Understanding the Internet Celebrity Restaurant's Servicescape in Developing Quality of Life.

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ABSTRACT

With the rapid development of Taiwan's restaurant industry and the diversification of consumer demands, the emergence of internet celebrity restaurants is a testament to the changing landscape. These restaurants have significantly impacted consumer demands, necessitating a shift in the industry's approach. Restaurateurs must focus on the servicescape to enhance customer emotions, satisfaction, and happiness, thereby improving their quality of life. This study illustrates that a relationship exists in the context of internet celebrity restaurants' providing dining necessitates innovative and differentiated strategies to maintain competitiveness.

Keywords: Customer emotion, Happiness, Quality of life, Satisfaction, Servicescape,

1. Introduction

As consumer living standards improve and consumption patterns shift, Taiwan's dining market has exhibited trends of diversification and growth. According to official data, sales of food and beverage services were NT$689.0 billion (US$22.9 billion) from January to August 2024, up 3.6% year over year (Ministry of Economic Affairs, 2024). However, the traditional restaurant business has been significantly impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic, forcing companies to reconsider how to maintain a competitive advantage in an increasingly fierce market; thus, internet celebrity restaurants have emerged as a crucial trend. These restaurants have quickly risen to prominence due to their unique and captivating design styles, a blend of modern and traditional elements, and innovative dishes that push the boundaries of culinary art, particularly appealing to younger consumers through extensive online exposure (Zhang et al., 2021b). Through massive social media exposure and word-of-mouth marketing, these restaurants are places to dine and offer a setting where life experiences can be documented and shared, which is one of the keys to their success (Zhang et al., 2021a, 2021b). Studying Taiwan's internet celebrity restaurants can reveal how they meet consumer needs and provide restaurant operators with strategic advice to help them stand out in a highly competitive market, enlightening them on the importance of understanding and meeting consumer needs.

In such a highly competitive market, operators must effectively utilize their operational resources and continuously innovate in the physical environment, products, and services to meet the evolving demands of consumers (Zhang et al., 2021b). At the same time, management needs to focus on consumers' emotional experiences and well-being, which are critical elements in marketing strategies (Bitner, 1992; Ryu & Jang, 2007). By providing a comfortable dining environment, delicious food, and friendly service, restaurants can improve consumers' quality of life and build strong brand loyalty in a highly competitive market (Oishi et al., 2018; Meng & Choi, 2017). Researching how Taiwan's internet celebrity restaurants enhance consumer well-

being will contribute to a better understanding of the potential impact of the restaurant industry on improving quality of life. However, there is a significant gap in the literature when it comes to studies on restaurant consumers' well-being (i.e., happiness), particularly concerning the connection between emotional experience and well-being during dining (Meng & Choi, 2017). This highlights the need for more research in this area. Overall, Taiwan's restaurant industry's market potential is substantial, and the industry is expected to continue growing in the coming years. In-depth research on the relationship between the servicescape of internet celebrity restaurants and consumer emotion can help operators formulate effective strategies to enhance customer satisfaction and happiness in quality of life.

2. Literature Review

2.1. *Internet celebrity restaurant servicescape*

Internet celebrity restaurants, as defined by their widespread online fame and ability to attract customers through massive exposure (Huang et al., 2021), possess unique and innovative features that set them apart. These establishments, known for their exceptional or creative designs, food, and brand culture, capture public attention (Zhang et al., 2021a, 2021b). They promote themselves through internet dissemination, benefiting from notable word-of-mouth effects (Song and Zheng, 2022). Renowned for their exquisite environments, engaging culture, and luxurious services (Huang et al., 2021), these restaurants stimulate customer purchase intentions and maintain loyalty through their innovative attributes. Unlike traditional restaurants that rely on word-of-mouth among long-term customers, internet celebrity restaurants attract customers primarily through their powerful brand personality (Zhang et al., 2021a, 2021b). However, what kind of brand personality do Internet celebrity restaurants have to attract customers? Servicescape is one of the critical factors. Bitner (1992) defined the "service scape" as the physical environment's style and appearance and the elements experienced by customers within the service delivery space. The "service scape model" includes three main dimensions: "ambient," such as music, lighting, and spatial scents; secondly, the "spatial layout and functionality," like floor planning, movement paths, machinery, and equipment arrangement; and the "signs, symbols, and artifacts" dimension, for example, explicit or implicit signage present during the service process. Thus, this study adopts Bitner's 1992 framework for evaluating internet celebrity restaurant servicescape, which includes ambient, spatial layout & functionality, and signs, symbols, & artifacts.

