



Inclusive Servicescape Design in Hotels: Examining Its Impact on Perceived Inclusiveness, Value, and Guest Loyalty

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Abstract

This study investigates international tourists' perceptions of inclusive servicescape design in hotels, examining how accessible physical environments and socially inclusive interactions influence guests' sense of belonging, perceived value, and loyalty. Using structural equation modelling, the research examines the relationships between inclusive servicescape design, perceived inclusiveness, perceived value, and hotel loyalty. The findings reveal that inclusive servicescape design significantly enhances perceptions of inclusiveness and value, thereby positively affecting emotional attachment and behavioural loyalty. The study confirms that the influence of inclusive design on loyalty is mediated by psychological evaluations of inclusiveness and value, emphasising the role of cognitive and emotional processes in shaping customer behaviour. By extending servicescape theory and the stimulus–organism–response paradigm within the hospitality context, this research highlights inclusivity as both a moral obligation and a strategic advantage. From a practical standpoint, the results suggest that inclusivity should be considered not only as a compliance requirement but also as a value-driven strategy to enhance guest relationships and improve hotel competitiveness in the global market.

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INTRODUCTION

In an increasingly competitive global hospitality landscape, hotels must go beyond aesthetics and comfort to deliver inclusive environments that genuinely support Tourism for All. Traditional servicescape research has long demonstrated that physical surroundings—ambient conditions, layout, signage, and décor—serve as stimuli that influence customers’ internal evaluations and subsequent behaviours (Bitner, 1992; Pai, 2025). However, fewer studies explicitly integrate accessibility, universal design, or inclusive servicescape features that address the needs of elderly guests, persons with disabilities, or travellers with diverse sensory or mobility requirements. While existing work links the general concept of servicescape to outcomes such as perceived value, satisfaction, and loyalty (Dedeoglu et al., 2018; Väisänen et al., 2023), much of this evidence arises from mainstream populations. For example, Dedeoglu et al. (2018) found that hotel servicescape was a significant antecedent of hedonic value among first-time tourists. Similarly, Väisänen et al. (2023) modelled perceived value, satisfaction, and loyalty in hotels by including servicescape attributes (e.g., aesthetics, cleanliness). These studies imply that when hotels carefully attend to the design of their environments, guests perceive greater value and are more likely to engage in favourable behaviours.

Despite growing scholarly attention to servicescape design, a critical gap remains in understanding how inclusive servicescape features—those intentionally tailored to promote equal usability, accessibility, and comfort—shape international tourists’ perceptions of value and loyalty. While traditional servicescape studies emphasise aesthetics, ambience, and functionality, little research has examined how universal access elements, such as spatial layout, clear signage, assistive technologies, and supportive staff interactions, influence the overall guest experience, particularly for travellers with accessibility needs. Addressing this gap, the present study develops a conceptual framework that integrates four key constructs: inclusive

servicescape design, referring to the physical and sensory environment embedding accessibility features; perceived inclusiveness, denoting the extent to which guests feel equally welcomed and accommodated; perceived value, representing guests' cognitive evaluations of benefits relative to costs; and hotel loyalty, reflecting their intentions to revisit, recommend, and maintain preference for inclusive hospitality providers.

Guided by the stimulus–organism–response (SOR) paradigm, the model posits that an inclusive servicescape (stimulus) influences guests' internal perceptions (organism: perceived inclusiveness, perceived value), which then drives loyalty behaviour (response). To test this, the study will employ Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) to validate the empirical relationships among these constructs. Accordingly, this research is anchored by one comprehensive objective: To examine international tourists' perceptions of inclusive servicescape design in hotels—addressing the needs of elderly travellers, persons with disabilities, and guests with diverse accessibility requirements—and to measure, analyse, and test the interrelationships among inclusive servicescape design, perceived inclusiveness, perceived value, and hotel loyalty via a validated SEM model.

By doing so, the present study aims to offer both theoretical contributions—by extending servicescape scholarship into inclusive design—and practical insights for hotel managers seeking to implement environments that truly support tourism for all.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Inclusive Servicescape Design in Hotels

Inclusive servicescape design in hotels refers to the creation of physical and social environments that accommodate diverse guest needs, ensuring accessibility, comfort, and equitable experiences for all visitors, including those with disabilities and elderly travellers. The concept integrates environmental psychology with hospitality management, emphasising the role of the physical

space in shaping customer perceptions and behaviour (Bitner, 1992). In the context of hotels, inclusive servicescape design encompasses several components, such as accessible entrances, pathways, signage, rooms, and amenities, as well as the social inclusivity of interactions between staff and guests. As hotels strive to enhance guest satisfaction, inclusive design goes beyond merely complying with legal standards (e.g., the Americans with Disabilities Act or similar local regulations). It emphasises a holistic approach to creating an environment that fosters a sense of belonging and emotional connection, which can significantly impact perceived value and loyalty (Liu & Park, 2015). The significance of inclusive servicescape design lies in its ability to affect customer perceptions, including perceived inclusiveness, perceived value, and customer loyalty. According to Turley and Milliman (2000), the physical environment in which services are delivered plays a crucial role in shaping customer experiences and can influence their attitudes toward the service provider. Specifically, an inclusive design that addresses diverse physical and social needs can increase guest satisfaction, create positive emotional experiences, and ultimately lead to long-term loyalty. This is particularly important in the hospitality industry, where repeat visits and customer loyalty are critical to business sustainability (Ehrenreich & Dube, 2019).

Inclusive servicescape design also serves as a strategic tool for attracting a broader customer base, including ageing populations and people with disabilities, who may feel marginalised or underserved in traditional hospitality settings (Stewart, 2014). As these demographic groups represent a growing segment of the tourism market, their needs must be adequately addressed to ensure a competitive edge. Furthermore, inclusive design has been recognised as a moral and ethical imperative, as it ensures that all individuals, regardless of their physical or cognitive abilities, can participate fully in society and its leisure offerings (Schaller, 2017). Recent studies have also highlighted the

importance of incorporating inclusive design elements into both the built environment and the organisational culture of hotels. Physical attributes such as wider doorways, wheelchair ramps, and accessible bathrooms are critical to providing functional accessibility. However, as emphasised by McIntyre (2016), social inclusivity—such as staff training in respectful interactions and in understanding diverse needs—also influences guest perceptions. This dual focus on the physical and social elements of the servicescape helps in creating a more comprehensive and effective inclusive environment.

