

## THE EFFECT OF THE STORE SERVICESCAPE ON THE CUSTOMERS REGARDING THE TELECOMMUNICATION SECTOR<sup>1</sup>

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### TELEKOMÜNİKASYON SEKTÖRÜNDE MAĞAZA HİZMET ORTAMININ MÜŞTERİLER ÜZERİNDEKİ ETKİSİ

**Dr. Öğr. Üyesi Onur ELİK**

Adana Alparslan Türkeř Bilim ve Teknoloji Üniversitesi

İřletme Fakültesi

Turizm İřletmecilięi Bölümü

ocelik@atu.edu.tr

ORCID: 0000-0002-8552-1133

#### Abstract

*The competition among enterprises in the today's business world is acquiring more different dimensions day by day. The enterprises which maintain especially their technology-oriented activities are experiencing a period in which it is not possible for them to be one step ahead from their competitors through only improvements in their technological infrastructures. The competition wars in the telecommunication sector of which importance and potential is great as well are observed to be performed over physical evidence which constitutes one of the significant elements of the marketing mix (7P). Within this scope, the study was implemented to the telecommunication sector which shows an oligopoly market property in Turkey. The purpose of the study is to reveal the effects of the servicescape on the target audience in the telecommunication sector. The study was carried out in the Shopping Malls in the province of Adana by taking into consideration the brands of Turkcell, Vodafone and Turk Telekom which are carrying on their business in the telecommunication sector in Turkey. As a result of this study, reviewable 400 surveys were obtained and within this scope, descriptive statistics were used for the demographic information and simple linear regression analysis were implemented for total 4 scales which include 21 judgments. According to the data of hypothesis test, servicescape was observed to have positive effects on the perceived quality, brand image, brand loyalty.*

**Key Words:** Servicescape, Perceived Quality, Brand Image, Brand Loyalty

#### Öz

*Günümüz iř dünyasında iřletmeler arasındaki rekabet her geen gün daha farklı boyutlar kazanmaktadır. Özellikle teknoloji odaklı faaliyetlerini sürdüren iřletmeler sadece teknolojik alt yapılarındaki iyileřtirmeler ile rakiplerinden bir adım öne çıkabilmeleri mümkün olmayan bir dönemi yaşamaktadır. Önemi ve potansiyeli büyük olan telekomünikasyon sektöründe de rekabet savařları hizmet pazarlaması karmasının (7P) önemli ayaklarından bir tanesi olan fiziksel unsurlar üzerinden de gerekleřtięi görülmektedir. Bu kapsamda alıřma Türkiye'de oligopol pazar özellięi gösteren telekomünikasyon sektöründe uygulanmıřtır. alıřmanın amacı telekomünikasyon sektöründe maęaza hizmet ortamının hedef kitle üzerindeki etkilerini ortaya koyabilmektir. alıřma Türkiye'de telekomünikasyon sektöründe faaliyet gösteren Turkcell, Vodafone ve Turk Telekom markaları dikkat alınarak; Adana ilinde yer alan AVM'lerde gerekleřtirilmiřtir. Arařtırmanın sonucunda incelenen 400 ankete ulařılmıř, bu kapsamda demografik bilgiler için tanımlayıcı istatistikler kullanılırken, 21 yargıdan oluřan toplam 4 ölek için ise basit lineer regresyon analizi uygulanmıřtır. Hipotez test verilerine göre ise maęaza hizmet ortamının; algılanan kalite, marka imajı ve marka sadakati üzerinde pozitif yönde etkisinin olduęu görülmüřtür.*

**Anahtar Kelime:** Maęaza Hizmet Ortamı, Algılanan Kalite, Marka İmajı, Marka Sadakati

<sup>1</sup> This study was supported by Adana Alparslan Türkeř Science and Technology University under Scientific Research Projects (Project No: 17117003)

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Remarkable and important figures are observed to be available when the telecommunication sector is reviewed across the world. As of January 2019, while about 67% of 7 billion 676 million people in the world has their own mobile telephone, internet utilization ratio is at the level of 57% (KMPG, 2018). In 2018, while the world population showed an increase of 1,1%, mobile telephone utilization ratio showed an increase of 2% (KMPG, 2018). Concerning specific to Turkey, the growth data of the telecommunication sector shows an advance in parallel to the world. Although the telecommunication sector is an advanced and great sector in Turkey, seen that it is a sector which still has an important potential, shows a consistent growth and is expected to grow, when paying regard to the demographic structure of Turkey (KMPG, 2018).

