

HOW THE RITUAL INTERACTION OF THEME RESTAURANTS PROVIDES A HAPPY DINING EXPERIENCE: THE MEDIATING ROLE OF FUN AND NOVELTY

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ARTICLE HISTORY

Received: 31 July 2024

Revised: 14 August 2024

Published: 24 August 2024

ABSTRACT

Tourists frequently seek out unique culinary experiences at tourist destinations. Some restaurants offer ritual interactions to their customers to enhance their dining experiences, thus attracting a substantial number of tourists. As the slogan (Amazing Happy) of Amazing Mota (a Japanese-themed restaurant), Ritual interaction is a scenario of interaction order that enables customers to obtain a happy dining experience. This study adopts a mixed-methods approach. In-depth interviews with 15 tourists who have dined at Amazing Mota were conducted to develop the measurement scale of ritual interaction of themed restaurants. Through the open coding to the selective coding process, 24 items of four dimensions were identified. These items were then validated through exploratory factor analysis (EFA) and confirmatory factor analysis (CFA), resulting in a final scale of 20 items across four dimensions. The four dimensions are contextual elements (including decoration and food sub-dimensions), ritual symbols, serving processes, and evoking emotions. A survey was then conducted to examine how these four dimensions of ritual interaction influence customers' happy dining experience through fun and novelty. This study contributes to the field of culinary tourism by identifying the key components of the ritual interaction of themed restaurants. These insights offer valuable guidance for restaurateurs seeking ways to create happy dining experiences, thereby contributing to the promotion of destinations through culinary.

Keywords: Themed Restaurants, Ritual Interaction, Fun, Novelty, Happy Dining Experience

CITATION INFORMATION: Yang, T., Lai, I., & Mok, Q. (2024). How the Ritual Interaction of Theme Restaurants Provides a Happy Dining Experience: The Mediating Role of Fun and Novelty. *Procedia of Multidisciplinary Research*, 2(8), 68.