In summary, inclusive servicescape design is a vital aspect of hotel management that not only helps meet accessibility standards but also enhances guest satisfaction and loyalty. It enables hotels to cater to diverse customer segments, fostering both emotional and cognitive connections with guests and promoting long-term business success. The integration of inclusive design principles within the servicescape framework positions hotels as leaders in both customer service and social responsibility.

Perceived Inclusiveness

Perceived inclusiveness in hotel servicescape design refers to how guests perceive the physical and social environment of a hotel as welcoming and accommodating to individuals from diverse backgrounds, particularly those with disabilities, older adults, and other marginalised groups. It encompasses both physical accessibility and the social inclusiveness of staff interactions and overall hotel culture (Baker & Cameron, 2008). A key aspect of perceived inclusiveness is how these elements combine to foster a sense of belonging, which is essential for enhancing customer satisfaction and loyalty in the hospitality industry (Kim & Lee, 2019). The perception of inclusiveness can be evaluated along two primary dimensions: physical and social. Physical inclusiveness involves features such as accessible rooms, ramps, elevators, and proper signage, designed to accommodate individuals with mobility

impairments, as well as sensory elements for guests with vision or hearing disabilities (Bakker et al., 2020). Meanwhile, social inclusiveness extends to interactions between guests and staff, encompassing behaviours such as respect, understanding, and empathy toward all guests, regardless of their physical abilities (Schaller, 2017). Recent research underscores that the physical environment alone is not sufficient to create a truly inclusive experience; staff attitudes and behaviours are equally critical in shaping guests' perceptions of inclusiveness. For instance, a study by McIntyre et al. (2021) found that inclusivity-focused staff training leads to a heightened sense of emotional safety for guests with disabilities. Guests feel more welcomed and respected when hotel staff are proactive in addressing their needs, and this social inclusiveness directly influences guest satisfaction and loyalty. As societal expectations surrounding diversity and inclusion continue to evolve, hotels are increasingly focusing on integrating inclusivity into their servicescape design, not just as a compliance measure but as a way to enhance competitive advantage. According to Wang et al. (2019), inclusive design is becoming a critical factor for hotels to attract diverse customer segments, especially ageing populations and individuals with special needs, who are becoming more vocal in their demands for accessible and inclusive experiences. This growing market segment has made perceived inclusiveness a key driver of customer loyalty, particularly as older travellers and people with disabilities represent an increasing share of the tourism market (Ehrenreich & Dube, 2019).

Research by Albrecht et al. (2020) emphasises that perceived inclusiveness in hotels improves guest loyalty by fostering an emotional bond between guests and the hotel. This emotional connection stems not only from the functional aspects of the servicescape (e.g., ramps, accessible amenities) but also from the hotel's social climate, where guests feel valued, and their needs are respected. This finding aligns with previous research by McDougall and Levesque (2000), which found that when hotels are perceived as inclusive,

guests are more likely to form positive emotional attachments and exhibit repeat patronage. Additionally, the impact of inclusiveness on customer loyalty is further reinforced by the cognitive and emotional satisfaction frameworks in hospitality studies (Liu & Park, 2015). In this regard, perceived inclusiveness is not only about accessibility but also about how the hotel's inclusive atmosphere makes guests feel emotionally supported and valued. This approach highlights that inclusiveness is integral to guest loyalty, particularly when hotel experiences align with the personal values of travellers who prioritise diversity and inclusion (Kim & Lee, 2019). In the context of modern global tourism, perceived inclusiveness is increasingly seen as a competitive differentiator in the hospitality industry. Research by Stewart (2021) found that travellers who perceive a hotel as inclusive are more likely to recommend it to others, creating a powerful word-of-mouth effect that enhances the hotel's market reputation. This underscores the importance of inclusivity not only as a moral imperative but also as a strategic business advantage, particularly in a highly competitive global market where travellers have more choices than ever before.

Perceived Value

Perceived value is a crucial construct in hospitality research, representing the guests' evaluation of the benefits they receive from a hotel stay relative to the costs incurred (Zeithaml, 1988). It is a multidimensional concept that encompasses both cognitive and emotional aspects and influences customer satisfaction, loyalty, and behavioural intentions. In the context of inclusive servicescape design, perceived value reflects how the inclusive elements of the hotel environment—ranging from accessible physical spaces to respectful social interactions—affect guests' overall assessment of the quality and worth of their experience (Sweeney & Soutar, 2001). The relationship between inclusive servicescape design and perceived value has gained increasing attention in hospitality literature. The concept of perceived value in the hospitality context is often evaluated by comparing what a guest receives—such

as convenience, comfort, and quality of service—to the sacrifices they make — such as financial costs, time, and effort. As noted by Liu and Park (2015), perceived value is shaped not only by functional attributes such as accessibility and comfort but also by the emotional and social dimensions of the guest experience, including the sense of inclusion, respect, and personalisation guests feel during their stay.

Inclusive design in hotels enhances perceived value in several ways. First, accessible environments that cater to the needs of diverse guests—such as those with disabilities or elderly travellers—can significantly increase the perceived worth of a hotel experience. For instance, providing features such as wheelchair-accessible rooms, ramps, and clear signage is often seen as an added benefit that enhances the functional value of a hotel stay. However, perceived value is also influenced by the social aspects of inclusivity, such as staff behaviour and attitudes. Hotels that train staff to be respectful, empathetic, and accommodating to all guests, regardless of their abilities or backgrounds, foster a positive emotional experience that enhances the perceived value of the stay (Sweeney & Soutar, 2001). Recent research has highlighted that perceived value in inclusive servicescape design is not only about the provision of tangible, accessible features but also about creating an environment that emotionally connects with guests. A study by Whelan et al. (2020) found that the inclusion of accessible, aesthetically pleasing design features, combined with social inclusivity, increased guest satisfaction and perceived value by enhancing the overall emotional experience. In this sense, inclusive design adds value not only by meeting basic accessibility needs but by enhancing the overall atmosphere and emotional appeal of the hotel, leading to stronger guest attachments and loyalty (Chen & Chen, 2018). In addition, perceived value is closely linked to customer expectations and the degree to which these expectations are met or exceeded. For guests with specific accessibility needs, inclusive design may be a critical factor in meeting their expectations, thereby

enhancing their perceived value of the hotel experience (Sweeney et al., 2016). When guests perceive that a hotel offers an environment that caters to their individual needs, this strengthens the hotel's perceived value. It can create positive word-of-mouth, further bolstering its reputation (Pereira et al., 2021). This is particularly relevant as travellers become more discerning and expect a higher level of personalisation and inclusivity in their accommodations (Kim & Lee, 2019). Furthermore, perceived value in the context of inclusive servicescape design contributes to customer loyalty, as guests who feel valued and included are more likely to return to the hotel. Research by Ehrenreich and Dube (2019) shows that perceived value mediates the relationship between inclusive servicescape features and guest loyalty, suggesting that when guests perceive that their needs are met, they are more likely to become repeat customers and engage in positive behaviour toward the hotel, such as recommending it to others. Finally, hotels that focus on inclusive servicescape design position themselves to attract a broader customer base, thereby increasing perceived value for individual guests and enhancing the hotel's competitiveness in the market. As discussed by Stewart (2021), inclusivity in hotel design is becoming a competitive advantage as more consumers seek brands that prioritise diversity and accessibility. Therefore, hotels that invest in inclusive design can build long-term customer relationships, enhance their market reputation, and ultimately achieve greater business success.

