The Relationship between Customer's Acculturation and His Perception of the Physical Environment of Service: A Qualitative Study of Old Palaces Rehabilitated as Restaurants in the Historic City of Damascus

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The Relationship between Customer's Acculturation and His Perception of the Physical Environment of Service: A Qualitative Study of Old Palaces Rehabilitated as Restaurants in the Historic City of Damascus

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Abstract: This research focuses on studying perception of physical environment of a place, which holds rich history, heritage and architectural significance. It contributes to knowledge on environmental perceptions by investigating the role of acculturation in the case of rehabilitated services places. The current research has two objectives i) to identify dimensions of a service space holding significant cultural value and ii) to investigate how varying degrees of consumers acculturation and familiarity with local culture i.e. the old city of Damascus Syria, influences their perceptions about the physical service space. We introduce the concept of "acculturation" to understand the various level of perception and the appropriation of the servicescape. Our results show that the level of customers' acculturation mediates the perception of physical environment. The paper discusses how some old and traditional building, could be perceived as rehabilitated in a service place.

Key words: physical environment, service, acculturation, perception, rehabilitation.

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Introduction

For forty years, the concept of physical environment has become a concern in the marketing research, and particularly in marketing services. The physical environment and all its sensory and social forces involved in the experience of the customer who no longer seek a simple purchase, but also an esthetic experience, sensory, entertaining, are more or less emotionally charged. This becomes more complex when we take in consideration the cultural dimension. It can be applied to both the data space as the client's characteristics.

The physical environment can act as a support of evasion. This reflects what Lombard (2000) calls "the spirit of place." This has a symbolic character, which is determined by the image that the individual will perform according to his knowledge, sensitivity and imagination. However, the spirit of a place can be experienced differently within the same company (Abdulac, 2008). In order to upgrade a place in the eyes of the population, it seems interesting to develop tourism.

In the tourism sector, it is about making optimal use of environmental resources. Moreover, respect for the socio-cultural authenticity, preservation of traditional values, contribute to the quality of intercultural relations. Differentiation in the tourism sector comes from elements from environmental, cultural or social. Differentiation treated in this research focuses on the rehabilitation of traditional places. A Move into private spaces for achieving a market activity, shows two levels of novelty:

- The first one is from the perspective of the provider and on the concept of supply (what can he offer? To whom? How?)
- The second is focused on the client side and for the new look they will have in the service area (perceptions and interpretations of spatial elements, sharing values and forms of behavior).

It is especially this second form of novelty that focuses our thinking.

We propose in this paper to investigate the perception of the physical environment by customers through the example of restaurants in Old Damascus, Syria. These restaurants have the characteristic of courtyard houses formerly built to climatic and environmental characteristics specific to the Syrian culture. The courtyard, microcosm, away from the outside world, gives the house "turned into a restaurant" an unprecedented relationship with nature, the sky, the sun, the fresh air, land, water and vegetation. At a time of global tourism, we will focus on the cultural dimension by offering an experimental design according to the level of acculturation of customers from two different cultures: Syrian and French.

This research aims to evaluate according to five levels of acculturation natives (Syrian living in Syria), expatriates (Syrian residing in France), non-native (Syrian second and third generation living in France) foreigners (French living in Syria) and tourists (French residing outside Syria) the perception of a physical environment strongly marked culturally and representative of a sustainable environmental consideration as traditional. Indeed, considering the architecture dating from before modernity with bioclimatic qualities recognized, it is interesting and informative to question perceptions of tourists according to their degree of familiarity with the place of culture.

The article consists of three parts. The first will be devoted to the analysis of the concepts of physical environment and acculturation. The second will present the exploratory approach

of this research and will expose the field study. Finally, the last section will highlight the main findings, and will be followed by a conclusion that will allow us to present our recommendations.

The theoretical framework
We present, first of all, the theoretical framework of the physical environment, before focusing on the concept of acculturation.

The physical environment
The first search using the term "atmospherics" marketing go back to the year 1973 when Kotler defined it as "*Efforts to design a shopping environment that can produce specific emotional effects among buyers that may increase their likelihood of purchase* "(p. 50). However, a strong ambiguity has been assigned to the physical environment concept that includes innumerable items (March, 2008). In this context, Aubert-Gamet (1997) pointed out the existence of a conceptual vagueness of the concept.

