Customer Dining Experience at Korean Themed Restaurant: an Enhanced Service Blueprint Approach

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Abstract

As competition between restaurants getting fiercer, restaurant owners need to be able to differentiate themselves with other restaurants to attract and retain more customers. Offering ethnic-themed foods and ambiance is regarded as one of strategy to differentiate between one restaurant and the others. At the heart of this strategy, restaurant owners are encouraged to offer authentic and distinct dining experience so that people are attracted and willing to revisit the restaurant. Customers perceive dining experience by recognizing the clues exposed during service delivery process or what usually called as service clues. This paper aims to explore how customers perceive about service clues and how it affects their dining experience at an ethnic-themed restaurant. This paper uses a qualitative approach and proposes an enhanced service blueprint to obtain deeper understanding of customer dining experience. The findings show the role of service clue in shaping up customer experience in an ethnic-themed restaurant. Each clue contributes differently to building customer dining experience.

Introduction

As competition between restaurants getting fiercer, restaurant owners need to be able to differentiate themselves with other restaurants to attract and retain more customers. Offering ethnic-themed foods and ambiance is regarded as one of strategy to differentiate between one restaurant and the others. This strategy has been acknowledged by Jang, Ha, & Park, (2012) as an ethnic-themed in restaurant triggers positive emotion which leads to customer intention to revisit and recommend the restaurant. At the heart of this strategy, restaurant owners are encouraged to offer authentic and distinct dining experience so that people are attracted and willing to revisit the restaurant (Sukalakamala & Boyce, 2007).

Berry, Carbone, & Haeckel (2002) argued that customers perceive dining experience by recognizing the clues exposed during service delivery process. They categorize

clues into two types. The first concerns with the performance of the goods or service. This clue influences customers' cognitive. In restaurant context, the quality of the foods and times required in delivering the foods are the examples. This clue is called functional clues. The second is related to the human and nonhuman elements of the services. This clue triggers customers' emotion. The clues that come from nonhuman things, such as ambiance, lighting, decoration, and music played in the restaurant is called mechanic clues. Meanwhile, the clues that come from human elements such as behavior and attitude of the server is called humanic clues (Berry et al., 2002). Each clue trigger different cognitive and emotion so that it contributes toward customer experience differently (Berry, Wall, & Carbone, 2006). Thus, recognizing the clues and how it influence customer is important in managing customer experience (Berry et al., 2002).

This paper aims to explore how customers perceive about service clues and how it affects their dining experience at an ethnic-themed restaurant. This study took place in Bandung as Bandung culinary attraction has been acknowledged by several previous studies (Koestantia, Nuryanti, Prayitno & Femina, 2014; Muhammad, Mayangsari, Novani, & Hermawan, 2016). Koenstantia et al., (2014) found that enjoying foods is one of the reasons tourists come to Bandung. Muhammad et al., (2016) study reveal the importance of Bandung's culinary image in shaping Bandung's destination image, especially for its varieties and delicious taste. Moreover, Indonesian Ministry of Tourism had regarded Bandung as Indonesian culinary destination along with Yogyakarta, Solo, Semarang, and Bali.

In particular, Chinggu restaurant, a famous Korean ethnic-themed restaurant in Bandung, is selected as the research object. As customer experience is always unique and different for each individual (Vargo and Lusch, 2008) we use a qualitative approach to gain a better insight of customer experience. As customer experience is shaped by a sequence of service delivery process (Haugen, 2014), service blueprint is used to capture what customer experienced during the service delivery process.

This study contributes to the literature in two folds. First, we offer more comprehensive views of customer experience by using qualitative research methodology. Previous studies related to this issue often use quantitative methodologies discussing ethnic-themed relation to customer emotion and behavioral intention (Nam & Lee, 2011; Shawn, Ha, & Park, 2012) or factors determining authentic experience (Tsai & Lu, 2012; Sukalakamala & Boyce, 2007) which limits the answer of customers regarding what they experienced in ethnic-themed restaurant. Second, we offer an enhanced service blueprint as a tool to examine customer dining experience. In this enhanced service blueprint, additional swim lanes are added to capture what is experienced by the customers during the service delivery process.

