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Double-Servicescape for Enhancing Social Capital

—A Case of Chinese Tea Restaurant—

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Teahouse is a traditional service industry, with thousands of years in China. In particular, in the past three decades, along with the development of the economy of China, the improvement of people's living standards and the increased of people's leisure time, teahouse industry was promoted into prosperity. The total number of teahouses in China has become 100,000, including varieties of teahouses, tea shop, tearoom, tea restaurant, and its economic output has reached about 300 billion Yuan. And among them a special type of teahouse, named "tea restaurant" which consists of a teahouse service and a restaurant service in one teahouse, is growing up fast recently, almost one-third of 100,000 teahouses are the tea restaurants.

This thesis explores how the Chinese tea restaurant's service structure effects on the customers' satisfaction. The physical environment of a service is defined as servicescape which is also called service environment or servicescape settings. And the Chinese tea restaurants usually contain two parts, one is restaurant where serves food, and the other is tea house for entertainment like chess. That means the Chinese tea restaurants contain two servicescapes, one is restaurant servicescape, and the other is entrainment servicescape. We call the

combined servicescapes seen in the Chinese tea restaurants, “double-servicescape”.

Our research questions are: (1) Why does the double-servicescape exist in the Chinese tea restaurants? (2) Why do the tea restaurants become popular in China? (3) What are the major aspects of double-servicescape that have impacts on customers’ satisfaction?

Based on questionnaires derived from 115 customers and 6 interviews from employees and managers at the tea restaurants in Chongqing, China, we got the following observations:

Firstly, along with the development of the economy of China, the people’s living standards are improving and the people’s leisure time is increasing. According to the investigation, almost 90% of the customers spend more than two hours in the Chinese tea restaurant; one quarter spends more than four hours. Therefore, the teahouses which only serve entertainment cannot meet the customers’ needs. The double servicescape of tea restaurants are accepted by customers, because the customers can spend lots of hours, the restaurant part and the tea house part in one tea restaurant could be very convenient for them. In addition, the longer the customers stay in a leisure facility, the more money they spend, so the managers of the Chinese tea restaurant would be happy to run the double-servicescape type tea restaurant.

Secondly, the customers are expressing higher satisfaction on the service of the tea restaurant, because of the convenience of the double-servicescape. More than half of them will consume at both the restaurant part and the entertainment part.

Thirdly, the customers are expressing higher satisfaction on the environment of the tea restaurant and the service about staffs’ conversation. About 90% of the customers have shown revisit intention. More than 82% of them have shown the intention to introduce friends and families to the tea restaurant.

Lastly, in old times before the teahouse appeared, people need a social place to get connected to others to exchange information and do business. So the teahouse appeared. In a long history the teahouse helped kinds of people to build connection with each other to promote the social development. And as the development of society, an advanced society needs a more comfortable and efficient gathering place. This makes the tea restaurant come out in people’s vision. In our study, the number of friends and co-workers is much larger than

families, that is because tea restaurant is mainly the place for friends and co-workers to communication to deepen people's "Guanxi (Chinese social captial)" The Chinese tea restaurant with double-servicescape is highly effective to build the "Guanxi" between customers in the society of China.

In summary, we got results that double-servicescape is effective for service improvement. That is the reason that the Chinese tea restaurants are becoming so popular.