Based on the first conceptualization of the physical environment proposed by Kotler (1973), several authors have focused on identifying the physical environment term that refers to all controllable elements that can influence psychological and emotional responses / or behavioral consumers (Bitner, 1992; Rieunier, 2000; Lovelock and al., 2004). Thus, Ezeh and Harris (2007) define the physical environment of a service as the one in which the service encounter occurs. According to the authors, the physical environment can arouse the customer reactions that lead him to show an approach or avoidance behavior. For Temessek-Behi (2008), the physical environment of the service refers to "*all artificial, natural and social conditions partially controllable and exercise (alone or in interaction) influence on the affective states, cognitive, physiological, and behavior of the occupants of the service (customers and employees)*" (p.71).

Given this multiplicity of definitions of the physical environment, the literature demonstrates great difficulty in establishing an appropriate classification of its components (Donovan and Rossiter, 1982). Thus, Kotler (1973) qualifies the data of the physical environment by a sensory way, and demonstrates that the physical environment is composed of visual factors (color, light, size, shape); sound factors (music, noise); olfactory factors (smell, chills) and tactile factors (temperature, materials, quality of the area). For its part, Baker (1987) consider the human dimension in his typology which contains three categories: 1) the atmospheric factors related to the quality of the ambient air (heating, ventilation, etc.) to auditory environment (noise) to the atmosphere olfactory (smell) and cleanliness; 2) design factors (representing the visual factors of the internal and external environment) and 3) social factors (representing the social environment).

In a service context, and during the time of manufacturing and service consumption, the client is forced to make contact with all components of the service delivery system including the physical elements. However, we raise some questions to be answered: are there differences between clients in their perception of the elements of the service area? These differences may be of a cultural nature. If so, which role does cultural backgrounds play at the customer's exposure to an environmental stimulus in a place of service? To answer these questions, we emphasize that our research is part of the general problem that examines the relationship between the physical environment and consumers. Specifically, we propose to introduce two components: a client-specific: its level of acculturation, the

other relating to the place: the traditional space of a former private palace rehabilitated in a commercial location.

The introduction of these two elements is not accidental. Considering the level of acculturation seemed relevant to us insofar, in the era of globalization, individuals show a multiple identity due to their mobility. Also, include this question of an architecture strongly influenced culturally, leads to a different perspective.

Acculturation and the perception of the physical environment

Acculturation describes all the changes that occur following contact between individuals and groups from different cultures. Thus, entering into the process of acculturation, individuals or groups gradually adopt foreign culture elements (ideas, words, values, norms, behaviors, institutions) during this process (Stamboli-Rodriguez, 2011). Berry et al. (2006) define acculturation as the general process of intercultural contacts and their results. For Peñaloza (1994), acculturation is the movement and adaptation to consumer cultural environment in a country by people of another country.

The work of the Canadian psychologist Berry (Berry, 1990; 2000; Berry et al., 1989) points to the existence of four types of acculturation:

- Integration: the individual maintains its cultural heritage while embracing the cultural values of the host country.
- Separation: under this type of acculturation, the individual avoids interaction with the culture of the host society, he or she values its culture of origin.
- Assimilation: the individual gives up his or her original culture and adopts the new culture.
- Marginalization: the individual acculturated feels rejected by the culture of the host country and has no desire to maintain his culture of origin.

Being a multidimensional phenomenon, different aspects of the process were taken into account to measure the degree of acculturation. Thus, some works have addressed such variables as: using and preference for the media of the host country (Lee and Tse, 1994), the intention to settle permanently in the host country (Jun and al. 1993), control and use of the language of the host country (Peñaloza, 1989), the age of arrival in the host country (Kara and Kara, 1996), the time spent in the country home (Wallendorf and Arnould, 1988; Zimmermann, 1995), etc.

Although acculturation is a widespread phenomenon that has important effects on consumer behavior, there is no work that has verified the potential role of the degree of acculturation in customer perception of an area of service.

However, it would be useful to point out that a review of the literature notes the inclusion of the cultural dimension in the perception of the physical environment. In terms of colors, Roullet et al. (2003) demonstrate that the colors are associated with cultural concepts, sensations and elements of the physical environment. In an olfactory context, it seems that culture is also a factor determining odor perception. In this respect, Maille (1999) found that the sea could be evoked by different scents in Brittany or in the Mediterranean. In terms of hearing, the literature emphasizes that individuals from different cultures have different perceptual behavior when exposed to a sound stimulus (Alpert and Alpert, 1991; Siberil, 2000).

