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Servicescape Design Analysis: The Influence of Ambient Conditions and Spatial Layout on Seating Preferences at Bento Café, Surabaya

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ABSTRACT

Cafés have become one of the most prominent urban public spaces, especially among young adults who use them for studying, working, socializing, and taking breaks. This widespread use demands a spatial design that can effectively support visitor comfort and activity patterns. Bento Café, located in Gunung Anyar, Surabaya, offers three seating configurations—indoor, semi-outdoor, and outdoor—yet the extent to which these spatial arrangements align with Bitner’s servicescape concept, particularly the dimension of spatial layout and functionality, remains to be examined. This study aims to assess the compatibility between Bento Café’s existing layout and the principles of servicescape, as well as to understand how these spatial characteristics shape visitors’ seating preferences. The research adopts a qualitative approach through literature review and on-site observation conducted over three days, covering both weekdays and weekends, and across three time periods (morning–midday, afternoon, and evening). Data were collected through direct visual observation, documentation, and systematic recording of seating preference patterns. The findings reveal that the semi-outdoor area consistently attracts the highest number of visitors due to its favorable environmental conditions, wider circulation space, and larger table dimensions, whereas the outdoor area is less preferred during morning and midday hours due to thermal discomfort and smaller table sizes. These results demonstrate that the spatial layout and functionality dimension plays a significant role in shaping visitors’ seating choices.

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1. INTRODUCTION

The need for public spaces in urban areas plays a crucial role in supporting the social activities of modern society. Public spaces are not merely physical components of the city, but also function as arenas for interaction, recreation, and the formation of everyday social dynamics. (Qi et al., 2024) public spaces serve as venues for daily community activities, including cultural practices and social interactions. (Perera et al., 2024) further emphasize that public spaces constitute a vital component of the urban landscape, as they facilitate social interaction, strengthen community cohesion, and contribute to individual well-being. In addition, (Hsu, 2020) argues that post-pandemic cities increasingly recognize the importance of public spaces as elements of societal resilience, rather than viewing them solely as recreational facilities. In this context, public spaces become essential amenities for various groups, including young people, who utilize them as places for gathering and engaging in shared activities.

Urban life is characterized by high mobility, work-related pressures, and the need for transitional spaces that can support daily activities, thereby creating demand for places that provide both comfort and flexibility. In this context, cafés have evolved into an integral part of the urban rhythm, offering spaces for resting, working, and building social relationships. The growing trend of coffee consumption, as noted by (Sidik et al., 2024) indicates that cafés have become embedded in contemporary culture and are no longer merely venues for enjoying beverages. The thematic character and atmosphere presented by a café also influence visitor behavior, (Liu, 2022) explains that a unique concept can encourage activities such as reading, social interaction, and even business negotiation. Furthermore, (Widiatmaka et al., 2023) emphasize the role of cafés in fostering inclusive social spaces for diverse groups, while (Arisanti, 2021) argues that for some individuals, cafés function as a “second home,” offering comfort and emotional attachment. Collectively, these perspectives underscore the significant role of cafés in the dynamics of urban life.

The growing public demand for cafés as urban public spaces requires designers, particularly architects and interior designers, to create environments that can accommodate diverse user activities. In practice, however, not all cafés experience the same level of patronage; some attract large numbers of visitors, while others remain relatively underutilized. One significant factor influencing this disparity is the implementation of servicescape design elements. (Bitner, 1992) explains that three primary dimensions within the servicescape framework influence visitor satisfaction.

- a. The first dimension is ambient conditions, referring to environmental characteristics that influence user comfort and activity, including lighting, temperature, and noise levels. In line with this, (Chrissia & Riandi, 2023) found that a warm spatial atmosphere, natural lighting, and comfortable seating options can encourage visitors, including workers, to stay longer and return for future visits.
- b. The second dimension is spatial layout and functionality, which concerns the arrangement of space and furniture that affects ease of movement and user comfort. (Yıldırım et al., 2024) note that excessively high seating density may increase perceptions of crowding and reduce comfort, while (Lukito & Xenia, 2018) demonstrate that table arrangement, seating position, and background noise levels contribute to shaping opportunities for both social interaction and individual activities.
- c. The third dimension is signs, symbols, and artifacts, which encompasses visual elements that convey information, such as directional signage or instructions, assisting visitors in understanding and navigating the space more effectively. Consistent with Bitner's

concept, (Sari et al., 2020) observe that interior displays in retail settings can influence visitors' emotions and purchasing behavior.