Literature Review

Customer Experiences and Service Clues
Customers' perception during service delivery is shaped by the performance of the services offered (functional clues), tangible elements of the services (mechanic clues), and the one who provides the service (humanic clues). These elements influence customer

rational and emotional perceptions of service delivery (Berry et al., 2006) and contribute toward customer dining experience.

The functional clue is related to the performance of the service (Berry et al., 2002). It relates to the ability of service providers to deliver what is expected by customers (Berry et al., 2006). Ha & Jang (2010) study has acknowledged the positive relationship between customer satisfaction and food and service quality. Delicious food and service quality will also trigger customer positive word-of-mouth (Jeong & Jang, 2011). Moreover, food quality is recognized as the most important attributes as it triggers customer satisfaction higher than other attributes such as restaurant environment and employee attitude (Tsai & Lu, 2012).

The mechanic clue is related to nonhuman aspects of the service (Berry et al., 2002). In the dining experience, the mechanic clue is related to the ambiance of the restaurant, such as music played, table layout, interior design and decor, eating utensils and the lighting. As customers are usually exposed by mechanic clues before others clues during the service delivery process, it plays important role in building customers first impression and expectation (Berry et al., 2006). Wall & Berry (2007) study reported that customer expectation tends to be higher when a high amount of mechanic clue exposed during service delivery. Restaurant environmental attributes trigger arousal which leads to pleasure in dining experience (Hyun & Kang, 2014).

Humanic clue is related to the servers of the foods. It includes attitudes, gestures, and voices of the server in delivering the service. While the customers encountered the servers, there is an opportunity to add some pleasant experience during the interaction. This pleasant experience can exceed customers expectation toward the service experience (Berry et al., 2006). This is supported by Wall & Berry (2007) study which found that humanic clue has a higher influence on customer service quality perception compared to mechanic clue. In line with this, Tsaur, Luoh, & Syue (2015) reported that aesthetic employee, including employee appearance, attitudes, and service triggers positive emotion which leads to positive behavioral intention.

Several studies have discussed the topics related to ethnic-themed restaurants. Sukalakamala & Boyce (2007) identified three motivations that lead customers to engage in the authentic dining experience. They are seeking for authentic foods, practically related concern, and looking for something new. Shawn et al., (2012) study showed that authentic foods and atmospheres induced customer positive emotions that trigger positive behavioral intention. Tsai & Lu, (2012) study argued that authentic food is the most important attribute in shaping up customer satisfaction in the ethnic-themed restaurant. However, the ethnic-themed restaurant is not only about ethnic foods. Bell & Meiselman (1994) study found that restaurant atmosphere is also an important part of the ethnic-themed restaurant as it has the positive influence on what customer perceive about restaurant authenticity.

Customer's dining experiences are built from a sequence of service delivery process which the customers are encountered by the service clues during the service delivery process (Berry et al., 2002). Thus, mapping the sequence of service delivery process is important to understand customer's dining experience. One tool that can be

used to map the service delivery process is service blueprint. Service blueprint maps series of events encountered by the customer and the explanation of the aspects that contributes toward the events (Haugen, 2014).

Service Blueprint

A service blueprint is a simple approach that helps the user mapping and explaining service process (Haugen, 2014). This blueprint is a powerful approach that can be used for designing or analyzing service process (Bitner, Ostrom, & Morgan, 2008). On the x-axis, service blueprint capture series of events encountered by the customers. On the y-axis, service blueprint informs the reader about other aspect related to the events (Haugen, 2014).

According to Bitner, Ostrom, & Morgan (2008), service blueprint consists of five elements. They are customer actions, onstage/visible contact employee actions, backstage/invisible contact employee actions, support processes, and physical evidence. Customer actions represent a sequence of actions conducted by customers. Onstage

contact employee actions are the front line employee actions. There is a line of interaction which separates customer actions and onstage contact employee actions. This line represents the customers and providers service encounters. These elements are the ones that visible to customers.

