The Cultural Spaces Rehabilitated In Places Of Service: What Influence On The Perception Of The Quality Of Service?

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Abstract

In this research, we are interested in the perception of a heritage site, rich in historical and architectural terms, and rehabilitated in a place of service. The conceptual model, developed and tested through structural modeling, identifies the dimensions of a culturally marked service space and the perceptions of clients according to their degree of acculturation and appropriation of space. The results show that the client's level of acculturation moderates the relationship between the perception of the rehabilitated physical environment and the quality of the offer. Theoretical and managerial implications of the research results are provided

Key-words: physical environment, quality of service, rehabilitation, acculturation

Introduction

Wealth refers to a consensual recognition of the historical value of a place and the need for its conservation. Heritage does not exist a priori (Leniaud, 1992). It is a heterogeneous set of both material and immaterial objects: architectural heritage, linguistic heritage, world heritage, etc. (Amougou, 2004).

Promoting heritage can be seen as a local economic development project, particularly through tourism (Chastel, 2011). This consists, in some cases, in developing places by entailing several issues such as restoration, conservation or rehabilitation. Thus, the rehabilitation of a site contributes to the affirmation of its heritage, since it concerns certain initiatives that make it

possible to preserve its cultural, historical and patrimonial character by promoting, in certain cases, a commercial activity. The rehabilitation can be translated by the opening of the place to the public so that it becomes conducive to strolling, transport, leisure (David, 2009).

In a purely commercial vision, many managers, especially in the field of service, have known the importance of developing places of rehabilitation, to theatricalize them, to particularize them in order to make them friendlier and more favorable to support the service experience. They have returned to heritage places whose first life could give a sense of emotion.

As a result, many service activities take place in diverted places. These new spaces have lost their initial vocation, which, despite everything, is still present in certain architectural details. Providers will then exploit the dual identity of the place to play on ambiguity and strengthen the symbolic burden. For example, and not exhaustive, let us quote the hotel "Intercontinental" installed in an old hospital Dieu hotel in Marseille in France, where the church rehabilitated in luxury hotel "Martin's Patershof" in Mechelen in Belgium, or also the old military fortress transformed into hotel "Caprocat" in Mallorca in Spain. Rehabilitating old places in service space is an interesting innovation track in terms of space that allows you to remake an abandoned place and revaluate it in the eyes of the client from its history.

A service space refers to all controllable physical elements that can influence individuals' psychological and / or behavioral emotional responses (Bitner, 1992). This link between space and the individual becomes more complex when there is a strong cultural dimension. We can then ask ourselves what are the perceptions of a culturally charged space for an individual who is also acculturated? Indeed, acculturation is a process of adapting a certain change in the attitude of an individual, his cultural identity and his social behavior when faced with a culture different from that of his origin. (Berry, 2000). Thus, we can imagine that a service space installed in a place that is part of the historical and cultural heritage, is perceived differently according to the customer's own history: its level of acculturation.

However, the literature is poor in terms of topical issues such as spaces for rehabilitation and acculturation of the client, addressed in the same context. Clearly, their link has never been specified. The goal of this research is to fill this gap. Thus, our study is part of the general problematic that questions the place-individual relationship widely discussed in the literature. We envisage this relationship by introducing two new elements: one specific to the place: a rehabilitation area strongly marked culturally, the other relating to the client: his level of acculturation.

The objective is to show that the acculturation of the client can have a moderating effect on the relationships between the elements of a culturally marked service space and the quality of the offer.

Understanding the link between the client's level of acculturation and his / her perception of a culturally marked space will shed new light on the field of space perception research.

Specifying this link is of considerable theoretical and managerial importance. At the theoretical level, the main contribution is based on the effort to bring together two themes often tackled in marketing in different contexts, but never in one single context: service space and acculturation. On the managerial level, our study will provide managers with rehabilitated places of service, practical information on the degree of acculturation of the customers that can be considered as a segmentation criterion.

Our field of research consists of ancient palaces of Umayyad caliphs rehabilitated and transformed into restaurants in Old Damascus in Syria. They are frequented by varied customers which goes from the foreign tourist to the local inhabitant. These places have the peculiarity of the houses of court formerly built according to the characteristics peculiar to the Syrian culture. At the time of globalization and the mobility of individuals, we have chosen to consider this perception according to the level of acculturation of clients from two different cultures: Syrian and French. Finally, this research presents a fortuitous but instructive interest: at a time when Syria is experiencing war, certain buildings that are part of the cultural heritage (including the palaces) are unfortunately destroyed. Our research was able to be realized just before the events and thus has a unique character.

After having presented the theoretical framework and the research hypotheses, as a first step; we will then describe our methodology; the results of the research will then be detailed; finally, we will propose theoretical and managerial implications of the research and will identify the limits and ways of future research.