Hotel Loyalty

Hotel loyalty is a key construct in hospitality research, representing the long-term relationship between a guest and a hotel brand, characterised by repeated patronage and positive behavioural intentions such as word-of-mouth recommendations and brand advocacy (Chen & Chen, 2018). Loyalty in the hotel context extends beyond mere repeat bookings and encompasses emotional attachment, trust, and a sense of attachment to the hotel brand (Oliver, 1999). Loyalty is often conceptualised as a multidimensional construct, involving

attitudinal, behavioural, and cognitive components that influence customers' decisions to return to a hotel and recommend it to others (Dick & Basu, 1994). Hotel loyalty has become an essential factor in long-term business success, especially in a highly competitive, saturated market where guests have many choices. A well-developed sense of loyalty not only leads to repeat visits but also provides opportunities for upselling, customer referrals, and stronger brand equity (Ehrenreich & Dube, 2019). As loyalty is crucial to a hotel's profitability, understanding the factors that drive guest loyalty is essential for both academic research and practical applications in hospitality management. Inclusive servicescape design plays a significant role in shaping hotel loyalty by creating an environment that meets the needs of all guests, particularly those with diverse accessibility needs, such as older travellers and people with disabilities. The link between inclusive servicescape design and hotel loyalty can be explained through various psychological and emotional mechanisms. Research suggests that when guests feel their specific needs are met—whether through physical accessibility or respectful social interactions—they are more likely to form positive attitudes toward the hotel, leading to increased satisfaction and loyalty (Kim & Lee, 2019). This is consistent with the findings of Liu and Park (2015), who emphasised that hotels that prioritise inclusivity and accessibility are better able to foster strong emotional bonds with their guests, leading to greater loyalty. The importance of inclusivity in shaping loyalty is further supported by the stimulus-organism-response (S-O-R) model in servicescapes. According to this model, environmental stimuli (such as inclusive design features) affect guests' internal states (emotions, perceptions of inclusiveness), which, in turn, influence behavioural responses (loyalty, repeat visitation) (Bitner, 1992). Inclusive servicescape elements, such as wheelchair-accessible rooms, ramps, and signage, serve as stimuli that enhance guests' psychological and emotional comfort. When guests perceive that a hotel goes beyond basic legal requirements to provide an inclusive and welcoming environment, they

are more likely to exhibit loyalty through both repeat visits and positive word-of-mouth recommendations (Stewart, 2021).

The social aspect of inclusivity also plays a critical role in fostering loyalty. Research by McIntyre et al. (2021) found that the way hotel staff interact with guests—particularly guests with disabilities—can significantly affect perceptions of inclusiveness and loyalty. Respectful and empathetic interactions between hotel staff and guests contribute to a more positive guest experience, which, in turn, increases the likelihood of loyalty. Guests who feel emotionally valued are more likely to develop a strong attachment to the hotel brand and remain loyal to it over time (Chen & Chen, 2018). Moreover, the relationship between inclusive servicescape design and hotel loyalty is influenced by perceived value—the guests’ assessment of the benefits received relative to the costs incurred during their stay (Liu & Park, 2015). As discussed previously, when guests perceive a hotel as inclusive, they tend to assign greater value to their experience, which can enhance their overall satisfaction and contribute to loyalty. Hotels that offer an inclusive and accessible environment often stand out in guests' minds, as they feel their needs are understood and respected, fostering trust and emotional attachment, which are key elements of loyalty. Recent studies also highlight the impact of perceived corporate social responsibility (CSR) initiatives on hotel loyalty. Hotels that prioritise inclusivity in their servicescape design may be seen as demonstrating a commitment to CSR, which further enhances loyalty (Pereira et al., 2021). Guests are increasingly aware of businesses' social responsibility and may feel more loyal to brands that align with their personal values, particularly those related to diversity and inclusivity (Ehrenreich & Dube, 2019). In conclusion, hotel loyalty is strongly influenced by inclusive servicescape design, both through physical accessibility features and the social inclusiveness of staff and interactions. By focusing on inclusivity, hotels can create a more emotionally supportive and welcoming environment for all guests, leading to higher levels

of satisfaction, trust, and loyalty. As the hospitality industry continues to evolve, inclusivity will likely remain a critical factor in cultivating long-term customer relationships and driving business success.

Conceptual Framework and Proposed Hypotheses

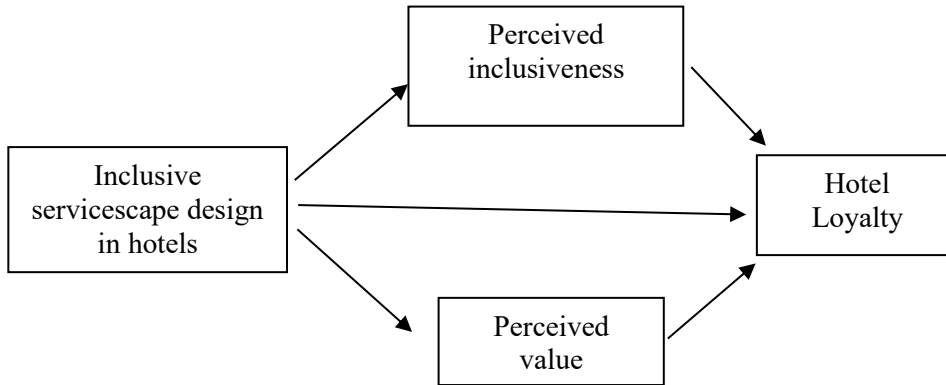


Figure 1: Conceptual Framework

Source: Author's own

Grounded in the Stimulus–Organism–Response (S-O-R) paradigm (Mehrabian & Russell, 1974), this study conceptualises inclusive servicescape design in hotels as the environmental stimulus that influences guests' internal evaluations—perceived inclusiveness and perceived value—which in turn shape the behavioural response, expressed as hotel loyalty. The servicescape represents the tangible and intangible design attributes that frame the service experience (Bitner, 1992). When hotels adopt an inclusive servicescape approach—integrating universal design, clear signage, barrier-free pathways, and sensory comfort—they extend accessibility to diverse traveller groups, including older adults and people with disabilities (Darcy, 2010; Devile & Kastenholz, 2018). Such inclusivity not only supports Tourism for All but also enhances perceived equity and comfort, leading to favourable emotional and cognitive evaluations (Kuo et al., 2022). Previous research has established that the physical and ambient characteristics of a hotel's servicescape directly influence guests' perceptions of service quality, satisfaction, and value (Dedeoglu et al., 2018; Zhang & Huang, 2022). Furthermore, perceived