Below onstage contact employee actions, there is a line of visibility which separated what visible and invisible to customers. Backstage contact employee actions and support processes are underneath the line of visibility. Both of them are conducted by service providers and invisible for customers. Backstage contact employee actions represent what employee does at the backstage, while support process illustrates activities conducted by partners that support service deliveries. There is an internal line of interaction which separates backstage contact employee actions and support processes. It shows internal interaction on service providers. The last element is physical evidence which represents tangible evidence of service delivery (Bitner, Ostrom, & Morgan, 2008).

Service Blueprint Components	
Physical Evidence	
Customer Actions	Line of Interaction
Onstage/ Visible Contact Employees Action	Line of Visibility
Backstage/ Invisible Contact Employees Action	Line of Internal Interaction
Support Process	

Figure 1. Service Blueprint Components (Bitner, Ostrom, & Morgan, 2008)

Several studies have used service blueprint to analyze the service delivery process in the restaurant. Hummel & Murphy (2011) used service blueprint to analyze the productivity of the restaurant. In their study, a sequence

of delivery process is mapped and then timed by using service blueprint. The insight from the service blueprint result then used to recommend strategies to increase service efficiency at the restaurant. Szende & Dalton

(2015) analyzed the restaurant service delivery process and proposed an enriched version of service blueprint. Additional swim lanes were added to service blueprint to capture important support actions of service providers or customers which often be forgotten such as customer information search or hiring employees. Although has been used in the restaurant context, the use service blueprint to capture what customer feel during dining experience is still rare.

Although has been regarded as a simple tool that can be used for designing or analyzing the service process (Bitner, Ostrom, & Morgan, 2008), service blueprint gives only a little information about customers experience. Thus, additional swim lanes should be added to the conventional service blueprint to enhance the understanding of customer experience. Previous studies had aware about the importance of putting customer experience aspect in service blueprint. Spraragen & Chan (2008) tried to include customers feeling on the service blueprint. They used visualization to capture customer feeling on the blueprint. Customer feeling and emotional states are represented by the circle around customer icons and the distance between the customer and service provider icon in the blueprint. Patricio, Fisk, & Cunha (2008) proposed a service experience blueprint for designing multi-interface service experienced by the customer. Yet, their study emphasizes more on the interface between the customer and the technology used rather than what customer felt during the service process. Alter (2013) proposed a value blueprint, a service blueprint with additional swim lane that captures the value of activities conducted by the actors involved in the activities. In this blueprint, how customer valued activity conducted by the service provider could be mapped so that service delivery process could be analyzed better.

Adopting from previous research, the enhanced service blueprint adds three new swim lanes in the conventional service blueprint. These swim lanes are customer feelings and customer satisfaction. Customers feeling captures what customers think and feel during each of customer actions. This captures both positive and negative feeling that can be used to analyze service delivery process. Customer satisfaction is the degree of satisfaction during the service delivery process, whether customer satisfies, dissatisfy, or indifferent. At last, we change the name of physical evidence to service clue. Service clues are things that trigger the customers feeling or thinking. It can refer to functional clues (e.g. the taste of the foods), mechanical clues (e.g. ambiance of the restaurant), or humanic clues (e.g. server attitudes).

Methodology

This study aims to capture customer dining experience at an ethnic-themed restaurant. We use a qualitative approach to obtain rich data about what customer felt during the dining experience that might be different from one to another. As customer dining experience is a sequence of service delivery process, we use service blueprint to capture this sequences.

This study was conducted in Chinggu restaurant at Jalan Sawunggaling No.10 Bandung. Chinggu restaurant offered Korean foods and atmosphere for the customers. The interior was designed to bring Korean atmosphere. The walls were painted with the mural which enhanced Korean atmosphere. A few photographs on the walls were related to Korean celebrities and drama. There were several separated rooms that captured Korean MRT, parks, and

restaurant atmosphere. The television in the restaurant always played Korean channels and Korean music clips.

Chinggu restaurant sold Korean foods and beverages which ranged from IDR 7,900 to IDR 29,900. The Korean foods included street snacks, noodles, meats, and soups. The beverages included squash, tea series, coffee, milk tea, milkshakes, pancake and bingsoo (Korean desserts). The menu books were written in English and used Won exchanges for the prices.

