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Visitor Perception on Food Court Servicescape The Study of Two Shopping Center Food Courts in Indonesia

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ABSTRACT

Objective-This research was aimed at describing the role of servicesapce in two food courts in Indonesia at the visitors’ perception, with a specific aim to understand the elements of the serviscape setting for both its kinds and roles which are configured into a holistic and unified public space interior.

Methodology/Technique - This research consisted of two stages, under the method of sequential exploratory. The first stage was done qualitatively to explore the understanding of serviscape indicators of food courts of shopping centers. The second stage was aimed to map the shaping of those factors quantitatively under the survey method.

Novelty – The findings of factors that create the servicespace in shopping center context. The result shows that Gandara City Food court, Jakarta has several factors that indicate the factors of serviscape: food court legibility, food court decoration, tenant mix, and social image-interaction. While Ciputra World Food court, Surabaya, has several factors that attract the visitors: food court legibility, food court decoration, and social image-interaction.

Type of Paper: Empirical

Keywords: food courts, serviscape, visitor perception.

1. Introduction

Properly designed food courts are likely to transform themselves into new social spaces (Manfredini, et al., 2014). People are likely to make use of food courts as meeting spots for either family or business matters. Rooms in the food courts as inseparable parts of the shopping centers not only reflect mathematical dimensions which are measured based on the agronomy standard but also offer special experience for the visitor to feel extraordinary modern shopping experience.

The setting of the food courts must be well planned so that the relations between the visitors and the shopping center become possible. In this present study, that is called the sense of place.

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Well setting food courts are likely to promote closer relationships with the visitors. Further studies need to be conducted in setting to investigate how the elements in the public room setting can become the factors that create the sense of place. Other studies usually focus on the customer behaviour or psychology. A few deal with visual environment cues of food courts, and hence this is the gap to fulfil in this present study.

Based on the rationales above, the following are the research problems of the present study: what factors become the preferences of the visitors?

2. Theoretical Background

A place, according to Najafi & Bin Mohd Shariff (2011), consists of physical and social aspects. The physical aspect is the aspect derived either from the human made environment and natural environment. In fact, social environment is mostly influenced by socio culture aspect. In reality, food courts can be separated with their physical and social conditions.

First, with regard to the physical aspect, among some aspects that make food court designs interesting are the public area setting, interesting tenants’ area design, seating and furniture design configuration (fixed or loose) in the eating areas (Kramer, 2008). Attractive physical design is one of the successful factors to make eating areas fascinating (Boon, 2011). In line with Kramer’s ideas, it is important that the configuration of the seating arrangement in the eating areas considers the circulation.

In line with Kramer’s ideas (2008), when configuring the eating areas, it is necessary to notice the importance of the visitors’ circular movement and the possibility for them to see each other. The layout is also worth noticing especially when it comes to creating comfortable shopping areas (Baker, 1986; D’Astous, 2000; Boon 2011). Dining areas can be in open space serving as the meeting or attraction points. Food court areas are commonly known as favourite areas (Sari, Kusuma, & Tedjo, 2010). In fact, they are likely to open up any possible chances of creating the image of the shopping centers. Furthermore, furniture design is also one of the aspects that most customers like to see (Maharani, 2014).

Lightening can be either human made or natural ones. In fact, the latter is more commonly seen than the former. (Wee & Tong, 2007). In the same way, music affects the visitors in terms of its volume (Smith & Curnow, 1966), music preference (Herrington & Capella, 1996). Other elements also include the scent and the airing technique. The scent has impacts on the visitors (Baker, 1986; Mitchell, et al., 1995, D’Astous, 2000). Signage gives the clarity about the direction (Baker, 1986; D’ Astous, 2000; Wee & Tong, 2007; Boon, 2011). Man-made-airing technique is very important to comfort the visitors (Kramer, 2008; Boon, 2011) especially the temperature, humidity, and the circulation (Baker, 1986; D’Astous, 2000). All of these physical elements are essential aspects that make visitors feel comfortable in the area of shopping centers.

Second, with regard to the social setting, marketing and promotion departments have an important role to attract people to come over. Interesting programs and events become the necessity in setting to invite people to visit the places as many as possible. In this case, it is important to consider the number of visitors or the crowd (Bell, et al., 1996), and lifestyle (Astuti & Hanan, 2011).

3 Research Method

The identification of factors of food court settings in shaping a sense of place will be done by using quantitative data, which have previously resulted from the qualitative identification process. Phase 1 Research is an understanding of indicators of the food court environment. Phase 2 research aims to more directly map the shaping of more factors that are valid on the perception of visitors, as well as to map the factors. This last phase research will aim to shape understanding of the background factors.