1. Review of the literature and research hypotheses

1.1 The physical environment of services and its effects on the customer

The role of the point-of-sale physical environment has been the focus of much research for a long time. This research dealt with the effect of the place on the affective, cognitive and behavioral responses of the individual. As part of this research, we envision the physical environment through historic spaces rehabilitated into service activities.

1.1.1 The service environment, a concept with multiple identities

Since the pioneering article by Kotler (1973) using the term "atmospherics" and the works of Mahrabian and Russelle (1974) in the field of environmental psychology, much research has been conducted to study the physical environment of retail outlets. Aubert-Gamet (1997) emphasizes the existence of a vagueness on this notion. The author recalls the terms used in French writings such as the physical environment, the physical medium, the design of the environment, the place of service. The same amalgam of the concept exists in an Anglo-Saxon context where several terms are used, such as servicescapes, environment cues, physical evidence, physical environment, physical setting, atmospherics, physical support (Aubert-Gamet, 1997).

According to Kotler's (1973) first conceptualization, the term atmospherics refers to "efforts to design a purchasing environment that can produce specific emotional effects for buyers who can increase their likelihood of buying". Several authors have used this conceptualization to identify the term physical environment. Thus, in the service marketing field, Bitner (1992) has studied the effects of the service environment that she calls servicescapes.

It proposes a complete integrative model on the influence of service elements on the reactions of the occupants of the place of service (employees and customers). For the author, the dimensions of the physical environment consist of "all the physical factors that can be controlled by the service company to improve the actions of employees and customers".

The literature testifies to a multiplicity of definition of the concept of physical environment which contributed to a difficulty of establishing an adequate typology of its components. Kotler (1973) describes the physical environment in a sensory way by grouping it into three factors: visual (color, light, size, shape), sound (music, noise), olfactory (odors, freshness) and touch (temperature, materials, air quality). Baker (1987) defines three constituents of the physical environment: 1) environmental factors (air quality, sensoriality and cleanliness); 2) design factors (layout, shapes and materials) and 3) social factors related to all co-present people in the place (other guests and staff). We chose to adopt Baker's typology (1987) because it is considered to be the most cited typology in marketing research, the most complete and the most general in a wide variety of industries (Hightower, 2010).

1.1.2 from the private historic place to the service area

The meeting points between economy and culture are becoming more numerous and enlightening. Thus, recognition of the value of heritage can play the role of a lever for local development: economic development (particularly through tourism), development of services, general improvement of living conditions, etc. Placing heritage and culture at the heart of local development can be considered as one of the most effective policies of a country (Chastel, 2011), through the conservation of traces of its past to perform various interventions necessary for economic development (Burle, 2001). In this respect, architecture is seen as a useful art whose incorporation into heritage induces a certain rehabilitation of spaces (Rautenberg, 2003), such is the case of the rehabilitation of a private place by its opening to the public so that it becomes suitable for walking, transportation or leisure (David 2009). It is in this sense that architecture becomes a source of market activities.

From a marketing perspective, the architectural style of the place is considered to be an essential factor (Turley and Milliman, 2000). Architecture as well as other elements such as color and decoration are visual stimuli that have significant effects on consumer behavior (Aubert-Gamet, 1997). These elements play the aesthetic role of the place (Koo and Kim, 2013). Indeed, the aesthetic feature of servicescape occurs through the association of certain elements among which fig shape (Borghini et al., 2012). For the authors, aesthetics of form

involves two types of factors: tangible or physical factors such as architecture, furniture, colors, objects, spaces; and intangible factors such as atmosphere, room smells, symbols and emotions. Other elements such as time, history and culture can play a vital role in the aesthetics of the place, and subsequently influence the perception of it by individuals. As a result, we are interested in a space whose architecture is culturally marked with details reflecting the history of the place.

1.1.3 The effect of the service space on the quality of the offer

The literature shows that the relationships between the physical environment and emotional, cognitive and behavioral responses have been repeatedly tested. We have therefore chosen to enrich the literature with a new element (acculturation) by studying its moderating effect on the relation of the physical environment with the quality of service.

Rehabilitating a heritage space as a service activity represents a major challenge for managers, who, for their part, initially take as their point of departure the needs and expectations of customers, focusing primarily on the attributes of the service. In this respect, the notion of perceived quality of service would be favored in the determination of competitive advantages. It reflects a cognitive assessment of the intangible aspects of service (Wakefield and Blodgett, 1999). This evaluation being complex is due to the specificities of the service (intangibility, perishability, etc.); this leads the customer to rely on other elements existing in the service location to estimate performance, before, during and after service consumption (Huang et al., 2016). As such, the service environment appears as a tangible element that helps the customer to assess the quality of service (Bitner, 1992). Thus, perception of the environment influences beliefs about the environment itself, but also beliefs about service quality (Hooper et al., 2013, Kim and Moon, 2009). In the catering sector, for example, the customer perceives positively the quality of the offer when he enjoys the service space (Kim and Moon, 2009). We therefore postulate the following hypothesis:

H1a, b, c: Perceived atmosphere (a), perceived design (b) and perceived social factors (c) have a direct positive influence on perceived quality of service.

