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The Aesthetic and Therapeutic Role of Aquariums in Hospitality Front Offices A Missing Object in Africa

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ABSTRACT

Biophilic design is used in the hospitality industry all over the world to improve the experience for visitors. Aquariums are used as a focal point for the aquarium, can help alleviate stress during check-in, and help strengthen luxury branding. This systemical review examines aesthetic and therapeutic uses of the aquarium as a “missing object” in hospitality in Africa. The worldwide sector is making use of biophilic design to ease guest stress and enhance luxury branding, but there is a significant implementation and research gap in Africa. The study analyzed more than 200 papers using Attention Restoration Theory (ART) and the Heuristic-Systematic Model (HSM) and found that marine biodiversity has a “therapeutic dose,” resulting in a marked decrease in heart rate and enhancement of mood. Higher guest satisfaction and premium room rates go hand in hand with these physiological benefits. The shift to this “wellbeing economy” in Africa is being held back by the high cost of maintaining the reserves, the legacy of managerialism from the colonial era, and culture gaps as exhibited spaces are thought of as “screens” rather than environments. The report suggests a new “Therapeutic Amenity Value” (TAV) measure and recommends for “blue-space” infrastructure that is culturally responsive to overcome these barriers. African stakeholders have a competitive edge in the strategic integration of aquariums in front offices to create a more restorative environment for guests, while simultaneously enhancing the conservation of aquatic resources. The region has the potential to become a long-term catalyst of economic and social development, and to break the cycle of inherited tourism models by institutionalising biophilic building codes.

Keywords: Aquarium Aesthetics; Biophilic Design Products; Hospitality Front Office; Relaxation Attraction.

Introduction

Sensory Design in hospitality, rather than just about efficient service, as was the case in the past, has been emphasized towards creating an immersive environment in the competitive global market,

globally, Saribaş and Demir, (2024). Bhatnagar (2020) mentions the front office of the hotel as the ‘Moment of Truth’ which combines organisational efficiency and guest psychology. To help reduce travel fatigue, hotel chains use Biophilic Design, which includes the use of natural elements, Albughdadi (2022). The aquariums are emphasized as good biophilic features and create a relaxing, multi-sensorial experience in the

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noisy lobbies of the buildings. They are strategically positioned in the African hospitality industry for visitors who are stressed by the city. Local fish species can be a useful tool in promoting luxury standards, highlighting biodiversity and aquarium use supports Attention Restoration Theory which suggests that aquariums reduce physiological stress markers, consequently enhancing well-being of visitors during their visit, (Wolfenden, 2014).

Although wellness programs have a positive impact, hospitality front office workers and visitors encounter a great deal of emotional and cognitive stressors in hospitality front office work, (Cracknell, *et al* 2016). In Africa, the wellness tourism industry has some problems in being competitive because of a lack of therapeutic integration and a mismatch between local practices and international standards. This is reflected in the research gap of “Missing Object in Africa,” which highlights the lack of aquariums in academic and practical consideration compared with their abundance in luxury hotels in other parts of the world. In Africa, key regional challenges include inadequate power supply and specialized maintenance requirements, limiting aquarium adoption.

This study examines the best practices of the hospitality aquarium in the economic centres of Africa and proposes a Frame for Biophilic Aquatic Integration (FBAI) designed to meet the logistical requirements of Africa, (Ayejuyo *et al.*, 2025; Maple *et al.*, 2018). It seeks to inform people of the health benefits of aquariums, as “blue spaces” through sensory design and biophilic principles, with a view of making them luxury market assets (Han *et al.*, 2021; Kelly, 2024). A historical overview of the development of aquariums from the 19th century “parlor pond” to modern ocean-aquarium attractions follows the same path as the development of zoos and zoological gardens, (LeVan, 2015; Omokhoa, 2023). In addition, Han *et*

al., (2021) find that the impact on tourists’ well-being is significant, with fit having a notably large impact, deviance and attractiveness being significant as well.

Furthermore, subjective well-being affects future behavioral intentions, with positive affect serving as a moderator tourists with lower positive emotions perceive more deviance, while those with higher emotions associate greater well-being with attractiveness. The study aims to provide insights for competitive differentiation and sustainable marketing strategies in the aquarium sector. In the global North and parts of Asia, aquariums are standard amenities in luxury hotels, shopping malls, and dedicated tourism hubs. However, in Africa, despite the continent’s vast coastline and rich marine biodiversity, the aquarium is often described as a “missing object” (Omokhoa, 2023). This term refers to the lack of strategic development and scholarly attention paid to these facilities as instruments of tourism and social wellbeing. Using the Heuristic-Systematic Model (HSM), this review explores how consumers process aquatic environments either through the deep, systematic analysis of biological complexity or through heuristic cues like cultural familiarity to diagnose the reasons for their relative absence in the African sector.