4. Research Objects
There have been three main criteria for the different location chosen. Firstly, is that the similarities in spatial character and regional width character (one or two department stores as leading tenant) (Kramer, 2008). Secondly, is that the chosen shopping centers should have similarity in term of being placed in the platinum category by Association of Shopping Centers in Indonesia. Thirdly, is that there is the ages of chosen shopping centers are similar. In the development of the modern shopping center in Indonesia, the shopping centers built during period of after 1998 with more attractive shape and thematic were chosen as the objects of this research (Kusumowidagdo, et al., 2013; Kusumowidagdo, et al., 2012).

5. Findings of Research Phase 1

Figure 1. The food court of Ciputra World, Surabaya

Figure 2. The food court of Gandaria City, Jakarta
In the food court area, comfortable setting is actualized by some indicators in the creation of a sense of place, among others are decoration of thematic corridor, accent, elements of area, dining room zoning, furniture, decoration in the tenants’ area, wall finishing, floor finishing, visitors, various restaurant outlets, crowd, lifestyle, and directory. Each of them will be explained furthermore.

In food court setting, thematic decoration for food court is implemented under the theme. Theme in the food court setting will give the visual impression that will give a different sensation when eating. Accent covers three-dimension accent and two-dimension accent. Three-dimension accent is actualized in art sculpture shape and interior element. Two-dimension accent is actualized in certain pattern shape. Besides shape, sizes and colors can also become room accent. Those indicators shown as proven by the research informants’ opinions.

Food Court Eat-and Eat, has a theme. Interesting furniture and accessories such as lighting, wall ornaments also support the traditional theme, including its wall and floor finishing. Tenant’s areas are also decorated under that theme. Those are stylish. For me, who often get bored of daily routines, visiting these kinds of places are very relaxing (Female, 23)

There is an interesting ceiling pattern play on food wave, which involves tassel on the center area of food court, and reflective material play on the front of food court stands and on the column. There is also a line from Fun World that is passing through the ceiling of food court area. Those things make dining activities fun and interesting (Male, 27)

One of important zones in a food court area is appropriate and comfortable hand-washing area. This area is a condition to dine comfortably in a food court, as reflected in an opinion of one participant during focus group discussion. This indicator shown as proven by the research informants’ opinion.

Maybe, for me, appropriate and clean hand-washing area is important, since there is a food court that does not have appropriate hand-washing area. In this Eat-and Eat are, the hand-washing area available is appropriate enough (Female, 30).

Zoning for dining area is the group of dining places based on visitor numbers and ambience atmosphere that will be built. Zoning for dining area is separated by different furniture, color for interior elements, material for interior, material for floor, height, and ceiling processing. This indicator shown as proven by the research informants’ opinion.

If going with friends, we often choose a place in the center. It is more familiar for us, can accommodate many people, and uses the sofa as its seat so it is more comfortable (Female, 29).

Furniture is another element which is significant to support the theme. Shape, color, and material being used; besides should reflect the theme, should also give uniqueness in shaping a sense of place. This indicator shown as proven by the research informants’ opinion.

There is a setting for sofa seating which gives an exclusive impression. The food court area is also near the Fun World, and it makes children who are sightseeing with me and my family is happy (Male, 30).

For decorating tenants’ area, the decoration covers serving area. Decoration at serving area is aimed at giving real information on the tenants’ products. The lighting in this case means lighting at the tenants’ area and food court.

Food kiosks in the center of food court are orderly and well-designed (Male, 32).
They have unique accessories, such as expired vintage cans and chandeliers (Female, 30).

Lighting for food court should support the theme. Wall finishing can be seen from the material use, color, or wall shape processing. Wall finishing is usually oriented at themes that will be implemented. Theme existence does not only affect the interior for the wall, but also the floor finishing. Floor finishing is affected by color play, pattern setting, and texture choice.

*Decoration for tenant and its interior is unique. The flow line is comfortable, the lighting is also dramatic, and they give a different impression to me* (Female, 28).

Of all interior elements of Ciputra World, the most interesting is the wave concept ceiling design and wall which are very dynamic and support the interior ambience of the food court. The difference between food court zone and mall zone is very sound (Male, 23).

The factor of intimate visitors appears when the visitors look friendly and have light activities. This factor contributes to create food courts as a comfortable place for the visitors’ perception.