1.2 The place of acculturation in the place-client relationship

The place-client relationship has been widely studied in the literature. Many authors incorporate variables that play the moderating role. The highlighting of these is an essential contribution of the Bitner model (1992). The author cites some moderating variables related to the character of the client, such as the need for stimulation, the purpose of visit, the mood of the client, etc. Based on this idea, we will examine the place-individual relationship by considering the moderating role of the cultural character of the client, more precisely, his level of acculturation.

1.2.1 Acculturation, which phenomenon?

Acculturation describes all the changes that occur as a result of contact between individuals and groups from different cultures. Thus, by entering the process of acculturation, individuals or groups gradually adopt elements of the other culture (ideas, words, values, norms, institutions) (Stamboli-Rodriguez, 2011). Berry (2000) defines acculturation as the general process of intercultural contacts and their results. For Peñaloza (1994), acculturation is the movement and adaptation to the cultural environment of the consumer in one country by people from another country.

Marketing research has examined the role of acculturation in leisure (Carr and Wiliams, 1993), with the type of object consumed (Lee and Tse, 1994), in terms of advertising effectiveness (Kara and Kara, 1996), or product attributes (Quester and Chong, 2001).

Although acculturation is a widespread phenomenon with important consequences for consumer behavior, to our knowledge there is no work that has verified the role that the client's level of acculturation can play in the perception of a rehabilitated service space. However, acculturation seems important to us to evaluate the perception of a rehabilitated place which, by definition, is strongly marked culturally by its history. When the client shares the cultural values that are legible in the place, we can assume that his perception will be different and more intense than when he is foreign to it. This is what our research model aims to demonstrate.

1.2.2 The moderating role of acculturation in the process of perception of space

Few studies consider the effect of point-of-sale environmental elements on consumer behavior by considering their culture.

Some exceptions, however, must be emphasized: Seock (2009) who has studied the influence of perception of the environmental elements of clothing stores as well as the influence of demographic characteristics of the Hispanic client, such as his age and the number of years that he lived in the United States, on his choice of different store formats; Veresiu and Giesler (2011) who cited the role of public and private space in constructing the ethnic identity of immigrants; and Schau et al. (2017) who have examined online forums as an acculturation platform for Chinese consumers in the United States, where they help each other by navigating and even exploiting the American retail servicescape. If these online forums are considered a virtual space, play the role of a lever of acculturation of Chinese immigrants to the United States (Schau et al., 2017), we can think that a culturally marked place of service can be perceived differently depending on the level of acculturation of the client. For the sake of clarity, let us clarify before acculturation with respect to a national culture does not interest us, but it is vis-à-vis the degree of appropriation of a culturally strongly marked space that we envisage the concept of acculturation.

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The development of hypotheses related to the role of acculturation in the process of perception of rehabilitated service space, is based on an exploratory qualitative study whose methodology and main results are described in Box 1.

Box 1: Methodology and results of the qualitative study

We conducted a qualitative exploratory study whose objective was to determine the factors that make up the physical environment of a rehabilitated domestic space, as well as to have a better understanding of the perception of the latter by clients with different levels of familiarity with space. As a result, we conducted semi-structured individual interviews with 12 clients of Old Damascus restaurants in Syria (6 Syrian native and 6 French immigrants in Syria) and 4 experts (architects and archaeologists including 3 native Syrians and 1 French immigrant). The interviews lasted between 30 and 45 minutes for the clients, and between 1:00 and 1:30 for the experts. They were recorded and fully transcribed. The client interview guide themes were as follows: perception of space (sensory perception, social perception, perception of design and temporal dating), the influence of the client's cultural origin, the evaluation of servicescene (the functional, aesthetic, emotional and social role of space). The topics of the expert interviews are based on those in the client interview guide. Three themes were discussed: history, architecture and the aesthetic aspect of space. The information obtained from clients and experts was the subject of a content analysis and, more specifically, a thematic analysis. Our qualitative study shows two main results: 1) the identification of the particularity of the place: three typicalities of the restaurant have been identified: A) the atmosphere characterized by the sound of the pond water present in the middle of the courtyard , smells emanating from jasmine and orange blossoms, lighting, etc., B) authentic architectural design with typical interior facades and alternating light and dark stones, and C) social factors components of other customers and employees whose dress appearance is congruent with the traditional style of the place.