This study consists of three phases. On the first phase, participant observation was conducted to observe how service was delivered and assessed how it felt to be a customer. On the second phase, we conducted semi-structured interview related to service clue exposed and customer dining experience. We invited two participants in this phase. The participants are our acquaintances who fond of Korean foods and culture which have not gone to Chinggu restaurant before. The result from the first phase was used to construct conventional service blueprint and enhanced service blueprint for the second phase. On the third phase, six participants were asked related to their expectation, what they liked and disliked, and overall satisfaction during the dining experience. All participants also were asked whether they will recommend and visit the restaurant again next time.

Result
Customer Dining Experience
These results are based on the phase one and two of the study. Participant observation and semi-structured interview were conducted to capture the sequence of service delivery. On the semi-structured interview, two participants were invited. Participant

1 is a master degree student which had already gone to South Korea before. She expected the authentic Korean flavor, especially for the street foods offered by Chinggu restaurants. Participant 2 is a master degree student which likes to use social media, especially Instagram. She also enjoys streaming Korean drama series. Before she came to Chinggu restaurant, she saw a Chinggu restaurant's photograph that had on the train atmosphere. Thus, her expectation to Chinggu restaurant was to enjoy Korean food like in Korean drama and to feel the train atmosphere. The result will be delivered in narrative manners to capture the sequence of service delivery. Based on these results, conventional service blueprint (Figure 2) and enhanced service blueprint (Figure 3 and Figure 4) were constructed.

Participant Observation Result
In this participant observation, we involved in the restaurant dining experience as a customer. We observed how the service delivered by service providers and how it perceived by the customers. The result of this participant observation will be used to construct service blueprint.

When the customers entered the restaurants, there was a waitress greeted the customers and asked how many people would come. After the customer responded to the waitress question, the waitress confirmed whether there was a seat available for the customer. If there was an available seat for the customer, the waitress would escort customer directly to the available seat. If there was not any seat available, the waitress would ask the customer to wait. There were several seats provided to the waiting customer although the waitress did not ask the customer to wait there.

Thus, there were several customers who waited outside the restaurant, not in the area provided. If there were more than nine customers on the waiting list, the waitress would ask whether they were willing to wait until their turn. After asked by the waitress, some customers decided to leave but there were also customers that decided to stay.

After there was a seat available for the waiting customers, the waitress escorted the customers to the seat. Not long after the customers waited on the seat, the waitress would come with the menu books and eating utensils in accordance with the number of customers. To order the foods, the customers had to call the waitress and ask them to take the order. It was quite easy to call the waitress as there were quite a lot of waitresses and there was at least one waitress stood by

in every room. The food would be served around ten minutes after the order was taken.

After the customers finished eating, the used plate would be taken by the waitress. The waitress would take the used plate every time the customer called the waitress to order another food. At the end, the customer could pay directly to the cashier or requested the bill to the waitress. If the customer requested bill from the waitress, the requested bill will be delivered in a glass. After the customer paid the bill, the customer might leave the restaurant. As there was no waitress assigned to greet the customer that leaves the restaurant, not all the customers were got a greeting from the waitress. It depends whether there is a waitress in the exit area while the customer left the restaurant.
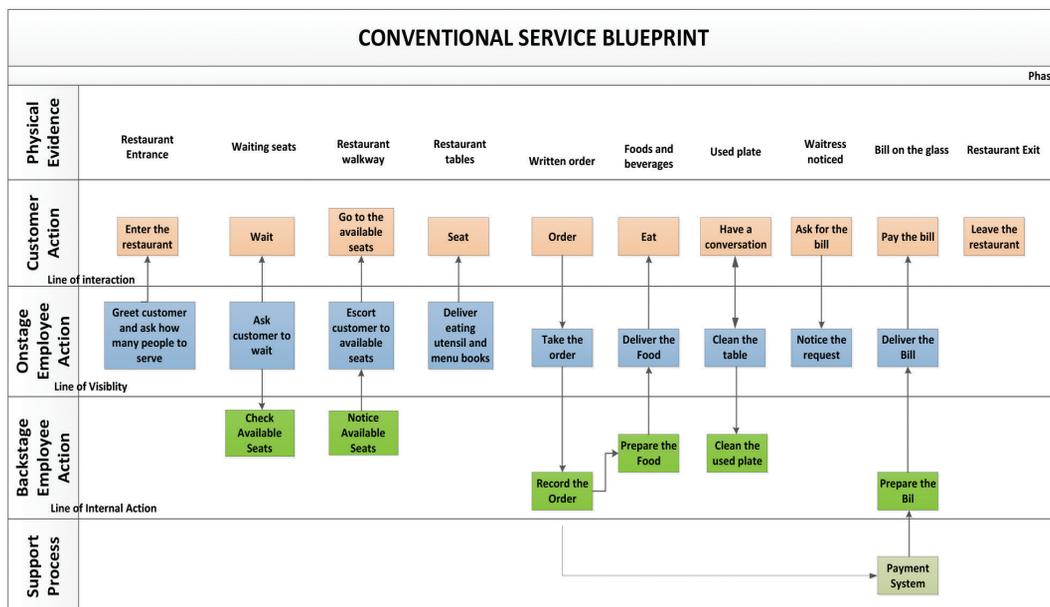

