

Servicescape Dimensions and Tourist Behaviour: A Quantitative Study at Chenang Beach, Langkawi

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the effect of servicescape dimensions on tourist behaviour at Chenang Beach, Langkawi. The research aims to determine how the physical, social, and complementary aspects of the servicescape influence tourists' experiences and actual behaviour. A quantitative approach was employed using a structured questionnaire administered through convenience sampling to 120 tourists visiting Chenang Beach. Data was analysed using regression analysis to examine the relationships between the three servicescape dimensions and tourist behaviour. The findings indicate that these dimensions collectively explain 67 percent of the variance in tourist behaviour. Among the predictors, complementary offerings exert the strongest influence, followed by the social and physical environments. These results confirm the applicability of the servicescape framework in explaining tourist behavioural responses in a rural coastal destination. The study contributes to tourism management by demonstrating that enhancing complementary facilities, maintaining a clean physical environment, and improving staff interaction can enhance visitor satisfaction and loyalty. The findings also offer practical implications for local tourism operators and policymakers in designing service environments that align with tourist expectations and support sustainable visitation at Chenang Beach.

Keywords: *revisit intention, rural tourism, servicescape, tourist behaviour, tourist's satisfaction*

INTRODUCTION

Tourism continues to grow as a global industry that shapes culture, economy, and society (Westcott, 2021). It involves travel for leisure, business and cultural experiences that contribute to both local and national development (Walton, 2024). Although the tourism sector faced major disruptions during the pandemic, it remains an essential driver of sustainable recovery and community resilience (Meng, 2022). As destinations compete internationally, creating a high-quality visitor experience has become critical to attract and retain tourists (Karl & Soshkin, 2024).

Rural tourism plays an important role in this development by offering authentic experiences based on natural and cultural settings (Carvalho & Rodrigues, 2023). It also generates inclusive growth by supporting local businesses and employment (Wang et al., 2023). However, tourists' satisfaction and loyalty in rural destinations depend strongly on the service environment in which experiences occur.

The concept of servicescape, introduced by Bitner (1992), explains how physical surroundings, social interactions, and complementary offerings shape emotions and behaviour. Most previous studies have examined servicescape in urban hotels or restaurants, while fewer have explored its influence in rural or coastal settings. To address this gap, the present study examines how the physical, social, and complementary dimensions of the servicescape affect tourist behaviour at Chenang Beach, Langkawi. Grounded in the servicescape framework and the stimulus–organism–response (SOR) model, the study aims to provide theoretical and practical insights for sustainable destination management in Malaysia.

Therefore, this study aims to examine how the physical, social, and complementary dimensions of the servicescape influence tourist behaviour at Chenang Beach, Langkawi. The objectives are:

1. To examine the relationship between physical, social, and complementary environments and tourist behaviour.
2. To identify which servicescape factor most strongly influences tourist behaviour.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Tourist Behaviour

Tourist behaviour refers to the actions and decisions made by travellers before, during, and after visiting a destination. It includes satisfaction, loyalty, and revisit intention, which show how visitors respond to their experiences. According to Gregoriades et al. (2023), repeat visitation is an important measure of destination success because loyal tourists spend more and promote the destination to others. Chen et al. (2022) describes revisit intention as the willingness of tourists to return to a place they have previously visited.

Tourist satisfaction is the emotional and cognitive evaluation of an experience (Tri & Nguyen, 2024). When tourists are satisfied, they are more likely to recommend the destination to others and to return. This satisfaction can be influenced by factors such as cleanliness, accessibility, staff friendliness, and the quality of facilities.

Tourist behaviour is often studied using the stimulus–organism–response (SOR) model, which explains how environmental stimuli affect emotions and result in behavioural outcomes. In this context, servicescape acts as a stimulus that influences the tourist's emotional state and leads to satisfaction, loyalty, or revisit behaviour. Understanding how servicescape affects these behavioural responses helps managers design better tourist experiences.