2) the difference in perception of culturally marked space according to the culture of the client: A) Syrians declare their attachment to their culture of origin by citing the concept of "at home" when they find themselves in the restaurant; for these clients, the place also promotes the emergence of their cultural identity. B) The French are mainly interested in the richness of the history, heritage and architecture of Syria, of which Old Damascus is a very important part; they do not have family or traditional ties to the reconstitution of the past through restaurants, but they chose to adapt a particular practice of a consumer activity: the frequentation of restaurants.

Highlighting the rehabilitation of former Umayyad palaces made it possible to question the new look that could have customers who, too, have different levels of familiarity with the place concerned.

We can assume that acculturation is a moderator and we formulate the following hypothesis:

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H2a, b, c: Client acculturation has a moderating influence on the relationship between perceived environment (a), perceived design (b), perceived social factors (c) and perceived quality of service. Figure 1 shows the different hypotheses elaborated previously.
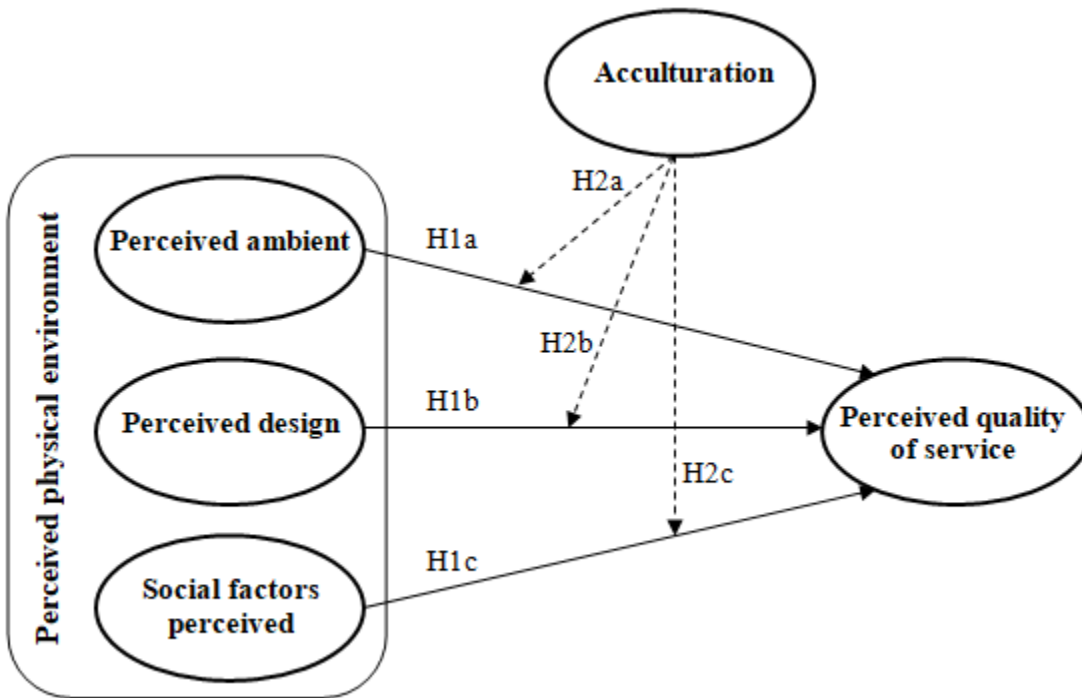

Figure 1: Conceptual Model of Research

2. Research Methodology

2.1 Data collection and sample

This research was conducted in the restaurants of Old Damascus in Syria. These restaurants exist in the historic heart of the city in old neighborhoods like "Bab Touma", "BabSharqi", "Medhat Pasha", "Qaimaryah".

Measurement items already tested and validated in a French context have been translated from French to Arabic using the method of blind parallel translation. They have been validated by 4 experts who speak perfect French and Arabic. The surveys were administered electronically to a sample of clients from Old Damascus restaurants. This step yielded 326 usable surveys divided into two equal sets of data (N1 = 163, N2 = 163) for exploratory factor

analysis and test hypothesis testing. The distribution of respondents in the Syrian sample (176 Syrian native and Syrian expatriates) is varied in terms of sex (61.4% of men), age (59.7% between 25 and 34 years) and of occupation (30.7% of employees, 25.6% of students and 10.8% of professors). The French sample (150 French immigrants residing in Syria) also shows some variation since it consists of 52% of men and 48% of women for an average age of between 35 and 44 years; 30.7% are employees and 20.7% are professors.

