

How Service Companies from Developing Countries
Can Satisfy Global Consumers?:
A Qualitative Study of a Chinese Chain Restaurant in
the Asian Market

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Introduction

The global market is becoming increasingly complex as a result of globalization and the rise of developing economies (Krufi, 2017; Mothersbaugh et al., 2019). In recent decades, emerging economies have been portrayed as promising markets, offering potential opportunities for foreign companies, particularly those from developed countries (Roth & Diamantopoulos, 2009; Sheth, 2011). Nevertheless, companies from developing economies are assuming a more prominent role within the global marketplace. Notwithstanding the growing significance of marketing in these contexts, the phenomenon has received inadequate attention. Moreover, the majority of research in the field of global marketing is concentrated on manufacturing industries, with relatively little attention paid to non-manufacturing sectors such as services and retail (Ozretic-Dosen et al., 2017). This is somewhat surprising, given that services have become a significant component of many modern economies.

The Asian market provides an illustrative case in point. For several decades, brands from developed countries, predominantly from the Western world, have been subjected to intense scrutiny and evaluation by consumers. Despite their

continued competitiveness in the region, these brands are facing increasing competition from local and other Asian companies. Asian consumers are becoming more familiar with brands from other developing countries. For example, an increasing number of consumers in Southeast Asia are utilising digital devices manufactured by Chinese firms and ordering food and taxis via an application operated by an Indonesian firm.

China has long been a prominent player in the global manufacturing sector. Since the 2000s, Chinese companies have begun to enter the global market, particularly in the manufacturing industry. Meanwhile, the service industry has been expanding at a rapid pace, with numerous companies emerging as competitors in the global marketplace. A handful of comprehensive efforts have been made to assess service quality in the Chinese food restaurant sector (Qin & Prybutok, 2009; Qin et al., 2010; Tan et al., 2014), yet there have been few attempts to do so in the context of the global market, as far as we are aware.

This study aims to investigate customers' perceptions of HDL in Asian markets from the perspective of global service marketing. Furthermore, while the majority of studies in this area have employed quantitative methods (Ozretic-Dosen et al., 2017, p. 191), this study employs a qualitative approach to describe Asian consumers' views of HDL. The qualitative approach is essential for uncovering new perspectives and insights (Gummesson, 2005).

This study addresses the following research questions:

- How do Asian customers evaluate HDL services? Is the framework developed in previous studies effective?
- What new insights and findings can the qualitative approach provide?
- How does China's national image affect the perception of service quality?

Literature Review

Service quality

Service has four characteristics: intangibility, heterogeneity, inseparability, and perishability (IHIP). It cannot be seen, touched, or produced in advance and stored for later use. The process of service production and consumption occurs simultaneously and involves an interaction between the service provider and consumer (Lovelock & Patterson, 2015). Thus, the quality of service can be highly unstable and difficult to measure.

Service quality is of great consequence in the service industry, as it has a profound impact on customer satisfaction and organizational strategic advantage (Gilbert & Veloutsou, 2006; Parasuraman et al., 1985; Cronin & Taylor, 1992). The provision of excellent service quality has been demonstrated to increase customer satisfaction and loyalty, which in turn leads to an increase in market share and revenues. Consequently, excellent service quality is regarded as a source of competitive advantage (Pecotich et al., 1996).

The well-known Nordic model, developed by Groonross (1984), proposes that perceived service quality is “the result of a consumer’s view of a bundle of service dimensions” (p. 39). These dimensions can be divided into two categories: technical quality (what is delivered) and functional quality (how it is delivered). Rust & Oliver (1993) posited that in addition to service processes and results, the service environment plays a pivotal role.

While the Nordic model primarily concentrates on the structure of service quality, Parasuraman et al. (1988) proposed the SERVQUAL instrument as a quantitative tool. SERVQUAL encompasses 22 items that fall into five dimensions: tangibles, reliability, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy. The SERVQUAL approach has been extensively utilized to assess service quality in

various service industries. In summary, service quality can be divided into three dimensions: physical environment, human interactions, and core product or service (Chelladurai & Chang, 2000; Tan et al., 2014). The physical environment refers to the physical aspects of the service environment, covering the tangible dimension in SERVQUAL. Human interactions refer to service process quality, which covers the functional quality in the Nordic model, as well as four dimensions—reliability, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy—in SERVQUAL. Core product or service refers to technical quality (Gronroos, 1984).