The enterprises in the telecommunication sector are showing hard effort to improve their technological infrastructures from past to present in order to take place in the sector and obtain competitive advantage. However, only these efforts are not sufficient to thrust themselves to the forefront in terms of the competition nowadays. Because all enterprises in the sector are putting similar efforts into practice. For this reason, the competition in the sector has started to tend to be performed over other elements. Servicescape is probably the most outstanding element among others. Because in retail sector consumers evaluate their experience with servicescape (Kwon et. al. 2015). Physical evidence which is one of the elements of the marketing mix includes all physical factors which customers encounter from their entry to the stores to exit. Perception left by these all factors on the customers may have an overall effect from the general image of the enterprise to the purchase behaviors of the customers. Through increase of the importance attributed to the customer perception and experiences today, the servicescape is further overemphasized by both implementers and also researchers (Turley and Milliman 2000; Karakařođku and Arslan 2016).

Further research are required due to inadequacy in the concept development in the store servicescape and the importance of the field (Spence et. al. 2014; Hoffman and Turley, 2002). Although studies are available in the international literature, studies evaluating the effect of the store environment on the consumer in Turkey are limited and these studies were carried out for retails which operate in different sectors. (Yalın and Kocamaz, 2003; Akaydın, 2007; Dursun et al., 2013; Fettahliođlu, 2014; Karakařođlu and Aslan, 2016; Yksekbiđgili, 2016; İnan et al., 2016). Such studies have not been encountered as to specific to the telecommunication sector.

According to Harris and Ezeh (2008), international literature agrees with the opinion that the store servicescape has an effect on the behavior (Cronin, 2003; Foxall and Yani-de-Soriano, 2005), but the issue needs to be developed conceptually and more studies are required to be carried out (Bitner 1992; Tombs and McColl-Kennedy 2003, Foxall and Greenley 1999; Hoffman and Turley 2002). Also, few empirical studies regarding the effect of the store servicescape on the consumer behaviors and purchase decisions despite of the conceptual inadequacy are available (Bitner 1992; Cronin 2003). On the other hand, studies regarding the effect of the store servicescape on the purchase decisions in the international literature have emphasized the effect of a single element on the purchase decisions; for example, music, light, fragrance, colors etc. (Tantanatewin and Inkarojrit, 2016; Areni and Kim 1993; Sweeney and Wyber 2002; Biswas et. al. 2017; Areni and Kim 1994; Summers and Hebert 2001). Only a few studies (Morone et al. 2018; Wakefield and Blodgett 1996; Mattila and Wirtz 2001; Spangenberg et al. 2005) have analyzed the big picture. However, most studies carried out with regard to the store servicescape have addressed the social-interactive dimensions of the physical evidence (Tombs and McColl-Kennedy 2003). Through this table arising as a result of the literature research, the purpose and framework of the study was determined. The purpose of the study is to reveal the effect of the store servicescape in the telecommunication sector in Turkey on the perceived service quality, brand image and brand loyalty. Within the framework of this purpose, it is intended that this study will provide benefits to meet some deficits available in the literature and be a guide to the implementers as well.

## 2. LITERATURE

**Servicescape** is a kind of setting place where services are provided (Risnen et. al. 2014). Store servicescape has several different definitions. Baker (1987) defined it as ‘physical environment’,

Kotler (1973) as ‘atmospherics’, Bitner (1992) as ‘servicescape’ and Turley and Milliman (2000) as ‘marketing environment’. Even if definitions attributed to the store servicescape differ, generally accepted hypothesis on which studies performed with regard to the effect of the store servicescape on the customers are based as follows; customers perceive stimulus in their physical environment, solve its code and interpret, then make a decision at the end of this process (Engel et al. 1978). By this process consumers’ perceptions of service functions and service quality are influenced by servicescape (Nilsson and Ballantyne, 2014).