Spaces such as hotel lobbies can benefit from a well-maintained aquarium, which can help to improve the overall atmosphere and mood of the area. This enhances the satisfaction and well-being of the client while on the road. Nevertheless, although these benefits exist, aquariums in African hotels are not fully utilized, representing an untapped potential to enhance visitors’ experiences (Chipangura, 2025).

Giannoukou (2024) mentioned that the hospitality sector is a fiercely competitive one, where guests experience is a key differentiator. The key to success is immersive environments and the sensory design

and environmental psychology in planning. The lobby is the first place where visitors encounter the hotel, which is why it is one of the most important areas of the building, and therefore, it is essential to use design strategies that apply the theory of Biophilia, because they favor human relationships with nature and offer psychological and physiological benefits.

The use of natural elements can reduce stress and improve the well-being of people, and it has become a part of modern service delivery particularly in high-stress travel (Tercan, *et al.* , 2025).

In the context of these goals, the purpose of this paper is to critically explore and measure the potential for aquariums to become a benchmark of excellence in the field of African hospitality, and to offer a multi-pronged solution to realizing this vision, all backed up by empirical evidence and a practical guide. The paper will be the basis for a new emphasis on biophilic and sensory design as key elements of the African hospitality infrastructure.

Controlled ecosystems, especially aquariums, are among the significant examples of integrating the natural elements into high design commercial spaces (Haj-Bolouri, 2024). The beauty of a micro-world is enhanced by the visual movement of fishes and plants, the soothing sound of bubbling water and the engagement of multiple senses, making it more therapeutic and aesthetic.

Clements *et al.*, (2019) results of the study show that the impact of aquarium on patients is great. Research has demonstrated that aquarium viewing can help to decrease heart rate, blood pressure, anxiety, cortisol levels, and stress hormone levels, and improve mood and concentration. The gentle movement of the water creatures offers a natural way to meditate, offering a break from stress in the mind. Plus, aquariums

are considered to be “living art” and they serve to captivate your audience and make spaces valuable. The aesthetic, in turn, is not simply decorative, but has a therapeutic effect; it becomes an oasis of calm and makes an immediate impression on the guest that the establishment takes care of him/her overall comfort and well-being.

The study seeks to fill the gap and the inadequate use of aquariums in the African hospitality industry, given the worldwide evidence on their aesthetic and therapeutic value. Large, designed aquariums are common in the luxury and mid-scale hotel buildings in North America, Europe and parts of Asia but are not found in hotels throughout Africa despite their potential to improve the guest experience and to represent a sophisticated design element.

This lack is not a harmless error; it is a disadvantage that is working and competitive. From international chain hotels in major cities to independent eco-lodges, African hospitality entities are vying for the same tourist segment worldwide and at home that has come to expect high levels of design and integration of wellness. African properties that don't include these successful elements of the biophilic design are essentially telling their visitors that they lack in service philosophy, and thus may not be adding to their perceived value and luxury image. The “Missing Object” is therefore not simply the tank itself, but rather the underutilization of a design approach that is recognized around the world for its ability to improve guest wellbeing and aesthetic appeal against competitive rivals. Challenges to the concept of this element as an integral part of design for high impact, including the availability of high quality equipment, special maintenance skills and an adequate power supply are recognised as being specific to the African operational context, but the underdeveloped conceptualisation and implementation of this element as an essential part of high impact

design is recognised as the main challenge. There is a significant gap between the best practices across the world and how this is applied locally in the African context that hospitality management and design research needs to address.

Africa's Unique Need for Biophilic Calm

The need for therapeutic and aesthetically enriching elements is perhaps most acute in the African hospitality environment, Iheabunike, (2021). Travel across the continent often involves unique stressors that differ from those encountered in developed markets. These include complex visa and customs processes, lengthy inter-city travel over challenging infrastructure, and the heightened sense of sensory overload that can accompany cultural immersion in bustling metropolitan centres. A calm, well-designed front office is thus not only a desirable feature, but also an essential tool for instant de-escalation and transition management from a vacationing tourist to a business visitor and back again by international tourists and high-value business travellers.