Servicescape

The term servicescape was introduced by Bitner (1992) to describe the physical and social environment in which a service takes place. In tourism, servicescape covers everything that shapes a visitor's perception, including layout, design, cleanliness, staff interaction, and supporting facilities. Each element of the servicescape influences how tourists feel and behave during their visit (An et al., 2023). A well-designed servicescape can create positive emotions, while a poor one can cause dissatisfaction. According to Pandey, Islam, and Hossain (2023), the servicescape in tourism destinations significantly influences satisfaction, loyalty, and word-of-mouth. Halbusi et al. (2020) found that both physical and social environments contribute to tourists' perceptions of value and quality. Therefore, understanding the servicescape is important to predict tourist behaviour and improve service

management. The servicescape is commonly divided into three main dimensions: physical environment, social environment, and complementary offerings. Each dimension is discussed in detail below.

Physical Environment

The physical environment includes all tangible aspects that tourists can see and touch at a destination. These elements include buildings, landscape, signage, cleanliness, and comfort. Okumu-Nisula (2021) emphasized that physical surroundings affect customers' emotions and influence whether they choose to stay longer or leave.

The Mehrabian and Russell model explains that physical environments can create feelings of pleasure or displeasure, which then shape behaviour. For example, a clean and well-maintained beach may encourage tourists to relax, take photos, and spend more time at the destination. On the other hand, poor facilities or littered areas can reduce satisfaction and discourage repeat visits.

Cahyono et al. (2023) reported that accessibility and facilities directly affect visitor loyalty. Luong (2024) also found that natural beauty and visual design increase visitors' emotional attachment and willingness to spend. In the context of rural and coastal tourism, physical elements such as landscape design, cleanliness, and ease of movement are essential for creating positive impressions.

For Chenang Beach, this means that maintaining clean public spaces, improving signage, and ensuring accessibility can strengthen the overall tourist experience and increase behavioural intention to revisit.

Social Environment

The social environment refers to the interactions that occur between tourists, locals, and service staff. It includes friendliness, politeness, hospitality, and communication. Huang and Hsu (2009) found that customer-to-customer and customer-to-staff interactions have a strong influence on vacation satisfaction.

Positive social interactions make tourists feel welcomed and safe, which enhances their overall experience (Hwang et al., 2021). Mody et al. (2020) explained that when tourists perceive warmth and helpfulness from locals, they form a stronger emotional connection with the destination. Similarly, Goh et al. (2022) highlighted that respectful staff behaviour and local friendliness encourage repeat visits and positive recommendations.

In contrast, negative encounters such as rudeness, lack of assistance, or overcrowding can create stress and dissatisfaction (Li et al., 2020). Therefore, a positive social environment acts as a key motivator for tourist loyalty. In beach tourism settings like Chenang Beach, where tourists frequently interact with staff and other visitors, the quality of social engagement can determine overall satisfaction.

Strong social ties not only improve immediate experiences but also encourage tourists to share good reviews online and recommend the place to others. This shows that interpersonal warmth is a vital component of destination success.

Complementary Offerings

Complementary offerings refer to supporting services and facilities that make the tourist experience complete. These include food and beverages, entertainment, accessibility, and other amenities. Sinambela (2021) found that additional facilities can motivate tourists to stay longer and return for repeat visits.

Accessibility is one of the key aspects of complementary offerings. It refers to how easily tourists can reach and move within the destination (Cockburn-Wooten & McIntosh, 2020). Reindrawati et al. (2022) stated that destinations with good transportation, clear information, and safety measures attract more repeat visitors.

The availability of local food also enhances the tourist experience. Local cuisine allows tourists to connect with the culture and increases satisfaction (Riwu et al., 2023). Affordable pricing further strengthens positive perceptions, as visitors feel that they receive fair value for their money (Truong et al., 2020).

Facilities such as toilets, parking areas, and rest spaces are also important. Widayati et al. (2020) explained that good facilities increase comfort and convenience, while poor maintenance reduces satisfaction. For Chenang Beach, providing accessible facilities, affordable food options, and diverse entertainment activities can improve the destination's image and encourage tourists to revisit.

Summary of Conceptual Relationship

The reviewed studies indicate that all three servicescape dimensions influence tourist behaviour. The physical environment affects visual and emotional comfort, the social environment shapes perceptions of hospitality and trust, and complementary offerings provide convenience and added value. When these elements function together, they create a satisfying overall experience that increases loyalty and revisit intention.