Bento Café is one of the cafés located in the urban area of Surabaya, specifically in Gunung Anyar. It has become a popular destination, particularly among young people, due to its strategic location near two higher education institutions, Universitas Pembangunan Nasional Veteran Jawa Timur (UPN) and Universitas Islam Negeri Sunan Ampel Surabaya (UINSA). This proximity contributes to a consistently high flow of visitors almost every day. In terms of spatial layout, Bento Café offers a diverse range of seating arrangements. The indoor area is arranged without fixed seating, with generous spacing between seating elements, creating a more relaxed and flexible atmosphere. The semi-outdoor area is dominated by long communal tables arranged in closer proximity, emphasizing shared use and social interaction among visitors. Meanwhile, the outdoor area features smaller tables that provide a more personal setting for individuals or those seeking a quieter atmosphere. This spatial configuration becomes a key factor in shaping visitors' seating preferences at Bento Café.

The purpose of this study is to examine how variations in design related to servicescape quality, particularly the dimension of spatial layout and functionality, influence seating selection preferences and the level of visitor comfort in cafés. This research serves as a preliminary study or pilot project to test the application of servicescape theory in understanding how design variations affect users within a café context. The findings are expected to provide a reference for the development of café design strategies that consider users' needs, comfort, and behavioral patterns.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW: THE CONCEPT OF SERVICESCAPE IN CAFÉ FACILITIES

The concept of servicescape refers to the physical environment in which a service is delivered and where interactions between service providers and customers take place. This idea was first popularized in the late 1980s by Mary Jo Bitner together with Bernard H. Booms, who emphasized that the physical environment is not merely a passive backdrop, but a critical factor capable of shaping consumers' perceptions, emotions, and behaviors. A well-designed service environment can create positive experiences, enhance comfort, and ultimately influence purchasing decisions as well as user satisfaction.

Over time, servicescape has become a widely adopted approach across various industries, as it provides a framework for understanding how spatial elements affect user behavior. Bitner later elaborated the concept into three primary dimensions. The first is ambient conditions, which refer to background environmental characteristics that significantly impact comfort, such as temperature, air quality, lighting, noise levels, and music. The second is spatial layout and functionality, encompassing spatial organization, furniture arrangement, circulation paths, and the ease with which users can access available facilities. The third dimension is signs, symbols, and artifacts, which include visual elements such as signage, decorative features, and interior symbols that function to provide guidance, establish spatial identity, and assist users in navigating the service environment.

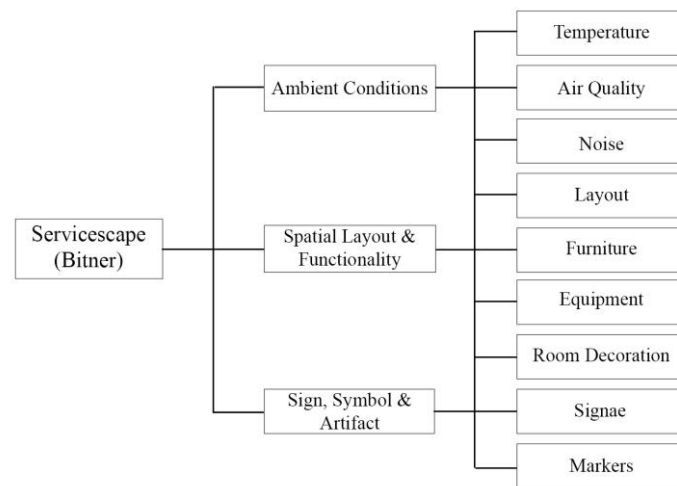


Figure 1. Framework Environmental Dimension of the Servicescape

Source : Author, 2025

(Bitner, 1992) emphasizes that the servicescape functions as a mediating element that shapes the quality of interaction between service providers and consumers. The physical environment presented by a business can evoke specific emotional and behavioral responses from visitors, whether consciously or unconsciously. Visual conditions such as overly striking colors or excessive lighting, for instance, may lead to overstimulation that affects user behavior and comfort. Similarly, an environment that is excessively noisy, filled with cigarette smoke, or characterized by high levels of crowding may generate discomfort for certain visitors, thereby influencing their perception of service quality. Thus, the servicescape is not merely a setting for activity, but also a significant psychological factor that shapes consumers' experiences and evaluations of a service environment.