inclusiveness—the degree to which guests feel welcomed and equally accommodated—can strengthen emotional attachment and trust in the service provider (Kasim et al., 2023). Perceived value, defined as the trade-off between received benefits and incurred costs (Zeithaml, 1988), also mediates the link between environmental design and loyalty behaviours (Väisänen et al., 2023). Based on these relationships, the proposed conceptual model (Figure 1) posits that inclusive servicescape design enhances both perceived inclusiveness and perceived value, thereby fostering hotel loyalty among international tourists.

An inclusive environment signals care, accessibility, and respect for diverse guest needs. Research indicates that accessible design features—such as ramps, elevators, adaptive technologies, and well-trained staff—create a sense of equality and belonging among travellers (Darcy, 2010; Devile & Kastenholz, 2018). When hotels visibly accommodate guests with differing abilities, tourists are more likely to perceive inclusiveness and social acceptance (Kasim et al., 2023). Thus, this study proposes the following hypothesis.

H₁: Inclusive servicescape design in hotels positively influences perceived inclusiveness.

Empirical evidence suggests that aesthetically pleasing, comfortable, and functional environments enhance guests' perceived value (Dedeoglu et al., 2018; Zhang & Huang, 2022). By incorporating inclusive design principles, hotels expand the range of benefits experienced by all guests—reducing physical and cognitive effort, improving comfort, and thereby increasing the perceived worth of their stay (Kuo et al., 2022). Accordingly, this study formulates the following hypothesis.

H₂: Inclusive servicescape design in hotels positively influences perceived value.

Guests who feel respected, accepted, and equally treated are more likely to perceive greater experiential and emotional value in the service encounter. Inclusiveness promotes psychological comfort and perceived fairness, both of

which enhance value perceptions (Hwang & Lyu, 2015; Kasim et al., 2023). In light of the reviewed literature, the study advances the following hypothesis.

H₃: Perceived inclusiveness positively influences perceived value.

When tourists perceive a hotel as inclusive, they form emotional bonds and trust, which lead to repeat patronage and positive word of mouth (Han et al., 2021). Inclusiveness fosters affective commitment—a key predictor of loyalty—particularly in hospitality settings, emphasising diversity and accessibility (Kuo et al., 2022). Consistent with the theoretical foundation discussed above, the following hypothesis is proposed.

H₄: Perceived inclusiveness positively influences hotel loyalty.

Perceived value has been consistently identified as a primary antecedent of loyalty in the hospitality industry (Väisänen et al., 2023; Dedeoglu et al., 2018). When guests believe that the benefits of their stay—comfort, accessibility, fairness, and emotional satisfaction—exceed costs, they are more likely to return and recommend the hotel to others. From the above arguments, the following hypothesis is derived.

H₅: Perceived value positively influences hotel loyalty.

In line with S-O-R theory, inclusive servicescape design (stimulus) first shapes internal perceptions (organism: inclusiveness and value), which subsequently lead to behavioural outcomes (response: loyalty). Prior research confirms that environmental stimuli indirectly affect loyalty through guests' cognitive and affective responses (Dedeoglu et al., 2018; Zhang & Huang, 2022; Han et al., 2021). As a result of the conceptual reasoning presented, the following hypothesis is formulated.

H₆: Perceived inclusiveness and perceived value mediate the relationship between inclusive servicescape design and hotel loyalty.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

A quantitative research approach was employed in this study to systematically examine the interrelationships among inclusive servicescape

design in hotels (as the environmental stimulus), perceived inclusiveness and perceived value (as internal evaluative responses), and hotel loyalty (as the behavioural outcome). Grounded in the Stimulus–Organism–Response (S–O–R) framework, this approach aligns with prior hospitality research that links environmental stimuli to guests’ psychological evaluations and behavioural intentions (Hwang & Lyu, 2015; Bitner, 1992). Quantitative research, underpinned by the positivist paradigm, emphasises objectivity, measurement, and statistical validation, allowing hypotheses to be empirically tested and theoretical propositions to be evaluated through numerical data (Creswell, 1994, 2002). Such an approach is particularly well-suited for research questions framed as “to what extent,” “how much,” or “what is the relationship”, as it enables the quantification of relationships among defined constructs and the identification of causal linkages through statistical modelling (Yin, 2003; Neuman, 2014).

The target population comprised international hotel guests with tourism-for-all experiences who had stayed in hotels in Bangkok, Thailand. This focus was justified by the diversity of international tourists, who represent a heterogeneous consumer segment with varying accessibility needs and heightened awareness of inclusive and sustainable hospitality practices (Darcy, 2010; Kuo et al., 2022). Moreover, Bangkok provides a particularly relevant research context, being both a global tourism hub and a destination confronting inclusivity and accessibility challenges in its hospitality infrastructure (UNWTO, 2021). Investigating inclusive servicescape design in this setting thus contributes to both theoretical understanding and practical implications for accessible tourism development in emerging destinations.

Given the absence of publicly available data on the total population of international guests with accessibility requirements in Bangkok hotels, the sample size was determined using Cochran’s (1953) formula, which is commonly applied when population size is large or unknown. Employing a 95%

confidence level and a 5% margin of error, the minimum sample size was estimated at approximately 400 respondents, consistent with methodological recommendations for behavioural and hospitality research (Israel, 1992; Hair et al., 2019).

A purposive sampling technique was adopted to deliberately select participants with relevant experience of inclusive or accessible hotel environments. This non-probability approach was considered appropriate in this specialised research context, as it ensures that data are collected from respondents who meet predefined inclusion criteria and have informed perspectives on accessibility and inclusiveness (Etikan, Musa, & Alkassim, 2016; Palinkas et al., 2015). Eligible participants were required to meet three criteria: (a) be international tourists who identify with or require accessibility-friendly services (Tourism for All), (b) be aged 19 years or older, and (c) have recently stayed in a hotel in Bangkok within the last 12 months.