**Quality** can be easily defined in manufacturing sectors but in service sector the phenomenon is getting more challenging to describe (Annamdevula and Bellamkonda, 2016). Perceived quality is an information package presented to the consumers for the question why they would like to purchase that brand instead of other brands (Yousaf, Zulfiqar et al. 2012, 328). According to Bitner (1992), physical evidence is required to position in the mind of the target audience as the services are abstract concepts and, in this sense, the store servicescape allows customers to generate the perceived quality in their mind. For example, physical evidence such as the store’s design, color, fragrance, music etc. may provide to arise positive or negative perceptions about the quality in the mind of the customers.

An efficient connection is available on the quality perception which the store servicescape leaves on the customers (Hooper et.al. 2013; Kearney et al. 2012; Bitner, 1992; Brady and Cronin, 2001 and Spangenberg et al., 1996). Hence, it was asserted that physical evidence is the determinant of the perceived quality (Ward et al. 1992; Baker et al. 1994; Baker 1998; Aubert-Gamet and Cova 1999; Baker et al. 2002). The first hypothesis has been built within the framework of this literature;

H1: Store servicescape has an effect on the perceived quality.

**Brand loyalty;** According to Dick and Basu (1994), it is a behavioral action which is consistently sustained towards a brand by the decision maker among various alternatives. While making decisions, consumers demand to have good memories and experiences about brands (Shanti et. al. 2019). Servicescape is a way to serve brand experiences to consumers.

It is understood that the effect of the store servicescape on the brand loyalty is a comprehensive research subject when literature is examined (Shashikala et. al. 2013; Foxall and Greenley 1999; Cronin 2003; Foxall and Yani-de-Soriano 2005). It has been seen that store servicescape has an effect on the customers’ emotions and on the tendency of the customers to continue or cease the purchase intention (Foxall and Greenley 1999; Lovelock 2001; Hoffman and Turley 2002; Tombs and McColl-Kennedy 2003). In this scope, the second hypothesis has been built as follows;

H2: Store servicescape has an effect on the brand loyalty.

**Brand image** consists of perceptions reflected about the brand in related to some association of ideas generating in the customers’ mind. Brand image is the big picture regarding the brand generating in the target audience’s mind (Howard, 1989). On the other hand brand image can effect target audience’s perception and feelings as well as their behaviors (Zhang, 2015).

Store servicescape shapes the brand image (Kisang et al. 2012). According to Booms and Bitner (1982), store servicescape creates the brand image in the customers’ mind. Also, according to Baker et al. (1994), improvements in the store servicescape conduces to the improvements in the brand image. The third hypothesis is as follows in the light of this information;

H3: Store servicescape has an effect on the brand image.

### 3. METHODOLOGY

The main audience of the study is the customers who have visited the stores of the brands operating in the telecommunication sector in Adana province physically at least once. Thus, more accurate evaluation of the store servicescape is aimed in the study to be carried out.

The main audience of the study is pretty large and to reach the full number is not possible due to both as material and also time limit. For this reason, sampling from the main audience was considered as appropriate. Based on the universe size, sampling figures are specified as 384 within the framework of 0,05 sampling error in cases where the main audience number exceeds 100.000 (Yazıcıoğlu and

Erdođan, 2004). Also, according to Büyüköztürk et al. (2012), “In a multivariate study (including also multi regression analyses), sampling size must be 10 times or more of the variance number in the study preferably”. By taking into consideration that 21 judgments are available in the survey of the study, a figure of about 210 and over may be sufficient.