Based on this understanding, the present study applies the servicescape framework to test how physical, social, and complementary environments affect tourist behaviour at Chenang Beach, Langkawi.

Identified Research Gap

Most past studies on servicescape have been conducted in urban environments such as hotels, restaurants, and shopping areas (Lee et al., 2019; Halbusi et al., 2020). Only a few studies have examined how servicescape influences behaviour in rural or coastal destinations, where the natural environment interacts with social and service factors. Previous research also focused more on behavioural intention than on actual behaviour. In addition, there is limited empirical evidence that explains how physical, social, and complementary elements work together to shape tourist experiences in Malaysian beach destinations.

To address these gaps, this study investigates how the three dimensions of servicescape influence tourist behaviour at Chenang Beach, Langkawi. By examining this relationship in a natural coastal setting, the study aims to extend the application of the servicescape model beyond built environments and contribute to a deeper understanding of tourist behaviour in rural and island tourism contexts.

Conceptual Framework

This study adopts the servicescape framework originally proposed by Bitner (1992) and later adapted by Chen et al. (2023) to suit rural tourism contexts. The framework explains that the service environment influences emotions and behaviour through three major components: physical environment, social environment, and complementary offerings.

In this model, the physical environment represents the tangible surroundings that shape tourists' comfort and aesthetic perception. The social environment refers to interactions between staff, locals, and tourists that influence feelings of friendliness and trust. The complementary offerings include

additional facilities and services such as food, activities, and accessibility that support the core experience.

All three components act as independent variables that influence the dependent variable, tourist behaviour, which includes satisfaction, loyalty, and revisit intention. This framework follows the logic of the Stimulus–Organism–Response (SOR) model, where the servicescape functions as the stimulus, tourists' emotions act as the organism, and behaviour forms the response.

The conceptual framework suggests that improving the quality of the physical, social, and complementary environments can enhance tourists' satisfaction and increase their likelihood of returning to Chenang Beach.

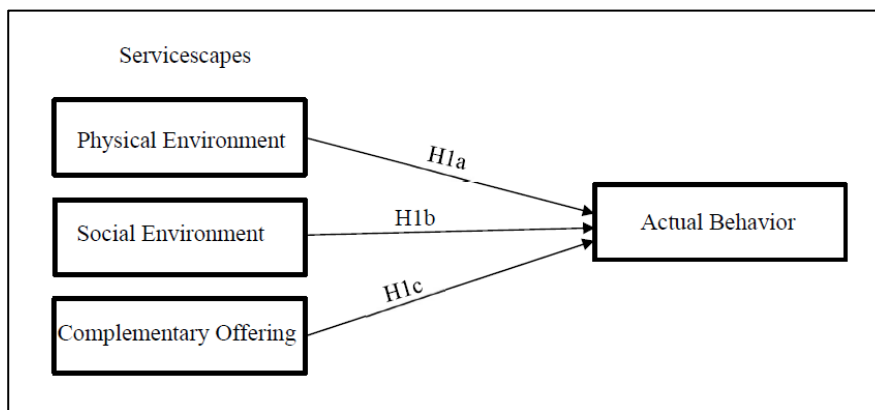


Figure 1: Conceptual Framework of the Study

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

This study uses a quantitative research design to examine how the physical, social, and complementary dimensions of the servicescape influence tourist behaviour at Chenang Beach, Langkawi. The design is appropriate because it allows numerical data to be collected and analysed using statistical methods to identify patterns and relationships between variables. A structured questionnaire was used to gather responses from tourists who had visited Chenang Beach. The study followed a descriptive and correlational approach to explaining how servicescape factors relate to actual tourist behaviour.

Population and Sampling

The population of this study includes both local and international tourists who visited Chenang Beach, Langkawi. Since it is not possible to survey all visitors, the study applied convenience sampling, which involves selecting respondents who were available and willing to participate. Data was collected at various points along Chenang Beach, including cafés, small hotels, and public areas.

The sample size was determined based on the rule of thumb of 20 respondents per variable, as suggested by Memon et al. (2020). With four main variables in the study (three independent and one dependent), the minimum sample size was 80. However, to improve accuracy and reliability, the final sample consisted of 120 respondents. This size meets the general requirement for regression analysis and provides a reasonable representation of tourist opinions.