Indeed, we find that all this research demonstrates an academic consensus on the existence of a multiplicity of perceptions against customers of the physical environment to their cultures of origin. This gives us the opportunity to ask questions about the existence of differences between customers in their perception of space by considering their level of acculturation.

Research methodology

We conducted an exploratory qualitative study whose primary objective is to determine the factors that make up the physical environment of a domestic space rehabilitated in a commercial place, but also to examine how the perception of these factors can influence the reactions of customers. It will also verify the existence of such a relationship between the customer's level of acculturation and his or her perception of the renovated space.

To detail the methodology for our qualitative study, we present, first, the field study, and then we explain our methodological approach.

Field study: restaurants of Old Damascus in Syria

We chose to apply our qualitative study about the restaurants located in the historic heart of the city of Damascus, Syria. These restaurants exist in older neighborhoods as "Bab Touma", "Bab Sharqi", "Medhat Pasha", and "Qaimaryah" in the old city.

As the oldest inhabited city in the world, Damascus has been cited in the Pharaonic texts. The old town was inscribed on the World Heritage List in 1979. Since it illustrates a rich heritage, history and architecture, Old Damascus has received a large number of tourists which has grown from year to year.

Since 1992, in Old Damascus, a new phenomenon began to appear: the conversion of traditional houses (old Damascene Palace) built in the Ottoman Empire to restaurants. The architectural results of the opening of these restaurants are varied: some houses have been turned by keeping them as they are, while some others have been renovated in an old faithful style (Abdulac, 2008). In general, we could say that these houses were converted to restaurants faithful to the traditional spirit. Restaurants therefore possess the particularity of courtyard houses formerly built to climate and environmental principles.

Collection and analysis of data

In our qualitative approach, we conducted a series of semi-structured individual interviews with four experts (architects and archaeologists, three Syrian and one French) and twelve customers [eight Syrian (natives living in Syria, expatriates living in France and non-native[1] "Syrian second and third generation" living in France) and four French (immigrants in Syria and tourists)]. Qualitative data were collected between July and August 2011. Although difficult events have marked Syria for more than three years, the situation in Damascus was quiet during most of 2011. Even today, these restaurants are still frequented by Syrian living in Syria, or expatriates residing outside Syria when they have the opportunity to go once or twice a year.

The interviews were conducted in Arabic and French. In order to obtain a coherent analysis, data collected in Arabic was translated into French by the researcher. Each interview was recorded with the consent of the respondent and transcribed in full exhaustively. This first

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[1] Non-native are Syrian whose culture is the legacy of immigrant parents, in other words, are second and third generation immigrants.

stage has transformed the entire investigative material in a format that facilitates analysis (Andreani and Conchon, 2005). Next, we conducted a thematic content analysis to analyze the data from our semi-structured interviews. To facilitate the analysis and interpretation, the data were codified. This consolidation has allowed us to identify several categories and to bring out the answers to our problems. All of our results are discussed in the following section.

Search results

Our exploratory qualitative study allowed answers to our research questions. Two main results emerge from this study: 1) identification of the particularity of the place, and 2) verification of the existence of such a relationship between the customer's level of acculturation and perception of the physical environment service.

1. ***Identification of the particularity of the place***

Returning to the typology Baker (1987), we can identify a triple typicality of these restaurants: the atmosphere, architectural design, and social factors. In the restaurants of Old Damascus, we will notice the strong influence attributed to the physical elements of the space which the client may face.

1.1 The ambiance of restaurants

These restaurants have the characteristic of houses with courtyards and formerly built to climatic and environmental characteristics specific to the Syrian culture. The courtyard microcosm away from the outside world, gives the house "turned into a restaurant" an unprecedented relationship with nature, the sky, the sun, the fresh air, land, water and vegetation. The house seems to close in on them, but at the same time it is opened directly to the nature. There is a connection between the direct courtyard and the open sky.

