THE GROUP YOU ARE *ASSESSING:*	Save your file. Use this format: group being assessed your group.doc So an example would be TIV Voltes5.doc – where TIV is the group being assessed and Voltes5 is your group.
BEAUTY AND THE BEASTS	
YOUR GROUP NAME:	
INSTRUCTOR	

A	B	C	D
Are ideas presented connected with the aim of the presentation?	Are the ideas presented clearly supported with evidence and logical argument?	Is it easy to follow & to understand? (Are the slides clear and easy to follow e.g. use of new pictures, words, graphs)	Overall impression (is it a group presentation etc.?)
40%	30%	20%	10%

5%	5%	5%	5%

Comments (space will expand as you type)
Thanks for the fun gift. Much needed energy after lunch

Less words on the screen

stores = restaurants

slide on scale of the store is spot on - few words and animation
Also customer profile

Choose a font that is easier to read

Some repetition i.e., elements of the method twice - make this more efficient
A figure could help

Interview - why so long?
How many incidents
Smaller number of incidents - so divide - sat-disat or and dimensions
Ocassional and first time - how many?
Where is professionalism?
CIT - who to focus on -- segment

Good awareness of limitations e.g., international v. local

leading restaurant provider
mulitlingual menu - easy now with online menu

This is an interesting report reflecting much effort. The writing, however, is so
dense it becomes tiring to follow - I'm longing for a figure or graph to break things

up. Do not forget - squeezing more in is not "more" report. This is particularly true in this case, a management style report, where you want credibility on the listening methods (particularly) and to show you have done background on the company at the start.

What is going to help make this work talk?
- explain the process / customer touch points
- layout your objectives line by line
- ease way way back on citation at the start - keep it simple and clear
- show results as graphs
- what happened to the Vietnam - Taiwan comparison?
- for the CIT code to your data -- particularly for practical work like this - what are the incidents telling us about Haidliao
- come to incisive conclusions that talk back to your objectives

Grade (%) 20%

Comments from: Mo Moon Day

Evaluating: Beauty and the Beast

Target company: Haidilao

1. Presentation Flow & Style:

- Opening Game: The game at the beginning was entertaining but felt disconnected from the presentation's main theme.

- Group Attire: Noticed all group members wore black—was this a uniform?

- Group Name ("Beauty and the Beast"): Curious why they chose this name and if it has any connection to Haidilao.

- Background Music: The music volume was distracting and too loud for a presentation setting; it felt more suited to a spa, making it hard to focus on the content.

- Inconsistent Atmosphere: The initial atmosphere with prize games was lively, but the energy didn't carry through the presentation, missing an opportunity to maintain engagement.

2. Content & Relevance:

- Image Relevance: The pictures used didn't appear related to Haidilao.

- Customer Profile: The customer profile section was clear and easy to understand.

3. Interview Details:

- Interview Timing: Is the timing of the interviews significant?

- Interviewee Codes: Each interviewee has a code like "001E" or "006B." What do "E" and "B" signify, and why not use simple numbers?

- Interview Grouping: How were the interview groups organized? Was this explained, or did we miss it?

4. Data & Analysis:

- Mix of Qualitative & Quantitative Results: The qualitative and quantitative results seem to be mixed together. It might be clearer if they were separated.

- Terminology Consistency: It would be better to use full terms like "regular customer" rather than abbreviations.

- Interpretation of Numbers: What insights are the numbers intended to convey?

- Frequency of Six Dimensions: The frequency of the six dimensions didn't seem connected to the pie chart shown below it. Clarification on this link would help.

- Comfort & Perfectionism: Are these dimensions combined? It's unclear.

- Over-Attentiveness: This could be related to a lack of comfort.

5. Limitations & Language Considerations:

- Language as a Limitation: Is language truly a significant limitation here? The service in Haidilao is in English and Chinese, and since the primary target group is Taiwanese, Vietnamese customers are a smaller segment. Given budget constraints, it may not be feasible for Haidilao to hire or train employees in Vietnamese.

Compliment
- Nice interactive activity to catch eyeball and attention.
- Big enough letter so we can easy to read.