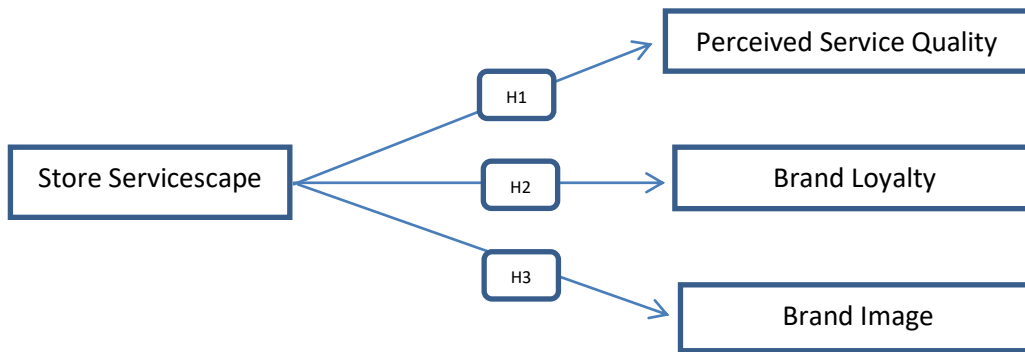
Paying attention to this information in the study carried out, a high sampling number as possible as was tried to be obtained and 417 persons were reached. However, when surveys were reviewed, it has been determined that incomplete data is available in 17 surveys. For this reason, the study was carried out on the basis of 400 sampling number. As the sampling method, judgment sampling method was used. With this situation, it was aimed that the main audience representation value of the sampling would increase.

Surveys were performed face to face with the answerers in February, 2019. Survey includes 21 judgments as well as demographic questions. Judgments were structured through 5-point likert scale. The scales used in the study have been previously benefited in various studies and these scales’ reliability has been proven. (Store Servicescape (7 items); Dabholkar et al., (1996); Demirci, (2000); Kurtuluř, (2001); Perceived Service Quality (9 items); Pappu et al. (2005, 2006), Brand Loyalty (3 items); Yoo et al., (2000), Brand Image (2 items); Lau and Lee (1999)).

Taking into consideration the study and the structure of Adana province, Shopping Malls were considered as the most correct places to reach the target audience. That the respective brands have a physical store in all shopping malls was efficient on this decision. In this study, “M1 Adana Shopping Mall” and “Optimum Adana Shopping Mall” which are two big shopping malls located in the province of Adana were determined as implementation place.

In the light of the information obtained as a result of the literature search, research model was formed. This model is as follows;

**Figure 1: Research Model**



Hypotheses were developed within the scope of the research model. Through the study conducted, the following hypotheses were tested.

H1: Store servicescape has an effect on the perceived quality.

H2: Store servicescape has an effect on the brand loyalty.

H3: Store servicescape has an effect on the brand image.

#### 4. ANALYSES

Firstly, the demographic structured was addressed in the analysis of the data obtained in the study. Demographic data obtained by using the descriptive statistics are presented in Table 1.

**Table 1.** Demographic Information

Age		Education		Gender	
Age Range	Percentage %	Level	Percentage %	F/M	Percentage %
18-25	16,0%	Primary education	14,5%	Female	39,7%
26-35	22,8%	High School	34,5%	Male	60,3%
36-45	27,3%	Associate degree	10,3%		
46-55	20,8%	Bachelor's Degree	30,3%		
56-65	11,0%	Master Degree	9,8%		
Over 65	2,3%	Ph.D.	0,8%		

Based on the data, 60,3% of the participants is male and 39,7% is female. 86,7% of the participants is under the age of 55. When regarding as the education level, the highest participation with 34,5% is high school level and it is followed by bachelor's degree with a ratio of 30,3%.

#### 4.1. Hypothesis Test Results

Reliability analysis applied to the scale with 21 sub-statements (Table 2). According to Hair (2010) Cronbach Alpha value should be above 0,70 but also 0,60 is acceptable. Due to that the test results (0,916) indicates the scale is reliable.

**Table 2.** Reliability Test Results

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
,916	21

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Test is used for adequacy of sampling to apply factor analysis. KMO value is acceptable between 0,5-1 but satisfactory value is above 0,70 (Malhotra, 1996). The test results show that KMO value is 0,915, means sampling adequacy is highly acceptable. Also Bartlett Test is applied to understand; between variables whether relationships are significant and different from 0 (Hair, 1998). So Bartlett Test result is adequate.

**Table 3.** KMO and Bartlett's Test Results

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		,915
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	3520,249
	df	136
	Sig.	,000

In the light of the results factor analysis applied to the scale. According to Hair (2010) each variables in the factors should be above 0,30-.040, due to that 4 variables (3 from perceived quality, 1 from servicescape) excluded from the analysis. According to factor analysis 4 factors are revealed. They are; servicescape, perceived quality, brand loyalty and brand image. Total explained variance is 57,078.