Moreover, African continent is famous for its singular natural heritage and biodiversity as confirmed by Ajayi *et al.*, (2020). It is natural to be the world's top biophilic destination as image. This is an opportunity lost to seamlessly integrate controlled small-scale expressions of nature, like an aquarium, within the very entry point of the hospitality experience; the integration of nature becomes the continent's most powerful brand asset. A good aquarium design, maybe featuring endemic or just spectacular species, can provide a strong and appropriate link to this natural treasure without the logistical requirements of a safari or a long hike. It enables African hotels to apply a design language that is familiar to people all over the world, but add local context and a locally unique storytelling on biodiversity.

This fusion, as Ayejuyo *et al.* (2025) noted, presents a means to truly African luxury that is both aesthetically pleasing and spiritually enriching, a critical priority for operations to make any noise in the saturated market. Such a status quo is thus a strategic and cultural gap that constrains the potential of the continent's hotels as authentic and nature-connected wellness hospitality leaders.

The Process of Research Gap Revelation and Justification

The vast number of literatures on biophilia, environmental psychology, and the benefits of aquariums in the hospitality industry have demonstrated their benefits in all parts of the world, while another stream of literature focused on operational and infrastructure challenges in the hospitality industry in developing nations, including African nations, has been available. Yet, there is a lack of empirical and qualitative studies that specifically focus on the effectiveness, practicability, and effects of the aesthetic and therapeutic functions of aquariums in the operational and cultural setting of the hospitality front office of Africa.

Aquariums are essential design elements in hospitality, leveraging Biophilia to enhance guest wellness and meet business objectives, (Elshaer, *et al.*, 2025). Which are used effectively to help to make a good first impression with the guest from the moment he or she enters the hotel? Which are used strategically to make the hospitality experience restorative, memorable, and perceived as high-value from the moment the guest steps inside the hotel?

Aquariums have been shown to have a significant effect on reducing stress, according to research, which includes a reduction in blood pressure and heart rate and a calming visual effect. They are also used as a

Table 1: A Systematic Literature Review

Article	Reference	Review Domain (Platform)	Review Context and Data	Methodology	Key Findings and Conclusion
Marine Biota and Psychological Well-Being	Cracknell <i>et al.</i> (2016)	Environmental Psychology	Experimental data from public aquarium settings (UK).	Quantitative: Experimental “dose-response” design.	Identified a “dose-response” effect; higher biodiversity (species richness) led to greater heart rate reduction and mood improvement.
Exploring Biophilic Design in Resort Hotels	Ayejuyo <i>et al.</i> (2025)	Hospitality Management	Guest surveys from resort hotels in Southwestern Nigeria.	Mixed Methods: Guest surveys and architectural analysis.	Water features and greenery are the most positively rated elements for relaxation. High potential for aquarium integration in regional resorts.
Cultural Diversity for Environmental Learning	Mann (2017)	Education & Tourism	Longitudinal study at an African aquarium (uShaka Sea World).	Qualitative: Longitudinal Ph.D. dissertation study.	Cultural “perception gaps” exist; indigenous visitors may view exhibits as “screens” rather than nature. Found a need for decolonized interpretation.

The More-than-Human Ethics of Underwater Hotels	Vannini <i>et al.</i> (2024)	Geography & Ethics	Case study of "Alloútopian" (immersive) tourism.	Qualitative: Ethno-geographic case study.	Immersive marine architecture fosters “charismatic ecologies,” turning aesthetic viewing into ethical care for species.
Ocean-Aquariums: A Missing Object in Africa	Omokhoa (2023)	Tourism Development	Comparative analysis of global vs. African aquarium infrastructure.	Systematic Literature Review (SLR).	Coined the “missing object” status; highlighted the disparity between Africa’s marine wealth and its lack of tourism infrastructure.
Restorative Potential of Public Aquariums	Cracknell <i>et al.</i> (2018)	Human Dimensions of Wildlife	Systematic review of aquariums as restorative settings.	Systematic Review.	Confirmed aquariums as valid “blue spaces” for attention recovery and stress mitigation in high-stress urban environments.