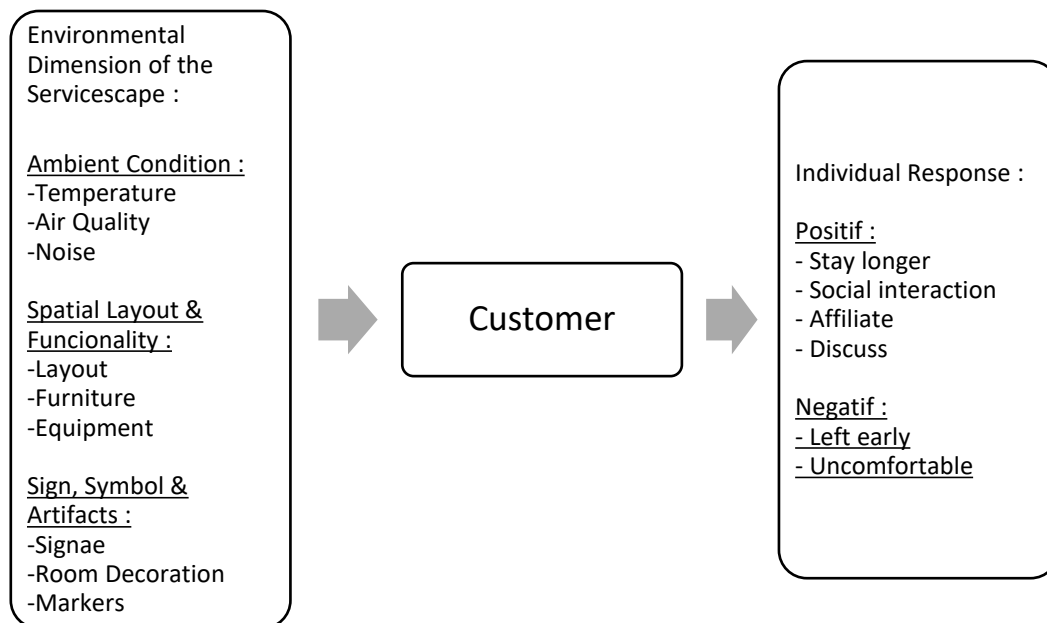


Figure 2. Customer Responses to Servicescape Aspects

Source : Author, 2025

2.1 Ambient Conditions

Ambient conditions refer to physical environmental characteristics that are not directly related to visitors' primary activities, yet exert a strong influence on their comfort, perceptions, and overall experience. (Bitner, 1992) explains that elements such as lighting, air

temperature, color, scent, and noise levels can shape users' emotional states and ultimately affect their behavior within a service environment. Lighting arrangement, for instance, plays a crucial role in establishing visual comfort. (Harmoyo et al., 2021) found that insufficient natural lighting or disproportionate use of artificial lighting may cause eye strain, reduce focus, and decrease visitor comfort. In addition, noise constitutes an important component of ambient conditions. (Slamet Widodo et al., 2022) argue that public spaces located near noise sources, such as major roadways, require adequate acoustic control, as unmitigated noise can disrupt concentration, generate sensory stress, and diminish the overall quality of the spatial experience.