2.2 Measurement of variables

The instruments for measuring the constructs were developed based on the literature supplemented by an exploratory qualitative phase. The majority of the items were measured on a 5-point Likert scale. The scale of measurement of the perceived physical environment of rehabilitation was created by applying the approach of Churchill (1979). We wanted to create a new scale that better fits our culturally marked space. A first pool of items with 54 items has been identified. This number of items being large, was the subject of a qualitative purification by six French experts (two architects, two historians and two archaeologists interesting to the Umayyad palaces of Damascus). This purification yielded a sample of 47 items that were quantitatively purified using exploratory factor analysis (ACP). The final validated scale consists of two levels of latent variables and 27 final items measuring ambient, design and social factors. Measuring instruments for other variables were also subject to an ACP to purify them. The perceived quality of service was measured by adapting the SERVQUAL measurement scale of Parasuraman et al. (1988) (3 dimensions "relational, reliability and tangibility" measured by 12 items). Acculturation, which consists of three dimensions of "self-identification, food and media", was measured by 11 items adapted from the Jolibert and Benabdallah scale (2009) and that of Sabatier and Berry (2008). Table 1 below will present the final list of items used after the statistical purification process.

We processed the data through structural modeling using a PLS approach of the XLSTAT software. Measurement models first made it possible to ascertain the structure and validity of the scales of measurement. Then, the global model test revealed the hypothetical causal relationships of the research model. The acceptance or rejection of a hypothesis is based on the significant relationships provided by PLS, that is to say, by reading significant structural ratios (path coefficients) at 1% or 5%. We also checked the predictive power of the model presented by the R^2. The moderating effect of acculturation was verified using an interaction variable of the acculturation variable in the relationship between two other variables (environment - quality of service, design - quality of service, social factors - quality of service). In order to measure the impact of each interaction variable created and integrated in the model, the analysis was done in three parts, since it is not possible to study the moderating effect of the three interaction variables. at the same time.

3. Search results

3.1 Validation of measurements and quality of fit of the global model

As shown in Table 1, the indices of reliability and convergent validity of the measurement model are satisfactory (Rho of DG ≥ 0.7 and AVE ≥ 0.5). Discriminant validity is also provided [1](Table 2).

The quality of the overall model was verified based on a global fit indicator that probes the performance of the PLS model: the Gof. The results show that the Gof is 0.595; value greater than the reference value (0.36) proposed by Wetzels et al. (2009). This leads us to conclude from the satisfactory quality of the research model.

Table 1: Reliability and validity of the measurement model

Variable Level 2	Variable Level 1	Items	Reliability (Dillon-Goldstein's rho)	Convergent validity (AVE)
Perceived Ambient	Pond water quality	Le bruit de l'eau du bassin attire l'attention	0,843	0,572
		J'aime entendre le bruit de l'eau du bassin		
		Le bruit de l'eau du bassin est apaisant		
		Je sens le frais grâce à l'eau du bassin		
	Cleanliness	Le restaurant est propre	0,813	0,582
		La vaisselle est propre		
		Les habits du personnel sont propres		
	Odor	Je sens l'odeur du jasmin	0,888	0,776
		Je sens l'odeur de la cuisine damascène		
	Lighting	Je trouve la lumière : agressive/ douce	0,815	0,592
		Je trouve la lumière : artificielle/ naturelle		
		La cour est éclairée par la lumière de soleil		
	Noise intensity	Je trouve la musique d'ambiance : forte/ faible	0,819	0,694
		L'ambiance est bruyante/ calme		
		La cour amène de la fraîcheur	0,786	0,647

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[1] We did not integrate the discriminant validity for acculturation in Table 2, because the values of Cor² (x, y) change slightly, since we performed the analysis of the moderating effect of acculturation in three times, as underlined above. It should be emphasized, however, that the discriminating validity of acculturation is ensured during each analysis.

	Temperature	La végétation permet d'avoir une température modérée		
Perceived design	Islamic architecture	L'architecture du restaurant est islamique	0,782	0,548
		Je trouve l'alternance des pierres déplaisante/ séduisante		
		Je trouve les motifs décoratifs non islamiques/ islamiques		
	Layout	L'aménagement est bien adapté	0,848	0,729
		La disposition des tables facilite la prestation de service		
	Authenticity	Le restaurant est inauthentique/ authentique	0,856	0,744
		Je trouve la décoration rénovée/ en l'état		
Perceived social factors	Staff	Le personnel est en nombre suffisant	0,727	0,559
		La tenue de la personne qui s'occupe des narguilés est inspirée de la tradition		
	Other clients	Les autres clients sont dérangeants/ sympathiques	0,743	0,591
		Les autres clients sont bien habillés		
	Perceived quality of service	Le personnel travaille bien et rapidement	0,835	0,500
		Quand le restaurant promet de faire quelque chose dans un certain temps, il le fait		
		Le personnel est très à l'écoute		
		Le personnel a le souci de me rendre service		
		Le personnel accorde une attention individualisée à chacun		
	Acculturation	J'aime écouter de la musique arabe orientale	0,860	0,546
		Je parle avec mes amis en arabe		
		Je parle avec mes amis en français		
		Je pense que ma culture est plutôt syrienne		
		Je pense que ma culture est plutôt française		