Figure 2. Chinggu Restaurant Service Blueprint

Semi-Structured Interview Result

Participant 1

While entering the restaurant, Participant 1 was quite disappointed as there were

no servers welcoming her. Although the entrance offered Korean atmosphere, she thought that there was nothing interesting there. Furthermore, she felt

that the atmosphere was unauthentic and not natural.

She walked on the tables to find her friend that already been there. She noticed that the table layout was too close to another. It triggered crowded feeling in her minds. She thought that the room was too crowded and noisy.

She found her friends and sat there. The seat was fine. Her friend gave her the menu books and asked her to order the foods. She found that the menu was not appetizing. She felt that there was not anything special offered on the menu. What interesting to her was the price used Won exchange. After thinking for a while she decided to order the foods. She was quite confused about how to order the food. After a while, the servers noticed her calls and took her order. She felt that the attitude of the server was average.

Her food was served. She enjoyed her foods. She said that all the foods served were failed to meet her standards, except one of the beverages. She said that both of the appearance and the flavor of the foods was nothing special.

She enjoyed conversation with her friend and decided to order something else. While ordering the foods, the server asked whether he could clean up the tables. She was pleased with the server's attitudes as it did not distract her conversation with her friends.

After a while, her friend requested the bill to the server. The bill was served in a glass. She was pleased with the creativity of the server that delivers the bill. After paying the bill, they left the restaurant. She was disappointed with the attitude of the servers which not thanking her or asking her to come back later.
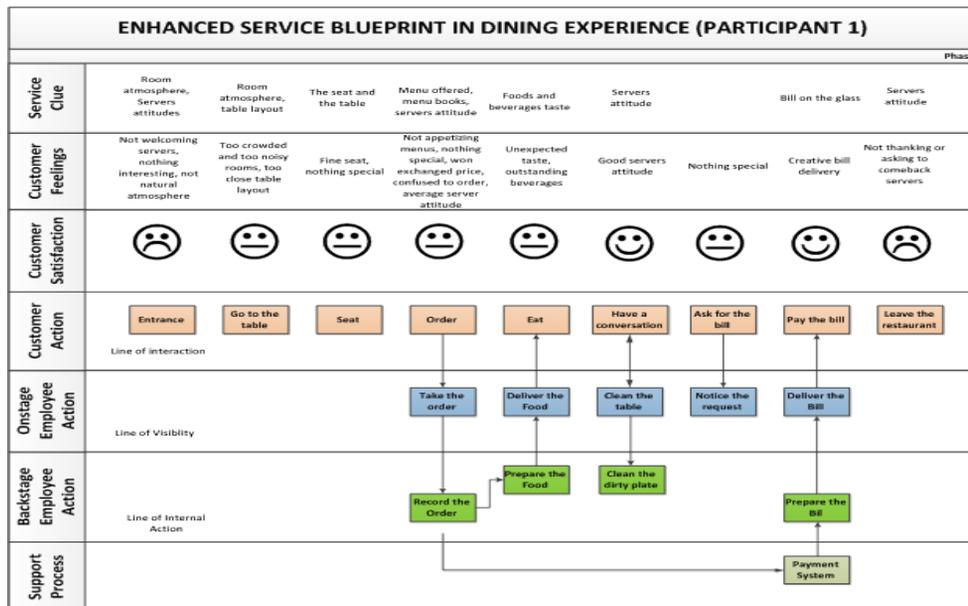