While purposive sampling may restrict statistical generalizability, it enhances data validity and contextual relevance, particularly when investigating phenomena involving specific user experiences (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). The final valid dataset consisted of 403 usable responses (from 414 returned questionnaires after data cleaning), exceeding the minimum threshold recommended for Structural Equation Modelling (SEM). Prior methodological guidance supports that sample sizes between 100 and 200 are sufficient depending on model complexity (Hair et al., 2006), and 5–10 respondents per estimated parameter are considered adequate (Bentler & Chou, 1987; Boomsma, 1985). Therefore, the achieved sample size provided robust statistical power, ensuring the reliability, validity, and general interpretability of the SEM analysis.

Data for this study were collected using a structured questionnaire, a widely recognised method in quantitative research for its efficiency, standardisation, and ability to facilitate statistical generalisation (Creswell &

Creswell, 2018; Neuman, 2014). The questionnaire was carefully designed to align with the conceptual framework, encompassing four key constructs: inclusive servicescape design, perceived value, guest satisfaction, and behavioural intention. Each construct was operationalised through measurement items adapted from validated scales in prior hospitality and tourism studies to ensure construct validity and theoretical consistency (Bitner, 1992; Kuo et al., 2022; Hwang & Lyu, 2015).

To ensure content validity and reliability, the development process followed the recommendations of Nunnally and Bernstein (1994) and Hair et al. (2019). Each item was evaluated for relevance, clarity, and internal consistency. A panel of academic experts and hospitality practitioners reviewed the initial questionnaire to ensure that the items accurately reflected the underlying constructs and were contextually appropriate for the hotel setting (DeVellis, 2017). A pilot test was subsequently conducted with a small sample of hotel guests to refine the wording, confirm scale reliability, and assess respondent comprehension (Bryman, 2016). The finalised instrument used a five-point Likert scale, ranging from “strongly disagree” to “strongly agree,” to capture participants’ perceptions in a standardised manner, enabling robust statistical analysis using structural equation modelling (Hair et al., 2019; Bentler & Chou, 1987).

The survey instrument comprised five sections developed in alignment with the study’s conceptual framework. The first section collected demographic information (6 items), including gender, age, nationality, education, income, and travel frequency, to provide essential background for understanding respondent characteristics and to enable subgroup analyses (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). The second section measured inclusive servicescape design in hotels (8 items), focusing on the accessibility and inclusiveness of both physical and social environments. Items assessed spatial layout, signage clarity, sensory comfort, assistive technology, and staff support, and were adapted from

established scales in servicescape and inclusive hospitality literature (Bitner, 1992; Kuo et al., 2022; Darcy, 2010). The third section captured perceived inclusiveness (5 items), reflecting the degree to which guests felt equally accommodated, respected, and included in the hotel environment, thereby extending inclusivity beyond physical accessibility to psychological and social domains (Darcy, 2010; Kuo et al., 2022). The fourth section assessed perceived value (4 items), operationalised as guests' evaluation of the overall benefits of their hotel experience relative to perceived costs, encompassing functional, emotional, and social value dimensions (Zeithaml, 1988; Sánchez-Fernández & Iniesta-Bonillo, 2007). Finally, the fifth section measured hotel loyalty (5 items), covering both attitudinal and behavioural loyalty dimensions, such as intention to revisit, willingness to recommend, preference continuity, and readiness to pay a premium price (Oliver, 1999; Han & Hyun, 2018).

All items were rated on a five-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree), a format widely endorsed for capturing perceptions and behavioural intentions in hospitality and tourism research due to its clarity, comparability, and psychometric robustness (Joshi et al., 2015; Hair et al., 2019). Prior to large-scale data collection, the questionnaire underwent pilot testing with a panel of academic experts, hotel practitioners, and experienced travellers to assess linguistic clarity, item relevance, and cultural appropriateness. This iterative refinement process improved both content validity and face validity, consistent with recommendations by DeVellis (2016) and Boateng et al. (2018). The final instrument thus demonstrated conceptual alignment, contextual sensitivity, and strong measurement reliability for examining the behavioural impacts of inclusive servicescape design in hotels that support Tourism for All.

The survey was conducted between January and August 2026 using a hybrid distribution strategy, integrating both paper-based and digital data collection methods to enhance accessibility and participation. Paper

questionnaires were distributed at hotel entrances, lobbies, and common areas, while digital surveys were accessed through QR codes displayed at reception counters and guest lounges. This multimodal strategy was adopted to ensure inclusivity and convenience, particularly for participants with varying levels of digital literacy and accessibility needs. Such an approach aligns with the tailored survey design methodology advocated by Dillman, Smyth, and Christian (2014), which emphasises reducing coverage error and increasing response representativeness by diversifying response modes. The combination of physical and digital surveys also reflected a post-pandemic adaptation, accommodating tourists who preferred contactless participation for health and safety reasons, a trend increasingly recognised in contemporary hospitality research (Sigala, 2023).

Participation in the study was entirely voluntary, and respondents were fully informed of the research purpose, procedures, and ethical assurances prior to participation. Each respondent was provided with an information sheet outlining their right to withdraw at any stage without penalty, and their responses were guaranteed anonymity and confidentiality—principles regarded as fundamental in ethical hospitality and tourism research (Saunders, Lewis, & Thornhill, 2019). To ensure institutional transparency and cooperation, formal consent was also obtained from the management of participating hotels, ensuring that the study adhered to established ethical protocols and organisational approval standards (Israel & Hay, 2006). Furthermore, the survey implementation followed the ethical principles outlined in the Declaration of Helsinki (World Medical Association, 2013), reinforcing the study's commitment to protecting participants' rights, dignity, and well-being. This robust methodological and ethical framework enhanced the reliability, inclusivity, and integrity of the data collection process, aligning with best practices in empirical hospitality research.

