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# The Effect Of Service Interaction Orientation On Customer Satisfaction And Behavioral Intention: The Moderating Effect Of Dining Frequency

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## Abstract

The purpose of this study is to examine the relationships among interaction orientation, customer satisfaction and behavioral intention, as well as the mediating role of customer satisfaction between interaction orientation and behavioral intentions. A self-administered survey was conducted with 628 convenience samples. The empirical results indicate that interaction orientation has positive influences on customer satisfaction in first-time and frequent diners, interaction orientation positive affects behavioral intentions in frequent diners, and customer satisfaction positive affects behavioral intentions in first-time and frequent diners. In addition to insights on how restaurant promotion strategies should fit the needs of individual with different dining frequencies, other ideas to enhance the dining experience are also offered.

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*Keywords:* Interaction orientation, customer satisfaction, behavioral intentions, dining frequency

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## 1. Introduction

Developing high quality lodging and dining experiences is the main aim of restaurant managers with regard to attracting consumers (Jensen and Hansen 2007). If consumers are satisfied with the food or service in a restaurant, they are more likely to re-visit it and thus increase the profits (Gupta et al. 2007). Therefore, the importance of customer satisfaction and re-purchase behavior (i.e., customer loyalty) is widely recognized in the hospitality field.

Moreover, due to technological advances and increased interactivity between firms and customers (Yadav and Varadarajan 2005), individual consumers expect companies to increasingly customize products and services to meet his/her specific demands. Scholars thus argue that an interaction orientation can enable businesses to refine their knowledge about consumer tastes and preferences (Srinivasan et al. 2002). In addition, Urban (2004) proposed that an interaction orientation can improve customer satisfaction, strengthening repurchase behavior and leading customers to become a firm's trusted

advocates. Consequently, the effective and efficient management of such interactions and the interfaces at which these occur are increasingly being recognized as sources of lasting competitive advantage.

However, few empirical studies examine how interaction orientation may influence both customer satisfaction and loyalty. Ramani and Kumar (2008) indicated that future studies should empirically survey the relationships among the above mentioned variables across many firms within an industry. Therefore, this empirical research investigates the relationships among interaction orientation, customer satisfaction and behavioral intentions across firms in the hospitality industry.

Namkung and Jang (2009) indicated that the level of frequency should play a moderate role among service stimuli (e.g., value), customer affect (e.g., customer satisfaction) and response (such as customer loyalty), suggested that an in-depth examination of the moderating role of re-purchase frequency is needed. Little research has yet been conducted into how frequent diners perceive their restaurant experience in terms of consumer-provider interactions, and how their perceptions differ from those of first-time diners. This study thus investigates how the level of dining frequency (first-time vs. frequently diners) moderates the relationships between interaction orientation and customer satisfaction/behavioral intentions.

## 2. Literature Review

### 2.1. *The relationship between interaction orientation and customer satisfaction*

The idea of interaction orientation was first developed by Kumar and Ramani (2006), who stated that it reflects a firm's ability to interact with its individual customers and to take advantage of the information obtained from them through successive interactions in order to achieve profitable customer relationships. Interaction orientation in this study represents restaurants' ability to interact with individual diners and obtain information from them to maintain profitable and long-term relationships. It is composed of four main elements, as follows: (1) The concept of the customer, (2) Interaction response capacity, (3) Customer empowerment, and (4) Customer value management.

Meanwhile, customer satisfaction is the consumer's fulfillment response. It is a judgment that a product or service feature, or the product of service itself, provided (or is providing) a pleasurable level of consumption-related fulfillment, including levels of under- or over-fulfillment (Oliver 1999). Consumer satisfaction is an attitude change resulting from the consumption experience (McCullough et al. 2000). Satisfaction in this study is thus conceived as a fulfillment response employed to understand and evaluate the consumer dining experience.

Kumar and Ramani (2006) proposed that interaction orientation leads to high levels of customer satisfaction. For instance, studies have shown that empowering individual customers to develop their own unique experience enhances their satisfaction (Prahalad and Ramaswamy 2004; Urban 2004). Ramani and Kumar (2008), in a survey of 211 samples in 107 firms, found that a superior interaction orientation is likely to result in greater customer satisfaction. In other words, conscious efforts by a restaurant to develop and enhance an interaction orientation will result in greater customer satisfaction, and thus we propose out first hypothesis:

Hypothesis 1. Interaction orientation positively influences customer satisfaction

### 2.2. *The relationship between interaction orientation and behavioral intentions*

Behavioral intentions involve recommending the company to others, providing positive word of mouth (WOM), a willingness to behave as a partner with the organization, and remaining loyal to the company (Bowen and Shoemaker 1998; Reichheld and Sasser 1990). Customers who make a personal referral must not only believe that a company offers superior value, but also feel good about their relationship with it (Reichheld 2006). Kumar and Ramani (2006) indicated that firms develop an interaction orientation (such

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