interior design creates a competitive advantage for hotels by allowing them to differentiate themselves and to target their chosen segments, while it creates value for customers by satisfying them and influencing their emotions and behaviours positively.

Hotel interior design symbolizes different meanings to customers. This suggests that a Hotelscape is a symbolic servicescape. It sends meanings that customers interpret to judge the city, service, quality, and hygiene standards of the hotel. This in turn creates value, as customers can rely on the design cues as tangible indicators, and hoteliers can employ these elements to represent their identity and offerings differently. These

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meanings also influence customers' emotions and behaviours. Hotel interior design also shapes customers' experiences as it influences several factors that work together in forming the overall experience, such as creating the first impression, and enhancing employees' performance. Eventually, all these factors will influence customers emotions and behaviours. Gioia et al. (2013, p.22) state, "The key question for us as model builders is how to account for not only all the major emergent concepts, themes, and dimensions, but also for their dynamic interrelationships. Speaking in classic boxes-and-arrows terms, this process amounts to assembling the constellation of boxes with a special focus on the arrows, as they set everything in motion''. Their argument was considered in building the model; the dynamic relationships and arrows that clarify these relationships can be clearly seen in Figure 18.
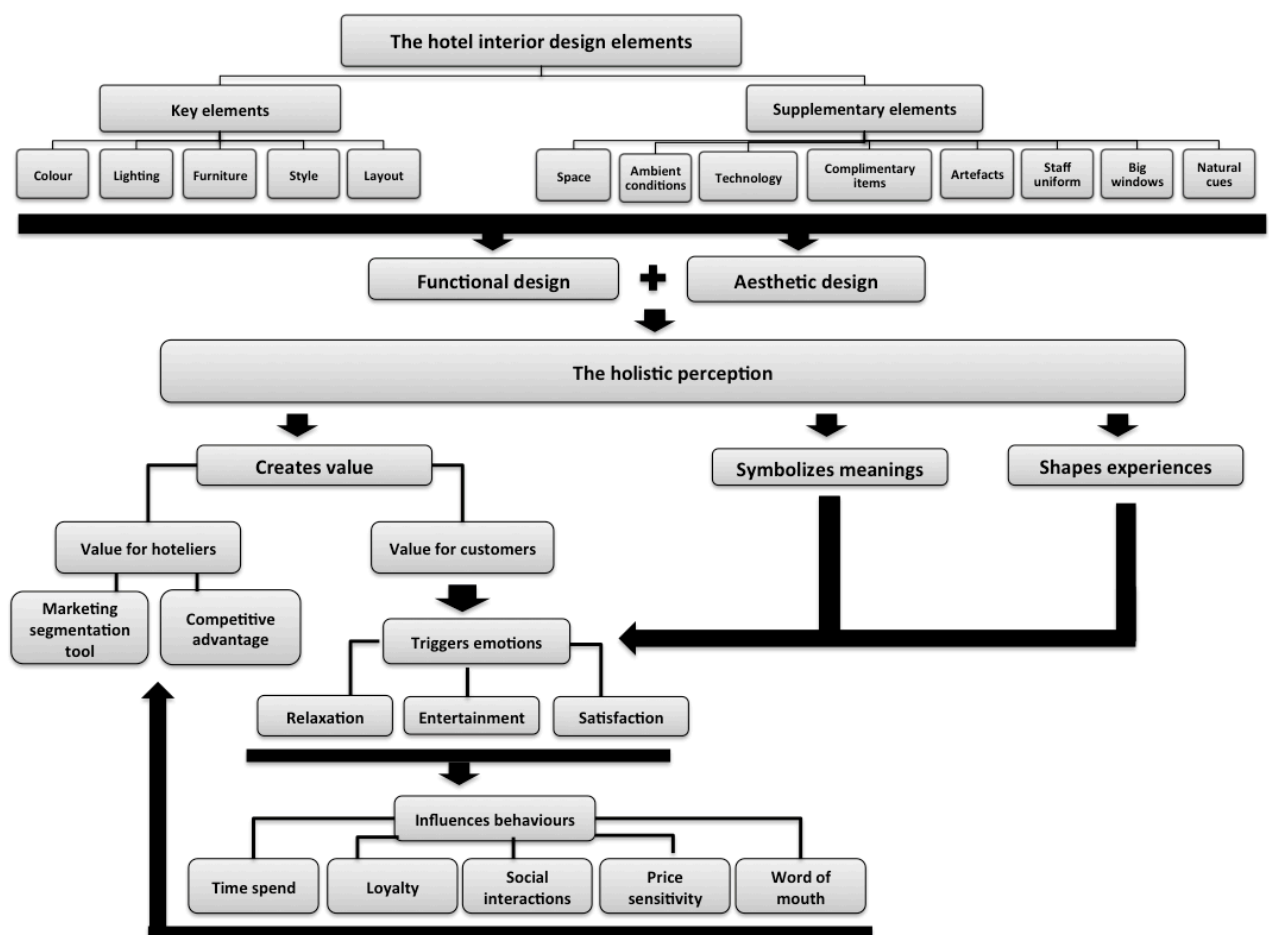