*This mall is quite crowded on Saturday and Sunday, many youths and families come sightseeing in this mall. A very fun and relaxing thing to see, especially in some places such as food courts, V-Walk and cafés* (Female, 22).

The various tenants’ area also contributes to this food court uniqueness in setting to create a sense of place, which cover diverse food types from different places in Indonesia. Food court density is also positively perceived. Food court density should consider the territorial and capacity conditions of food court existing. If above its capacity, then the food court becomes uncomfortable and uninteresting for the visitors. Lifestyle is another thing that should be considered, which covers style of clothing and types of activities. Watching other visitors’ lifestyle has become an important attraction for them and intermezzo for their activities in the food court. Informative tenant signage is significant to make easier for the visitors to search for desired product and display differences of products.

What makes this food court interesting is diverse food types, starting from favorite vintage food, unfamiliar food types, with food from abroad are served here (Female, 21).

6. Findings of Research Phase 2

For conditions in Surabaya, it can be concluded that there are three influential factors for shaping food court, which are food court legibility, social image and interaction, and decoration.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Factor</th>
<th>Eigen value</th>
<th>Variable to shape factor</th>
<th>Loading value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Food court legibility</td>
<td>3,227</td>
<td>Floor <em>Finishing</em></td>
<td>0.798</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Furniture choice</td>
<td>0.708</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Wall finishing</td>
<td>0.695</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Interior</td>
<td>0.610</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Hand-washing area</td>
<td>0.555</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><em>Zoning</em> for dining area</td>
<td>0.515</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Good lighting</td>
<td>0.505</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The first factor is food court legibility with \( \text{eigen} \) value 3.227. Food court legibility is the originality element of food court. Food Court in Ciputra World is under contemporary theme and spread serving system. Indicators of influential factors that shape this food court are floor finishing, furniture choice, wall interior finishing, zoning of dining area, and good lighting. \textit{Finishing} for floor contributes to the food court legibility because of the material combination between parquet and homogenous tile which mark two different zones in the food court. Furniture choice is also quite unique, since there is a combination between contemporary furniture and modern classic furniture with bright cushion suede color. Wall interior is dominated with white, although there are some parts with stainless steel ornaments and natural stone.

The second factor is social image and interaction, with \( \text{eigen} \) value 3.103. Social image and interaction is a factor of visitors’ lifestyle image when in shopping centers and social interaction between visitors which influence the food court’s sense of place. Supporting indicators for this factor are visitors’ density, visitors with intimate atmosphere, visitors’ lifestyle, various tenants’ area, and tenant signage. Visitors’ density can attract other visitors to join the crowd. Another indicator is visitors with an intimate atmosphere that contributes to create the desired nuance.

The third factor is the decoration for food court with \( \text{eigen} \) value 2.237. Decoration for food court here is decorative elements in the interior of food court area. Influential indicators for food court are accents/focal points/art sculpture existences, thematic decoration that give different atmosphere, and decoration of the tenants’ area. The dominant accent in the food court area is lighting sculpture that is positioned at the center of the food court. Meanwhile, thematic decoration can be seen in the curvy leaf on one wall of the food court, and column design. Decoration of the tenants’ area stands out harmoniously, marking the settingly tenants’ area and diverse products.

### Table 2. Factor Analysis Result on The Food Court at Gandaria City

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Factor</th>
<th>Eigen value</th>
<th>Variable to shape factor</th>
<th>Loading value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Food court legibility</td>
<td>3.202</td>
<td>Zoning for dining area</td>
<td>.839</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Hand-washing area</td>
<td>.825</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Good lighting</td>
<td>.805</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Furniture choice</td>
<td>.794</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>\textit{Floor Finishing}</td>
<td>.762</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Wall finishing</td>
<td>.749</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Accent</td>
<td>.743</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Decoration for food court</td>
<td>2.716</td>
<td>Thematic decoration</td>
<td>.735</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Decoration for tenants’ area</td>
<td>.684</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Various tenants’ area</td>
<td>2.284</td>
<td>Various tenants’ area</td>
<td>.758</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Informative tenants’ signage</td>
<td>.628</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social image and interaction</td>
<td>1.432</td>
<td>Visitors atmosphere</td>
<td>.824</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Visitors density</td>
<td>.714</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The first factor is food court legibility with eigen value 3.303. Food court legibility means the uniqueness existence of food court interior at Gandaria City under the theme of traditional. The influential indicators for food court legibility are zoning for dining area, the availability of hand-washing area, good lighting, furniture choice, floor finishing, wall finishing, and accent in the area. Food court zoning in Gandaria City is divided into food court concept with centralized payment services; thus, both tenants’ stalls and zoning for dining area are spread out. Zoning for dining area has clusters that satisfy the number of seats. The hand-washing area is also considered as one of the indicators. Dim lighting gives relaxing impression for the food court. Furniture, floor finishing, and finishing that is completed all support the traditional concept. Accent in the area can be seen at the interior accessories.