Figure 1: The courtyard of Old Damascus restaurants

In the Damascene house, several paintings interact to create a unique atmosphere: shade and sun, day and night, water and air. Thus, opening the house to the courtyard allows enjoying the light of the sun. This courtyard therefore looks like a real garden with all the plants and flowers that meet there and above all, the fountain. The courtyard encapsulated

the beauties of the world but also represents Paradise, as highlighted this verbatim: "*So we can say that the house is seen from the outside as walls more or less blind, but behind those walls is hiding something that looks like paradise, and it is by the courtyard (...) This courtyard is like a paradise because there is water, greenery, trees, jasmine and orange which is the symbol of Damascene. This courtyard also, is open to the sky, so there is something spiritual, because you can directly be related to God*".

Indeed, a character inspired by tradition dominates the majority of the elements in the atmosphere of this type of restaurant. Either the lights dimmed lanterns or light, as stated by one expert: "*lighting of an existing restaurant in an old house, is an imitation, or it is inspired by a traditional lighting* ", or the water level of the fountain that plays an essential role as a symbolic element, decorative and functional, as we find it in this verbatim: "*It's good, I like the water and the sound of water is great, it's very soothing (...) is something that cannot be separated from the atmosphere of the house*", or at the vegetation in the yard that preserves the freshness and which emerge from fragrant: "*You can smell some flowers, such as Damascus jasmine scent. Jasmine makes a very important part of the Damascene ambience in these restaurants*".
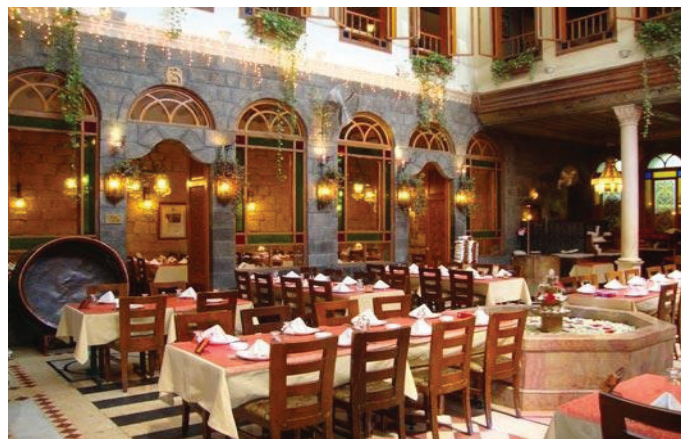

Figure 2: The traditional ambience of Old Damascus restaurants

We think tourists like to find such an atmosphere created as part of the commercial utility since it corresponds to the image, but it can certainly be conducive to trade with friends, or even the entry into conversation with strangers (Syrian or foreign).

Indeed, the traditional and authentic restaurant is not in itself something new; here the novelty lies in the proposed activity. In other words, what is new is that a private place has become a commercial space. The elements of the atmosphere, which in reality never existed as such (at the time, there were no restaurants) are not perceived by customers as new. They refer to a customer perspective, the cultural dimension of the place, and they therefore have no character of novelty, as they are an unconventional point of view of a service provider.

1.2   **Architectural design**

It is recognized that the rehabilitation of architecture may impose on some occasions a change of use. Here, it should be noted that some change proposals might involve partial or total loss of the values of the relevant architecture. In our example, the rehabilitation of Damascene palace restaurants imposed the change of use of the space is no longer a servant but instead dealer. However, this rehabilitation has contributed to the development of architectural elements and decoration. This helped to upgrade the place in the eyes of the people and place it in its historical and cultural reality without limit; itself only to shed light on elements of the past for the purposes of commercial appeal.

The Damascene house is arranged around an enclosed courtyard that maintains a micro-climate, it is interesting to note that the architectures are described as "green"; the buildings are often oriented and organized according to natural elements; the walls are thick and the spatial configuration of the bowl-shaped courtyard facilitates the extraction of hot air, as outlined in the speech of one of our experts: "*Damascus is widely known by the architecture of the houses. In fact, these houses are environmentally friendly because they are adapted to arid climate, for example, to avoid the heat, the house was built closed, i.e. we cannot see anything from outside (...) the architecture of the houses called 'introverted' 'is closed outside and open inside with the courtyard*".

Thus, the architectural organization of the house turned in restaurants allows you to enjoy the favorable elements provided by nature to deal with its aggression. Climatic characteristics of the architecture thus lead to energy savings; the courtyard maintains the temperature of the house protecting it from cold winds, and in summer it helps to cool the atmosphere by evaporation of the pond and plant respiration.