Research Instrument

A structured questionnaire was developed to collect primary data. It consisted of three sections.

- Section A: Respondent demographic information such as age, gender, and occupation.
- Section B: Questions on the physical environment (cleanliness, facilities, accessibility, and visual appeal), the social environment (staff friendliness, politeness, and interactions with locals and other tourists), and complementary offerings (local food, entertainment, and affordability).
- Section C: Questions on tourist behaviour, including satisfaction, loyalty, and revisit intention.

Each item was measured using a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). The questionnaire items were adapted from previous studies such as Halbusi et al. (2020), Lee et al. (2019), and Chen et al. (2023). The instrument was pre-tested among a small group of respondents to ensure clarity and reliability before full data collection.

Data Collection Procedure

Data was collected over four weeks in both online and face-to-face formats. Respondents were informed about the purpose of the study, and their participation was voluntary. The questionnaire was distributed through Google Forms and administered in person to tourists at Chenang Beach. Ethical considerations such as confidentiality and anonymity were observed. Respondents gave informed consent before completing the survey, and no personal identifiers were recorded.

Data Analysis

The data collected was analysed using IBM SPSS Statistics 27. Descriptive analysis was used to summarise demographic information and mean scores for each variable. Reliability analysis using Cronbach's Alpha tested the internal consistency of all items. Values above 0.70 indicated acceptable reliability. Correlation and regression analyses were conducted to determine the relationship between the independent variables (physical, social, and complementary environments) and the dependent variable (tourist behaviour).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Demographic Profile of Respondents

A total of 120 respondents participated in the study. Most respondents were between 21 and 35 years old (58 percent), followed by those aged 36 to 50 years (24 percent). Female respondents made up 60 percent of the sample, while males accounted for 40 percent. The majority were local tourists from Malaysia (72 percent), while 28 percent were international visitors. Most respondents were first-time visitors to Chenang Beach, and their average length of stay was two to three days. These results suggest that Chenang Beach attracts mainly young adults and domestic tourists who visit for short leisure trips.

Reliability Analysis

The reliability of each construct was tested using Cronbach's Alpha. All values exceeded the minimum threshold of 0.70, indicating high internal consistency

Table 1. Reliability analysis

Construct	Number of Items	Cronbach's Alpha	Interpretation
Physical Environment	6	0.866	Reliable
Social Environment	6	0.908	Highly reliable
Complementary Offering	5	0.848	Reliable
Tourist Behaviour	6	0.887	Reliable

The reliability analysis in Table 1 was conducted to assess the internal consistency of the measurement items for each construct using Cronbach's Alpha. The results showed that all constructs recorded alpha values above the acceptable threshold of 0.70, indicating that the scales used in this study were reliable. The physical environment recorded an alpha value of 0.866, suggesting that the items related to cleanliness, layout, and facilities were consistent. The social environment achieved the highest value of 0.908, showing excellent reliability and strong consistency in measuring tourists' perceptions of friendliness and staff interaction. The complementary offering recorded a value of 0.848, confirming that questions related to food, accessibility, and entertainment were stable and dependable. Lastly, the tourist behaviour construct obtained a value of 0.887, which indicates that items measuring satisfaction, loyalty, and revisit intention were highly reliable. Overall, these results confirm that the questionnaire was well designed, and the collected data were suitable for further analysis such as correlation and regression.

Descriptive Analysis

Descriptive statistics were used to examine the mean scores of all constructs. Respondents rated the complementary offerings highest (mean = 4.15), followed by the social environment (mean = 4.08) and physical environment (mean = 3.79). This shows that tourists were most satisfied with the food, accessibility, and local entertainment available at Chenang Beach. The relatively lower mean for the physical environment indicates that visitors expect cleaner surroundings and better facilities.

Regression Analysis

Multiple regression analysis was conducted to test the relationship between the three dimensions of the servicescape and tourist behaviour.