Figure 3. Enhanced Service Blueprint Participant 1

Participant 2
While entering the restaurant, Participant 2 was quite disappointed as there were no servers welcoming her. She was quite confused to find her friend that already there. The room was crowded. She felt that the atmosphere was not appropriate with the one on the Instagram.

She felt that the room was quite small so that she could easily find her friends that already been there. She found her friend and sat there. She was pleased that she found eye-catching Korean drama pictures on the several spots on the walls. She hoped that the room was bigger so it could enhance Korean atmosphere more.

She looked at the menu books. She found the menus were quite confusing. She thought that the menu offered needed more variation and explanation about the foods. She criticized the fusion beverages that were not appropriate for the restaurant Korean themes. When she ordered the foods, she felt that the server was polite and nice. She was pleased with the patience of the server that waited for her while she was carefully choosing her drinks.

Her food was served. She enjoyed her foods. She was pleased with the appearance of the beverages (she ordered a bingsoo). However, the flavor of the foods was not met her standards. She felt that her food was not spicy although she ordered the spicy ones.

At one moment, the server came to clean up the tables. She criticized the attitude of the servers that took the unused eating utensils. She thought that the server should not have taken it as they probably would order foods again.

After a while, her friend requested the bill to the server. The bill was served in a glass. She was disappointed with that kind of attitude. She thought that the server was a lack of effort by serving the bill through a glass. After paying the bill, they left the restaurant. She was disappointed with the attitude of the servers which not thanking her or ask her to come back.
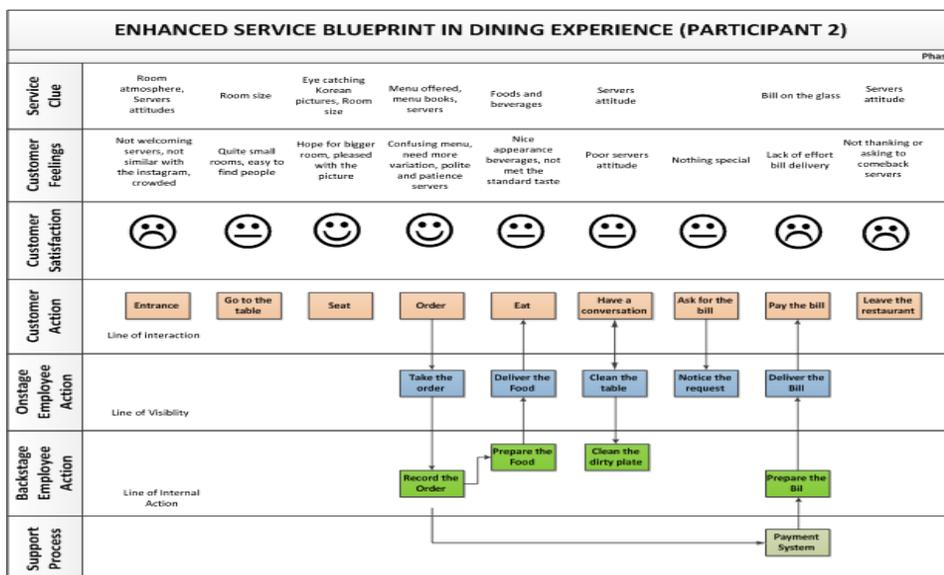

Figure 4. Enhanced Service Blueprint Participant 2

Customer Expectation and Overall Satisfaction

On the third phase, six participants were involved in this study. Each of participants was asked about their expectation and what they like and dislike during the dining experience at Chinggu restaurant. Each participant also was asked to give

a score in one to ten scale of the overall dining experience and the reasons why they gave such score. At the end, each participant was asked whether they would come back to Chinggu restaurant and gave a recommendation about Chinggu restaurant to their friends.