Indeed, the interviewees believe that the architectural design and decoration of the restaurant-refurbished house are very well suited. On one hand, the colors used are conventional or dull; it seems that gray is the dominant color of the walls. This refers to the use of basalt to provide heat insulation and noise insulation as well as a liquid. On the other hand, a feature of Damascene houses attracts the attention of customers: the traditional technique of alternating light and dark stones. Experts think that this is an Ottoman process that characterizes the interior facades of Damascene palaces. Indeed, this technique is attributed to a high use of two alternating stone qualities: light limestone and dark basalt: "*I think this is one of the characteristics of the place that attracts attention (...) this Ottoman technique is traditional and typical of these restaurants, or those buildings*".

Figure 3: The alternation of light and dark stones of Old Damascus restaurants

Also in order to remain faithful to the traditional and authentic old houses Damascene, the use of marquetry furniture in some restaurants adds a certain authenticity: "marquetry *furniture, yes, there is, and it can be well yes (...) for furniture like chairs or couches is authentic*".

Figure 4: The marquetry furniture

The traditional and authentic character of the architecture and decoration are the main elements that mark the clients. For them, it's more of a flashback. However, in the past the restaurant business didn't exist either in these forms, or in those places. We can therefore say that what constitutes a differentiation for the provider is not necessarily perceived by the customer.

1.3 Social factors

These factors correspond to staff and clients whose presence and behavior influence the perception of the physical environment.

As for the staff, the vast majority of respondents attach great importance to the behavior of servers. They provide a very fast service, and show some kindness and sympathy for customers who, in turn, act spontaneously and feel comfortable, as highlighted by this verbatim: "*The staff is friendly and nice. They are kind to the extent that it gives customers a kind of feeling of being at ease, or behaves spontaneously*".

In terms of the appearance of the staff, it turns out that the traditional dominant elements of the physical environment of the restaurant also include the costume of staff. This inspired from the tradition seems very important and in harmony with all other elements. Experts interviewed show that this costume appears as marketing tool to attract customers, particularly tourists, "*In general, it's a costume partly inspired by tradition and partly imaginary, it corresponds to the image we think that the tourist wants to find*".

The traditional attire of staff does not necessarily correspond to the specific clothing worn by the servants of time, but the fact to clothe the servers with, makes it an anachronism not identified by interviewees. These combine the suit first to a cultural dimension matching what they would like to see.

Figure 5: The traditional costume of staff

Moreover, the number of customers in the restaurant who attract the attention of interviewees who meet with friends or family, restaurants of Old Damascus were the most popular "*Other customers, well (...) there are many people who are different in fact, there are families, often there are family, friends, birthdays, so it makes a lot of noise (...) discussions are animated, but that's part of the atmosphere of the restaurant*".

Thus, this may encourage customers to patronize those restaurants while believing in their good reputation. These restaurants are widely used by local clients, often young, but also by tourists who are mainly interested in the rich heritage, history and architecture of the city and are looking to have an extraordinary experience in the old town: "*Some of the clients of these restaurants are tourists who want to experience the old Damascene inhabitants (...) the only difference between the restaurants of Old Damascus and other types of restaurants for customers is that they are of different nationalities and this is normal, because all the tourist seeks what is historical and old and these buildings are old*".

2.   ***Checking the relationship between the customer's level of acculturation and its perception of the rehabilitated area***

At a time of globalization and the mixing of populations, it seems important for us not only to carry out our study to identify different acculturation levels but also to revisit the concept of new places under rehabilitation historic buildings. Our study may contribute to the creation of new knowledge in terms of perception of a rehabilitation project and according to acculturation levels. Thus, we are interested in evaluating the perception of a physical environment strongly influenced culturally by customers from two different cultures (Syrian and French) according to their degree of familiarity with the place of culture. We found differences between the two segments (Syrian and French) in their perception of the physical environment.

2.1   **Perception of the Syrian of Old Damascus Restaurant space**

Syrian meanwhile, they are native, non-native or expatriate, seem to be attached to their Syrian culture. Through interviews, the concept of home was often cited, including expatriates.