2.2 *Customer emotion & Satisfaction*

Emotions are defined as the affective states of customers, including moods and attitudes toward specific events (Bagozzi et al., 1999). Emotions are decisive factors influencing consumers' willingness to repurchase, recommend the store, spend more time, and spend more money in the store (Ryu & Jang, 2007). In the context of a restaurant, if the lighting, background music, spatial layout, and functionality are appropriate, customers will feel comfortable. Additionally, customers will feel happy if the staff are attractive, polite, willing to help, and giving special attention to them. Therefore, when customers engage in a pleasant service environment, they develop positive perceptions and feelings, indicating an influential relationship between the servicescape and emotions. Furthermore, customer satisfaction is the emotional response generated after using a product or service, which subsequently influences customers' repurchase intentions and behavioral evaluations (Oliver, 1981). Customer satisfaction is the difference between perceived performance and expectations. When perceived performance exceeds expectations, customers experience satisfaction. Conversely, if perceived

performance falls below expectations, customers are dissatisfied. Thus, customer satisfaction is the level of pleasure or disappointment a person feels, primarily derived from the discrepancy between the product's perceived performance and expectations (Kotler & Keller, 2016).

2.3 *Happiness & Quality of life*

Scholars define Happiness as a profoundly significant concept as people's evaluations and responses to their quality of life, encompassing positive and negative emotions and satisfaction with life (Oishi et al., 2018; Lu, 1998). Diener (1984) adds to this, arguing that the concept of happiness is multi-faceted, encompassing both cognitive and affective dimensions. The affective dimension involves an individual's emotional reactions to overall life or specific life domains, such as the positive and negative emotions experienced through life activities. It is considered a short-term experience. The cognitive dimension refers to an individual's satisfaction with overall life or positive cognitive evaluations of specific life domains, representing long-term perceived personal experiences. Thus, happiness contains an individual's feelings of positive and negative emotions and their degree of life satisfaction, making it a concept of practical relevance and application (Oishi et al., 2018). In addition, subjective well-being refers to individuals' subjective perceptions and evaluations of the balance between pleasure and displeasure within specific domains of life and their overall life satisfaction (Kim et al., 2015). Dagger and Sweeney (2006) found that high ratings (satisfaction) of dining experiences lead to higher levels of subjective well-being and overall life quality. This connection between customer emotion, satisfaction, and happiness is crucial, as it highlights the influence of servicescape on customer emotion, satisfaction, and ultimately, happiness and quality of life.

3. Methods

The study targets consumers who have dined in internet celebrity restaurants. A questionnaire survey method will be adopted, with physical questionnaires distributed. Expert validity will ensure the validity of questionnaire content, and SPSS software will be used for analysis, such as independent sample t-test, correlation analysis, and regression analysis. Based on the above literature review, we proposed the research model shown in Figure 1.
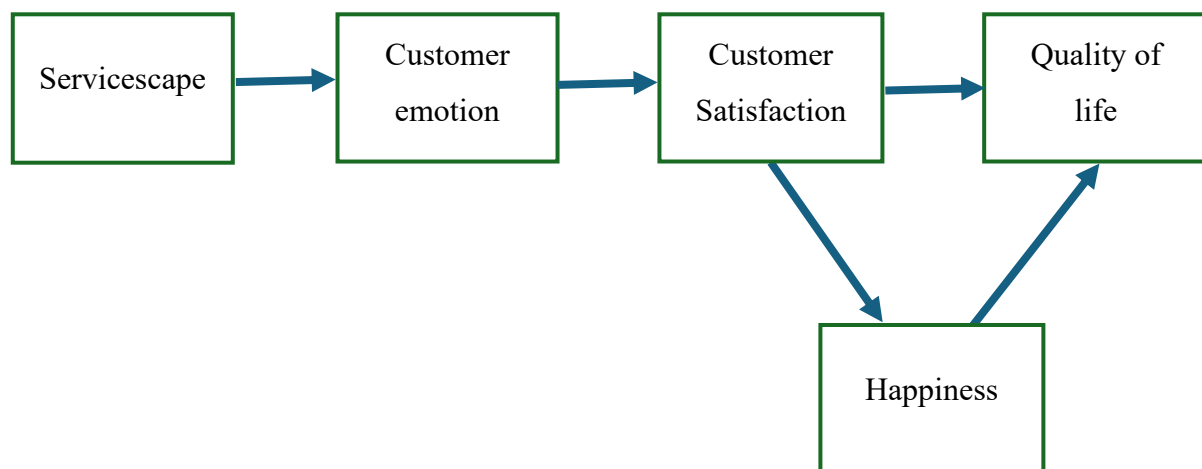

Figure 1. Research model

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