Service quality in the dining industry

Stevens et al. (1995) employed the SERVQUAL model in order to ascertain the perceptions of customers regarding the quality of service provided by restaurants. A series of surveys conducted in various restaurant settings—including fast food, casual dining, and fine dining establishments—led to the development of the DINESERV instrument. Subsequently, several studies have adopted the instrument to evaluate service quality in the dining industry (Marković et al., 2010; Qin et al., 2010; Qin and Prybutok, 2008, 2009; Tan et al., 2014).

The original DINESERV model comprises 29 items and can be grouped into five dimensions: tangible, reliability, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy. These dimensions are comparable to those identified in the SERVQUAL model. The tangible aspect of a restaurant's evaluation encompasses its physical design, appearance, and cleanliness. The dimension of reliability encompasses the freshness and temperature of the food, the accuracy of the bill, and the promptness with which ordered food is received. The responsiveness of restaurant staff can be defined as their ability to assist customers with menu selection and to respond promptly and appropriately to their needs and requests. Assurance refers to the trust that patrons should be able to place in the recommendations provided by staff,

the confidence they should have that food is safe and free from contamination, and the assurance that they can voice any concerns without consequence. Finally, empathy can be defined as the provision of individualized attention to customers, whereby the specific issues they face are taken into account (Stevens et al., 1995; Tan et al., 2014).

However, DINESERV does not devote sufficient attention to the aspects of food and price (Andaleeb and Conway, 2006; Tan et al. 2014). The quality of the food and price are of critical importance in the dining industry (Andaleeb & Conway, 2006; Qin & Prybutok, 2009; Qin et al., 2010; Raajpoot, 2002). Although DINESERV reliability encompasses food-related items, there are no direct food-related items. Meanwhile price is the primary cue customers utilize to form expectations and evaluate quality, thereby influencing satisfaction (Pecotich et al., 1996; Tan et al., 2014).

COO effect on services from developing countries

The impact of country-of-origin (COO) on consumer behaviour have been one of the main subjects of academic marketing literature since the 1960s (Ingenhoff et al., 2018; Jaffe & Nebenzahl, 2006). Han (1989) juxtaposed two explanations for the COO effect, which he labelled the ‘halo’ and ‘summary’ construct models. When consumers are not familiar with a country’s brand, country image may serve as a halo, while country image may serve as a summary of consumers’ beliefs when consumers become familiar.

The COO effect is negative for developing countries (Jaffe & Nebenzahl, 2006). Products produced in developing countries lack intrinsic (performance, durability, etc.) and extrinsic (price, quality perceptions, brand image, retailers’ reputation, etc.) factors; therefore, they tend to be less preferable than products from developed countries (Agbonifoh & Eliminian, 1999; d’Astous and Ahmed, 1999; Demirbag et al., 2010; Hsieh et al., 2004; Zebal & Zebal, 2020). This has become a challenge for companies from

developing countries (Muruganantham and Priyadharshini, 2017).

The impact of COO on services has received little attention (Pinkaeo and Speece, 2002), even though trade in services is growing significantly (Zebal and Zebal, 2020). However, COO can affect many different aspects of service. Consumers tend to have higher expectations of service companies from developed countries than from developing countries, and COO also affects the evaluation of products and salespeople (McGee and Spiro, 1991; Pinkaeo & Speece, 2000). Few studies have examined the impact of COO on the service industry in China. Cheng et al. (2014) found that Chinese airline services are rated significantly lower than their competitors from South Korea and Taiwan.

Methodology

About HDL

Founded in 1994 by Zhang Yong and three other co-founders in Mianyang City, Sichuan Province, HDL is one of China's most successful local restaurant chains and went public in September 2018.

HDL offers Sichuan-style hot pot, a traditional Chinese cuisine. In a hot pot restaurant, the menu offers several soup bases, semi-processed ingredients, and dipping sauces. As the hot pot simmers, ingredients such as meat, seafood, and vegetables are added to the pot to be cooked. HDL specializes in Sichuan-style hot and spicy flavours, although several non-spicy soup bases are also available. The restaurant industry in China has long suffered from low employee skills and motivation, particularly given the demographic profile of its workforce, which is predominantly drawn from remote areas and small towns with relatively low levels of education. However, HDL has established a reputation for excellence in customer service, characterised by a commitment to treating customers with respect and providing attentive care that goes beyond the industry standard in China.