Far from the acculturation process, here we are not interested in acculturation of Syrian (expatriates and non-native) that are more or less acculturated to French culture (culture of the host countries of these two Syrian groups), but rather it is their perceptions, attitudes and behaviors in their country of origin where the restaurants are located, that interest us.

As such, we noticed that the physical environment of the restaurant could evoke feelings of well being among the group of expatriates who claim to have, in addition, the feeling of being at home. Indeed, the Syrian group enjoys the atmosphere and the spirit of old he found not only in the restaurant but also in night trips to get there, as pointed out by one of our interviewees, a Syrian expatriate: "*I feel good. In fact, I prefer coming to this restaurant compared to other modern restaurants where you come just to eat (...) I feel that these restaurants in the old town are ours (...) when I am there I am feeling at home (...) also, I love when I walk through the narrow streets of the old town before arriving at the restaurant. I think it's very nice*".

This expatriates attitude against the Old Damascus Restaurant occurs as a normal reaction to what Stamboli-Rodriguez (2011) calls "the longing for home". The latter corresponds to the lack of native city, sea, landscape, historical places, etc. Thus, the fact of being in the old town, in restaurants, could reduce the nostalgic feeling. We also found "the longing for home" among non-native (second and third generation immigrants) who find that the nostalgia is for something unusual or unknown, to an imaginary place. For them, ending up in one of those restaurants favors the emergence of cultural identity; they learn more and more about their culture, their roots and origins: "*I learn about my culture, about myself actually seeing, discovering. Such restaurants, this architecture, all that, I also learn about me (...) I do not find this as something strange, no, on the contrary, I feel at home, here*".

Thus, the rehabilitation of houses and restaurants open to the public, allows guests to attend and support, therefore, upgrade the eyes of the Syrian expatriates and non-native. This is in order to give them the illusion of back home.

Moreover, these restaurants are part of the architectural heritage of Syria. The natives often attend (or when they have time) because they like to give the illusion of plunge a few hours in to their past, as stated in an interview: "*I frequent these restaurants because I love*

to be in the middle of the architectural heritage (...) I actually appreciate the heritage side restaurants that exist in the Old City. It's part of our heritage, the Syrian heritage".

This unique experience that the Syrian wants to live in restaurant allows Damascene houses rehabilitated restaurants to position themselves among the most dynamic market spaces, innovative and functional for the reception of guests.

2.2 Perception of the French restaurants of Old Damascus space

In order to meet the expectations of visitors from around the world, the rehabilitation of old Damascene palace restaurants is just as one of the fruits of favoring experiential places and tourism development practices on the architectural heritage of Damascus.

French tourists actually appreciate the heritage side of the restaurants in the old buildings to the extent that is recovered items from the past to relive them. They are primarily interested in the relative wealth of history, heritage and architecture of Syria Old Damascus especially known for its rich culture: "*the old town, this is where we found artisans that offer arabesques through the windows, where also are the narrow streets, the houses that stick to each other, cafes and restaurants (...) in fact, outside the restaurants, we cannot imagine such beauty ... they say that wealth is never visible, but once you're inside, it's as if you are in paradise*".

As for the French immigrants in Syria, they find that the old city has not lost its cultural identity by transforming the traditional houses in restaurants, but on the contrary, this rehabilitation has strengthened the cultural position of the latter while allowing customers a unique experience that they could perhaps not live elsewhere, as we find it in this verbatim: "*I believe that this experience to go to these restaurants in Damascus, really enjoyed it compared in what I saw in Beirut, it was also identity in something that was completely artificial. As for me, Damascus has kept all transforming (...) it has not lost its traditional features*".

Immigrants lived in Syria for short breaks, have no family or traditional attachment to the reconstruction of the past through the restaurants of the old city of Damascus, but they have developed a sense of place in margin or outside of their professional lives. Preferably, they choose to adapt a particular practice of a consumer business, in other words, visits to restaurants of Old Damascus: "*I am French, but I think I'm attached to the Syrian culture also yes ... in fact, I personally do some sort ... so, I choose what I like in the Syrian culture and same for my French culture ... and if I go to restaurants in the old town, it is because I got used to frequent them (...) I really like the Syrian cuisine, and I like smoked hookah*".

For French, the former palace rehabilitated restaurants are not frozen in time, but it is something that is constantly changing but in an organic way.