Table 2. Regression Analysis

Variable	Beta (β)	Sig. (p-value)	Result
Physical Environment	0.087	0.260	Not significant
Social Environment	0.375	0.001	Significant
Complementary Offering	0.438	0.000	Significant

Note: $R^2 = 0.670$

The results show that the model explains 67 percent of the variation in tourist behaviour ($R^2 = 0.670$). Among the three predictors, complementary offerings had the strongest influence, followed by the social environment. The physical environment did not have a significant effect.

The findings indicate that the servicescape dimensions significantly influence tourist behaviour, consistent with previous studies by Halbusi et al. (2020) and Chen et al. (2023). The high impact of complementary offerings shows that tourists value convenient access, affordable food, and entertainment options more than physical structures. This supports the view of Sinambela (2021), who found that supporting facilities strongly affect tourist satisfaction and loyalty.

The strong effect of the social environment also agrees with Hwang et al. (2021) and Goh et al. (2022), who emphasized that positive interactions with staff and locals enhance destination image and

emotional attachment. Tourists who feel welcomed and safe are more likely to return and recommend the destination to others.

The physical environment, although important, was not a significant predictor in this study. This may be due to the natural beauty of Chenang Beach, which already provides an attractive physical setting, reducing the impact of additional physical factors such as facilities or signage. These findings suggest that in rural or beach destinations, human and service factors may be more influential than built environments. The overall results support the Stimulus–Organism–Response (SOR) theory, which explains that environmental stimuli (servicescape elements) influence emotional responses and lead to behavioural outcomes. In the context of Chenang Beach, social interaction and complementary services function as the main stimuli that shape positive tourist emotions and behaviour.

The findings indicate that the study successfully achieved its first objective by showing that servicescape dimensions significantly influence tourist behaviour. The second objective was also achieved, as regression results identified complementary offerings as the most influential factor affecting tourist behaviour at Chenang Beach.

CONCLUSION

This study examined how the physical, social, and complementary dimensions of the servicescape influence tourist behaviour at Chenang Beach, Langkawi. Based on data collected from 120 tourists, the findings revealed that the servicescape dimensions explained 67 percent of the variation in tourist behaviour. Among the three factors, complementary offerings and social environment were significant predictors, while the physical environment had no significant effect. These results show that tourist experiences in coastal destinations are influenced more by service interactions and supportive facilities than by physical structures alone.

The study confirms the relevance of the Stimulus–Organism–Response model in explaining how environmental elements shape emotions and behavioural outcomes. Tourists value clean and accessible facilities, affordable local food, engaging entertainment, and friendly interactions with staff and locals. When these factors are well managed, they create positive experiences that increase satisfaction, loyalty, and revisit intention.

Based on these findings, several recommendations are proposed. Tourism operators and local authorities should improve the quality of complementary services such as hygiene facilities, parking, and local food offerings. Training programs for staff and local vendors should be introduced to enhance hospitality and communication skills. Collaborative community initiatives, such as beach cleaning and cultural performances, can also improve destination image and tourist engagement. These efforts can strengthen Chenang Beach's competitiveness and support sustainable tourism development in Langkawi.

However, the study has some limitations. The sample size was limited to 120 respondents, and data were collected from a single location using convenience sampling. As a result, the findings may not represent all tourists visiting Langkawi or other coastal destinations. Future research could include a larger sample and compare several beaches or island destinations. Researchers may also use structural equation modelling to test mediating variables such as satisfaction or place attachment. Despite these limitations, this study provides useful insights into how servicescape elements influence tourist behaviour and offers practical strategies for improving visitor experiences in Malaysia's coastal tourism sector.

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AUTHORS' CONTRIBUTION

The authors confirm that the contributions to this paper are as follows: The study conception, design, data collection, and analysis were carried out by Nurul Iman Qistina Fadzil Ishkandar and Nurul Saadiah Zainuddin. The interpretation of results and preparation of the draft manuscript were undertaken by Siti Aminatasha Hafizal and Fadhilah Zainal Abidin. The review, refinement, and final approval of the manuscript were completed by I Gede Gian Saputra. All authors read and approved the final version of the paper before submission.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST DECLARATION

We hereby certify that this manuscript represents the original work of the authors and co-authors. It has not been published previously, nor is it under consideration for publication elsewhere, in whole or in part. All authors have made substantial contributions to the conception, design, data analysis, and interpretation of this research.

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