HDL initiated its overseas expansion in 2012 and currently operates a total of 115 Haidilao hot pot restaurants in international markets, with 70 located in Southeast Asia, 17 in East Asia, 18 in North America, and 10 in other regions as of the end of 2023.

Approach

As previously discussed, service quality has been measured primarily with empirical data. However, service evaluation in the restaurant industry is largely experiential, unlike healthcare or auto repair. For companies that have recently entered the market, such as HDL, it is impossible to collect empirical data due to the lack of brand awareness and knowledge in general. Therefore, we decided to use a qualitative approach.

Grounded theory, founded by Glaser and Strauss (1967), is one of the most popular qualitative methodological frameworks used by researchers today. Characterized by data collection, analysis and interpretation, some of which take place simultaneously, grounded theory could be helpful in identifying core variables and generating specific and general theories (Gummesson, 2005, p.323).

Data

The data used here are online reviews written by customers. We collected the text data from well-known local restaurant review websites (“Tabelog” in Japan, “Google” in Taiwan, and “Rettay” in Thailand). HDL entered Japan and Taiwan in 2015 and Thailand in 2019, and the number of restaurants at the time of data collection (January 2021) was 6, 14, and 3, respectively. Specific information on the qualitative data is shown in Figure 1.

Figure 1. Qualitative data used in this study

	Branch name	Number of reviews	Date of re views
Japan	Ikebukuro	126 ¹	Sep.2015~Feb. 2021
Taiwan	Xinyi	200 ²	~Feb. 2021
Thailand	Central world	176	~Feb. 2021

¹: We have excluded 26 blank responses for a total of 152 reviews.

²: We have selected only the most recent 200 reviews of the Xinyi branch in Taiwan, as the number of reviews was more than 2,000.

The analysis software used was MAXQDA Plus 2020. The analysis process consisted of three types of coding:

- 1) Open coding: This step allows individual response narratives to be broken down into small pieces or ‘subcodes’.
- 2) Axial coding: This is the step in which these separated fragments are reconnected in a new way, establishing initial links between categories.
- 3) Selective coding: This step refers to the accumulation and creation of the main categories and several sub-categories from which a new theory can be built and grounded.

All three authors speak English, Japanese, and Chinese, while only one of us speaks Thai. Therefore, we discussed and analysed the data from Japan and Taiwan in the original languages, but the data from Thailand were translated into English beforehand.

A key to qualitative research analysis is comparison (Gummesson, 2005). We read all the comments and discussed the codes according to their content. During the coding process, we compared the data with the existing theory and the results of previous research to determine the codes and the relationship between the codes. For example, if a customer wrote that “the stuff was very nice,” what does that

mean? According to the SERVQUAL model, there are four dimensions of interaction with staff. It could mean that the staff paid attention to each customer (empathy), or that the food was delivered quickly and correctly (reliability), or that they provided proper assistance with the order, or that they were confident and knowledgeable enough to make the customer trust them (assurance). Furthermore, a good service can fulfil all of these. Therefore, the SERVQUAL model may not be suitable for our qualitative study.

This continuous comparison is part of a sense-making process in which patterns are formed and transformed into concepts, categories and finally theories (Gummesson, 2005). The findings from this process are explained below.

Findings

Main codes

We identified five main codes: physical environment, human interaction, food, price, and others. The physical environment refers to the appearance of restaurants, interior design, cleanliness, etc. Human interaction includes all interactions between customers and employees. Then there is food, price and others. Food and price are important factors in the dining industry, as discussed earlier. This structure is consistent with previous studies (Chelladurai & Chang, 2000; Tan et al., 2014).

The number of main codes is shown in Figure 2. Note that the number of codes does not equal the number of reviews because some codes appear more than once in a review. This depends on the structure of the review. Therefore, the number of codes is similar to the frequency of specific comments; sometimes the number is larger than the total number of reviews. Meanwhile, some codes appear only once; for example, the purpose of the visit (with who and why) usually appears only at the beginning. Since not all comments mention the purpose, the number of codes is smaller than the number of comments.

As we can see, human interaction is the most important part in all three markets, even more than the core product of restaurant food. This describes human interaction as the most important factor for HDL visitors. Food is the second most frequent code in Taiwan and Thailand, and the third most frequent code in Japan. The price code is almost a third of food. These three factors will be discussed in more detail later.

The physical environment is almost as important as human interaction in Japan, while fewer visitors in Taiwan and Thailand mentioned it. This is due to the interior design and atmosphere of the Ikebukuro branch in Tokyo. The design of the Ikebukuro branch is luxurious, with a vault and a large chandelier in the center, and almost all the employees and customers were Chinese. This created an “authentic Chinese” atmosphere that greatly impressed Japanese visitors. Meanwhile, the design of the two branches in Taiwan and Thailand is normal, and most employees and visitors are local people.

Others can be divided into two main factors: purpose of visit and other information. Japanese visitors tend to write the purpose at the beginning, while many in Taiwan and Thailand skip it. Other information refers to information about hotpot cuisine, HDL as a successful Chinese company, and especially the long line. Since HDL is famous in the local society, people usually have to wait in a long line; the longest case was a visitor in Thailand who waited for seven hours.

Figure 2. Numbers(%) of the main codes

	Physical environment	Human interaction	Food	price	Others	
					Purpose of visit	Other information
Japan (126)	177 (140%)	178 (141%)	158 (125%)	62 (49%)	83 (66%)	83 (66%)
Taiwan (200)	29 (15%)	200 (100%)	111 (56%)	35 (18%)	9 (5%)	32 (16%)
Thailand (176)	5 (3%)	219 (124%)	173 (98%)	50 (28%)	21 (12%)	130 (74%)

In the next section, we will take a closer look at three main codes in particular: Human Interaction, food and price.

Code: Human interaction

We started with open coding, and all reviews related to interactions between employees and customers were coded as human interaction. We identified four sub-codes according to content: show, amenity, special services, and employee.

Show refers to the shows that people can enjoy in HDL restaurants. When customers order noodles, an employee performs the noodle dance in front of them, swinging the noodle dough while turning in place. Another famous example is the traditional Chinese face changing performance. Amenity refers to the amenities that customers can have in HDL restaurants, from the apron, rubber bands for those with long hair, cell phone covers, and cloth to protect them from liquids and odours. Special services refer to HDL services that people do not usually experience in other places, such as shoeshine and nail service in the waiting area, and other services, including free drinks, snacks, and various games (poker, checkers, etc.), or special discounts for visitors who make origami. HDL is a child-friendly company, providing playrooms, chairs or beds, as well as special meals for children and free diapers in diaper changing rooms. Sometimes the employees even take care of the children so that the adults can enjoy the food.

We found that Japanese customers mentioned the show the most. The show contributed to the authentic and pleasant atmosphere of the restaurant in Japan. Visitors in Thailand seemed to enjoy the most special services and amenities.

In all three markets, employee was the most common subcode. This means that visitors are very concerned about HDL employees. Most reviews were positive. Below are two examples from Taiwan and Thailand:

We were really moved by the service. From start to finish, we were treated like royalty. Even though they were all wearing masks, I could still see them smiling. I'd like to give a special shout-out to employees A and B (names withheld). A was really attentive, even though the restaurant was packed because it was a holiday. I'd love to know how this company trains its employees so well. B was also really nice. I was surprised to find out that he was a manager when he handed me his name card! He brought us a free dessert and gift and made us feel like family. Everyone in our family was pleased.

The staff training is really impressive. I'd like to thank them for their help. The waiter at our table was very attentive. For instance, we dropped something into the pot, and the employee came with a sieve to help us or put a fish ball with a colander for us. The dishes were changed right away. The employee saw four of us wearing glasses and brought a cloth to wipe them. They served more fruit right after we finished eating. Honestly, the service is better than Shangri-la, where my family usually goes to eat. I'm really impressed with the service.

Figure 3. Numbers(%) of sub-codes of human interaction

	Show	Amenity	Special services	Employee
Japan (126)	62 (49%)	14 (11%)	26 (21%)	92 (73%)
Taiwan (200)	30 (15%)	9 (5%)	43 (22%)	106 (53%)
Thailand (176)	44 (25%)	38 (22%)	79 (45%)	100 (57%)

In terms of negative comments related to human interaction, the total numbers for Japan, Taiwan, and Thailand were 14, 9, and 38, respectively. Given HDL's high reputation, customers tend to hold high expectations prior to visiting. While

expectations for amenities, shows, and special services may be easily satisfied, it appears that employees' enthusiasm is not consistently demonstrated. The following comments illustrate this:

Today was my birthday, but not many employees came to celebrate with me. And the employee seemed unhappy. She even didn't make a dipping sauce for me. I feel so disappointed.

I took my customer here yesterday. No noodles were present without any explanation. They cleaned the table only once. I came for good service, but I felt losing face in front of my customer. I prefer another branch in ○.

Additionally, Japan presents an intriguing case. As a significant number of employees in Japan originate from China, many of them lack proficiency in Japanese. 21 comments indicated that employees demonstrated inadequate Japanese language proficiency, yet only 4 suggested that this negatively impacted customer satisfaction and the intention to revisit. In the remaining 17 comments, the issue caused some inconvenience, particularly when ordering food. However, this did not result in any negative customer experiences due to the high level of hospitality demonstrated by the employees. Some visitors even found the experience enjoyable, perceiving it as an opportunity to immerse themselves in a foreign atmosphere and feel as though they were travelling abroad.

Code: Food and Price

Food was the second most prevalent topic in the data set, representing a significant factor influencing customer experience within the dining industry. The majority of the comments pertained to food items that visitors would recommend. In terms

of taste, a minority of visitors indicated that certain dishes were excessively spicy. However, the majority of these visitors did not express any concerns regarding authenticity. A total of 3, 4, and 5 negative comments about food were identified in Japan, Taiwan, and Thailand, respectively. The comments pertained to the quality and quantity of the food provided.

It appeared that Japanese customers derived pleasure from the buffet-style sauce corner. Visitors had the option of selecting various ingredients, including sauces, snacks, vegetables, fruits, and desserts, to create their own unique combinations. A total of 88 sub-codes were identified in relation to the sauce corner in Japan, while 17 and 43 were identified in Taiwan and Thailand, respectively. It can be assumed that this is due to the fact that Japanese customers were the least familiar with the Chinese hotpot.

Another important factor in customer experience is price. The numbers of code regarding price in Japan, Taiwan, and Thailand were 62, 35, and 50, respectively. The data was divided into three categories: positive (not expensive or high cost-performance), neutral (just mentioned as information), and negative (expensive or low cost-performance). This is illustrated in Figure 4.

Figure 4. Perception of price

	positive	neutral	negative
Japan	22	27	13
Taiwan	17	3	15
Thailand	34	6	10

The data revealed that customers evaluate the price in relation to their expectations and experiences. Those who perceive the dining experience comprehensively, encompassing entertainment, amenities, and atmosphere, tend to view the price positively. Conversely, customers who prioritize food-related

aspects may perceive it negatively. Additionally, some customers compare the price with competitors and HDL's branches in other countries. For instance, a few Japanese customers described the price as expensive in comparison to HDL in China they had previously visited.

Discussion

Qualitative approach for evaluating service quality

As Gummesson (2005) indicated, qualitative research is underused in the field of marketing. However, it is essential to infuse marketing data with a degree of vitality. Qualitative research may prove beneficial, particularly when addressing novel market phenomena or new market entrants. It is not feasible to obtain empirical data on these subjects due to a dearth of awareness or knowledge in general. The use of a qualitative method allows researchers to explore a broader range of research topics. Moreover, the qualitative approach allows researchers to observe the data and descriptions in their raw state and to contribute new findings through comparison with existing concepts and theories. This method allows researchers to comprehend and contextualize the raw data. These factors may contribute to the reconceptualization and generation of new frameworks or theories.

Our findings indicate that the quantitative framework is not an appropriate means of analysing qualitative data. In contrast, the framework derived from the Nordic model is applicable to our study. The following section presents the findings obtained through the use of a qualitative approach.

Dining industry as a product-service mixed context

As previously discussed, DINESERV was developed based on SERVQUAL and has subsequently been adopted in numerous subsequent studies. The two instruments are identical in terms of their five-dimensional structure and the factors they

encompass. However, there is a general consensus that customer perceptions of service quality differ between industries. Parasuraman et al. (1988) employed four organizations as case studies: a bank, a credit card company, a repair and maintenance organization, and a long-distance phone service carrier. Each of these services can be considered a “pure type,” in that there is minimal or no exchange of tangible products. Conversely, the dining industry comprises a combination of tangible and intangible, heterogeneous products and services.

The qualitative method employed in this study revealed that human interaction plays a pivotal role in the product-service mixed context. Despite the fact that numerous researchers have documented consumers’ proclivity towards variety-seeking and short-term relationships in the dining industry (Uehara and Assarut, 2020), the development of positive customer relationships remains a crucial aspect, if not the core competence. The success of HDL can be attributed to its commitment to hospitality. Some customers develop long-term relationships with their preferred employees, requesting specific individuals when making a meal reservation. This proclivity is particularly evident in Taiwan. Might it depend on Taiwanese culture, as previous studies have proposed that customer perceptions of service quality may vary in the sociocultural context (Marković et al., 2010; Olorunniwo and Hsu, 2006)? We were unable to ascertain a definitive answer to this question. Nevertheless, it appeared that human interaction represented the primary area of concern among HDL customers.

Extraordinary experiences in overseas market

Individuals may occasionally elect to pursue unconventional or novel experiences that are not accessible in their typical daily lives. This can encompass a range of activities, including selecting a rare travel destination or sampling foreign cuisines. Such experiences are referred to as extraordinary or collectable experiences

(Bhattacharjee & Mogilner, 2014; Keinan & Kivetz, 2011).

An extraordinary experience can be considered a “double-edged sword” in that it has the potential to both enhance perceived value and increase perceived risk. The evaluation of extraordinary experiences by customers is dependent on a number of factors, including demographic characteristics, social media usage, and social and cultural contexts (Mhlanga and Tichaawa, 2017; Uehara and Assarut, 2020).

As evidenced by the findings presented here, Japanese customers expressed high levels of enjoyment with regard to the extraordinary experiences HDL provided through interior design and the atmosphere. Extraordinary experiences contribute to the perception of authenticity and pleasure, thereby enhancing perceived value. Even instances of failure, such as instances of difficulty encountered by Japanese customers when ordering due to the limited language proficiency of employees, can contribute to the creation of an authentic atmosphere and enhance customer satisfaction. Consequently, extraordinary experiences represent a crucial factor, particularly in overseas markets where customers may be less familiar with the product category. However, the ability to recover from such experiences is also of critical importance (Qin and Prybutok, 2008). In the case of HDL, the majority of Japanese customers expressed satisfaction due to the hospitality of the employees.

COO effect of developing countries

As previously stated, the role of the COO can impact numerous facets of service, including customer expectations, evaluation of products or salespeople, and so forth. Moreover, service companies from China may be perceived negatively due to the country’s political system and economic development (Cheng et al., 2014; Han, 1989).

With regard to the impact of China’s COO on customer perceptions, our

findings were unexpectedly null. Indeed, it had a beneficial effect in certain instances, which can be elucidated through the gap model (Parasuraman et al. , 1988). The gap model posits that perceptions of service quality are shaped by the discrepancy between consumer expectations and the perceptions of the actual service performance (Lee et al., 2000). The origin and nationality of a brand have been demonstrated to exert a considerable influence on service expectations, which in turn affect the evaluation of service quality (Pinkao & Speece, 2002).

In the case of HDL, as customers had low expectations of service companies from China, the quality of HDL's service was more readily discernible, leading to increased satisfaction. Japanese and Thai customers provided the respective reviews.

The service was fantastic! I'm surprised this is a Chinese company.

I'm impressed with the queues. Who said Chinese people didn't serve?
This restaurant is Chinese and offers excellent service!

Additionally, it is noteworthy that no comments were identified that expressed animosity or ethnocentrism, which are commonly observed in the context of global marketing. This may be attributed to the distinctive characteristics of the food industry. Food is a fundamental necessity for human survival, yet it is inextricably linked to historical, cultural, and traditional aspects. The three markets included in this study have a long and complex history with China, and their food cultures are closely intertwined. Consequently, customers may not be fully aware of this subject matter.

Conclusion

This study employed a qualitative approach to investigate the evaluation of HDL, a Chinese chain restaurant, by Asian customers. A quantitative analysis of online customer reviews revealed that human interaction is the most important factor, even more so than food. The findings of this study imply that a qualitative approach may be a viable method for examining the dining industry, particularly in the context of product-service mixed industries, extraordinary experiences, and the COO effect in overseas markets. To further these discussions, it would be beneficial to expand the scope of our research subjects to encompass a wider range of contexts in the future.

Acknowledgment

This paper was written in Japanese and translated into English via DeepL, which was then refined by the authors as a rough translation. This study was supported by Seijo Annual Grant.

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