Each participant came with different expectation when they came to Chinggu restaurant. However, most of them mentioned that they were expecting the good foods and comfortable place at Chinggu restaurant. In term of good foods, two participants were expecting to have an authentic Korean flavor for this restaurant's foods. Both of participants were familiar with Korean flavor as one had been visited South Korea and had tasted the authentic Korean flavor there and the other one was a fan of Korean dish. In term of a comfortable place, some participants were expecting the Chinggu restaurant is a restaurant that is quiet and can be a comfortable place to study.

"I am expecting to have an authentic Korean flavor here, especially for the street snacks... I know some of the menus here and how should it tastes." Participant 1

"I am expecting Korean food with a taste like a Korean food. I am also expecting the place where I can eat comfortably." Participant 2

"When I came to Chinggu restaurant, I expect that Chinggu restaurant is quite, not a crowded place, comfortable place to do some studies, and provides a lot of snacks and delicious beverages." Participant 3

When the participants were asked about what they liked during the dining experience at Chinggu restaurant, most of them related it to the functional and mechanical clues of the restaurants.

The functional clues were related to the parking area and serving food waiting times. The mechanical clues were related to the interior design and the Korean theme of the restaurants. These clues were the one that built up good customer experience. Thus, these clues should be maintained, even enhanced, to ensure good customer experience.

"What I like here is the parking area, the foods that served fast, and Korean songs played." Participant 4
"What I like most is the parking area. It is rare to see the restaurant this big (small restaurant), provides a quite large parking area." Participant 1

"There are several things I like about this restaurant. I like the parking area which is large. I can comfortably park my car there. I like the interior design of the restaurant. I like the restaurant that provides me with an electric plug. And the price is affordable." Participant 3

When the participants were asked about what they dislike during the dining experience at Chinggu restaurant, most of them were concerned about the crowd on the restaurant. The crowd on the restaurant would also relate to another problem such as too long waiting time to be seated and the room layout which was not comfortable. Other concerns were related to the functional clue, such as the taste of the foods, and humanic clues, such as no greeting from the waitress. These clues were the ones that contributed to the bad customer experience. Thus, this clue should be evaluated and repaired in order convert bad customer experience to be good customer experience.

"What I don't like in this restaurant is the crowd, there are too many people here, the air circulation is not good" Participant 5

"I don't like the eating utensils, the time I spend to wait to be seated, and the room layout." Participant 6

"There are too many people here. I don't like the taste of the foods; the taste is just like an Indonesian food, not authentic. They are no greetings when I come here. And other things I don't like the way they served this drink (showing the drink that is served in the plastic glass like a take-home drink). I don't order a take-home drink, but what they serve is a take-home drink. " Participant 3

All participants were asked to give score related to their overall satisfaction with their dining experience. The score should be given in one to ten scale and each participant was asked why did they give such a score for their overall dining experience satisfaction. The average score participant give is six or seven out of ten. Most of the participants give the positive and negative comment for the reasons why they gave such a score. Positive comments were related to the service of the waitress while negative comments were related to the taste of the foods.

"I give the restaurant a six score out of ten, as the taste of the foods is too 'Indonesian', not authentic. However, this place is a good place to hang out, different from another Korean restaurant." Participant 2

"The score is seven out of ten. The place is too crowded. The parking area is in a mess. The taste of the food is not really goods. However, the attitude of the waitress is quite goods." Participant 4

"I give six points for the restaurant. Although it is not like what I expected (authentic Korean flavor), the service is quite goods." Participant 1

At last, all participants were asked whether they would like to visit the Chinggu restaurant again and recommend it to their friends. All of the participants answered "no" to this questions. Some participants argued that they would only come again if their friend asked to come to Chinggu restaurant; otherwise, they would never go to Chinggu restaurant again.