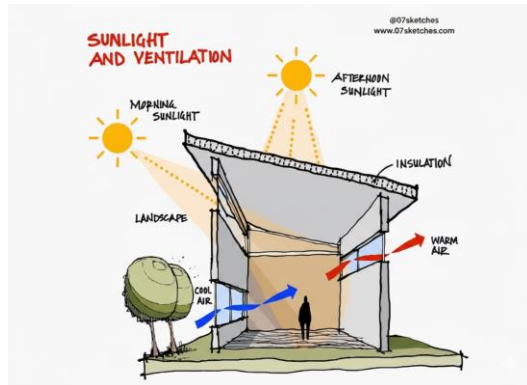


Figure 3. Natural lighting at windows

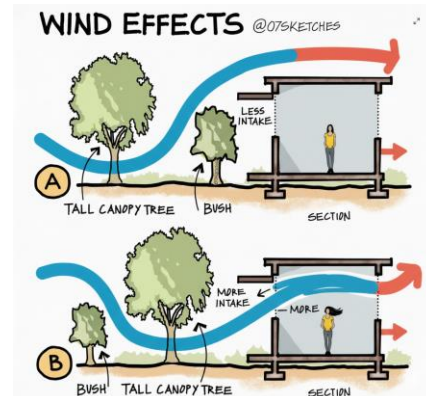


Figure 4. natural ventilation

Source : <https://www.07sketches.co/>, 2025

2.2 Spatial Layout and Functionality

Spatial layout and functionality encompass how a space is organized and the extent to which its physical elements effectively support visitors' activities. (Bitner, 1992) emphasizes that this dimension includes seating arrangements, circulation flow, distances between spatial elements, and ease of access to available facilities. Such arrangements not only determine the efficiency of space utilization, but also shape perceptions of comfort and the overall quality of visitors' experiences within the service environment. (Langitan et al., 2024) demonstrate that layout configuration in retail environments can significantly influence consumer decisions, including movement patterns, attention focus, and purchasing behavior. These findings indicate that the way space is organized can either encourage or constrain certain behaviors, and the same principle applies within café settings characterized by diverse activities.

In the context of café visitor behavior, seating preference is a key aspect strongly influenced by spatial layout. (Harmoyo et al., 2021) found that visitors tend to select seats located in corners or near walls, as these positions provide a greater sense of security, clearer visual boundaries, and higher levels of privacy. Conversely, seats situated in central areas are often avoided because they are perceived as more exposed and less comfortable. This finding suggests that central zones in cafés may be more appropriately utilized as circulation paths or, if maintained as seating areas, better suited for larger groups rather than individual users. Therefore, a layout designed with consideration of user preference patterns can enhance both comfort and functional efficiency within the space.

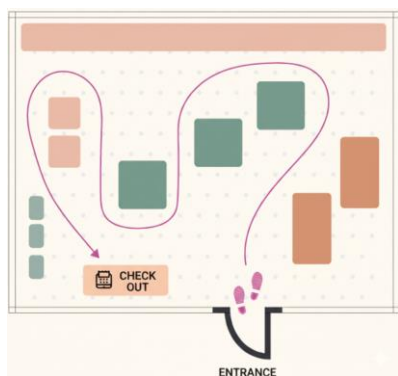


Figure 5. Reatail Layout

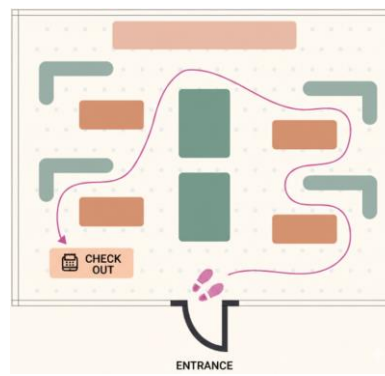


Figure 6. Boutique Layout

Sumber : <https://www.creoate.com/>, 2025

2.3 Signs, Symbols, and Artifacts

The dimension of **signs, symbols, and artifacts** refers to all visual elements that function to convey information, provide direction, or construct the character of a space. (Bitner, 1992) emphasizes that signage, interior decoration, material selection, and visual themes not only assist visitors in navigating the space, but also shape their perceptions of a place's identity and quality. In other words, these elements operate as a visual language that connects visitors to the environment they enter. The effectiveness of visual cues has been examined in various studies. (Jamshidi & Pati, 2025) assert that poorly designed signage can hinder user orientation and reduce efficiency in navigating a building, indicating that clarity and placement of signs have a direct impact on the navigational experience. Furthermore, (Rui & Firzan, 2025) found that visual harmony, such as consistent color schemes, minimalist furniture, and aesthetic coherence among interior elements, is closely associated with users' emotional responses, including their sense of comfort and satisfaction within a space.

Beyond visitors, interior design also affects individuals who spend extended periods within a building, including employees. (Mindhayani, 2020) explains that ergonomically designed decorative elements can significantly influence employees' mood and productivity. This suggests that visual and symbolic elements not only enhance aesthetic experience, but also contribute to the well-being of those who occupy the space. In the context of cafés, consistency in visual themes, appropriate decorative choices, and clear signage can reinforce spatial identity and create an environment that is more legible, enjoyable, and meaningful for visitors.