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Table 2: Discriminant validity of the measurement model

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
AVE (x) > Cor² (x,y)												
Pond water quality	**0,572**											
Cleanliness	0,067	**0,582**										
Odor	0,002	0,005	**0,776**									
Lights	0,036	0,059	0,002	**0,592**								
Noise intensity	0,075	0,052	0,001	0,262	**0,694**							
Temperature	0,082	0,030	0,001	0,093	0,041	**0,647**						
Islamic character	0,007	0,000	0,011	0,080	0,000	0,019	**0,548**					
Planning	0,076	0,115	0,007	0,007	0,010	0,010	0,001	**0,729**				
Authenticity	0,011	0,010	0,001	0,271	0,231	0,020	0,058	0,001	**0,744**			
Staff	0,049	0,045	0,038	0,006	0,020	0,003	0,023	0,035	0,014	**0,559**		
Other customers	0,130	0,090	0,007	0,008	0,042	0,030	0,000	0,054	0,000	0,010	**0,591**	
Quality of service	0,056	0,141	0,010	0,019	0,026	0,108	0,002	0,096	0,005	0,047	0,083	**0,500**

Thus, we can appreciate the structural model and look at testing the hypotheses of the research.

3.2 Hypothesis Testing and Discussion

We present and discuss first, the test results of the direct effects of the elements of the service environment on the quality of service, then the test results of the moderating effect of acculturation.

3.2.1 Test of the direct effects of environmental elements on perceived quality of service

The verification of hypotheses relating to the effect of the physical environment on the perceived quality of service (Table 3) shows that 20.8% of the variability in the quality of service perceived was explained by the atmosphere, design and social factors, and two

environmental elements contribute to a positive perception of quality of service: environment and social factors (Path coefficient respectively = 0.294 and 0.240, p <0.01). However, the design has no direct effect on perceived quality of service. Hypotheses H1a and H1c are therefore corroborated while H1b is rejected. Thus, the elements of the atmosphere (the quality of the water of the basin, the cleanliness, the smells emanating from the flowers and the plants, the lighting, the intensity of noise and the temperature) have an influence on the perception quality of service. Indeed, the perception of the service environment is an antecedent of the perception of the quality of the offer (Hooper et al., 2013). Our results confirm previous work that has highlighted the strategic role played by the service environment as a determinant of quality of service (Bitner 1992, Kim and Moon 2009). Moreover, the direct link between social factors and quality of service confirms that it is possible to act on it through interpersonal relationships. In other words, client-employee interactions influence the quality of service assessment, particularly in high-contact services (Butche et al., 2002). However, the lack of a direct effect of design on quality of service contradicts previous work showing that design is a key environmental element and an important visual cue (Jang and Namkung, 2009). This result is not really surprising: on the one hand, the majority of the validated statements of the scale of the quality of the supply measures the relational quality of service, on the other hand, this relation, as we will see by the rest will be moderated by the acculturation that reveals the link between design and quality, which highlights the crucial role of acculturation in the context of the influence of the rehabilitated physical environment on the quality of service.

Table 3: Results of the hypothesis testing of the direct effects of the model

Direct effects	Path coefficient	R²
H1a: Ambient ➔ Quality of service	0,294 **	
H1b: Design ➔ Quality of service	0,044n.s.	0,208
H1c: Social factors ➔ Quality of service	0,240 **	

* : p<0,05 ; ** : p<0,01 ; n.s.= not significant

3.2.2 Test of the moderating effect of acculturation on the relationship between environment and quality

We verified the moderating effect of acculturation at the level of the global sample and at the level of the Syrian sub-sample (n1 = 88) and the French sub-sample (n2 = 75),

The hypothesis test results H2a, H2b, H2c (Table 4) show that at the level of the overall sample, there is a significant positive effect of interaction of the variables "environment" and "acculturation" at the threshold of 1%, and a significant negative interaction effect of the "design" and "acculturation" variables and the "social factors" and "acculturation" variables at the 1% level. The cross-validation on the subsamples partially confirms the hypothesis H2b with a positive moderator effect of acculturation for the French sub-sample (path coefficient = 0.373, p <0.01) and fully confirms the hypothesis H2a with a negative moderating effect for the Syrian subsample (path coefficient = -0.274, p <0.01) and a positive moderating effect for

the French sub-sample (path coefficient = 0.531, p <0.01); as well as the H2c hypothesis with a negative moderating effect for both Syrian and French subsamples (path coefficient = -0.199, p <0.05, path coefficient = -0.378, p <0.01 respectively).