Figure 17 The "Hotelscape" framework

4.4.3 The contribution of the "Hotelscape" framework

Theoretically, the "Hotelscape" framework is the first to focus on the hotel industry from cosmopolitan consumers' point of view, and the first to identify the significant design elements, and the critical role of design for the hotel environments. It is also the first to integrate CCT, SDL, and servicescape to have a comprehensive understanding of the role of hotel interior design. Additionally, the relationship between the hotel design elements and customers' behaviours and how these behaviours can eventually benefit hotels, offers a great opportunity and is a key factor that was overlooked before. Therefore, the framework is considered "box-breaking" with regard to Alvesson and Sandberg's (2013) argument, explained in the methodology chapter.

Apart from enriching the servicescape research stream and improving on the mostly cited framework, the "Hotelscape" contributes to SDL and CCT because the role of servicescape in these two theories was overlooked before. The "Hotelscape" analyses the role of hotel interior design by considering it a value creation source (SDL), a meaning symbolizing source (CCT), and an experience creator (SDL and CCT). The integration of these two theories was recommended by resaerchers (e.g. Arnould, 2006; Penaloza & Mish, 2011). Nevertheless, integrating them to study the role of hotel interior design is a new insight.

Operationally, the "Hotelscape" framework outlines the direct impacts that hotel design has on customers and clarifies the different means by which hotel design can benefit hotels, including the differentiating and targeting concepts. This framework suggests how the resulting behaviours will influence hotels indirectly too. This emphasizes the importance of design for the hotel industry, and that it is crucial for them to consider and include it in their strategies as a fundamental component, given what it means to their guests and how much it influences them.

Furthermore, to validate the proposed "Hotelscape" framework and explain how it contributes to theory and practice further, it must be compared to previous established models in the same area, to identify how it differs from them and fills their gaps. Hence, the next part will explore this comparison further.

4.4.3.1 "Hotelscape" vs. previous frameworks

The first established framework with regard to physical environments is the stimulus-organism-response (SOR) model (Mehrabian & Russell, 1974). This framework was designed from an environmental psychology perspective. As explained in the literature review chapter, Mehrabian and Russell (1974) introduced a model that summarizes how environmental stimuli (S) influence emotional states (O) and therefore behaviour (R), which is the stimulus-organism-response model (SOR). Later, this model was widely used in different service settings, but mainly in retail premises and restaurants (Donovan & Rossiter,1982 ; Donovan et al., 1994; Anderson,1986; Buckley, 1987; Sherman & Smith, 1987; Dawson, Bloch & Ridgway, 1990; Yalch &Spangenberg, 1990; Milliman,1986; Bellizi & Hite, 1992), not in hotels. Apart from being dated, the most common criticisms of this framework are that it originated from environment psychology science, and that it does not capture the entire domain of emotions, as many everyday emotions are absent from the model (Barsky & Nash, 2002). In contrast, the "Hotelscape" framework is new, it focuses on the hotel industry, and it identifies several significant emotional responses and categorizes them under three main categories which are relaxation, satisfaction, and entertainment, which are different from Merabian and Russell's three emotions (pleasure, arousal, and dominance). Additionally, "Hotelscape" presents various specific behaviours that may occur in the hotel industry, which are word of mouth, price sensitivity, social interactions, price sensitivity, loyalty, and time spend. These provide a deeper and clearer understanding, as the SOR framework considers behaviours only in the broad terms of approach and avoidance, without detailed insights.

The SOR model is concerned with personality and environment variables in general, while the "Hotelscape" is concerned with the environment component but adds the specific hotel interior design elements that customers perceive and are influenced by. Although the "Hotelscape" aligns with the general process by which environments influence emotions and these emotions influence behaviours, the "Hotelscape" is context specific, more comprehensive as it includes customers' perception, discrete environment elements, and specific emotions and behaviours. It also illustrates the role of hotel interior design through integrating different theories. This suggests that

compared to SOR, "Hotelscape" provides more detailed information, is more relevant to the hotel context, and represents customers' point of view.