The second factor is food court decoration eigen value 2.716. Decoration for food court reflects the traditional theme, and it has its shaping indicators, which are thematic decoration and decoration of the tenants’ area. The accessories for thematic decoration in the tenants’ area are vintage cooking utensils and food cans. Tenants’ area is decorated under the theme of traditional hut, using wooden material and the products are ordered as inspired by traditional food stalls.

The third factor is various tenants’ area, which are the range of products offered. Indicators of this factor are various tenants’ area and tenant signage. Tenants’ outlets in the food court at Gandaria City are complete enough, and are well supported with informative signage with similar format for all outlets.

The fourth factor is social image and interaction. Social image and interaction mean that image of visitors’ lifestyle when in shopping centers and social interaction between visitors that influence the sense of place of the food court. Indicators for this factor are intimate atmosphere among the visitor, visitors’ density, and visitors’ lifestyle. Visitors with intimate atmosphere, as well as all the employees of Gandaria 8 office complex, use food court with a traditional theme as a relaxing area. Visitors’ density in this food court ranges from 0.7 m²/person for the most crowd food court to 2m²/person for the most deserted food court. Lifestyle of visitors is the modern lifestyle, as seen from their activities and clothing style.

As for the food court in Ciputra World, the influential factors are atrium legibility, social image and interaction, atrium atmosphere, and atrium decoration. Meanwhile, in Gandaria City, the shaping factors for public space setting that should be considered are, consecutively, atrium legibility, atrium decoration, event space decoration, social image and interaction, and event atmosphere.

There are similarities and differences between both research objects, which are explained furthermore. The similarities between both food courts are the factor of legibility, factor of social image and interaction, and the factor of decoration. These three similar factors show that there is legibility or originality of setting character at the food court in both shopping centers, which satisfy the concept of each shopping center. These two research objects have social image and interaction which is well-perceived by the upper class society.

7. Conclusion

The following are the conclusions of the present study:

10.1 The factors of food courts that create visitors’ preference.

Some factors integrated to the food court setting that is likely to create the image of the sense of place, the preference of the visitors are the legibility of the food court, food court decoration, kinds of tenants, social image and interaction. The following is the description for each:

10.1.2 10.1.1 The legibility of the food court
The legibility of the food court refers to the spatial characteristics of the food court that make them different from food courts of other shopping centers. The legibility of the food court such as shapes and the service can serve as the identity of the visitors. The legibility of the food court can be in the form of floor finishing, furniture selection, zoning and service system, washing facilities, and lighting.

10.1.3 Social image and interaction

Social image and interaction have two aspects: social image and social interaction. The social image refers to the images recorded and manifested in the lifestyles, ethnics, and segments in the food courts. Meanwhile, the social interaction refers to the activity situations and friendliness among the visitors in the food courts. The crowd is also one of the social interaction aspects.

10.1.4 Food court decoration

Food court decoration is the interior element that functions to decorate the food courts. Food court decoration commonly has themes in the form of different ornaments such as art accents and tenant area decoration either with fixed or movable characteristics. The food court decoration has functions as the accent in the rooms.

10.1.5 Various kinds of tenants

Various kinds of tenants refer to the various types of tenants in the food court areas: kinds of stalls with different kinds of products, different ways of service and informative tenants’ signage.

10.1.6 The primary factors that create visitors’ preference

There are two primary factors as the findings of the present study: legibility as the uniqueness of the place and social image and interaction. The aforementioned four aspects cannot be separated from the early understanding (Najafi & Bin Mohd Shariff, 2011), that is, the formation of the sense of place image is closely related to both physical and social factors. The theory that this present study has found is the extension of the previous theories. Among the physical factors is the legibility of the corridor and food court decoration. Meanwhile, those that belong to social factor are social image and interaction and various kinds of tenants.

11. The Implications

This present study offers both scientific and applied contribution. The scientific contribution will be explaining the effects of the study in filling in the scientific gap and opportunities for further studies. Meanwhile, the applied one will be explaining the possibilities of the use of the theories in the field of design study.

References