Table 4: Results of the hypothesis test on the moderating effect of acculturation

Hypothesis	Testing of the moderating effect of acculturation		
	Overall sample	Syrian sub-sample	French sub-sample
	Path coefficient	*Path coefficient*	*Path coefficient*
H2a: Ambient x Acculturation ➔ Quality of service	0,339**	-0,274**	0,531**
H2b: Design x Acculturation ➔ Quality of service	-0,228**	-0,190n.s.	0,373**
H2c: Social factors x Acculturation ➔ Quality of service	-0,281**	-0,199*	-0,378**

* : p<0,05 ; ** : p<0,01 ; n.s.= not significant

Before highlighting the role of acculturation in the process of perception of rehabilitated space, it would be interesting to specify the level of acculturation of Syrian and French clients. For this fact, as shown in Box 2, we calculated the distance in terms of degree of appropriation of the culturally strongly marked space, between, on the one hand, Syrian expatriates and French immigrants, and on the other hand the native Syrians considered as the reference group that best appropriates these places in the host country (Syria). This calculation shows that Syrian expatriates are more acculturated to space than French immigrants.

Box 2: Calculate the distance in terms of appropriation of culturally marked space

In order to calculate the distance in terms of degree of appropriation of space, we used the Euclidean distance indicator applied by Jolibert and Jourdan (2006). The results show that French immigrants are far from native Syrians in terms of the degree of appropriation of space while Syrian expatriates are the closest to native Syrians (the distance is 0.580 and 0.293 respectively). The Syrians are therefore strongly acculturated to the culturally marked space compared to the French who are weakly accultured. The Euclidean distance is given by the following formula:

$$D_{ij} = \left(\sum_{k=1}^{p} \left(|X_{ik} - X_{jk}| \right)^2 \right)^{1/2}$$

Where: Dij: distance between individuals i and j
P: number of variables
Xik: value of the variable k for the subject i
Xjk: value of the variable k for the subject k

In order to calculate this distance, we relied on client responses to items related to the measurement of acculturation elements, as follows:

1. We calculated the average of each item in each sub-sample obtained after dividing our database according to groups of respondents (48 native Syrians, 40 Syrian expatriates and 75 French immigrants);

2. based on the averages of the items making up each cultural element, we calculated the means by element;

3. Once these averages were obtained, we used the Euclidean distance formula to calculate the distance between the groups of Syrian expatriates and French on one side, and the group of native Syrians on the other side;

4. After calculating the distances between these groups, we proceeded to interpret the results to empirically identify the close group and that far from the reference group.

We conclude a moderating effect of the acculturation on the relations environment - quality, design - quality and social factors - quality. Taking into account the elements of the relationship, its significance and the level of acculturation of the client, we identified three acculturation roles: 1) relationship enhancer, 2) relationship reducer, 3) relationship developer.

1. The amplifying role is the positive moderating role of acculturation on already significant relationships. One link is concerned in the least acculturated group (French):

- Ambient - Quality of service: elements that culturally mark the ambient (water basin and the specific noise that it makes, the smell of jasmine and orange, etc.) may seem unknown or unusual to French customers who perceive the ambient positively, and therefore, positively evaluate the quality of service. In other words, the positive perception of quality of service will be amplified by the culturally marked environment.

2. The reducing role of acculturation indicates that it moderates negatively a (already significant) link between two variables. The relationships involved are:

- Ambient - Quality of service and social factors - Quality of service for the highly acculturated group (Syrians). This is explained by a habituation effect, or habituation effect to the ambient and social factors. These customers are so accustomed to assuming that they are becoming less sensitive to the ambient and social factors and that, as a result, the perceived quality of service will be less related to the perception of the ambient and social factors.

- Social Factors - Quality of service in the weakly acculturated group, which results in the client being less expensive and more socially reserved and, as a result, social factors (culturally marked by their traditional appearance) are less linked with perceived quality of service.

3. The revealing role is the role of acculturation when it moderates an insignificant relationship. One link is concerned in the group less acculturated:

- the link Design - Quality of service that acculturation reveals with a positive moderation. This is explained by the existence of a form of gradual adoption of the design of the rehabilitated space. These customers are gradually getting used to design elements to positively evaluate the quality of the offer.

4. Conclusion

At the end of our research, we present, first, the theoretical contributions as well as the managerial contributions and then, we put in perspective the results obtained.