Figure 7. Signage or markers at the Asia Books store

Source : <https://whitesp-ce.com/>, 2025

3. RESEARCH METHODS

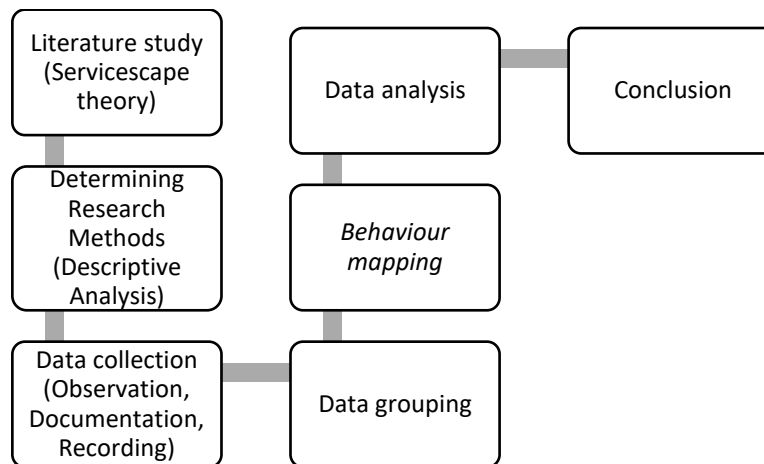


Figure 8. research methods

Source : Author, 2025

This study employs a descriptive analytical approach to understand how servicescape elements influence visitors' seating preferences at Bento Café. The initial stage of the research involved a literature review on the servicescape concept, serving as the theoretical foundation as well as a source of secondary data, which was used to construct an analytical framework identifying physical elements that potentially affect visitor behavior. Subsequently, field data were collected through direct visits to Bento Café using observation methods, visual documentation, and systematic recording of spatial conditions relevant to the servicescape concept, including layout configuration, spatial arrangement, lighting conditions, visitor circulation patterns, and characteristics of seating areas. The observational data were then categorized based on similarities in activity patterns and seating preferences, and further analyzed using behaviour mapping techniques to spatially identify the relationship between spatial configuration and visitor behavior patterns. The observation method was selected because it enables researchers to obtain objective data without interfering with visitors' natural activities. (Kawulich, 2005) observation provides access to actual behavior within its original context, ensuring that the data obtained are more authentic and reflective of real field conditions.

3.1 Location of research object

The research was conducted at Bento Kopi, located on Jl. Dr. Ir. H. Soekarno, Tambak, Gunung Anyar District, Surabaya, East Java. The collected field data were subsequently processed, categorized, and compared with the conceptual framework of servicescape theory. This step was undertaken to examine whether the physical elements described in the theory genuinely influence visitors' seating preferences within the study context. The observational findings were then aligned with the existing literature to identify points of convergence, divergence, or specific patterns emerging from the research object.



Figure 9. Location of research object

Source : Google Maps, 2025

3.2 Existing Condition of Bento Cafe

Bento Café is located on Jl. Dr. Ir. H. Soekarno, Tambak, Gunung Anyar District, Surabaya, East Java. The site measures approximately 20 meters in width and 85 meters in length, resulting in a total area of roughly 1,700 square meters. The café building is oriented northward, directly facing the main road. At the entrance area, visitors are greeted by the cashier counter, which functions as both a reception point and the initial circulation control before entering the seating areas. Adjacent to the cashier is the indoor seating area, which serves as the space with the most stable thermal and acoustic comfort levels. Further inside the building lies the semi-outdoor area, which utilizes wide openings to facilitate natural air circulation. At the rear of the site is the outdoor seating area, characterized as the most open and socially dynamic space, equipped with live music facilities that typically operate in the evening. This spatial division creates a gradient of atmosphere, ranging from more enclosed and tranquil zones to areas that are increasingly open and vibrant.



Figure 10. Bento Café Layout

Source : Author, 2025

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Analysis of Visitor Seating Preferences

Observations were conducted over three days, consisting of two weekdays (Thursday and Friday) and one weekend day (Saturday). A comparison across these days did not reveal significant differences in the types of seating preferences, but rather in the number of visitors. Weekends tended to generate a higher frequency of visits compared to weekdays. Observations were also carried out across three time intervals, namely late morning to afternoon, late afternoon, and evening, from 09:00 to 21:00.

The observational results indicate relatively consistent patterns. During the late morning to afternoon period, most visitors preferred the semi-outdoor area, particularly seats positioned against the wall but not at the extreme ends. The indoor area was less favored during these hours, except for seats located at the far end, which offered a quieter and more private atmosphere. As the day progressed into the afternoon, seating preferences within the semi-outdoor area began to shift. Seats at the far ends, previously avoided due to heat exposure, became more desirable as temperatures decreased. Conversely, in the indoor area, visitors tended to avoid spots near the glass façade because of strong afternoon sunlight, making centrally located seats a more comfortable option. From late afternoon to evening, visitor activity gradually shifted toward the outdoor area. The presence of live music and cooler ambient conditions made this zone the most crowded toward nighttime. The semi-outdoor area remained consistently occupied, while the indoor space was primarily used by visitors seeking a quieter environment or wishing to avoid external noise.