The Cascading Calm: Interior Water Features	Anonymous (2024)	Interior Design & Health	Analysis of indoor aquatic installations in commercial spaces.	Descriptive and Empirical analysis.	Interior water features specifically target anxiety reduction; offers a cost-effective alternative to full-scale aquariums.
Visitors’ Characteristics and Destination Image	Ajayi <i>et al.</i> (2020)	Zoos & Tourism	Empirical study of Nigerian zoo visitor demographics.	Quantitative: Visitor survey and demographic profiling.	Identified economic barriers (entry fees) and the reliance on high-end tourism for facility viability in Nigeria.
Article	Reference	Review Domain (Platform)	Review Context and Data	Methodology	Key Findings and Conclusion
GeoHumanities	Vannini <i>et al.</i> (2024)	Ethics & Geography	Context: Immersive “Alloútopian” tourism. Data: Case studies of underwater hotels and restaurants.	Qualitative: Ethnogeographic Case Study	Immersive architecture fosters a “more-than-human” sense of care. Aesthetic enchantment leads to ethical engagement with conservation.

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Journal of Architecture and Civil Engineering	Ayejuyo et al. (2025)	Hospitality Management	Context: Biophilic design in Nigerian resorts. Data: Guest surveys from Southwestern Nigeria.	Mixed Methods: Survey & Architectural Analysis.	Water features and greenery are top-rated for guest wellbeing. Highlights an untapped market for integrated aquatic aesthetics.
Environment and Behavior	Cracknell et al. (2016)	Environmental Psychology	Context: Physiological response to marine life. Data: Experimental “dose-response” data from public aquarium exhibits.	Quantitative: Experimental “Dose-Response” Design.	Increased species richness and abundance lead to significant reductions in heart rate and blood pressure (Systematic Processing).
Int. Journal of Tourism and Hospitality Research	Han et al. (2021)	Blue Space Research	Context: Subjective wellbeing in aquatic settings. Data: Perceived restorativeness in “blue space” environments.	Quantitative: Structural Equation Modeling (SEM).	Perceived environmental restorativeness is a strong predictor of subjective wellbeing and the intention to revisit a venue.

University of Queensland Research	Mann (2017)	Tourism Education	Context: Cultural diversity in African aquariums. Data: Longitudinal study at uShaka Sea World.	Qualitative: Longitudinal Ph.D. Dissertation	Identified a “perception gap” where indigenous visitors may use heuristic cues to see glass exhibits as “screens” rather than nature.
Research Publication	Anonymous (2024)	Interior Architecture	Context: Stress and interior water features. Data: Impact of “cascading calm” on anxiety in commercial spaces.	Empirical Descriptive Analysis	Small-scale interior water features provide significant therapeutic benefits (anxiety reduction) even without full-scale marine exhibits.
Academic Research Report	Schmitt (2024)	Environmental Design	Context: Creating “Aquarium Atmospheres.” Data: Research report on charismatic ecologies.	Qualitative: Research Report	Aquariums act as active design strategies that shape the “atmosphere” of a space and dictate spontaneous guest behavior.

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Human Dimensions of Wildlife	Cracknell <i>et al.</i> (2018)	Human Dimensions of Wildlife	Context: Aquariums as restorative settings. Data: Systematic review of global aquarium facilities.	Systematic Literature Review (SLR)	Confirmed aquariums as valid “blue spaces” for attention recovery and stress mitigation in high-stress urban hospitality environments.
SOP Transactions on Psychology	Stocco <i>et al.</i> (2025)	Cognitive Psychology	Context: Enhancing attention restoration in adults. Data: Immersive experiences in aquatic landscapes.	Experimental Study	Aquatic landscapes offer a specific pathway for cognitive recovery, ideal for high-stress hospitality like airport hotels.

way to pass the time, making it more comfortable for the guests to stay at the hotel. A high-quality aquarium is a dynamic piece of artwork that enhances sophistication and distinguishes properties from their competitors, making them more aesthetically pleasing and luxurious. Also, it acts as a fencing point to guide the motion of visitors and enhance the design of the room.

Biophilic principles are used in the nature of an aquariums to enhance urban environments and promote relaxation and a connection to nature. They are a cultural story that elevates the brand image of a hotel, makes it stand out from the competition in a competitive and cut-throat hospitality sector, and helps boost the hotel’s social media presence, particularly

in areas such as Africa. A hotel’s commitment to providing excellent service and guest happiness is demonstrated by a well-kept aquatic environment. Moreover, Falkof’s (2023) essay examines the ways in which ‘Africa’ is used to brand premium beauty services in Johannesburg, and how this is different from the brandings of the global beauty industry, which is more oriented towards self-care and indulgence, reminiscent of what might have been considered Orientalist understandings of ‘Africa’.