4.1 Theoretical contributions and managerial implications

From a theoretical point of view, the major contribution is based on the effort of synthesis of the concepts of physical environment and acculturation, concepts being often approached in marketing in different contexts but never in one and the same context. In addition, the service environment we have been working on only concerns culturally marked rehabilitation areas. Our research aims to enrich the literature with a new vision by introducing two elements that have not been studied together: one specific to the client: his level of acculturation, the other related to the place: the traditional space of an old palace rehabilitated in a commercial place. For this reason, we have relied on research from different disciplines such as marketing, environmental psychology, sociology but also geography and architecture.

On the managerial level, this research has several contributions. The empirical results lead us to emphasize the link between the elements of the physical environment and perceived quality of service. In reading these results, we emphasized the importance of ambient and social factors as two environmental elements that have a direct impact on the assessment of quality of service. In this respect, the key to success for managers would be to work (or update) their offer in a holistic and congruent way, while giving greater importance to the elements of the ambient by mobilizing all sensory variables, and to social factors reinforcing employee training and appearance so that it is congruent with the style of service provided.

In addition, the three roles (amplifier, reducer or developer) played by acculturation open up new horizons for the management of rehabilitated sites. More specifically, it can be said that in the case of rehabilitated places of service, the degree of acculturation of the clientele can be considered as a segmentation criterion:

- For highly acculturated clients (ie who are familiar with the architectural and spatial culture expressed by the place), the strong level of acculturation:

• reduces the link between the ambient elements and the quality of service as well as that of the social factors with the quality of service. In other words, Aboriginal clients who know the history of the place and share the values of culture that this place symbolizes, rely less on ambient factors and social factors to assess the quality of service. Thus the manager does not have interest to bet on the physical environment if he wants to increase the

perception of the quality of service and more specifically on the ambient and the social factors. Other marketing variables, other than the physical environment, deserve the attention of the manager (such as the value for money or the accessibility of the service).

- For low acculturated clients (ie those who do not know the culture to which the building refers), the low level of acculturation:

• amplifies the link between ambient factors and quality of service. For these low-acculturated clients, managers have an interest in focusing on ambient factors to increase perceived quality.

This situation could be particularly effective when other variables of the service (quality of food for a restaurant, competence of the staff, process of delivery of the service … etc), other variables relating to the customer (the duration of his stay, his tourist vs. resident status) or other market variables (competitive roughness) are unfavorable; ambient and design factors offset these disadvantages. Its to the manager to communicate on the history of his place, to stage the initial culture, even to build an experiential offer of animation (music, dance, exhibitions) or visit the place.

• reduces the link between social factors and perceived quality. For these clients, the folklore of the staff in contact does not intervene in perceived quality. The same goes for actions devoted to the management of other customers. Knowing, as said above, that our results show the same thing for highly acculturated clients, we may wonder if the manager really has an interest in investing in the social factors (staff and other clients) of the physical environment. The manager should focus on other elements typically marked with place culture, such as ambiance or also design for non-native clients.

• reveals the link between design factors and quality. For the manager, it would be interesting to emphasize the fact of marking, even culturally over-semantising the design and to preserve as much as possible the traditional and authentic character of the place. The gain realized at this level lies in the positive evaluation of the design and, subsequently, in the positive evaluation of the quality of service.

We can see that the manager can exploit acculturation as a segmentation criterion. If, in a non-counter-intuitive manner, low-acculturated clients are more sensitive to the place in their assessment of the quality of service, for highly acculturated clients, the rehabilitated place intervenes little on the relations of the environmental elements with the quality of service. But we can assume that for these, the place strongly marked culturally, plays a major role in their process of spatial appropriation. This is in line with the identity dimension of acculturation (Berry, 2000). Contrary to what we thought, when the client shares the cultural values legible in the place, his perception is not more intense than when he is foreign to it.

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4.2 Putting the results of the research into perspective

It should be noted that this research has limitations that are ways of future research. First, we conducted this research in a single sector (the catering sector) with customers of a single rehabilitated space (former Umayyad palace rehabilitated in restaurants) and in one country (Syria). As a result, it is difficult to generalize the results to other sectors, to other rehabilitation areas and to other countries. These are indeed different from an economic, cultural and social point of view. We therefore recommend replicating this search by considering these different elements. For example, it would be interesting to validate our results in other sectors, such as the hotel sector, especially that there are hotels that look like the restaurants we studied. It would also be desirable to examine the influence of a rehabilitated physical environment in the cultural field (such as museums and live performances) or for other forms of rehabilitation (from an industrial space to a restaurant) or cultural origin (rehabilitation of Riad in North Africa or castle in France). Finally, acculturation remains a concept to be explored, such as the relevance of an acculturation in general or according to the reference cultures. What we did by differentiating natives, expatriates, and immigrants deserves to be reworked according to different cultures.

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