FINDINGS

The presentation of findings in this study follows three structured stages of quantitative analysis, designed to provide a clear, systematic, and empirically grounded interpretation of results. First, a descriptive profile of the international tourist sample is presented to provide contextual understanding of respondent characteristics, including demographic attributes, travel behaviours, and hotel usage patterns. This stage provides foundational insight into the representativeness and diversity of the sample, aligning with recommendations for contextual framing in hospitality and tourism studies (Hair et al., 2019; Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Second, the measurement model is assessed through a series of reliability and validity tests, including Cronbach's alpha, composite reliability (CR), and average variance extracted (AVE), to ensure internal consistency and construct robustness (Fornell & Larcker, 1981; Nunnally & Bernstein, 1994). Convergent and discriminant validity were also evaluated to confirm that the measurement items appropriately captured the underlying theoretical constructs of inclusive servicescape design, perceived inclusiveness, perceived value, and hotel loyalty (Hair et al., 2019). Finally, the results of hypothesis testing within the structural model are reported, identifying direct and indirect relationships among constructs using Structural Equation Modelling (SEM). This final stage emphasises the theoretical contributions and managerial implications derived from the findings, supporting the study's aim to advance knowledge in inclusive hospitality design and guide practical applications for hotel management (Byrne, 2016; Kline, 2016). The structured presentation of findings thus ensures methodological transparency, analytical rigour, and interpretive coherence, facilitating both academic and industry relevance.

Descriptive Analysis of the Sample

The demographic profile of the 403 international hotel guests surveyed in Bangkok provides valuable insight into a diverse yet distinctive segment of

global travellers engaging with inclusive hospitality services. The sample was nearly gender-balanced, comprising 48.16% male and 45.41% female respondents, with 6.43% identifying as LGBTQ+ or preferring not to disclose their gender identity. Such demographic inclusivity reflects the growing recognition of gender and identity diversity in contemporary tourism markets (UNWTO, 2021). In terms of age distribution, the majority of respondents were within the 35–45 years age group (39.7%), followed by those aged 46–56 years (28.3%), and 25–34 years (21.4%), with a smaller representation of guests aged over 56 years (10.6%). This age pattern aligns with global travel trends indicating that mid-career professionals and mature adults are key contributors to international tourism demand, often exhibiting strong preferences for comfort, accessibility, and personalized service quality (Pappas, 2018; Han & Hyun, 2018). Regarding nationality, the largest share of respondents originated from the United States (35%), followed by China (19%), the United Kingdom (17%), Australia (12%), and other countries, including Japan, Germany, and Singapore (17%). This distribution mirrors Bangkok's position as a leading global hub attracting Western and Asia-Pacific travellers seeking both leisure and cultural experiences (Tourism Authority of Thailand, 2025). In terms of educational attainment, the majority of respondents (75%) held at least a bachelor's degree, while 18% possessed a master's degree or higher, and 7% had completed secondary or vocational education. This high educational profile suggests that international travellers in Bangkok are generally well-informed and possess high expectations regarding service quality, inclusivity, and environmental awareness—key factors influencing satisfaction and loyalty in hospitality experiences (Kasim et al., 2023; Kuo et al., 2022). Concerning income level, approximately 42% reported earning an annual income between USD 40,000 and 70,000, while 31% earned above USD 70,000, reflecting a middle-to-upper income segment with substantial discretionary spending power. This demographic aligns with research indicating that higher-income

travellers are more likely to value inclusive design features and sustainability-oriented hotel practices (Han, Yu, & Kim, 2021). Finally, analysis of travel frequency revealed that 55% of respondents had visited Bangkok for the second time, 28% were first-time visitors, and 17% had travelled to the city three or more times. Repeat visitation patterns suggest strong loyalty potential and appreciation for the accessibility and inclusivity efforts of hotels catering to diverse guest needs (Oliver, 1999; Kuo et al., 2022). Overall, the descriptive findings underscore the heterogeneity and sophistication of the international tourist market, providing a strong foundation for analysing their perceptions of inclusive servicescape design, perceived inclusiveness, perceived value, and hotel loyalty.

Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) Analysis

Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) was employed as the primary analytical technique to validate the measurement model and test the hypothesised relationships among Inclusive Servicescape Design (ISD), Perceived Inclusiveness (PI), Perceived Value (PV), and Hotel Loyalty (HL). SEM is particularly well-suited for hospitality and tourism research, as it allows for simultaneous estimation of multiple interrelated dependence relationships while accounting for both measurement error and latent construct correlations (Byrne, 2016; Hair et al., 2010; Kline, 2016). This approach provides a more rigorous and holistic understanding of how inclusive design in hotel environments shapes guests' perceptions and behavioural intentions. Following the two-step analytical procedure recommended by Anderson and Gerbing (1988), the study first assessed the measurement model using Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) to establish construct reliability and validity. Subsequently, the structural model was evaluated to assess the strength, direction, and significance of the hypothesised relationships among constructs.

Measurement Model Evaluation

The CFA results demonstrated a satisfactory model fit to the data ($\chi^2 = 635$, $df = 120$, $p < 0.001$; CFI = 0.943; GFI = 0.944; RMSEA = 0.071). Although the RMSEA value slightly exceeded the conservative threshold of 0.06 suggested by Hu and Bentler (1999), it remained well within the acceptable range for complex behavioural and perception-based models in hospitality contexts (Hair et al., 2010). Convergent validity was strongly supported, with all standardised factor loadings ranging from 0.85 to 0.90, well above the 0.50 benchmark. The Average Variance Extracted (AVE) values exceeded 0.50, and the Composite Reliability (CR) values were above 0.70, indicating satisfactory internal consistency and shared variance among items within each construct. Moreover, Cronbach's alpha coefficients, ranging from 0.87 to 0.91, further confirmed high reliability (Fornell & Larcker, 1981; Hair et al., 2010). Discriminant validity was verified using the Fornell–Larcker criterion, where the square roots of each construct's AVE exceeded their respective inter-construct correlations, confirming that each latent variable was empirically distinct. Furthermore, multicollinearity diagnostics ($VIF < 10$) indicated no significant multicollinearity among predictors, supporting model robustness. Collectively, these results affirm that the measurement model adequately captured the theoretical dimensions of inclusive servicescape design and its psychological and behavioural outcomes (see Table 1).