Based on previous work of Kotler (1973), Mehrabian and Russell (1974), Baker (1986), and Donovan and Rossiter (1982), Bitner (1992) has developed a framework for understanding environment-user relationships in service organizations, known as Bitner's servicescape model. It is the most widely used framework in the service industry in general. This framework was explained earlier in the literature review chapter. Although there are some similarities between Bitner's (1992) servicescape framework and the "Hotelscape" framework, there are some clear developments and new insights in the latter. First, it could be argued that Bitner's model is dated and that there have been many changes since it was developed, that may affect its validity. Second, Bitner's servicescape framework is concerned with understanding environment-user relationships in service organisations in general and it studies the influence on both employees and customers, while the "Hotelscape" framework is focused on the hotel context and on customers in specific. Third, Bitner's model depends on managerial and experts' point of view, while the "Hotelscape" is developed according to cosmopolitan consumers' point of view, which provides more in-depth information. Fourth, the physical dimensions are categorised differently, as the findings suggest that there are key elements and supplementary elements and the "Hotelscape" focuses on the interior design construct. The "Hotelscape" framework demonstrates the role of hotel interior design on customers and hotels, and identifies specific emotions and behaviours that result in the hotel environment, especially due to its interior design. This indicates that the "Hotelscape" framework aligns with Bitner's servicescape framework in regard to some concepts but clearly takes it further, which makes it more applicable to the hotel industry and valuable for both theorists and managers. Integrating SDL and CCT in the "Hotelscape" produced more benefits regarding the impacts of servicescapes and particularly their design.

Rosenbaum and Massia (2011) expanded Bitner's (1992) servicescape paradigm to include the setting's built, social, socially symbolic, and natural elements, which they believe influence both customers and employees. Their framework includes several dimensions, while the "Hotelscape" focuses on the physical dimension. Additionally, the "Hotelscape" focuses on the hotel industry while their framework is more general.

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Interestingly the most significant interior design elements that hotel guests perceive as part of the environment physical design are absent in Rosenbaum and Massia's framework, which suggests that it is insufficient, especially for the hotel context. For example colour, technology, complimentary items, and staff uniform are influential in shaping the hotel design and are covered by the "Hotelscape" framework, while Rosenbaum and Massia's (2011) framework does not cover them. Another main difference is that the "Hotelscape" is more comprehensive, because it covers the impacts of theses elements rather than just listing them. This also suggests that the "Hotelscape" is more useful to consider and build on, especially with regard to hotel design and its role.

Researchers have continually highlighted the insufficiency of empirical research in the servicescape area (Donovan and Rossiter, 1994; Hoffman & Turley, 2002; Reimer & Kuehn, 2005). Most of the studies carried out on the impact of servicescapes' elements on buying behaviour have tended to focus on single elements such as colour (Bellizzi & Hite, 1992; Crowley,1993; Funk & Ndubisi, 2006), or music (Milliman, 1986; Areni& Kim, 1993; North & Hargreaves, 1996; Wilson, 2003).This suggests that little was known about the holistic impact of servicescapes. Ezeh and Harris (2007) stated that "it is expected that such integration of multiple elements will increase the scant knowledge base on the global configurations of servicescapes" (Ezeh & Harris, 2007, p. 70). In the same way, Walter et al. (2010) state that "there seems to be a need for empirical research in other empirical contexts, focusing on the customer experience of the physical environment as a whole and the role it plays" (Walter et al., 2010, p. 240). The "Hotelscape" addresses these gaps by identifying the roles of different design elements holistically and separately.

4.5 Summary

In summary, this chapter has presented the findings and discussion part of this study. These key findings answered the research questions and formed the foundation for building the "Hotelscape" framework. The "Hotelscape" framework was introduced to cover the most significant hotel design elements, and reveal their different impacts on both customers and hotels, to better understand customers' perspective, and defend

the significance of the design factor in the hotel industry. The many identified influences call into question the lack of theoretical work on this matter, fill gaps in knowledge, and provide fruitful managerial implications that evidence the value of the study and the "Hotelscape" framework.

CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSION

5.1 Introduction

The aim of this chapter is to bring the study to a conclusion. It revisits the research objectives, highlights its contributions and limitations, and suggests future research directions. The significant role of servicescapes appears clear in applied practices in daily life, but the lack of theoretical research and theory to support this, especially in a competitive industry like hotels, has generated the need for this study. Moreover, the separation between the business and design disciplines heightens the need for a study that proves that their combination can lead to great success. Furthermore, the established relationship between servicescapes and emotions, and the relationship between emotions and behaviours have also enhanced the importance of this study, as hotels are hedonic and emotions are more relevant in a hotel context and the design of hotels are their tangible cues and differentiating tools. Exploring these gaps led to the recognition of the significant role of hotel interior design and helped in grasping the interior design consumer behaviour interface. It also contributed to CCT and SDL theories and clarified the place of serviescape in them. Accordingly, this study fills several gaps in knowledge and helps hoteliers too, as this study offers both theoretical and applied contributions.

5.2 Revisiting the research objectives

This study sought to explore the hotel interior design concept in the hotel industry from cosmopolitan consumers' perspective. This concept was theoretically overlooked before and this research provides a deeper understanding of it. This part explains how the findings have addressed the research objectives and assisted in achieving them.

The first objective was to understand how customers' perceptions of hotel servicescape's design are formed. Although the rich findings align with previous theories that suggest that customers perceive their surrounding environments holistically (Kotler, 1973; Lin, 2004; Orth et al., 2012), there were new insights with regard to the hotel industry. Perception starts holistically but in service settings where customers spend a long time, such as hotels in comparison to retails for example,

customers start to recognize details and fragment the holistic design after a while. A key insight here is that hotel guests perceive the hotel design holistically as a first impression only, but are influenced by it both holistically and separately, as some elements might be influential and have dominant impact. The second point is that hotel guests perceive and judge the hotel design according to its functionality and aesthetic appearance combined.

The second objective was to identify the significant design elements that form hotel interior design, create value, and convey meanings from cosmopolitan consumers point of view. This objective was achieved by identifying these elements. The findings revealed that the most influential design elements that they notice, and that symbolize meanings to them, and assist in creating value and shaping the overall experience, are divided into two categories: key elements which are colour, lighting, furniture, style, and layout and distribution; and supplementary elements which are space, ambient conditions, technology, complementary items, artefacts, staff uniform, the use of glass, and natural cues.

The third objective was to comprehend the role of interior design and what it has to offer to the hotel industry through SDL and CCT. This indicates that impacts studied from new perspectives. Minimal research has integrated them and employed them to understand the role and benefits that servicescapes have to offer. The findings revealed interesting influences that were not recognized in the hotel context before. Hotel interior design creates value in many ways; it influences customers' emotions and behaviours. The most influenced emotions are relaxation, satisfaction, and entertainment. On the other hand, the most influenced behaviours are word of mouth, loyalty, social interactions, time spend and price sensitivity. If these emotions and behaviours were influenced positively, that will create value for both customers and hoteliers. Hotel interior design influences first impressions, which are lasting impressions that form perceptions toward the city and the service. It also conveys meanings to customers as it is considered as a tangible indicator of the quality and hygiene standards of the hotel. Finally, the overall experience of customers is shaped by the hotel interior design elements and their perceptions and feelings toward it. All these impacts influence hotels indirectly. However, the findings also revealed interesting means by which hotel interior design can create value directly for hotels;

that is through using hotel interior design as a marketing segmentation tool, and to differentiate themselves. Hence, it can be a source of competitive advantage.

The final objective was concerned with the final outcome of the study, which was to conceptualize a framework that identifies the significant hotel interior design elements, and maps the relationship between these elements and their impacts in the hotel industry. Accordingly, the final outcome of this research was the development of the "Hotelscape" framework (Figure 18: Chapter 4), which summarises the key findings of the study. This proposed framework is the first to focus on the hotel industry, and the first to cover the elements that form the overall interior design of a hotel servicescape, along with their impacts on customers and hoteliers in one comprehensive framework. This framework is also the first to integrate SDL and CCT to study the role of interior design in the hotel industry. As a result, the "Hotelscape" framework is the key contribution of this research, as it provides a robust theory that enriches theory and provides managerial implications. The contributions of this study will be explained next.

5.3 Contributions

Corley and Gioia (2011) categorise theoretical contribution dimensions into originality and utility. They argue that the originality of a contribution can either be revelatory or incremental, while utility can be practical or scientific (Corley & Gioia, 2011). Incremental originality advances an understanding of a phenomenon; it " advances knowledge in a scientific discipline, guides research toward crucial questions, and enlightens the profession of management" (Van-de-Ven, 1989, p.486). A theory is considered as revelatory when it " allows us to see profoundly, imaginatively, unconventionally into phenomena we thought we understood" (Mintzberg, 2005, p.361). On the other hand, utility means that a contribution "must be seen as useful as well as improve the current managerial practice of organizational practitioners" (Corley & Gioia, 2011, p.18). Scientific utility is the advancement and improvement of an idea that can potentially be tested and operationalized, while practical utility means that theory may be applied to solve managers' problems (Corley & Gioia, 2011).

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This suggests that the current study has contributed to theory along both dimensions (originality and utility) (Corley & Gioia, 2011). With regard to originality, it is both revelatory and incremental. The current study integrates several theoretical lenses (e.g. CCT, SDL, Servicescape) and disciplines (e.g. design, business) which is new; it also problematizes previous established theories (Alvesson & Sandberg, 2013) and reveals new insights that were overlooked before, which shows how it is revelatory. It also provides an incremental contribution by advancing the understanding of the hotel interior design concept and consumers' perception toward it (Corley & Gioia, 2011), and through gap spotting (Gioia et al., 2013), as the study of hotel industry and cosmopolitan consumers was neglected in the past. On the other hand, with regard to utility, this study is both scientifically and practically useful. It is scientifically useful because it produces the "Hotelscape" framework as the final outcome of the study, which may be operationalized and tested in future research. In addition, the findings of the research provide guidance and solutions for hoteliers and that is why it provides practical utility.

5.3.1 Theoretical contribution

Corley and Gioia (2011) suggest that theories that reveal the unknown and introduce unfamiliar concepts have revelatory originality. With regard to this claim, this research is considered to make revelatory contributions and be academically fruitful for several reasons. This research has merged theory and empirical evidence to analyse the concept of hotel interior design and recognise its role. Hence, different backgrounds, especially the disciplines of design and business, were merged together.

This research has enriched and added to different areas of knowledge, including services, marketing, design, environmental psychology, globalization, SDL, and CCT, which is a clear theoretical contribution. The integration of servicescape and interior design in specific in SDL and CCT was previously overlooked. This rsearch helped in understanding the importance of design, especially in modern days, and globalization factors; because these two research streams are spreading, understanding the position of servicescape in them was important.

This study has academically and scientifically proven the value of design for businesses, especially in a competitive industry such as hotels. This notion lacked theoretical support (e.g. Coates, 2003; Norman, 2004 Esslinger, 2009), and now this study has addressed it and advanced the understanding of this concept, which makes an incremental contribution. It suggests that implementing pleasant design and considering it in organisations' main strategies is a must, and that the concepts of art and design should be appreciated more, as they are no longer merely supplemental practices, but rather a valuable, significant essential.

Gap spotting resulted in incremental contributions too (Gioia et al., 2013). Reviewing services, hotels and marketing literature revealed ideas and practices that were not theoretically supported and highlighted several clear gaps that needed further exploration. For example minimal research was found in the hotel industry (e.g. Barsky & Nash, 2002; Countryman & Jang, 2006; Jani & Han, 2013). The current research has certainly provided a foundation for future studies with regard to the hotel industry, as it has provided the "Hotelscape" framework that focuses on the hotel industry and addressed several identified gaps. This framework fills a gap in knowledge, and can be tested and developed further. Moreover, it may be used as a reference for future studies, which explains how the current study is scientifically useful in regard to Corley and Gioia (2011).

Accordingly, the most significant theoretical contribution is the introduction of the "Hotelscape" framework, by combining servicescape, SDL and CCT. This framework identifies the most significant interior design elements, explains how they contribute to the value creation and meaning creation processes from SDL and CCT perspectives, and highlights the importance of the design concept to business. This framework enriches existing knowledge and meets the need for such theoretical frameworks that ground the servicescape's interior design elements, especially in the hotel industry (e.g. Bitner,1992; Countryman & Jang, 2006; Orth & Malkewitz, 2008). It identifies the most influenced emotions and behaviours in a hotel context, and this was also an important identified gap (e.g. Coates, 2003; Slatten et al., 2009; Kumar & Garg, 2010). The "Hotelscape" also explains the role of hotel interior design and identifies the different impacts that hotel interior design has on customers and hoteliers from cosmopolitan consumers' perspective, which was also another

important gap that needed to be addressed (e.g Countryman & Jang, 2006; Slatten et al., 2009; Orth, et al., 2012).

This suggests that this study and the developed "Hotelscape" framework in particular, has contributed greatly to knowledge and enriched various areas of research. It also provides a robust theoretical base for future studies and enhances understanding of cosmopolitan consumers. Finally, literature on hotels and deisgn is fragmented and scarse. This study offered a coherant framework to unite the disparate concepts under the SDL and CCT labels. After recognizing the theoretical contributions, the practical contributions will be discussed next.

5.3.2 Managerial contribution (implications)

This study has several managerial implications, especially for hoteliers and designers, and the following will explain the practical utility of the study. Due to the lack of theoretical frameworks and empirical research in this area, this research will enhance hotel managers' awareness of the practical value of interior design and the different opportunities that hotel interior design can offer to them, which they can manipulate in order to derive benefit. It also encourages designers and managers to work alongside each other and join their strengths together to provide more effective strategies.

The "Hotelscape" framework provides a clear identification of the most important interior design elements that they should consider and invest in. These recommendations can be divided according to the classification of the identified design elements. Nevertheless, findings revealed that customers perceive these elements and judge them according to their aesthetic appearance and functionality. Therefore, hoteliers should consider these two characteristics in their designing strategies.

Hoteliers and designers should recognise the importance of the colours that they choose, and although tastes differ, they should focus more on white, light, and natural colours as the findings proved that they are generally preferred by customers. Lighting,

especially natural lighting, is very important too, as it can influence the guests' comfort or even push them away from the hotel. Furniture is another key element in the hotel design from customers' point of view, which they judge by its comfort and aesthetic look. The photos of furniture in websites are also important to consider, because they influence customers' online booking and preference. Regarding style, although modern and classic are the most popular hotel design styles from customers' point of view, adding unique and cultural touches adds a lot of value, as agreed by the majority of participants. The importance of layout in the hotel context is related to the functionality and accessibility of the design and how it can be used, as well as to its aesthetic look. It is proved to influence the perception of the overall hotel design, customers' comfort, and their satisfaction.

Space is an important element, but despite the general agreement about the importance of space, it was found that small spaces may be tolerated if other features are available, especially in cities with a lot of activities, and on short trips. Therefore, hoteliers should balance and be aware of what the priorities of their guests are and what their expectations are, especially as a result of their location and surrounding activities. Although it is often thought that hotel interior design is only related to visual cues, ambient conditions are perceived and considered part of the hotel interior design. The two main ambient conditions that were recognized are related to the different scents and sounds in the hotel servicescape. Another interesting dimension that was not expected to be perceived as part of the design is the use of technology and the various gadgets and devices offered. Hotel guests use these as important criteria by which to judge and compare hotels, especially for guests who are interested in this matter. Favoured gadgets include the different media, MP3, IPads, plasma televisions, and the facility of controlling devices through remote controls. This suggests that hoteliers should keep this in mind and be aware of their guests' expectations.

In addition, hotels can satisfy their guests and gain their admiration by offering them complimentary items that do not cost much but are highly appreciated by their guests as a positive gesture and a special touch; surprisingly, this was one of the perceived hotel design elements. Artefacts and art pieces (e.g. paintings, sculptures) have the same effect, because they may attract hotel guests' attention, influence their choice

and preference, and increase enjoyment and happiness. Although these are extra touches, their influence was found to be more important than expected and hotel guests seem to appreciate art and design more than hotel managers may think. Staff uniform is another interesting factor; it was not mentioned in previous studies, and it was not expected to be perceived by the hotel guests as part of the hotel interior design. However, hotels should pay attention to this factor as it will affect guests, especially their overall perception, and it is easy to apply.

Availability of glass and big windows makes a positive noticeable difference to hotel guests too, by making the outer view more accessible, making the place more airy, and enhancing light. Therefore, hoteliers should try to provide glass walls and windows as much as they can. Also, the availability of natural cues seems to have the same positive effect on guests, including the use of fresh flowers, greenery, and water, which hoteliers should consider and try to offer to their guests too.

A very important practical contribution is that all the presented findings are from cosmopolitan consumers' point of view, which provides a better understanding of this segment. The importance of understanding customers was discussed earlier, and this work will help hoteliers to know their customers better. Acknowledging the identified customers' emotions and behaviours that can be influenced by hotel interior design also provides hotel managers with guidance on the possible influences, so that they can control and encourage positive outcomes that will ultimately impact their success.

This study suggests how hotel design, and in particular interior design elements, can be used as a significant tangible cue and marketing communication tool, as hotel design can be used to send certain messages and symbolize certain meanings to guests. Hotels can also use these elements to indicate their quality and hygiene standards. The "Hotelscape" also suggests that hoteliers can use hotel design as a marketing segmentation tool and a competitive advantage to differentiate themselves, especially as this is a highly competitive industry. Finally, providing pleasant servicescapes will enhance hotel employees' performance, which will reflect positively on their service and impact the overall experience of hotel guests.

Although many managers worry about the cost associated with design (Kotler & Rath, 1984), the findings suggest that there are some simple touches that customers perceive as part of the hotel interior design and may be applied without having to spend a lot of money, and hoteliers should keep that in mind. Nevertheless, if they decide to make major changes, or they are willing to spend more on design, they should be assured that investing in good design and renovating their spaces is worthwhile, due to the great benefits, even if it takes some time. These benefits include attracting more customers, influencing their choices, and the opportunity for hotels to differentiate themselves in a very competitive industry.

5.4 Research limitations

Although every research is driven by a research need that challenges the researcher toward a certain research process, no research is perfect and every research has some limitations (e.g. Creswell, 2007). Nevertheless, given the circumstances of time constraints, the researcher's knowledge, and the available resources, the research was conducted in the best possible way, to answer the research questions at the time. Having said that, the recognized limitations of this research will be highlighted next.

Every research approach has its own strengths and weaknesses. For example, the subjectivity is of the researcher is one of the associated concerns with qualitative research. As a result, the researcher had to consider various practices that can enhance the quality of the research to ensure that the presented data and findings are credible and reliable. These were explained in detail in the methodology chapter. For example she has declared her position and reflected on her background, and she has also made sure to have external checking and a high level of documentation throughout the research process.

Another challenge that has faced the researcher, as a woman, was getting access to interview males, due to cultural constraints in Saudi Arabia. The researcher managed to interview them eventually, but it was more difficult to contact them and meet them, compared to females. The choice of a Saudi Arabian sample in specific was justified due to their reputation for extensive travelling and heavy spending, especially during their summer holidays. Although the characteristics of the chosen sample much in

common with widely travelled people around the world, because they are considered as cosmopolitan consumers, it is still debatable whether the conclusions could be generalized, because the sample of the research is from one country only. The "Hotelscape" model that has been developed by this study could be valid in other countries, although further research is needed to examine this.

In addition, the research is limited to consumers' perception toward hotel interior design, and did not consider hoteliers' views toward it. It could be argued that understanding it from different angles could strengthen the findings of the study. However, due to the time constraints and research strategy it was difficult to interview consumers, managers, and hotel owners. The main identified gap was in understanding the consumers' perspective, but comparing the views of consumers and hoteliers could be an area for further research.

5.5 Research agenda for further research

The conceptual "Hotelscape" framework suggests a wide range of research possibilities. Due to the clear gap in marketing and consumer behaviour literature, there is great opportunity for theory building and empirical testing. As mentioned in the previous chapter, this framework is the first to focus on the hotel industry, and the interior design dimension, and to integrate CCT and SDL. Further study is needed to test the "Hotelscape" model quantitatively in order to further its validation. Due to the exploratory nature of this study, further confirmatory research is required. Quantitative testing with larger samples from different countries is necessary. This would help in understanding the extent to which the "Hotelscape" model can be generalised, and to demonstrate that the findings of this study are not unique to this particular sample.

This study has explored the hotel interior design and investigated its role through the lens of SDL and CCT. Further research could explore this from different theoretical perspectives. Besides, further research could focus on different dimensions of the hotel industry (e.g. the social dimension). This study has focused on the physical

design dimension; exploring the role of social factors in the hotel industry and how social and physical factors work together is another area for future research.

The "Hotelscape" framework also highlights a wide opportunity for application and replication of the framework in different contexts. For example, it may be tested in retails, restaurants, hospitals and leisure service settings. Although the sample of this research was cosmopolitan consumers, which suggests that geographical contexts cultures make no difference, all interviews were conducted in Saudi Arabia and with Saudi participants. This underlines another recommendation for future studies, where the same research can be explored on different samples and the "Hotelscape" framework may be tested in different geographic contexts. It would be interesting to compare whether individuals from different countries and backgrounds would have the same hotel interior design perception, and whether they would be affected by it in the same way. Moreover, further research is still required to understand the concept of integrating design and business, and to realize the role of aesthetics in modern days. This research has focused on one part, which is the environment design. Further research may explore the role of product design, package design, and graphic design (e.g. the design of promotional materials, websites, stationary and logotypes).

Another interesting research opportunity, afforded by the current increasing importance of the Internet, is exploring cyberscapes and comparing the perception and role of hotel servicescapes "Hotelscape", to hotel "cyberscapes". In addition, more research is still needed to explore the impact of hotel images that are displayed online, especially their interior design and how different customers perceive them and are influenced by them. This may be investigated in the future and the results may be compared to the perceptions and role of the physical "Hotelscapes" presented in this study. Finally, the aim of this research was to conceptualise the hotel design elements and investigate their role from cosmopolitan consumers' perspective. The justification for conducting consumer-oriented research was explained earlier. Further research may explore the hotel interior design and its role from managers' or hotel owners' point of view, to better understand their perceptions and find out whether there is a difference between their views and those of customers.

5.6 Summary

This chapter revisited the research objectives. It has highlighted the study's contributions from both theoretical and managerial perspectives, discussed the limitations of the research and offered recommendations for further studies. In conclusion, this study explored the underpinnings of hotel interior design, and explained its role, especially in creating value, symbolizing meanings and shaping experiences from cosmopolitan consumers' perspective; through servicescape, SDL and CCT lenses. This study merged design and business concepts together; and integrated SDL and CCT theories to offer a coherent framework: "Hotelscape". The "Hotelscape" framework identifies the influential interior design elements, and explains how cosmopolitan consumers perceive hotel interior design. Their perception is formed by aesthetic and functional design characteristics. The framework outlines the direct impacts that hotel design has on customers and clarifies the different means by which hotel design can benefit hotels. Given the reported scarcity of research in the marketing and consumer behaviour literature, the "Hotelscape" framework suggests a wide range of research opportunities for theory building, empirical testing, application and replication in different contexts and on different samples. Finally this study has highlighted the importance of interior design for marketing managers in the hotel industry, and provided guidance for hotel managers and designers. Design is fundamental for hotel guests and for hoteliers. Thus, it is essential and not a substitute. This leads to the conclusion that design and business should be coordinated to reinforce capabilities and create more beneficial strategies and better offerings, especially in a globalized and competitive industry such as hotels.

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Appendix One: The interview guideline

Topic 1: Background of the research participant:

Age, gender, education, occupation, family…

Topic 2: Explore participants' travel experiences:

- Can you describe your last travel?
- How often do you travel? Where? Why?
- Where did you travel?

Topic 3: Discuss participant's choice of hotels:

- How do you choose a hotel when you usually travel?
- What hotels do you like? Can you describe them?
- What is the best hotel in your view? Examples? Why?
- Can you tell me about the best hotel experience you ever had?
- Do you have a favourite hotel/chain? Why?
- What kind of hotels do you dislike?

Topic 4: Identify the important interior design elements

- What are the characteristics of an ideal hotel from your point of view?
- What parts of the hotel are important?
- What usually grabs your attention the most?
- What matters to you the most?

Topic 5: Discover the different emotions that hotels' design can trigger

- How do the hotel impact your journey?
- Does hotel design make any difference? How?
- What kind of emotions do you experience in a hotel stay?
- How does hotel interior design make you feel?

Topic 6: Understand the behavioural outcomes:

- Do you usually prefer to stay in the same hotel?
- Are you willing to pay higher price for the hotel design? Why?
- Will the hotel atmosphere and design make you repeat the visit? How?
- Will you choose a hotel because of its interior design? Why?
- Would you recommend a hotel that you like for others?

Appendix two: Examples of quotations supporting the extracted codes for this study

Code	Quotations
Colour	*"The room has to be reasonable size, good service, have some taste into it like colouring and stuff like that, I don't like to go for a hotel where you will find a red wall for example, or colours that blind you, I like light colours, a nicely decorated, calm place. It does not have to be very fancy but it has to have a touch of class into it, so it can be basic but with some touches, to me its much better than something fancy with ugly colours." Interviewee#16*
Furniture	*"Comfort is important so not only the look. Sometimes furniture looks nice but is not comfortable. Making you comfortable is the most important part; first and foremost bed and chairs should be comfortable. Then the placement of TV and desk." Interviewee#10*
Space	*"It's very important for the bedroom to be spacious. Like London hotels are so annoying because the rooms are small, and the view is not great. Xxx hotel is not bad but still I wasn't happy because the rooms were small in size, but at least, in a place like London I will be out most of the time and use it mostly for sleeping only, and it's the only place I can tolerate that because of this reason. But I don't feel happy, comfortable or satisfied." Interviewee#11*
Technology	*"A Tokyo hotel stuck in my mind because of its spacious rooms, technology in bathrooms, good customer service, I like technology; they also offered an I pad to each room. You could control AC and curtains through the I pad." Interviewee#24*
Complimentary items	*"All the extra little things that they put in the room, treats, fruit, oils, all these are enjoyable little treats…They could give you small extra things that make the difference." Interviewee#29*
Staff uniform	*"It's not a matter of good design, it's a matter of smart design, should be relaxing, eye catching, eye relaxing, temperature, music people, even the way people are dressed within the hotel part of design all correlated." Interviewee#2*

Natural cues	*"Also small details and small add on but it does make a difference such as decorating the rooms with fresh natural flowers as they give a very nice feeling to a room. Flowers make me feel refreshed, I appreciate flowers and like freshly cut flowers, the colours are nice to look at and the smell is good…Flowers, greenery, natural light, water, waterfalls, make me feel alive." Interviewee#12*
Satisfaction	*"Happiness and feeling psychologically and emotionally satisfied is the main role of design. A beautiful hotel makes me psychologically fulfilled and emotionally satisfied."Interviewee#6*
Conveying meanings (symbolism)	*"Lobby and reception gives an indication, if small it will mean that service is not good, whereas if it's big it gives the impression that a lot of staff are available to help you faster."Interviewee#19*
Shaping experiences	*"The lobby accounts for 60% of the whole experience because it gives a first impression, an identity. The more spacious, high ceiling and sophisticated the lobby is, this can play a big role in making the guest experience. It's easy to build on after that. From my point of view you can put less effort in the room if you have proper experience and impression in the entrance of the hotel. If the entrance was not satisfactory, guests would be already off the mood so doesn't matter how much effort you do after that." Interviewee#9*
Word of mouth	*"I felt spoiled, relaxed, see something new, do something new that not everybody see. I have something to talk about, and took pictures of every corner of the room to show them when I go back… Of course I recommend all the time, say strengths and weaknesses. Even if I go to a country for the first time I will ask my friends and see what they recommend." Interviewee#14*