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處理方式：

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中文摘要：讚美對員工是種強烈的回饋。然而，有關餐飲業顧客讚美行為相關實證研究卻較少被探討。因此，本研究旨在探討餐廳顧客在服務線索下，讚美行為之原因與內容；並進一步從顧客觀點探討員工逢迎是否是顧客讚美行為的重要前因。研究採用文獻回顧、關鍵事件技術及立意抽樣法，並以全套式服務餐廳顧客為研究對象，問卷共得有效問卷409份。研究資料除利用內容分析法進行讚美行為原因分析外，亦採用結構方程模式分析餐廳員工逢迎、顧客滿意度、喜悅與讚美行為構念間之相關性。研究分析顯示：服務好、表達感謝及鼓勵服務人員為顧客表達讚美行為的主要理由；CP值不夠高、服務與菜餚普通或低於預期則為顧客未表達讚美行為的原因；除此，研究結果顯示員工逢迎對顧客滿意度、喜悅與讚美行為具有正向顯著的影響；顧客滿意度亦會直接或透過喜悅的中介影響顧客的讚美行為。研究結果期能提供餐廳業者在服務行銷與人力資源管理之參考。

中文關鍵詞：顧客讚美行為、服務線索、員工逢迎、顧客滿意度、顧客喜悅、全服務餐廳

英文摘要：Compliments serve as a kind of strong feedback. However, there is little empirical research available on customer complimenting behavior in the restaurant industry. Thus, this study aims to explore the reasons for and context within which customer complimenting behavior occurs in relation to the service clues of restaurants; based on social exchange theory, this research also aims to investigate whether employee ingratiation could be an important antecedent to customer compliments, from the perspective of the customers. The research methods which we will utilize in this study include: reviews of compliments and complimenting behaviors; critical incident technique; and questionnaire sampling. A total of 409 valid samples were collected by means of purposive sampling from customers who had eaten at a full-service restaurant and had expressed compliments. The content analysis method was used to analyze the reasons for and against customer complimenting behavior, and structural equation modeling was used to estimate a model linking employee ingratiation, customer satisfaction, delight, and complimenting behavior. The analytical results identified the most common reasons for (e.g. good service, the desire to express thanks or encouragement to service personnel) and against (e.g. the CP value was not high enough, or the service and dishes were ordinary or worse than expected) customer complimenting behavior within the service clues. The results also revealed that employee ingratiation positively and significantly influences customer satisfaction, delight, and complimenting behavior, and that customer satisfaction positively and significantly influences

customer complimenting behavior, either directly or through the medium of delight. Hopefully, these results can be valuable to restaurant management and future research.

英文關鍵詞：Customer complimenting behavior; Service clue; Ingratiation; Satisfaction; Delight; Full-service restaurant

1. Introduction

Zeithaml and Bitner (2002) considered levels of satisfaction in terms of an outcome whereby a product or service provides a pleasant experience for a customer. Kim et al. (2015) suggested that customer satisfaction has always been an important antecedent to customer loyalty. Baker et al. (1994) noted three basic service clues which influence a consumer's image of a restaurant: food, service and the environment.

According to the concept of impression management, people will assume ingratiating self-expression tactics when they desire to be seen as endearing (Seiter, 2007), with the most common ingratiation being to compliment others (Jones, 1964, 1990). The act of complimenting involves positive judgments and ideas and results in the expression of positive opinions to and for the sake of others (Wolfson & Manes, 1980). However, customers sometimes give compliments not from the heart, but merely as a means to lubricate interpersonal relationships (Kraft & Martin, 2001). Kraft and Martin (2001) proposed a theoretical model of complimenting behavior covering a range of considerations including delight, expected interest, involvement, social norms, individual and situational factors. However, Payne et al. (2002) argued that, in order for a compliment to be a successful social strategy, compliments have to be sincere and spontaneous rather than formulaic.

Customer satisfaction is an often researched theme amongst scholars. However, the relationship between satisfaction and loyalty has been called into question (Skogland & Siguaw, 2004), and many scholars have begun to investigate the alternative concept of customer delight. Customer delight goes beyond the limitations of satisfaction and includes the idea of having a pleasant experience (Patterson, 1997). It differs from satisfaction in that delight is an emotion whereas satisfaction is a combination of emotion and cognition. The emotion of delight is the combination of high pleasure and high arousal (Berman, 2005; Finn, 2005; Hicks et al., 2005; Plutchik, 1980; Torres & Kline, 2006). Delight may also be defined as 'the highest level of satisfaction' or being 'completely satisfied' (Berman, 2005; Keiningham et al., 1999; Kumar & Iyer, 2001). However, most of the literature does not clearly delineate the distinction between satisfaction and delight (Anderson & Mittal, 2000; Oliver et al., 1997). There are still some scholars, such as Anderson and Mittal (2000), that consider delight to be the highest level of customer satisfaction. Nevertheless, satisfaction does not inevitably lead to customer delight (Wang, 2011).

Kraft and Martin (2001) defined customer compliments as a kind of strong feedback. Kipfelsberger (2013) argued that active feedback from customers can enhance the sense of well-being in an organization, with customer compliments having a strongly positive effect. However, a review of the past literature reveals it to be primarily focused on customer complaints (e.g., Heung & Lam, 2003; Rosenbaum & Montoya, 2007; Tsai & Su, 2009). Therefore, it is vital to now better research those behaviors that lead to and accompany compliments. Previous studies focused on the non-hospitality industry and exploring empirical research on the theme of customer compliments is rare (Kraft & Martin, 2001; Otto et al., 2005; Payne et al., 2002; Robinson & Berl, 1980). Furthermore, the fact that there are cross-cultural differences in the way that compliments are expressed has been well-documented (Nelson, Al-Batal, & Echols, 1996; Olshtain & Weinbach, 1988; Yu, 2005). Hence, it becomes necessary to further explore the reasons, content and service behaviors which produce customer complimenting behaviors. Moreover, many scholars believe that customer delight is a better predictor of positive outcomes such as customer loyalty, commitment, word of mouth and willingness to pay, than is satisfaction (Barnes et al., 2010; Kim et

al., 2015). Hence, this study also will explore the relationship between first-line service personnel ingratiation, customer delight, satisfaction, complimentary behavior, and customer loyalty from the customers' perspectives, in the hope that it can aid the restaurant industry in service marketing and human resource management.

2. Literature review

2.1. Service clues

Berry et al. (2002) investigated three clue categories of the service experience: functional clues, mechanic clues, and humanic clues. Functional clues concern the technical quality of the offering. Functional clues are based on the food itself, along with the accuracy and efficiency of the service. For example, when shrimp scampi is offered with the appropriate accompanying procedure, these would be the functional clues. Mechanic clues are nonhuman elements in the service environment consisting of design and ambient factors including equipment, facility layout, lighting and color. For example, the tile-top tables and copper pot lamps in Chili's restaurant. Humanic clues consist of the behavior of service employees including body language, voice tone and mood. For example, a warm and friendly smile from a restaurant host demonstrates humanic clues.

2.2. Ingratiation

Liden and Mitchell (1988) defined ingratiation as, 'an attempt by an individual to increase their attractiveness in the eyes of others'. They understood that flattery engenders goodwill, and Heider (1958) went further in suggesting that it reflects the interdependence of people pleasing behaviors. This suggests that ingratiating behaviors do not necessarily involve deceitful attempts to manipulate others (Ralston, 1985), rather that individuals use ingratiation in order to be liked. Ingratiation is associated with beneficial organizational outcomes such as group solidarity and teamwork (e.g., Strutton & Pelton, 1998); leader-member exchange quality (e.g., Dockery & Steiner, 1990; Wayne & Green, 1993); performance assessments; and extrinsic success. Employee ingratiation can affect both the success of a service encounter and the customer's evaluation of the service quality.

2.3. Customer satisfaction

Zeithaml and Bitner (2002) considered levels of satisfaction in terms of an outcome whereby a product or service provides a pleasant experience for a customer. Baker et al. (1994) noted three basic attributes which influence a consumer's image of a restaurant: food, service and the environment. In recent years, the integration of foreign literature has added attributes such as: service quality; service responsiveness; waiting lengths; diversity of the menu; prices; food quality and the overall atmosphere (Sulek & Hensley, 2004; Iglesias & Guillen, 2004; Andaleeb & Conway, 2006).

2.4. Delight

Compared to satisfaction, scholarly definitions become more inconsistent with regard to customer delight (Schümmer, 2007). Kim et al. (2015) pointed out that 'delight' is divided into two different definitions. The first definition of delight is to be found in psychological literature (Plutchik, 1980), which differentiates between delight and satisfaction in so far as that delight is an emotion, and satisfaction a combination of emotion and cognition. Emotions typically contain two elements - pleasure and arousal (Mano & Oliver, 1993; Wirtz & Bateson, 1999). Emotions of delight are a combination of a sense of high pleasure and high arousal (Berman, 2005; Finn, 2005;

Hicks et al, 2005; Plutchik, 1980; Torres & Kline, 2006). A sense of delight is a state wherein the individual feels pleasure or happiness, and awakening is a sense of irritation for an individual in an active state (Bigné et al., 2003).

2.5. *Compliment*

Compliments, like gift exchanges, will be accompanied by chat and many other social functions (Coupland, 2009). Manes and Wolfson (1981) described the compliment as a chance to say nice things for the listener's benefit, the most important function being to establish or strengthen the relationship. Here 'establish' refers to a new relationship between strangers, whereas 'strengthen' refers to the relationship between people who are already acquainted. Speakers express their goodwill through their issuance of compliments to the listener; at the same time, the listener, having received the approving words of the speaker, experiences a positive reaction (Probst, 2003). Wolfson (1983) believed that complimenting 'greases the social wheels' and thus serves as a 'social lubricant', highlighting compliments as a social strategy that allows people to establish or maintain friendly relations. Grant et al. (2010) pointed out that whilst compliments are an effective form of flattery, affection is not the primary mechanism in the relationship between compliment and flattery. Therefore, Payne et al. (2002) argued that, in order for compliments to be a successful social strategy, compliments must be sincere and spontaneous, rather than formulaic.

2.6. *Research hypotheses*

Yagil (2001) pointed out that service employee ingratiation behavior is designed to please the customer, show respect for the customer's status, enhance the customer's self-esteem, and ultimately therefore results in enhanced customer satisfaction. Service employee ingratiation can affect the success of a service encounter and customer evaluations of service quality. Seiter (2007) found that food servers received significantly higher tips when they complimented their customers' choices of menu items, compared to when they did not. Based on social exchange theory, Medler-Liraz and Yagil (2013) suggested that, due to their enjoyment of flattery, customers are motivated to reciprocate such ingratiation by regulating their emotions and displaying positive emotions towards service employees. Furthermore, Anderson and Mittal (2000) regarded delight to be the highest level of customer satisfaction.

Kraft and Martin (2001) and Payne et al. (2002) stated that tried so hard to serve me, delight or great satisfaction were the key motivations for consumer complementing behaviors. Comparing satisfaction to delight, Finn (2005), Loureiro (2010) and Ngobo (1999) pointed out that satisfaction has a strong influence on repeat purchase intentions. Based on the above findings, the study hypothesis can be inferred as follows:

Therefore, this study presents the following hypotheses:

Hypothesis 1: Ingratiation by restaurant staff has a significant positive impact on customer satisfaction.

Hypothesis 2: Ingratiation by restaurant staff has a significant positive impact on customer delight.

Hypothesis 3: Customer satisfaction has a significant positive impact on customer delight.

Hypothesis 4: Customer satisfaction has a significant positive impact on customer complimenting behavior.

Hypothesis 5: Customer delight has a significant positive impact on customer complimenting behavior.

Hypothesis 6: Ingratiation has a significant positive impact on customer complimenting behavior.

3. Methodology

In order to explore the reasons for and context within which customer complimenting behavior occurs in relation to the service clues of restaurants, a purposive sampling method was used. A qualitative approach with a self-administrated open-ended questionnaire was distributed to 350 consumers who had recently eaten at full-service restaurants. Content analysis and frequency method were used to analyze the critical incidents.

Furthermore, to investigate whether employee ingratiation would be an important antecedent to customer's compliments, a total of 409 valid samples collected by means of purposive sampling, from customers which had eaten at a full-service restaurant within the last three months and had expressed compliments to service personnel .

The items for this study were constructed after considering the definition of compliments (Holmes, 1988) based on a literature review (Kim & Lee, 2013; Yu & Bastin, 2010) and the opinions of many hospitality industry experts. The dimensions of this study included a total four-item design to measure the complimenting behaviors of restaurant customers. The twelve-item ingratiation behavior scale by Strutton et al. (1995) was adopted to measure the ingratiation behavior of the employees. Furthermore, the six-item delight scale by Kim et al. (2015), the three-item satisfaction scale by Kim and Lee (2013), and the three-item loyalty scale by Bowden and Dagger (2011) were also adapted to measure the delight, satisfaction, and loyalty of the customers. All of the items were rated on a 7-point Likert-type scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree). In addition, the questionnaire included questions related to the personal demographics of a respondent, such as gender, age, education level, and vocation.

4. Findings

4.1. Service clues and customer complimenting behavior

A total of 350 valid samples were collected by means of purposive sampling, from customers who had recently eaten at a full-service restaurant. The results show the main reasons for customer complimenting behavior in restaurants to be: 'good service'; the desire to 'thank or encourage service personnel'; 'delicious meals'; to express 'delight'; and in the hope that the customers might get better 'service quality'. The main reasons for customers not offering compliments were found to be: 'the CP value was not high enough'; 'the service and meals were ordinary or worse than expected'; 'we are not in the habit of expressing compliments'; and 'good service is just what should be expected from a restaurant'.

4.2. Ingratiation, satisfaction, delight, and customer complimenting behavior

4.2.1. Respondent characteristics

In this study, 409 valid samples were collected from diverse educational backgrounds, income groups, and socioeconomic groups. Female and male (50.1% and 49.9% respectively) and married and unmarried (50.6% and 48.48.2% respectively) respondents were fairly equally represented, and the largest proportion of people came from the 31-40 year group (33.3%), were university graduates (46.0%), and worked in the service industry (30.8%), earning a monthly income of between \$20,001 to \$40,000 (29.4%) and \$40,001 to \$60,000 (28.6%).

4.2.2. Exploratory factor analysis

To verify the validity and reliability of the construct of customer complimenting behavior, this study conducted exploratory factor analysis (EFA), and a Cronbach's alpha criterion of 0.7 was used to evaluate the internal consistency of the construct (Nunnally, 1978). One factor was applied using EFA to customer complimenting behavior. The total cumulative variance explained by this factor was 68.69%, and its Cronbach's alpha value was 0.885. Furthermore, the Cronbach's alpha scores for the ingratiation, satisfaction, and delight variables were 0.888, 0.937, and 0.936, respectively, all exceeding the 0.70 threshold.

4.2.3. Structural equation modeling

Structural equation modeling was conducted to ensure model validity, and to examine the relationships between the constructs. The goodness-of-fit statistics indicated a satisfactory fit for employee ingratiation and satisfaction, delight, and the complimenting behavior of customers ($\chi^2/df = 243.418/72 = 3.381$, GFI = 0.922, AGFI = 0.887, RMSEA = 0.076, TLI = 0.952, CFI = 0.962).

H1, H2, H3, H4, H5, and H6 all postulated positive influences between employee ingratiation, customer satisfaction, customer delight, and customer complimenting behavior. First, the estimation results revealed that employee ingratiation positively affected customer satisfaction ($\beta = .427$, $p < .001$) and customer delight ($\beta = .271$, $p < .001$); therefore, H1 and H2 were supported. Second, the estimation results revealed that customer satisfaction positively affected customer delight ($\beta = .644$, $p < .001$): therefore, H3 was supported. Third, customer delight and customer satisfaction positively affected customer complimenting behavior ($\beta = .266$ and $.228$ respectively, $p < .001$); therefore, H4 and H5 were supported. In conclusion, the estimation results of the model revealed that employee ingratiation positively affected customer complimenting behavior ($\beta = .189$, $p < .01$): thus H6 was also supported. The results revealed that employee ingratiation is an important antecedent to customer's compliments (Figure 1).

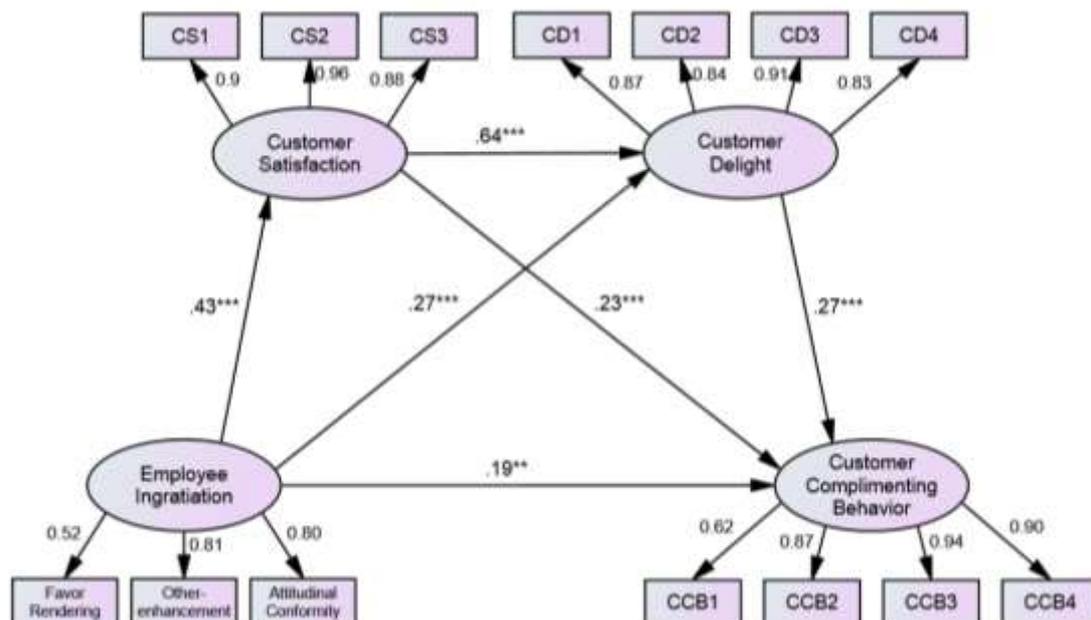


Figure 1. Analysis results of structural model

5. Conclusions and Discussion

Humanic and functional clues are the major factors that result in customers exhibiting complimenting behaviors and are possible predictors of customer loyalty. Furthermore, the results indicated that employee ingratiation had a positive effect on customer delight and satisfaction. Customer delight and satisfaction, in turn, had a positive effect on customer complimenting behavior. The customer complimenting behavior also had a positive effect on a customer loyalty. The results reveal a positive relationship between the employee ingratiation, customer delight, customer satisfaction, complimenting behavior, and customer loyalty for full-service restaurants.

Barnes et al. (2011) saw that employee effort and emotional display are important factors in generating delight and their effect becomes stronger the more skilled the employees are in delivering them. This study's results are also consistent with the perspective that employee ingratiation behavior has a positive effect on both customer satisfaction and delight. One of the possible reasons for this is that favor-rendering as an ingratiation tactic can significantly elevate interpersonal relations (Tsang, 2015), thereby elevating satisfaction and delight in turn.

Giving is clearly one form of complimenting behavior that demonstrates satisfaction. Seiter (2007), investigating restaurant staff and the service process, found a direct causal relationship between customer-directed flattery and tips: specifically, food servers received significantly higher tips when they complimented their customers' choice of menu items than when they did not. Similar studies such as Seiter and Dutson's (2007) found that stylists in hairstyling salons received significantly smaller tips when they did not compliment customers, compared to when they did. The present study is also consistent with these perspectives, and revealed the significant influence of customer delight, satisfaction, or employee ingratiation on customer complimenting behavior.

In order for a compliment to be a successful social strategy, compliments have to be sincere and spontaneous rather than formulaic (Payne et al., 2002). Therefore, first-line employees need to be sincere and spontaneous, and capable of applying ingratiation tactics such as favor rendering, providing other enhancements, and achieving attitudinal conformity to enhance the level of customer satisfaction. These tactics can engender customer delight and garner compliments, ultimately resulting in loyal and grateful clientele.

This study, conducted in a northern city of Taiwan, surveyed respondents who have previously dined at full-service restaurants, and the results may not therefore be widely generalized. Future studies could extend this study further to add a higher degree of external validity, perhaps even providing a cross-cultural contrast.

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