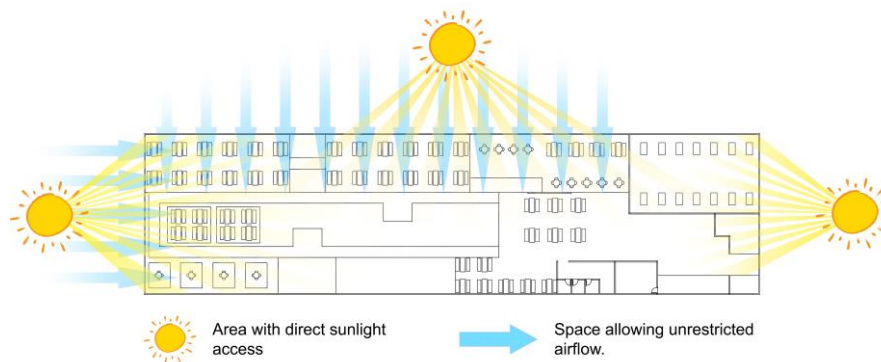


Figure 11. Café layout conditions in relation to ambient aspects (lighting and air circulation).

Source : Author, 2025

Table 1. visitor behavior at Bento Café in determining seating based on ambient conditions.

Time (Hours)	Behavior analysis	Documentation
Morning – Afternoon (08.00 – 12.00)	During the late morning to afternoon period, the semi-outdoor seating area was the most frequently selected location by visitors. Tables measuring 80 cm × 200 cm provided sufficient space to accommodate both dining and working activities, while a circulation distance of approximately 2 meters allowed visitors to move smoothly without disturbing those who were seated.	 

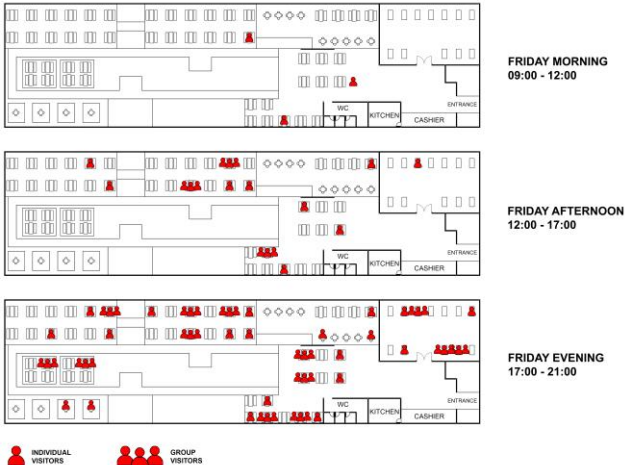
Time (Hours)	Behavior analysis	Documentation
Afternoon – Evening (12.00–17.00)	During the afternoon period, the semi-outdoor area remained the most preferred location among visitors. As the late afternoon progressed, when temperatures began to decrease and solar exposure diminished, visitors gradually started to occupy the outdoor area.	
Evening – Night (17.00 – 21.00)	During the evening period, visitor activity demonstrated a more pronounced shift toward the outdoor and semi-outdoor areas. Meanwhile, the indoor area tended to be less preferred, with a relatively lower number of visitors compared to the other two zones.	

Source : Author, 2025

Tabel 2. Seating place mapping of visitors at Bento Café.

Day	Visitor behavioral
Thursday, 20 November 2025	 FRIDAY MORNING 09:00 - 12:00 FRIDAY AFTERNOON 12:00 - 17:00 FRIDAY EVENING 17:00 - 21:00 INDIVIDUAL VISITORS GROUP VISITORS

On Thursday morning (09:00–12:00), visitors tended to choose the semi-outdoor area located near the cashier, as it offered thermal comfort by providing protection from direct sunlight while still allowing natural airflow. During the afternoon session (12:00–