Table 1 : Hypothesis Testing

Hypotheses	Structural path	Std. Estimate	T-value	Hypothesis result
Hypothesis 1	ISD --> PI	0.625	1.869**	Supported
Hypothesis 2	ISD --> PV	0.694	3.600**	Supported
Hypothesis 3	PI --> PV	0.727	2.766**	Supported
Hypothesis 4	PI --> HL	0.319	2.517*	Supported
Hypothesis 5	PV --> HL	0.421	2.069**	Supported

Variance explained	Indirect effect:
	ISD-->PI-->HL =.451**
R ² (ISD) = 0.678	ISD-->PV-->HL =.501**
R ² (PI) = 0.754	
R ² (PV) = 0.597	

Note 1. ** p< 0.01; *p<0.05

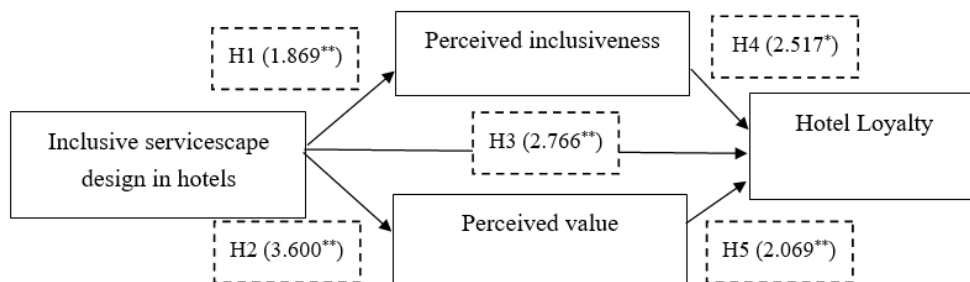
Note 2. ISD = Inclusive Servicescape Design in hotels. PI= Perceived Inclusiveness, PV= Perceived Value and HL= Hotel loyalty

Source: Authors' own

Structural Model Evaluation

The structural model was estimated using AMOS 23, yielding strong and acceptable overall model fit indices ($\chi^2/df = 2.45$; GFI = 0.941; AGFI = 0.974; CFI = 0.933; TLI = 0.976; RMSEA = 0.094). Although the RMSEA was marginally higher than the ideal cut-off, the other indices exceeded recommended thresholds, confirming an overall satisfactory model fit (Hair et al., 2010; Kline, 2016). The findings demonstrated significant and theoretically meaningful relationships among the constructs. Inclusive Servicescape Design (ISD) exerted a strong direct effect on both Perceived Inclusiveness ($\beta = 0.625$, $t = 1.869$, $p < 0.01$) and Perceived Value ($\beta = 0.694$, $t = 3.600$, $p < 0.01$), highlighting the foundational role of inclusive physical and social environments in shaping guests' perceptions of belonging and fairness. Furthermore, Perceived Inclusiveness significantly influenced Perceived Value ($\beta = 0.727$, $t = 2.766$, $p < 0.01$) and Hotel Loyalty ($\beta = 0.319$, $t = 2.517$, $p < 0.05$), emphasising that inclusiveness is not only a matter of social equity but also a strategic determinant of emotional and behavioural engagement. Likewise, Perceived Value positively impacted Hotel Loyalty ($\beta = 0.421$, $t = 2.069$, $p < 0.01$), reinforcing the principle that guests who perceive high value—arising from inclusivity, comfort, and equitable treatment—are more likely to demonstrate loyalty intentions (Zeithaml, 1988; Oliver, 1999), as presented in

Figure 2.

**Figure 2:** Conceptual Model and Hypotheses Testing**Source:** Authors' own

The variance explained (R^2) values demonstrated substantial explanatory power across the model, with R^2 values of 0.678 for Perceived Inclusiveness (PI), 0.754 for Perceived Value (PV), and 0.597 for Hotel Loyalty (HL). These results indicate that the proposed model accounts for a significant proportion of the variance in the key dependent constructs, highlighting its robustness and predictive accuracy. In particular, the high R^2 for perceived value suggests that inclusive servicescape design and perceived inclusiveness jointly serve as powerful antecedents shaping guests' evaluative judgments. Collectively, these findings underscore the pivotal role of inclusive servicescape design as both a functional and symbolic determinant of the overall guest experience—functionally by enhancing accessibility, comfort, and usability, and symbolically by conveying fairness, respect, and belonging. This dual influence aligns with the broader discourse on inclusive hospitality, in which design is not merely an operational attribute but a strategic element in cultivating perceived value and loyalty among diverse guest segments (Bitner, 1992; Han & Hyun, 2018).

Additionally, indirect effect analyses confirmed that ISD indirectly influenced Hotel Loyalty through both Perceived Inclusiveness ($\beta = 0.451$, $p < 0.01$) and Perceived Value ($\beta = 0.501$, $p < 0.01$). This dual mediation underscores the critical role of psychological perception pathways in

transforming physical inclusivity cues into loyalty behaviors—a finding consistent with the servicescape theory (Bitner, 1992) and stimulus–organism–response (S-O-R) paradigm (Mehrabian & Russell, 1974).

Overall, these results provide robust empirical support for the proposed conceptual framework, reinforcing the notion that inclusive environmental design in hotels can strengthen perceived inclusiveness, enhance perceived value, and ultimately foster long-term guest loyalty through both direct and mediated pathways.

DISCUSSION AND IMPLICATIONS

The findings of this study advance theoretical and managerial understanding of inclusive servicescape design in the hotel industry, providing empirical evidence of how accessibility-driven environments influence tourists' perceptions and loyalty behaviours. Grounded in the Stimulus–Organism–Response (S–O–R) paradigm (Mehrabian & Russell, 1974) and servicescape theory (Bitner, 1992), the results confirm that inclusive environmental stimuli—embodied in physical design, assistive technology, and social interaction—significantly shape tourists' internal cognitive and affective evaluations, which ultimately drive loyalty.

Theoretical Discussion

First, the strong and significant effect of Inclusive Servicescape Design (ISD) on Perceived Inclusiveness and Perceived Value supports the argument that hotel environments designed to accommodate diverse accessibility needs not only facilitate physical usability but also foster psychological inclusiveness (Darcy, 2010; Kuo, Lu, & Chang, 2022). This aligns with the social model of disability theory, which emphasises that it is the design of the environment—not the individual's impairment—that determines the inclusiveness of experiences (Devile & Kastenholz, 2018). The results thus extend servicescape theory by integrating inclusivity as a multidimensional construct that encompasses spatial accessibility, sensory comfort, and social equity. Second,

the positive influence of Perceived Inclusiveness on Perceived Value and Hotel Loyalty demonstrates that inclusiveness operates as both a moral and experiential factor in shaping guests' emotional attachment and behavioural intentions. Guests who perceive that hotels treat all individuals with dignity and fairness experience greater emotional satisfaction, trust, and perceived value (Han, Yu, & Kim, 2021). This finding contributes to the growing literature on inclusive hospitality and social sustainability, which posits that inclusiveness enhances not only ethical legitimacy but also market competitiveness (Kasim, Kadir, & Kamaruddin, 2023). Third, Perceived Value emerged as a significant determinant of Hotel Loyalty, corroborating prior studies that identify perceived value as a key driver of customer retention, advocacy, and willingness to pay premiums (Zeithaml, 1988; Oliver, 1999; Väisänen, Komppula, & Laukkanen, 2023). This relationship suggests that inclusivity contributes to loyalty not solely through physical accessibility but by elevating guests' perceptions of fairness, quality, and emotional fulfilment. Moreover, the significant indirect effects of ISD on loyalty, mediated by perceived inclusiveness and perceived value, highlight the mediating role of psychological appraisal. This pathway aligns with the S–O–R logic, in which environmental cues (stimuli) influence internal states (organisms), which then drive behavioural outcomes (responses). The results confirm that inclusive design affects loyalty indirectly, through perceptions of being welcomed, respected, and valued—concepts central to equity and belonging theories (Hwang & Lyu, 2015).