"I will go here if only I was invited by a friend to go here. Otherwise, I won't." Participant 4

"If someone asks me to go to Chinggu restaurant, I will come. But I won't come here alone." Participant 1

Discussion
The notion that value is value is always unique and different depends on what beneficiary felt (Vargo and Lusch, 2008) is proved in this study. All participants came different expectations and different perception of the service performed in Chinggu restaurant. We can also see a different perception of customers about the same object. While participant 3 was pleased with the parking area of Chinggu restaurant that the participant could park comfortably, participant 4 felt disappointed and thought that the parking area is a mess.

The notion that every service clues contribute differently towards customer satisfaction (Berry et al., 2006) is also proved in this study. Although the average scores for participants dining experience are six or seven, the reasons why they gave that such score was quite different. It proves that every participant perceived differently about the service clues exposed during the dining experience. Participant 1 and participant 2 perceived that the functional clue (i.e. the authentic Korean flavor) is the most important things, while participant 4 tended to stress more in the humanic clue (I.e. the waitress attitudes).

Other interesting thing is Chinggu restaurant's humanic clue (i.e. the waitress attitudes), contributes towards customer satisfaction a lot. As participant 1 and participant 4 said that they were highly disappointed because the taste of the foods, the score they gave was still high (seven points from participant 4 and six points from participant 1) due to the waitress attitudes that quite goods. These findings align with previous study findings that argued servers attitude could add a pleasant experience to customers and that turn negative to positive experience (Berry et al., 2006). Positive servers' attitude could trigger customer positive emotion (Tsaur, Luoh, & Syue, 2015) that leads to the increase of satisfaction.

We also found that functional clues play the most significant role in shaping customer dining experience. Most of the participant's concerns were related to the functional clues, such as the taste of the foods, crowd on the restaurant, and the waiting time. These clues also are mentioned as the main consideration of participants' satisfaction scoring. Most participants considered taste and authenticity of the foods as what they expect and contribute most to the dining experience. These findings support the previous study by Berry et al., (2006) which argued that functional clues refer to providers ability to deliver service so that it relates most to satisfaction. This also aligns with a previous study (Tsai & Lu, 2012) that acknowledges food quality as the most important attribute that triggers customer satisfaction.

With regards to Chinggu restaurant's mechanic clues, we found that mechanic clues did not directly relate to customer dining experience satisfaction. Although most of the participants were pleased with Chinggu restaurant's mechanic clues, mechanic clues were not mentioned

when they were asked about overall satisfaction. This could be a sign that mechanic clue gave a less contribution towards customer satisfaction compared to functional and humanic clues, or the mechanic clue did not directly influence customer satisfaction.

The findings of this study should be treated with cautious manner. The first is related to the generalizability of the study result. We believe that culture difference could influence people's eating behavior. Regarding this, we limit the generalization with the Indonesian context. The study conducted in other regions could possibly have resulted differently from this study. The second is related to customer feel. We believe that prior feeling could possibly influence customer current feeling. These limitations offer opportunities for the future research. Future research could explore more about cultural background and prior feeling and how it affects dining experience.

Conclusion

This paper aims to explore how customers perceive about service clues and how it affects their dining experience at an ethnic-themed restaurant. Chinggu restaurant, a famous Korean themed restaurant in Bandung, was selected as the object of the study. A qualitative approach is used to get a deeper insight into customer perception of service clue and dining experience.

Our study finds that each service clues contribute differently in shaping up customer dining experience. The functional clue is regarded as the most important factors in shaping up customer dining experience. Meanwhile, we found that humanic clue could add more pleasant feeling so that increase customer satisfaction. The mechanic clue also has a positive influence on customer dining

experience although as not as significant as humanic or functional clue. These findings can be used by the restaurant with regards to their investment strategy. Although investing in mechanic clue could increase customer satisfaction, its contribution to positive customer dining experience and satisfaction is less compared to humanic and functional clue. Thus, although improving ethnic atmosphere is important, the taste of the foods and service quality should be maintained at a high level as it also significant in building customer experience.

We also proposed an enhanced service blueprint as a tool to examine customer dining experience. An enhanced service blueprint captures the sequence of service delivery process and how it perceived by customers. It also enables restaurant owners to examine what triggers positive and negative dining experience. The output from the tools can be used by restaurant owners as a strategy to improve restaurant quality.

Notes on Contributors

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