Day	Visitor behavioral
	17:00), preferences shifted toward the outdoor area as solar heat intensity decreased, enabling visitors to enjoy the open space with natural breezes without experiencing thermal discomfort. In the evening session (17:00–21:00), when air temperatures became cooler and more stable, visitors occupied all seating areas, including outdoor, semi-outdoor, and indoor zones. At this stage, thermal comfort conditions were relatively even across spaces, and seating selection was influenced more by social activity needs and personal preferences than by microclimatic factors.
Friday, 21 November 2025	 FRIDAY MORNING 09:00 - 12:00 FRIDAY AFTERNOON 12:00 - 17:00 FRIDAY EVENING 17:00 - 21:00 INDIVIDUAL VISITORS GROUP VISITORS
	On Friday between 09:00 and 12:00, the café was relatively less crowded compared to other weekdays, with only a small number of visitors occupying the seating areas. This condition was influenced by socio-religious activities occurring during that period. Visitors who were present continued to show a preference for the semi-outdoor area near the cashier, primarily due to considerations of thermal comfort and natural air circulation. Entering the afternoon session (12:00–17:00), the number of visitors began to increase, and seating preferences shifted toward the outdoor area as air temperatures became more comfortable with the reduced intensity of solar heat. During the evening session (17:00–21:00), when temperatures were cooler and more stable, all seating areas outdoor, semi-outdoor, and indoor became more evenly occupied, with spatial selection influenced more by social activity needs and personal preferences than by environmental factors.
Saturday, 22 November 2025	 SATURDAY MORNING 09:00 - 12:00 SATURDAY AFTERNOON 12:00 - 17:00 SATURDAY EVENING 17:00 - 21:00 INDIVIDUAL VISITORS GROUP VISITORS
	During the morning to afternoon session (09:00–12:00), the café was predominantly occupied by students, freelancers, and members of the general public utilizing their day off for leisure activities. Consequently, seating selection was influenced not only

Day	Visitor behavioral
	by thermal comfort but also by visual preference and overall spatial comfort. The semi-outdoor and outdoor areas tended to fill more quickly, as they offered an open atmosphere and natural air circulation. In the afternoon session (12:00–17:00), visitor density increased significantly, particularly in the outdoor area. Although solar exposure remained noticeable, visitors appeared willing to tolerate these conditions in order to enjoy the open-air ambiance and social activities. Entering the evening period (17:00–21:00), all seating areas indoor, semi-outdoor, and outdoor reached high occupancy levels, with spatial choice influenced more by social interaction needs, group capacity, and length of stay rather than solely by microclimatic factors.

Source : Author, 2025

Table 3. Visitor responses to servicescape aspects

Servicescape		Visitor behavioral response
Aspect	Item	
Ambient Conditions	Temperature	Visitors tended to avoid seating areas with excessively high temperatures, such as the outdoor zone directly exposed to sunlight, particularly during midday hours (10:00–15:00).
	Air Quality	Visitors tended to prefer areas with natural air circulation while remaining protected from direct sunlight, such as the semi-outdoor zone, which provides adequate airflow under a covered roof structure.
	Natural Lighting	The semi-outdoor area with natural lighting, particularly those located adjacent to the outdoor open space, was more frequently preferred by visitors because it allowed daylight to enter without direct exposure to sunlight. This condition was generally favored over the indoor area, which relied primarily on artificial lighting, as well as semi-outdoor sections situated farther from the open space that appeared dimmer and required additional artificial illumination.
	Noise	Visitors did not perceive moderate levels of noise as problematic, provided that they remained within reasonable limits. Sounds such as background music were even considered an added attraction, as long as the volume did not interfere with auditory comfort.
Spatial layout & functionality	Layout	Individual visitors or small groups tended to prefer seating layouts arranged linearly or face-to-face with adequate spacing between tables, as these configurations provided clearer visual orientation, unobstructed circulation access, and a greater sense of personal comfort. In contrast, clustered seating layouts with relatively closer table spacing were more frequently selected by visitors arriving in larger groups.
	Furniture	The indoor area, designed without conventional chairs and featuring tables placed on synthetic grass flooring, was more frequently preferred by younger

Servicescape		Visitor behavioral response
Aspect	Item	
		visitors, such as university students, as it conveyed a relaxed and flexible atmosphere. Meanwhile, long wooden tables measuring approximately 160 cm, paired with wooden chairs in the semi-outdoor and outdoor areas, were more favored by group visitors because they could accommodate multiple users simultaneously and support social interaction. In contrast, small round tables with a diameter of approximately 60 cm, accompanied by metal chairs, were typically selected by individual visitors or small groups due to their practicality, accessibility, and suitability for shorter visits.
Sign, symbol & artifact	Signage	Signage, decorative elements, and interior design did not exert a significant influence on visitors' behavior in determining seating location. This is largely due to the café's spatial character, which is dominated by semi-outdoor areas without walls or partitions. As a result, visual elements such as restroom signage, potted plants, and pendant lighting function more as supportive features that enhance atmosphere and spatial orientation, particularly at night, rather than as primary factors driving seating selection.
	Room Decoration	
	Interior Design	