**Table 4. Pattern Matrix<sup>a</sup>**

	Factor				Cronbach Alpha		
	1	2	3	4			
Perceived Quality3	,911				0,899	0,913	
Perceived Quality2	,871						
Perceived Quality4	,779						
Perceived Quality1	,676						
Perceived Quality6	,575						
Perceived Quality5	,473						
Image2		-,808			0,838		
Image1		-,694					
Servicescape3			,811		0,841		
Servicescape2			,777				
Servicescape4			,731				
Servicescape7			,539				
Servicescape5			,508				
Servicescape6			,454				
Loyalty3				,676	0,764		
Loyalty2				,645			
Loyalty1				,573			
Extraction Method: Maximum Likelihood.							
Rotation Method: Oblimin with Kaiser Normalization.							
a. Rotation converged in 6 iterations.							

On the purpose of carrying out hypothesis tests, the average of the answers given by each participant to the sub-groups was taken and hypotheses specified were tested through Regression analysis. All analyses were carried out through simple linear regression and regression coefficients occurred at an important level of 5% through unpaired T test. The direction of the relationship among variables was occurred at an important level of 5% through Pearson correlation analysis.

**Table 5. ANOVA<sup>a</sup>**

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	118,147	1	118,147	236,946	,000 <sup>b</sup>
	Residual	198,452	398	,499		
	Total	316,599	399			
a. Dependent Variable: perceivedquality						
b. Predictors: (Constant), servicescape						

As a result of the simple linear regression analysis conducted, it has been seen that store servicescape has positive effect on the perceived quality and this effect is significant. (Table 5). Within this framework, H1 hypothesis is supported.

**Table 6. Model Summary**

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	,611 <sup>a</sup>	,373	,372	,70613

a. Predictors: (Constant), servicescape

R<sup>2</sup> value is obtained as 0,373. This value is an indicator that 37% of the quality occurred as a result of impression obtained from the store servicescape. When regarding the multiplicity of the variables to affect the quality perception of a brand, it is remarkable that weight of variable is at level of 37% (Table 6).

**Table 7. Coefficients<sup>a</sup>**

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	,602	,195		3,090	,002
	servicescape	,748	,049	,611	15,393	,000

a. Dependent Variable: perceivedquality

Table 7 shows that the beta coefficient of the variable is 0.748. The positive coefficient indicates that the relationship between the independent variable (servicescape) and the dependent variable (perceived quality) is positive. Also significance value (p= 0,000; t=15,393) proves that the model is statistically significant.

**Table 8. ANOVA<sup>a</sup>**

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	60,603	1	60,603	76,105	,000b
	Residual	316,928	398	,796		
	Total	377,531	399			

a. Dependent Variable: loyalty  
b. Predictors: (Constant), servicescape

Based on the analysis, H2 hypothesis is supported. The result stating that store servicescape has effect on the brand loyalty (Tablo 8).

**Table 9. Model Summary**

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	,401 <sup>a</sup>	,161	,158	,89236

a. Predictors: (Constant), servicescape

It is seen that positive changes and developments to be performed in the store servicescape will have a positive effect on the loyalty of the target audience to the respective brand. R<sup>2</sup> value as a result of the regression analysis is 0,161. This result states that the store servicescape renders a part of 16% of loyalty levels of the customers (Table 9).

**Table 10. Coefficients<sup>a</sup>**

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	1,623	,246		6,593	,000
	servicescape	,536	,061	,401	8,724	,000

a. Dependent Variable: loyalty

The beta coefficient of the variable is 0.536. Significance value ( $p= 0,000$ ;  $t=8,724$ ) shows that the model is statistically significant.

**Table 11. ANOVA<sup>a</sup>**

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	76,451	1	76,451	63,253	,000 <sup>b</sup>
	Residual	481,046	398	1,209		
	Total	557,497	399			

a. Dependent Variable: image  
b. Predictors: (Constant), servicescape

H3 hypothesis is supported. It has been found that the store servicescape has positive effect on the brand image (Table 11).