Suggestion
- The objective is not comprehensive enough and can be more important/practical for the research.
- The interviewee mostly from Asia and only 1 from America, so we think they can explain more analysis except from lack of cultural diversity, or better make it more international/Asian focus because they have told in the objective that for Taiwanese and Vietnamese.
- The slow music can let us feel relax at first so it's good, but in the middle of presentation it may be better if they can lower the volume since it's kind of distract.
-

Comments from: The Fried Rice Group

Evaluating: Beauty and the Beast

Target company: Haidilao

Name	Comments
Hiro	1.With interactive beginning that will draw listener attention more easily understand and know their points while talking with step-by -step presentation. 2.Interesting analysis result that divided the participants into frequent, occasional and first-time 3 groups, but I don't know the definition how they defined the 3 groups 3.I also want to know what kind of group(gender, age...etc) tend to be frequent or occasional customers of Haidilao, but I didn't see in the presentation 4.Video to introduce should add English subtitle too 5.Cultural background only separate into continent, it's better divided in a smaller areas such east Asia or southeast Asia...etc
May	Good Points: 1.Creative Opening 2. Nice theme concept for presentation 3.Attractive presentation style; Font size, not too much text 4.Not clear about last session purpose or link to research objective. Recommendation: 1.Reduce music background. It's might be too loud. Sometime it make me loose focus.
Joey	Presentation: interactive, thematic (associations with the group's name), simple and clean Content: engaging, gets the point across, good use of numbers as a hook, somehow too much emphasis on the methods (I personally think there is no need for the pros and cons of methods used), music may be slightly distracting Question: how do you define regular, occasional and first-time? (specification is in the questionnaire itself)
Tu	1. Good points: - Good game at the beginning to get everyone engaged. - Canva slides' design: nice idea of connecting your group name with the research client (Hadilao). Really good Canva design. - Impressive number of the survey participants. 2. Recommendation: - The music is nice but the tempo sometimes fast, so somehow I have the feeling like your presentation is rushed due to the music. - Hope you can explain more about the link between 2 research method

	that you chose.

National Cheng Kung University

Institute of International Management

Mid-term Group Report

SERVICE MANAGEMENT - CHINESE PERSPECTIVE

Listening to Customers:

An Analysis of Haidilao's Service Experience

Group: Beauty and The Beasts

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Instructed by: Professor James Stanworth, Ph.D.

November, 2024

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1. Introduction

1.1 Organization Overview about Haidilao

In recent decades, the global catering industry has experienced significant transformation driven by shifting consumer preferences, digitalization, and heightened competition (Zhao et al., 2023; Santiago et al., 2024). Within this evolving landscape, Haidilao - a Chinese hot pot chain founded by Zhang Yong - has established itself as a leading brand recognized for its unique and customer-oriented service model (Du, 2023). From humble beginnings as a small hot pot restaurant in Jianyang, Sichuan in 1994, Haidilao has blossomed into a global culinary powerhouse. By 2023, the company had expanded to operate over 1,400 stores globally, which includes more than 114 international locations managed by its overseas division, Super Hi International Holding (Chan H-H, 2022; Lin, 2023). The brand earned accolades as one of Forbes World's Best Employers, Top Regarded Companies, and Asia's 200 Best Over A Billion in 2019 (Forbes, 2023). With the approach of "customer first", Haidilao differentiates itself through a highly personalized and technologically innovative approach to customer service (Kong, 2024; Wu. B, 2023). Known for its distinctive in-restaurant amenities, such as complimentary manicures, free beverages for the waiting section, and a variety of interactive elements, Haidilao provides a high-touch experience that emphasizes customer comfort and engagement (Kong, 2024; Twimbit, 2020; Wong, 2018). This service-driven strategy has been instrumental in helping Haidilao stand out in the crowded restaurant industry, appealing to middle- and upper-middle-income consumers who value quality, novelty, and social dining experiences in a warm, inviting atmosphere (Twimbit, 2020).

Despite its success, Haidilao faces challenges from increasing competition, the rise of internet marketing, and the proliferation of new hot pot brands (Chong et al, 2024). To address this, the brand has adopted a "sinking market strategy," expanding into China's second and third-tier cities to capture emerging demand while balancing the challenges and nuances of these markets (Song, 2023). However, as Haidilao strives to maintain its reputation, it must navigate the fine line between attentive service and customer comfort, as some guests perceive the high level of attentiveness as overly intrusive (Lin, 2023). Understanding customer feedback is critical for a service-oriented business like Haidilao, as it enables the brand to continuously refine its service approach to better meet diverse expectations.

1.2 The Importance of Listening to Customers

In the restaurant industry, listening to customers is essential for understanding their needs, preferences, and expectations, which are critical to customer satisfaction and loyalty. For restaurants, in particular, customers expect a high-quality dining experience characterized by healthy, delicious meals and a distinctive style, ambiance (Hwang & Seo, 2016), and level of service that set the restaurant apart from others (Khan, 2020; Kim et al., 2006; Lee & Hwang, 2011). According to (Castleberry & Shepherd, 1993), listening involves positively sensing, explaining, evaluating, and responding to both verbal and non-verbal customer cues, a process that has been shown to improve service efficiency.

Beyond meeting basic functional needs, such as the desire to eat and drink affordably (Kiatkawsin & Han, 2019; