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# Influence of Ambient Conditions on Customer Satisfaction in Selected Universities, Nairobi Kenya

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## Abstract

Ambient conditions are employed by customer to assess the state of a food service center for convenience. This study sought to determine the influence of the ambient conditions on customer satisfaction in selected universities, Nairobi Kenya. The study adopted a mixed method research design but specifically adopted descriptive and explanatory research designs. The target populations were the universities in Nairobi County. However, the study purposively targets four universities: 2 public and 2 private universities. Purposive sampling is appropriate when the study population is always very busy and since may not be available at the time of the study. The questionnaires were distributed during meal hours; breakfast, lunch and dinner. Four questionnaires during every meal hour were administered systematically to students who were willing to fill it across the four universities with help of two research assistants. One questionnaire was distributed to a customer, skip 3 customers and issue another questionnaire until the four questionnaires were filled. Quantitative analysis comprised both descriptive and inferential statistics. Particular descriptive statistics included means and standard deviation. Inferential statistics comprised of multiple regression. A total of 305 questionnaires were distributed to consumers at the university food service facilities whereas 278 were returned. This represented 91.1% response rate. The regression analysis established that ambient conditions explained 61.7% ( $R^2=0.617$ ) of the variance in customer satisfaction. In addition, regression results revealed that ambient conditions ( $\beta=0.494$ ,  $p=0.000$ ) have a positive and significant relationship with customer satisfaction. The regression results were significant because the p values were less than 0.05. The

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interviews revealed that management continuously improve ambient conditions in order to remain pleasant and more so meet ever changing customer needs. The study recommends that the food service facilities at the university in regard to continuous improvement of ambient conditions features like setting up proper lighting, undertaking periodic color painting of the food service facility and rebuilding food facility floors and ceilings with aim of promoting aesthetic value.

**Keywords:** *Ambient Conditions, Customer Satisfaction & Universities*

**1.1 Introduction**

Customer satisfaction is deemed as the feeling after consuming a product or service and can either be positive or negative feeling (Amin, 2015). Thus, customer satisfaction defines the level of customers feeling of pleasure or displeasure based on the service offered in comparison to the expected level of service (Oliver, 1980). Relating to the context of the current study, customer satisfaction connotes the loyalty of the customer to the food and services sold at the food service facility, the desire to visit again to the food service facility and recommend other customers to the food service facility (Oliver, 1980).

In the hotel industry, customers expect good services at the food facility. Customers are most likely to be pleased with the viewed high quality of service at the food service facility if they have attained worthy experience that satisfies or surpasses their assumption (Harrington, Ottenbacher & Kendall, 2011). However, underperformance of highly anticipated institution may likewise cause customer frustration (Jysmä, 2012). According to Harrington *et al.*, (2011), the food service facility needs to take extra care to recognize the customer assumptions in order to guarantee the customer complete satisfaction can be optimized and possible in long run.

The ambient conditions are therefore very significant factors that contribute to satisfaction of consumers in the food service facilities in the university (Jang, Ro & Kim, 2015). Ambient conditions are employed by customer to assess the state of a food service center for convenience. Because the foregoing, ambient problems have been attested as significant variables on customer feedbacks (Jang, Ro & Kim, 2015). The ambient conditions are categorized as the intangible background features that stimulates the common human sensations that drive exhibitor’s perception and the response to the surrounding through visual aesthetics temperatures, cleanliness and the audio (music and noise). More so, the music, color, lights, displays help in forming a physical servicescape and emotional of consuming a particular product or service (Awasthi & Shrivastava, 2014) and thus motivate the customers to spend more of their time in the service space and enhance product and service satisfaction. The ambient conditions are therefore very significant factors that result to customer satisfaction among students in the food service facilities in the university (Jang, Ro & Kim, 2015).In this study, ambient conditions measures include Visual aesthetic (light, colour, shape), Cleanliness (scent, air quality, fragrance), Temperature and Audio (music, noise).

In the context of the hospitality industry, ambient conditions, plays critical role in differentiating the nature of hospitality services offered among the hospitality service providers thus influencing consumer satisfaction (Chen & Hu, 2010; Ryu *et al.*, 2012). The ambient conditions are categorized as the intangible features that trigger the human sensations about physical environment via visual aesthetic (Lighting, color, shapes), cleanliness (air quality, fragrance and scent), ambient (temperatures) and the audio (music). More so, the music, color, lights, displays can enhance customer satisfaction (Hendriyani, 2018; Awasthi & Shrivastava, 2014; Kong & Jamil (2014),

Shashikala & Suresh, 2018). According to Lee, Wang and Cai (2015), appearances, ambient condition, seating comfort, and sanitation, and visible variables can be made use of as efficient analysis dimension indications. According to Onuoha and Nnenanya (2015) special layout, signs, symbols, artifacts and ambient conditions, influence customer satisfaction at the three star hotels in Nigeria. Kamau (2017) in a study on how ambient conditions influence customer satisfaction among hotel in Nairobi County noted that consumers are happy as well as pleased with the ambient conditions in the restaurants.

**1.2 Statement of the Problem**

According to Jang, Ro and Kim (2015) the capacity of university food service facilities should ideally full with customers particularly when in session. Fully utilized food service facilities often signify that either customers’ expectations are met / exceeded or there’s possibly no better alternative to source for meals. According to Njau, Mutungi and Mutinda (2019) food service facilities in most universities witness low consumer traffic raising queries on the state of hospitality services of the food service facilities. In hospitality industry, customers are more likely to be satisfied with the perceived good quality of service at a facility if the experience meets or exceeds their expectation. However, the food service facility needs to take additional care to understand the customer expectations in order to ensure the customer satisfaction can be maximized and achievable in long run (Harrington *et al.*, 2011).

With the numbers of higher education customers on university, there has to be unquestionably raised in the expansion of demand for food service availability and quality on universities (Jamil, 2014). Food service facilities operating in the universities have unquestionably become critical hospitality service providers for customers competing with many local and private food service operators operating nearby (Liang & Zhang, 2009). Many empirical studies have been undertaken on the effect of ambient conditions on customer satisfaction in selected universities, Nairobi Kenya. A study by Kamau (2017) focused at the influence of ambient conditions on customer satisfaction among classified restaurants operating within the Nairobi City. The study focused on general restaurants in Nairobi County, current study focuses on consumer’ food facilities at the universities. In addition, Kamau (2017) found that ambient conditions did not significantly influence customer satisfaction. As a result, this study sought to determine the influence of the ambient conditions on customer satisfaction in selected universities, Nairobi Kenya.

**1.3 Research Objective**

To determine the influence of the ambient conditions on customer satisfaction in selected universities, Nairobi Kenya.

**1.4 Research Hypotheses**

**H<sub>0</sub>:** There is no significant influence of ambient conditions on customer satisfaction in selected universities, Nairobi Kenya.

**2.1 Literature Review**

**2.2 Theoretical review: Bitner’s Servicescape Model**

Bitner’s model as proposed by Bitner’s (1992), states that servicescape consists of all physical elements that can be regulated by service provider. By doing this, they are able to enhance



customer as well as employee's actions. The model also takes a holistic view of the internal environment as it relates to the perceived servicescape. Essentially Bitner's servicescape model (1992) is a more comprehensive version of the Stimulus – Organism – Response (SOR) model originally advanced by Mehrabian and Russel (1974). The model also takes a holistic view of the internal environment as it relates to the perceived servicescape.

Bitner (1992) suggests customer's perceptions are influenced by tangible cues (the physical environment), due to the fact that they commonly have to form opinions of the service through means apart from direct physical contact. Bitner (1992) suggests that a service company's environment might actually have a strong effect on customer's perception of the service experience. Bitner (1992) suggests that customers frequently try to find cues concerning a company's capabilities or quality of the services and that the physical environment is rich with these kinds of cues. The physical environment is assumed to affect the customer's ultimate satisfaction with the service (Bitner 1990; 1992). The key aspects identified from the Bitner's model shall include ambient conditions. These aspects formed key variables under consideration in this study. Physical servicescape of a service facility has strong influence on consumer desire to buy a service or product from in there. Thus, physical servicescape as described by Bitner's Model is an important aspect of a service facility and need to be given priority when designing food facility.

With the realization that customers are influenced by their physical environment, comes the opportunity to influence the design of the setting. Every individual comes to a service organization with an objective or purpose that might be aided or hindered by the setting. Indeed, a firm may want to ensure a particular progression of events that is, following a script, with the ultimate purpose of designing environments being to enhance customer satisfaction.

**2.3 Empirical Review**

Chang and Suki (2018) conducted a study on the level of satisfaction among students at university food facilities. Partial Least Squares (PLS) was adopted in analyzing data. Ambience conditions were found to greatly influence level of satisfaction among university students, followed by how cafeteria staff carry out themselves and lastly quality of food. Improving ambience conditions through decoration enhances satisfaction of students in the university cafeteria. However, the study identified ambience as only element influencing satisfaction of students at the university food facilities, there are many other aspects of servicescape that influence customer satisfaction that need to be studied.

Focusing on Debonairs Pizza outlets in Botswana, Chiguvu (2017) investigated how ambience elements impacts satisfaction of customers. Casual research design was employed. The outlets included main mall, Riverwalk and Pula spar in Gaborone City. Ambience elements significantly impact the level of satisfaction among customers. Ambient scent had greatest impact followed by lighting and room temperatures.

Kwong (2016) while focusing on Hotel Buffet Restaurant investigated the role of physical servicescape in enhancing customer satisfaction. Results of the study revealed that physical servicescape dimensions positively impact satisfaction of customers. Cleanness greatly impacted customer satisfaction. However, the study focused on restaurants in general contrasting this study that specifically focuses on university students' food facilities.

In Cluj-Napoca City Hall, Reianu (2014) undertook a study regarding the level of satisfaction among customers satisfaction by focusing at Day Center for the Elderly. Questionnaires were used in collecting data and data analysis was undertaken by use of SPSS version 11. T-test was employed to emphasize on those factors that influence customer satisfaction. It was revealed that customers at the care center were satisfied to large extent. However, the study focused on satisfaction of customers in the context of Day Center for the Elderly unlike current study that focuses on customer satisfaction by focusing on food service facilities presenting a contextual gap. Moreover, the current study investigates influence of servicescape model on customer satisfaction presenting a conceptual gap.

By focusing on Hotel Haven, Jysmä (2012) conducted a study on impact of physical servicescape on customer satisfaction. An interview session was held with hotel manager while online based questionnaire was send to hotel employees. From interview responses, physical servicescape is important in hotels as it enhances hotel experiences of customers. Physical servicescape also created warm and ambience in hotel that significantly impacted customer satisfaction of customers. However, the study focused boutique hotels in Finland, unlike currents study that focuses on university food facilities among students in Kenyan universities presenting a contextual gap hence the need to undertake this study.

Dipesh and Apil (2018) conducted a study on the impact of ambience, food quality, service quality, and price rates on customer satisfaction. This was a quantitative study focusing on Nepalese Restaurants in Finland. The study revealed that, ambience, food quality, service quality, and price rates are responsible for customer satisfaction. However, the study focused on Nepalese restaurants in Finland, contrasting current study that focuses on food facilities in Kenyan universities.

By focusing on restaurant in Bali, Hendriyani (2018) conducted a study on the significance role of physical servicescape in enhancing customer satisfaction. This was a quantitative study where principle comment matrix was employed. The factors investigated include ambience, lighting, aesthetic, atmosphere, layout and employee as a factor. The most determining factor of customer satisfaction is ambience followed by the aesthetic value of the hotel. However, the study focused on guest satisfaction in restaurants, unlike current study focusing customer satisfaction while focusing students' food service facilities in universities.

Chow, Ong, Tham and Wong (2013) did a study to explore factors that influence experience of customers in dining areas and how this impact customer satisfaction and intention to revisit the food outlets among undergraduate students towards in Malaysia. The study adopted the descriptive research design to describe the characteristics of a population. The study found that in fast food industry, a satisfying air will even contribute a larger amount of generally consumer loyalty. There is an immediate connection among condition and consumer loyalty in drive-through eatery in many restaurants. Achrol and Kotler (2012) found that more than 70% of the experiences of the day are significantly affected by the smell. Odours are very influential and can mix the emotions to sadness and also comfort an individual and relieve stress.

Furthermore, Ali and Amin (2014) did a study how physical servicescape influences customer satisfaction and emotions of customers in Chinese resort hotels. The study found that the ambient conditions that affected the customers and the responses to the influence of the environment are very strong indicators of the sustainability of a company. The ambient conditions were seen as the representative of the background stimuli that are known to affect the feelings of the customers (Canny, 2014). Some studies have shown that the purchasing power increases with the surrounding

that are perfumed and smell has an impact on the approach avoidance decision. There are immense expectations among customers in regard to the nature of physical servicescape of a food service facility. Favorable physical servicescape of a food service facility may impact customers' satisfaction. Ambience and aesthetic value influences customer satisfaction (Mari & Poggesi 2013). In this review, knowledge gaps that need further review were identified. Further, various aspects of ambience conditions that include visual aesthetic, cleanliness, temperature and audio were identified and adopted to develop the proposed current study.

2.4 Conceptual Framework

A conceptual framework is a figurative representation of variables in a model and how they relate. Figure 1 is a figurative representation of the variables that were explored by the study.

Independent variable

Dependent variable

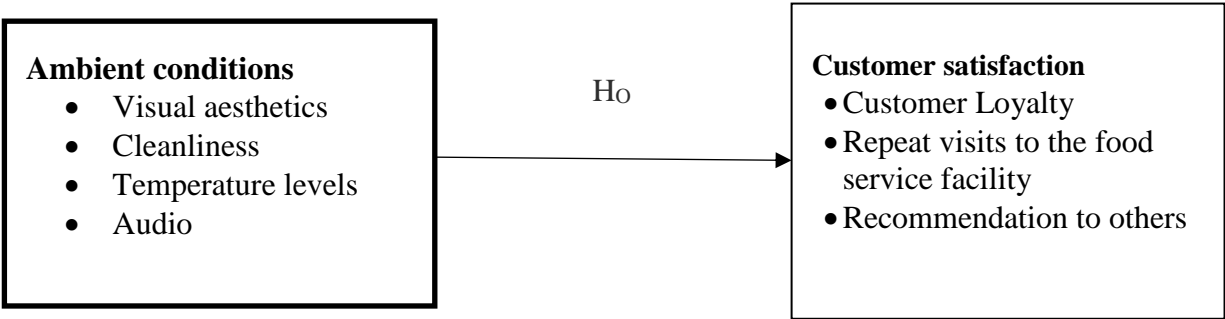


Figure 1: Conceptual Framework

Sources: Adapted and modified from: Bitner (1992) and Oliver (1980).

The independent variable was ambient conditions. The dependent variable is consumer satisfaction measured using as service expectations by customer loyalty, repeat visits to the food service facility and recommends to the food service facility. It is perceived that ambient conditions influence on consumer satisfaction.

3.1 Research Methodology

The study adopted a mixed method research design but specifically adopts descriptive and explanatory research designs. Descriptive research is used to describe characteristics of a population or phenomenon being studied. Explanatory research design is appropriate when establishing whether there is a significant association among variables (Kumar, 2019). Explanatory research design describes the “why” of the population by establishing the cause-and-effect relationship between the dependent variable (customer satisfaction) and the independent variables (ambient conditions). Descriptive design was also employed by Kamau (2017) on the influence of servicescape on customer satisfaction in restaurants within classified hotels in Nairobi County.

The target populations were the universities in Nairobi County. However, the study purposively targets four universities: 2 public and 2 private universities. Purposive sampling is appropriate when the study population is always very busy and since may not be available at the time of the

study. The inclusion of two public and two private universities ensured that the study population is representative in reflecting the situation of the university food service facilities in Kenya. The unit of observation were the main food service facilities of four universities in Nairobi County (University of Nairobi, Technical University of Kenya, Strathmore University and United States International University). There are 13 food service facilities in University of Nairobi, 2 food service facilities at Technical University of Kenya 2 food service facilities at Strathmore University and 3 food service facilities at United States International University. The unit of analysis was 1,490 consumers visiting university catering on daily basis. The study also targeted 96 food catering officers of the main food service facilities of the four universities. Food catering officers have been included in the study because they possess crucial information regarding ambient conditions of university food service facilities. Systematic random sampling method was employed in selecting 305 customers included in the study. The selection of customers was conducted by use of systematic random sampling method.

The questionnaires were distributed during meal hours; breakfast, lunch and dinner. Four questionnaires during every meal hour were administered systematically to students who were willing to fill it across the four universities with help of two research assistants. One questionnaire was distributed to a customer, skip 3 customers and issue another questionnaire until the four questionnaires were filled. The same process was conducted at lunch time and dinner. This means that the data collection process took approximately 30 days since a total of 12 questionnaires were distributed and filled daily. Three forms of instruments were employed in this study and include questionnaire, interview guide and observation checklist. Quantitative data gathered using questionnaire was entered Excel template and imported to SPSS version 23.0 for further analysis. Quantitative analysis comprised descriptive and inferential statistics. Particular descriptive statistics included means and standard deviation. Inferential statistics comprised of multiple regression.

**4.1 Results and Findings**

A total of 305 questionnaires were distributed to consumers at the university food service facilities whereas 278 were returned. This represented 91.1% response rate. All the four catering officers participated in the interview sessions representing 100% participation rate.

**4.2 Regression analysis**

The results presented in Table 1 indicate the fitness of model used of the regression model in explaining the study phenomena.

**Table 1: Model Fitness**

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.785 <sup>a</sup>	.617	.613	.45588

From the results on Table 1, shows that ambient is satisfactory in explaining satisfaction in selected universities, Nairobi Kenya. This fact is supported by coefficient of determination also known as the R square of .617. This implies that ambient conditions explain 61.7% of the variations in the dependent variable, which is on customer satisfaction in selected universities in Nairobi. The influence of ambient conditions on customer satisfaction is an issue of great importance in the



hospitality industry. The ambient conditions of the restaurant is the first element that customers will experience after entering a food service facility, forming a key factor for customers. For this reason, the food service facility's ambient conditions needs to provide elements of interest to customers. Table 2 gives the results of the analysis of variance (ANOVA).

**Table 2: Analysis of Variance**

Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	91.715	1	30.572	147.101	.000 <sup>b</sup>
	Residual	56.945	276	.208		
	Total	148.660	277			

a. Dependent Variable: Customer Satisfaction

The outcomes of the analysis of variance show that the general model was statistically significant. Further, the outcomes suggest that ambient conditions is satisfactory indicators of customer satisfaction in food service facilities. This was supported by an F statistic of 147.101 and the reported p value (0.000) which was less than the conventional probability of 0.05significance level. The importance of creating an attractive ambient condition that include ambient conditions, is critical in attracting and satisfying customers in hospitality industry. The regression coefficient result is shown in Table 3.

**Table 3: Regression coefficient analysis**

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	.475	.235		2.023	.044
	Ambient Conditions	.494	.071	.326	6.920	.000

a. Dependent variable: Customer satisfaction at food service facilities in selected universities in Nairobi County

The beta coefficients of the multiple regression model predicting customer satisfaction in selected universities, Nairobi Kenya is presented as ;

$$Y=.475+.494X_1$$

Where

Y = Customer satisfaction at food service facilities in selected universities in Nairobi County

X<sub>1</sub> =Ambient Conditions

The results also revealed that the coefficient of ambient conditions have a positive and significant ( $\beta=.494, p=0.000<0.05$ ) influence on customer satisfaction in selected universities, Nairobi Kenya. The regression of coefficient implies that if ambient conditions increase by one unit, customer satisfaction in selected universities, Nairobi Kenya improves by .494 units. The hypothesis was tested using p-value method. The acceptance/rejection criterion was that, if the p value is greater than the significance level of 0.05, we fail to reject the Ho but if it's less than 0.05 level of significance, the Ho<sub>1</sub> is rejected. Results in Table 3 shows that ambient conditions and customer satisfaction in selected universities are positively and significantly related with p

value=0.000<0.05. The null hypothesis was therefore rejected and concluded that there is significant influence of ambient conditions on customer satisfaction in selected universities, Nairobi Kenya.

4.3 Discussion of Findings

The objective of the study was to examine the influence of the ambient conditions on customer satisfaction in selected universities, Nairobi Kenya. The major ambient conditions identified in the study are visual aesthetic, cleanliness, temperature and music. Majority of respondents (customers) in the study were agreeing that visual aesthetic, cleanliness, temperature and music are key indicators that predict customer satisfaction. Ambient conditions encompass an array of background characteristics of the environment such as temperature, lighting, noise, music, and scent.

An interview guide was used to answer the perceptions of the catering officers regarding ambient conditions and how it influences customer satisfaction in selected universities, Nairobi Kenya. Interview sessions was held with catering officers.

In an interview with KII 1; had this to indicate;

*‘Ambient conditions particularly temperature, visual aesthetic, cleanliness and audio help in creating physical comfort and emotional pleasure of consuming service and thus motivate the customers to spend more of their time in this university food service facility. We are also been keen in ensuring that the food service facility is always clean. Eating area, kitchens and washrooms are cleaned with cleaning detergents. Walls of the food facility are also periodically wiped to remove dust’* KII 1, [Key Informant Interviewee 1, 2020].

Ambient conditions are employed by customers to evaluate the state of a food service facility for comfort. In view of the foregoing, ambient conditions have been affirmed as influential factors on customer responses. The ambient conditions are therefore very significant factors that result to customer satisfaction in the university. By demonstrating that a specific ambient stimulus of a ambient conditions activates a customer’s sensory system and ultimately forming certain emotional, cognitive and behavioral responses towards the food service provider, it is posited that sensory cues may affect customer commitment which in turn impacts customer satisfaction. The décor of walls also portrays the ambience of the food service facility. In an interview with KII 3, said;

*‘The walls of the food facility are periodically painted to maintain their eye pleasing appearance. Glass walls are also cleaned and wiped on daily basis to get rid of dust particles.’* KII 3, [Key Informant Interviewee 3, 2020]

Wall decorations serve to enhance the perceived quality of the ambient conditions. Customers tend to appreciate the ambient conditions dimensions in the restaurant, especially the wall hangings and drawings on the walls.

On the other hand, visual aesthetic include lighting, colors, shapes floor, ceiling and have significant influence on consumer satisfaction. Lights, colors, shape, fragrances, a soft and cozy ambience can create mood thus influencing customer satisfaction, help in forming physical and

emotional states of exhibitors and encourage customers to spend more time in servicescape. According to Çetinsöz (2019) in a study on the influence of physical servicescape on customer satisfaction and loyalty in upscale restaurants lighting in terms of the physical servicescape elements was the most perceived dimension influences customer satisfaction and loyalty. Visual aesthetic are used by customers as part of auditory components of their evaluations of an environment, whereas management can use them as effective tools to reduce the negative consequences of waiting in any service operation.

The results agree with a study conducted by Hendriyani (2018) who found that facility's aesthetic factor is a vital determining factor of customer satisfaction. The results also concur with Bekar, and Sürücü (2017) who established that there was a positive and significant relationship between aesthetic value of restaurants and aesthetic experiences of customers and that positive aesthetic value and aesthetic experiences increased revisit intentions of customers. Moreover, Velasco *et al.*, (2016) opined that food aesthetics plays a decisive role for consumers. Likewise, food aesthetic may be tied to the level of cleanness of the restaurant.

Cleanliness is the appearance of the food service facility and affection that improves the atmosphere which affects the customers feeling towards the food service facility. Customers create positive or negative word of mouth about facility by looking at the cleanliness. Cleanliness of a food service facility creates positive impression among customers and makes them stay longer in the food service facility. Product display and cleanliness are very important for the food service facility selection. Cleanliness of the food service facilities create an image of comfort and luxury in the customer's mind due to which customers stay for more time in the food service facility and make more purchases. The degree of cleanliness carries special importance, as it has the potential to impact customers' first impression of the service, and, thereby, their intentions to revisit. The results concur with Kwong (2016) who conducted a study on the role of servicescape in Hotel Buffet Restaurant and found that cleanliness has a positive effect on customer satisfaction. Likewise, Nasiruddin and Ghani (2014) who conducted a study on factors affecting choice of cafeteria among Universiti Utara Malaysia students established that cleanliness has significant influence on customer satisfaction. Kamau (2017) found that ambient conditions did not significantly influence customer satisfaction. This study found that ambience conditions positively and significantly influences customer satisfaction. Ambience conditions are vital elements of physical servicescape and it is presumed to have significant impact on the level of customer satisfaction.

In addition certain temperatures are associated with negative emotions. At certain temperatures customers think of the restaurant negatively and in return, this renders a return visit unlikely. Too extreme temperatures make a hotel facility unpleasant for food consumption. Likewise, too low temperatures make the hotel facility uncomfortable to stay in. The results in the study concur with Shashikala and Suresh (2018) who conducted a study on the impact of servicescape on customer perceived value in fine dining restaurants and found that room temperatures of the food service facility essentially plays a critical role in creating and enhancing customer value. Dipesh and Apil (2018) in a study on how ambience affects customer satisfaction in Nepalese Restaurants in Finland revealed that room temperatures affected customer satisfaction.

**5.1 Conclusions**

The null hypothesis that ambient conditions has no significant influence on customer satisfaction in selected universities ,Nairobi Kenya was rejected and concluded that there is significant influence of ambient conditions on customer satisfaction in selected universities, Nairobi Kenya. Ambient conditions positively and significantly influence customer satisfaction in selected universities. The study concludes that ambient conditions that include aesthetic, cleanliness, temperature and music are essential predictors of customer satisfaction in a food service facility. Ambient conditions are employed by customers to evaluate the state of a food service facility for comfort. In view of the foregoing, ambient conditions have been affirmed as influential factors on customer responses. By demonstrating that a specific ambient stimulus of a servicescape activates a customer’s sensory system and ultimately forming certain emotional, cognitive and behavioural responses towards the food service facility, it is posited that sensory cues may affect customer commitment which in turn impacts customer satisfaction.

The aesthetic features like lighting, colors, presence of plants, flowers, painting influences customer satisfaction at food service facility. Cleanliness of a food service facility creates positive impression among customers and makes them stay longer in the food service facility. Cleanliness of the food service facilities create an image of comfort and luxury in the customer's mind due to which customers stay for more time in the food service facility and make more purchases. Optimal room temperatures of the food service facility predict customer satisfaction. Too extreme temperatures make hotel facility unpleasant for food consumption. Likewise, too low temperatures likewise make the hotel facility uncomfortable to stay in. Noise and sound of music also affect customers’ emotions in restaurants; when music or ambient noise is loud, fast, or discomforting, people are likely to spend less time in a facility

The interview revealed that ambient conditions particularly temperature, visual aesthetic, cleanliness and audio help in creating physical comfort and emotional of consuming a particular product or service and thus motivate the customers to spend more of their time in this university food service facility. They are also been keen in ensuring that the food service facility is always clean. Eating area, kitchens and washrooms are cleaned with cleaning detergents. Walls of the food facility are also periodically wiped to remove dust.

The internal temperatures of the food facilities in this university are regulated by use of open window. The walls of the food facility are also made of materials that minimize loud sounds from external.

**6.1 Recommendations**

The study found that ambient conditions influence customer satisfaction in selected universities, Nairobi Kenya. A recommendation is made to the food service facilities at the university in regard to continuous improvement of ambient conditions features like setting up proper lighting, undertaking periodic color painting of the food service facility and rebuilding food facility floors and ceilings with aim of promoting aesthetic value.



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