Conclusion

Synthesis

Highlight the rehabilitation of old Damascene palaces allowed us to question the new look that the customer can have on the place concerned. The rehabilitation of private spaces commercial locations might appear less ambitious but sometimes very successful and beneficial for heritage preservation.

Our objective was to examine the cultural dimension in the perception of a private place

(old Damascene palace) converted into commercial space (restaurant).

Thus, it is clear from interviews that in his service experience, the client identifies the typicality of restaurants on three points: the atmosphere, the architectural design and social factors are the dimensions that make up the physical environment of restaurants. Two characterstics are highly remarkable in these dimensions:

- The first is natural: these natural elements found in the courtyard of the restaurant, are the pool water that plays a symbolic role, decorative and functional, plants and flowers and scents and natural sunlight.
- The second is traditional and authentic: it dominates the majority of architectural features, atmosphere, staff attire, decor and the food supply.

Beyond the relationship between the physical environment and consumers, we have considered the customer's acculturation level that seemed appropriate thus far, in the era of globalization, individuals show a multiple identity due to their mobility. Also, included is this question of an architecture strongly influenced culturally, leading to a new look that can have the client on the domestic space transformed into merchant location.

The results emerging from this qualitative study support the deductions made from previous work: the physical environment of service is likely to influence customer feedback; relationships can exist and be moderated by the client's level of acculturation.

Reflection on the rehabilitation of old Damascene palace

Our results suggest several recommendations to government and officials of Damascene palace. Indeed, the rehabilitation of old private spaces merchant site reflects the projects and sensitive questions in all kinds of outdoor elements and in which it is particularly important and necessary to take into account the local population and societal organization around these buildings. The goal at the bottom of this rehabilitation is to build the future without erasing all traces of the past. Transforming old palace restaurants is somehow end a meeting between the cultural and socio-economic needs with architectural, climatic and environmental solutions.

On the one hand, it would be quite possible to look more and more about the heritage aspect of this type of space, not only for their tangible values, but also to the intangible heritage value that takes their architectural model. It would be desirable to develop a collaborative approach between the Syrian Ministry of Culture and all services and actors related to the field of rehabilitation of old Damascene palace. The establishment of such an approach could help to rehabilitate these palaces to offer customers (citizens and tourists) public places with a social, cultural and recreational, and giving back to their own palace architectural coherence, cultural and historical. It would be interesting to learn from ecological architectural models of these palace rehabilitated restaurants in the construction of new restaurants or hotels in other neighborhoods or even in other cities.

On the other hand, it would be wise for leaders of rehabilitated areas to develop the elements of design presentations media (work of art, decoration, furniture, architecture, etc.) in a move to attract customers and get them, thereafter, to manifest an intention to return to the place. Moreover, the key to success for managers would work (or update) their offer in a holistic way and be congruent, while giving greater importance to the atmosphere elements by mobilizing all sensory variables, and social factors strengthening employee training and

their dress looks to be in congruence with the style of service. In particular, the cultural aspect of space causes nostalgic feelings and cultural affiliation that could be interesting to include in the client-place relationship.

Limitations and further researches

This research is constrained by a various limitations. First, we focus only on a kind of service activities (restaurant), and a defined architectural place (rehabilitated Syrian palaces). It will be interesting to extend our field to other services' activities (retailing, hotel), to others rehabilitated places (religious places, traditional houses (ghoutas, goubbas), antiques baths, iwans, galleries and battlements…). Second, we categorize five levels of acculturation: natives, expatriates, non-native, foreigners and tourists, from two different cultures: Syrian and French. By the way, we considered acculturation concept through the lens of nationality, opposing local versus foreign. We share Penaloza's (1994) argument wherein consumer acculturation is a general process of movement and adaptation to the consumer cultural environment in one country by persons from another country", it can be considered reductionist. Luedicke (2011) approach which frames consumer acculturation as a complex system of recursive socio-cultural adaptation, could extend our research. In his alternative model, consumer acculturation concerns the socio-cultural discourses, consumption practices, and resources that affect how locals and migrants construct their identities in a circle of mutual observation, translation, and recreation of discourses and practices. Rather than adopting a dialectic consideration between two nationalities, it mixes several socio-cultural elements. This approach could avoid a caricatured account.

All these constraints are the basis for further research opportunities. We can draw up three further researches according an extending to other services' activities, other traditional places, other nationalities.

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