Managerial Implications

From a managerial standpoint, these findings underscore that inclusivity is not merely a compliance requirement but a strategic value proposition. Hotel managers should view inclusive servicescape design as an investment that enhances both guest experience and brand reputation. This entails: 1) Integrating universal design principles—such as accessible layouts, tactile

signage, barrier-free navigation, and adaptive technologies—to ensure usability for all guests, including elderly and disabled travellers (UNWTO, 2021). 2) Fostering an inclusive service culture, where staff are trained to demonstrate empathy, patience, and cultural sensitivity. Emotional inclusivity—expressed through service behaviour—enhances perceived value beyond physical accessibility (Kuo et al., 2022). 3) Communicating inclusivity as a brand identity, leveraging marketing narratives that highlight accessibility and fairness as part of the hotel’s ethical and social responsibility strategy (Kasim et al., 2023). Moreover, 4) Employing feedback systems and accessibility audits to continuously evaluate and improve inclusivity features, thereby strengthening loyalty and repeat patronage. In the post-pandemic era, where guests increasingly seek safe, equitable, and socially responsible travel experiences, integrating inclusivity into hotel design and management is both a competitive differentiator and a driver of long-term sustainability.

CONCLUSIONS

This study empirically validated a conceptual framework for inclusive servicescape design in hotels that supports Tourism for All using Structural Equation Modelling (SEM). The findings confirm that inclusive servicescape design significantly influences perceived inclusiveness, perceived value, and hotel loyalty—both directly and indirectly. By demonstrating substantial explanatory power (R^2 values of 0.678 for perceived inclusiveness, 0.754 for perceived value, and 0.597 for loyalty), the study provides robust evidence that inclusivity is a central mechanism shaping tourists’ psychological and behavioural responses. Theoretically, this research extends the S–O–R model and the servicescape literature by embedding inclusivity as a multidimensional construct encompassing accessibility, fairness, and belonging. In practice, it highlights the strategic imperative for hotels to design and manage environments that embrace diversity, enhance perceived value, and foster loyalty among all travellers—especially those with accessibility needs. Future

research could broaden this framework across diverse cultural and market contexts, employ longitudinal designs to track behavioural loyalty over time, and integrate qualitative insights to deepen understanding of the dynamics of emotional inclusivity. Overall, this study positions inclusive servicescape design not merely as a design practice but as a cornerstone of equitable, sustainable, and human-centred hospitality.

FUTURE RESEARCH DIRECTIONS

While this study provides strong empirical support for the role of inclusive servicescape design in influencing perceived inclusiveness, perceived value, and hotel loyalty, several avenues for future research remain to refine and expand the current framework.

One promising direction for future research is to broaden the application of the conceptual framework across diverse cultural and market contexts. The perceptions and expectations regarding inclusivity in servicescape design may vary significantly across different regions due to varying cultural norms, social attitudes toward diversity, and legal standards for accessibility. For instance, travellers from countries with more robust accessibility regulations may have different expectations than those from countries with less stringent regulations. Examining these cross-cultural differences would provide a more comprehensive understanding of the global applicability of inclusive design principles, enabling hotels to tailor their services to meet the specific needs of diverse guest populations (Schaller, 2017). Additionally, longitudinal studies could be employed to track the long-term effects of inclusive servicescape design on guest loyalty and repeat visitation. While this study provides valuable cross-sectional insights, understanding how perceived inclusiveness and value evolve—particularly for guests with diverse needs—would offer more robust evidence of the sustainability of loyalty driven by inclusive design. Longitudinal research could also help to identify whether initial perceptions of inclusivity have lasting impacts on brand attachment or whether guests' loyalty

diminishes if their needs are not continually met (Pereira et al., 2021). Moreover, integrating qualitative research methods, such as in-depth interviews and focus groups, would enhance our understanding of the emotional and psychological dimensions of inclusivity. While Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) offers a solid statistical foundation, it may not fully capture the intricate emotional experiences that guests with accessibility needs undergo during their hotel stays. Qualitative data could uncover the nuanced feelings of belonging, dignity, or exclusion that may not be reflected in quantitative measures. By combining qualitative insights with quantitative findings, future research could provide a richer, more holistic view of how inclusive servicescape design influences guests' emotional responses and their overall satisfaction (Kim & Lee, 2019). Additionally, researchers could explore how technology can enhance the inclusivity of hotel environments. With the increasing integration of digital technologies into hotel services, such as mobile apps, digital check-ins, and virtual assistance for guests with disabilities, there is an emerging opportunity to examine how technological innovations can support and extend the principles of inclusive design. For instance, how can AI-driven systems enhance accessibility and inclusivity for guests with cognitive impairments or hearing difficulties? Future studies could investigate the synergy between technology and physical design in creating truly inclusive and seamless guest experiences (Whelan et al., 2020). Finally, future research could investigate the impact of inclusive servicescape design on the hotel industry's competitive advantage in greater depth. While this study emphasises the strategic importance of inclusivity, there remains limited research on how inclusive design can be leveraged as a differentiation strategy in the broader hospitality market. Hotels that embrace inclusivity may gain a competitive edge not only by attracting a more diverse customer base but also by positioning themselves as socially responsible, fostering brand loyalty among socially conscious consumers (Ehrenreich & Dube, 2019). Future studies could delve into the

financial implications of inclusive design, assessing its return on investment and how it contributes to both short-term profitability and long-term brand equity. In conclusion, while this study has made significant contributions to the understanding of inclusive servicescape design, future research holds considerable potential to extend this knowledge. By exploring cultural variations, tracking loyalty over time, integrating qualitative perspectives, examining the role of technology, and evaluating the competitive advantages of inclusivity, future studies can further establish inclusive servicescape design as a critical pillar of sustainable and human-centred hospitality.

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