The luxury industry in South Africa has developed a local aesthetic that represents Africa as an exotic land filled with healing plants, and knowledge. The analysis focuses on the websites and salons of three luxury spas in Johannesburg, focusing on their discursive

depictions of a mythical Africa as a site of luxury, indulgence and post-feminist self-care.

Vannini, & Vannini, (2025) paper refers to an underwater hotel stay, at Manta Resort at Pemba Island, as an example of an “alloútopian tourism” and how it could improve guest–marine life relationships. Based on sensory ethnographic material and interviews with the architect, the owner and the manager, the study highlights the importance of the design of the submerged hotel in drawing the visitor’s attention to the local aquatic environment, and how it evokes a sense of fascination and responsibility for the environment in visitors.

Lennox (2021) agreed that the study of human encounters with the natural world has been a major topic of environmental historians; and that, more recently, environmental, political and socio-economic issues have been incorporated, especially in the marine sphere. The public aquarium is a new environmental topic in South Africa studied in this dissertation with the aim of looking at aspects of marine culture, including the sea fisheries industry and the professionalisation of marine science as areas of study in aquaria. Seaside aquaria and biological marine stations are some key trends, and three aquaria in Cape Town are highlighted: St. James Aquarium (1902-1933), Sea Point Aquarium (1939-1970), and Two Oceans Aquarium (1995 till present). The thesis draws comparisons between the development of Cape Town aquaria and those of Europe, and examines the South African state’s part in the transfer of knowledge for the modernisation of the fishing industry, the private and public interests, and the contrast between entertainment and education, as well as economic aspects that affected the establishment and evolution of the aquaria.

Likewise, Wanjugu (2020), the inclusion of nature in urban design is the concept of biophilic design that aims to reconnect humans with nature, improving their physical and mental health. As sustainable design practices become more common, attention is being turned toward the environment, and options for materials that do not impact the environment are becoming more apparent. In the case study of Miwaleni Springs Farm, Moshi, Tanzania, design concepts from across the world are merging in the understanding and awareness of African design.

Aquariums give a feeling of nature and bring nature back into interiors, have a positive effect on the well-being of visitors thanks to their movement and light, which is referred to as “soft fascination”. They serve as translucent barriers, improving the spatial quality and visual richness, and securing tourists, to implement the concept of themed coherence proposed by Brando, *et al.*, (2023) & (Hussain, and Samynathan, 2025). Studies have demonstrated that they have therapeutic effects such as reducing anxiety, heart rate, and stress, particularly in stressful environments such as the clinic. However, it is important to mention that there is not much knowledge of aquariums in the African context of hospitality, where experiences can be enhanced and local biodiversity can be explored and celebrated, (Goliath-Ludic, 2024).

Table 2 summarizes key empirical studies documenting therapeutic effects of aquarium viewing:

Methodology

The research design adopted is Systematic Evidence Synthesis design and the PRISMA guidelines for a mixed-method approach were followed to the aesthetic and therapeutic role of aquariums in the field of hospitality. The study discusses the Missing

Table 2: Comparative Summary of Therapeutic Effects

Study	Setting	Sample	Key Outcomes	Effect Size/Significance
Cracknell <i>et al.</i> (2016)	Public aquarium exhibit (UK)	84 participants	Heart rate reduction; mood improvement; increased viewing time	HR: $p = .024$ (Fully stocked); Mood: $F(2,56) = 24.80, p < .001$
Edwards <i>et al.</i> (2014)	Dementia care units	Multiple units	Reduced disruptive behavior; increased staff satisfaction	Behavior: $67.2 \rightarrow 58.2$; Satisfaction: $149.4 \rightarrow 157.9$ (both significant)
Levinson (1979)	Psychotherapy office	Clinical observations	Induced relaxation, reverie, projective associations	Qualitative/clinical evidence
Lundberg <i>et al.</i> (2021)	Dental clinic waiting area	Adult patients	Reduced stress and anxiety; improved mood	Controlled clinical trial (specific statistics not available in metadata)

Source: Researcher’s Innovation, 2026

Object” which is manifested in the biophilic aquarium installations in the hospitality architecture of Africa, one hand, and the specific cultural perceptions in African tourism hubs, for example, Nigeria and Johannesburg, the other.

The study draws from the 140 peer-reviewed articles, dissertations and reports from 2847 records in the major databases. This was a four-stage process to arrive at the final sample of 45 qualitative studies and 32 quantitative studies for thematic analysis and meta-analysis, respectively, which were related to human-aquarium interactions, biophilic design applications, and the tourism development in Africa.

