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A Proposal of Menu Co-creation with Customers based on Service Dominant Logic and its Evaluation

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The food service industry is one of typical service industries. However, both the market size and sale record of this industry have been decreasing since 2005 in Japan. Restaurants in the food service industry provide not only high quality food but also various services such as nice atmosphere or omotenashi services. Customers enjoy the total service provided by restraints and feel their satisfaction. Therefore, in order to satisfy customers' increasing requirements on restraint services, various efforts should be done to increase their sales. An evolution of menu is one of such efforts.

There are many reasons for customers to choose a restaurant, which are the physical environment of the restaurant, attitude of service, or the food quality. According to a survey on the ordinary consumers, more than 50% of consumers make their orders based on the menu provided by the restaurant. So the menu plays an important role in making their decisions of ordering dishes and in catching their desires. We can conclude that descriptions in the menu can make customers expect to have their surprise and satisfaction with the provided services including foods.

One of the research (Ueda, 2006) on the importance of menu has pointed out that menu is considered as an important factor to affect consumers' actions but has not been investigated enough. Most of owners in restaurants have not focused on how to make their menus attractive. However, how to make the menu attractive seem to be quite important for increasing customers' expectations. So far, menus are always categorized according to the ingredient, for example, the category of meat, the category of fish, the category of noodle, etc. However menus should be categorized for fitting customers' desires to order, for example, how much calorie the food have, whether the food do good to hairdressing or healthy, and so on.

Recently, a new concept of service dominant logic (SDL), which emphasizes value co-creation, has been applied to various service industries. In the new concept, customers have an important position in making services or products based on a value co-creation concept. Here, services are co-created according to customers' desires, and the co-created services become more valuable for customers based on "value in use".

In this survey, the concept of SDL is used for creating a new menu and customers participate in making menus based on their experiences of eating foods and feeling the atmosphere in the restaurant. Then, the comparison between the original menus made by the restaurant and the new menus made by customers are done for evaluating the effectiveness of the proposed methodology. The menus based on the SDL concept has been found to be attractive for customers and expected to bring good business to the restaurant.

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