Source : Author, 2025

The discussion of these findings aims to examine and demonstrate that the servicescape concept proposed by Bitner remains relevant and effective in influencing consumer comfort levels. Within the context of this study, servicescape is understood through the role of its various dimensions in shaping consumers' seating preferences, which are influenced by the café's spatial layout. These findings are consistent with previous research conducted by (Tela et al., 2022) which states that well-designed and carefully planned servicescape elements can enhance spatial attractiveness and increase the intensity of consumer engagement within commercial environments.

Ambient conditions, the observational findings at Bento Café indicate that visitors tend to avoid seating areas directly exposed to sunlight, particularly during the morning to afternoon period. Areas with adequate air circulation and balanced natural lighting, especially within the semi-outdoor zone, emerged as the primary preference. These findings align with the study by (Wulandari & Zulfikri, 2024) which states that visitor comfort preferences are strongly influenced by ventilation layout and lighting configuration. Although the spatial openings meet minimum standards, their dimensions and orientation contribute to increased indoor temperatures, particularly in the late afternoon when direct solar radiation penetrates the seating areas.

spatial layout and functionality, observations at Bento Café reveal that visitors tend to select seating arrangements that best correspond to their needs and the scale of their visit. Individual visitors or small groups more frequently choose side areas or relatively private zones, while larger groups tend to select areas equipped with long tables and seating capable of accommodating multiple members simultaneously. These findings are consistent with the research conducted by (Gerald & Darmayanti, 2023) which emphasizes that layout and seating facilities constitute crucial elements in cafés or coffee shops, as tables and chairs function as the primary infrastructure for consumption activities. Furthermore, ergonomic

factors play a significant role in determining visitor comfort levels, with suitability influenced by dimensional standards of tables and seating facilities in accordance with user characteristics and patterns of use.

5. CONCLUSION

Based on direct observations examined through Bitner's (1992) servicescape framework, this study indicates that seating preferences at Kafe Bento form a relatively consistent pattern that can be explained through the interrelationship among servicescape elements. The semi-outdoor area emerges as the primary choice compared to indoor and outdoor zones, influenced not only by environmental factors such as lighting and thermal conditions, but also by more spacious spatial qualities, smoother circulation, and the use of larger-scale furniture. The combination of physical comfort and the visual perception of a more open and expansive space contributes significantly to visitors' overall comfort levels. In contrast, the outdoor area, characterized by smaller table dimensions, tends to be less preferred, particularly during the morning to midday period when rising ambient temperatures reduce both thermal and functional comfort. These findings suggest that the compatibility between furniture dimensions and visitors' activity needs, along with accompanying ambient conditions, plays a crucial role in shaping seating preferences. Overall, visitor preferences do not emerge independently; rather, they represent a response to the integrated interaction between environmental conditions, spatial organization, and furniture characteristics, reaffirming the continued relevance of the servicescape concept in explaining café visitor behavior and highlighting the strategic role of spatial design quality in shaping comfort and user experience.

This study demonstrates that in the context of a medium-scale café located in a warm tropical climate, the ambient conditions dimension exerts the most dominant influence on seating preferences, particularly during the morning to midday period when solar radiation intensity increases significantly. Factors such as ambient temperature, direct sunlight exposure, air circulation, and natural lighting become primary considerations in the initial stage of seat selection, positioning thermal comfort as a prerequisite before visitors evaluate other aspects. When an area is perceived as thermally comfortable, with adequate airflow and balanced lighting, visitors tend to be more flexible in choosing seating positions as long as functional comfort is maintained. At a subsequent stage, the spatial layout and functionality dimension serves as a secondary criterion supporting the decision-making process, particularly through circulation efficiency and the suitability of furniture dimensions to users' activity needs. Meanwhile, the signs, symbols, and artifacts dimension demonstrates relatively low relevance within a semi-open café setting characterized by a legible spatial arrangement, where visitors do not heavily rely on visual markers to understand spatial orientation or identity.

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