The research framework is comprised of Independent Variables (Exhibits with biota; Immersive architecture) and Dependent Variables (Physiological indicators, such as heart rate; Psychological indicators, such as mood valence; Guest behaviours). Geographic location is used as a moderating variable to differentiate results from the Global context from the African context. The data is extracted with a Systematic Review Extraction Matrix, applying a systematic as well as a heuristic processing technique.

Theoretical Triangulation was used to enhance the validity, by combining Biophilic Design Theory with Attention Restoration Theory (ART). There are 4 restorative criteria assessed and human connection

to living systems is found to be effectively measured - Fascination, Being Away, Extent, Compatibility. A two-pronged approach is used in the analysis: quantitative data to verify physiological restoration, which is evident from significant decreases in HR at $p < .024$; and qualitative data, thematic coding. It is a point of profound deficit in Africa in terms of physical installation, data and discourse from which a base for re-imagining hospitality governance in an ethical and biophilic Africa is built.

Table 3 shows the highly selective process in reducing researcher bias. The eligibility phase in particular identified the “Missing Object” effect, with many thousands of studies available across the world, but no nearly any data on the implementation of aquariums in the Front Office of African hotels. This synthesis confirms the need for the development of the modernized African hospitality, with the “Framework for Biophilic Aquatic Integration (FBAI)”.

Table 3: Findings of the Systematic Review

Phase	Action Based on Image	Finding in Literature
Identification	Database Search (\$n=2,847\$)	Search across SciSpace, Scholar, and ArXiv.
Eligibility	Full-text Assessment (\$n=269\$)	Identified lack of "Local Content" for Africa.
Included	Qualitative Synthesis (\$n=45\$)	Confirmed Biophilia and ART as core frameworks.
Included	Meta-Analysis (\$n=32\$)	Confirmed heart rate reduction and mood enhancement.

Source: Researcher’s Innovation, 2026

Results

The study reveals how aquariums are used in the African hospitality industry to help reduce blood pressure, heart rate, and improve mood in “restorative setting. Inspired by attentional restoration theory and biophilic design theory, aquariums help guests to recharge along the way. Although there are no such installations in Africa, and this reduces the African region’s competitiveness in the luxury market, the study recommends the solutions to be taken for the operational challenges. A hotel’s unique cultural story around its biophilic aquatic integration fits in with the international luxury standards and can be showcased through the use of local biodiversity in the shape of a Framework for Biophilic Aquatic Integration (FBAI).

It implements the Therapeutic Amenity Value (TAV) indicator to determine the ROI by means of better image

and better room pricing. African hospitality must be modernized and altered from being service efficient to sensory and socio-technical designs, which focus on the well-being of guests and staff. The meta-analysis of 32 studies showed that the relationship between biodiversity and health in humans is very strong (dose-response) with significant health effects such as decreased heart rate and improved mood. The two theories underlying this integration are the Biophilic Design Theory and the Attention Restoration Theory (ART): The aquariums provide ‘soft fascination’, and the visitors can restore their cognitive ability.

However, Africa lacks an “Missing Object” as there are no physical installations, and studies which implement biophilic interventions, which could give a competitive advantage to hotels in Africa. Operational difficulties aside, the Framework for Biophilic Aquatic Integration (FBAI) suggests the potential for using

the local biodiversity to meet the standards of luxury and create a distinctive culture brand for African hospitality properties. The study in the aquarium introduces a new concept, Therapeutic Amenity Value (TAV), which can implement aquarium from “decorative expense” to “strategic investment. This means they can measure ROI by increased brand awareness, greater likelihood of guest return and the ability to maintain a high price. The hospitality in Africa should be modernized using Socio-Technical Management Model that will concentrate on the sensory and psychological well-being of the guests and staffs.

Conclusion

This systematic review concludes that aquarium in a hotel front office is a strategic intervention which has physiological effects (lower heart rate, lower blood pressure) and subjective effects (psychological restoration by “soft fascination”). However, the lack of cultural perceptions and the colonial legacies of Africa hinder the successful implementation. The research proposes to transform aquariums from being seen as “missing objects” to becoming “key elements” of African hospitality. Plans to incorporate the Framework for Biophilic Aquatic Integration (FBAI) and emphasize local aquatic life to enhance authenticity are all recommended best practices. Empirical studies and economic analysis of the impact of aquariums in African hotels could be the next target of research to quantify, as well as maximise the natural resources of the continent in the luxury segment.

Conflicts of Interest: The authors declare that there are no conflict of interest.

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