**Table 12. Model Summary**

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	,370 <sup>a</sup>	,137	,135	1,09939

a. Predictors: (Constant), servicescape

R<sup>2</sup> value is obtained as 0,137 in this hypothesis test. It is an indicator that 13% of the brand image occurred as a result of impression obtained from the store servicescape (Table 12).

**Table 13. Coefficients<sup>a</sup>**

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	,880	,303		2,900	,004
	servicescape	,602	,076	,370	7,953	,000

a. Dependent Variable: image

The constant value is significant at 0,004. The beta coefficient of the variable is ,602. According to significance value ( $p=,000$   $t=7953$ ) the model is statistically significant.

## 5.RESULTS

This study was designed in order to reveal the effect of the store servicescape on the perceived service quality, brand image and brand loyalty. It is aimed to meet the deficit recognized in the literature and also to be a guide for the implementers.

The study was carried out with 417 participants, but 400 data was obtained as usable. Descriptive statistics, factor analysis and simple linear regression analysis applied to data. Based on the results obtained, four hypotheses were supported. Through H1 hypothesis, it has been found that



the store servicescape has positive effect on the perceived quality. The result obtained shows parallelism with the literature (Massicotte et. al. 2011; Ward et al., 1992; Baker et al., 1994; Baker, 1998; Aubert-Gamet and Cova, 1999; Baker et al., 2002; Bitner, 1992; Rust and Oliver 1994; Rys et al. 1987; Zeithaml et al., 1990). While describing the store servicescape, Kotler (1973) also states it as the factors affecting the customers' perceptions. In the study carried out regarding the telecommunication sector in South Africa, it has been emphasized that the perceived quality should show a significant difference in terms of the competition for the enterprises and so, the enterprises in the telecommunication sector need to pay attention to the store servicescape so as to increase the behavioral intentions of their customers (Ngwenya, M. 2017).

Based on the H2 hypothesis is supported, the store servicescape has effect on the brand loyalty. Foxall and Greenley (1999), Cronin (2003), Foxall and Yani-de-Soriano (2005) also emphasized in their studies that the store servicescape has positive effect on the brand loyalty and this effect is so significant. Moreover, the findings stating that fragrance (Hallett and Silver, 2004, Takagi, 1989, Hirsch, 1991, Hunter, 1995), music (Yalch and Spangenberg, 1990; Chebat et al., 1993; Dube' et al., 1995, Areni and Kim, 1993, North and Hargreaves, 1996, Milliman, 1986), esthetic (Nguyen and Leblanc, 2002, Bitner, 1992), which are the variables of the store servicescape, have effect on the brand loyalty, purchase intentions, the store's sales, duration spent in the store, moods of the customers are rather prevalent.

After obtaining that the store servicescape has effect on the brand image, H3 hypothesis is also supported. According to Belizzi and Hite (1992), the store servicescape has positive effect on the brand image. On the other hand, Joanna et al. (2011) referred to the importance of the role of the store servicescape and employees in order to deliver and strengthen the brand image which the enterprises desire to their shareholders in their studies. Jang et al. (2015) emphasized in a study conducted regarding restaurant enterprises that the store servicescape has effect on the restaurant brand image. A similar result was also obtained in the study which was carried out by Durna et al. (2015). Durna emphasized that the store servicescape has positive effect on the brand image and the image has a mediation influence between the store servicescape and behavioral intention as well.

Based on the results, it has been seen that the brands will obtain an increase in their perceived service quality, brand image and brand loyalty through the returns of the improvements to be made in the physical elements of the stores. Consequently, the recommendation to be given to the implementers is as follows; if they allocate resources to their store servicescape and design their physical elements as appropriate to their target audience by the experts, this will provide a considerable benefit to the enterprises in the telecommunication sector.

The study conducted was carried out within a certain framework due to material reasons and time limit. For example, the province of Adana was selected as the baseline as the target audience. In the future studies, implementing on the people in different regions, different cultures and with different socio-economic level will be beneficial. On the other hand, other sectors may be analyzed apart from the telecommunication sector. Also investigation on consumer satisfaction and pleasure can attribute to literature because according to Chang (2016) store servicescape has effect on the different feels of the customers such as satisfaction pleasure and emotion.

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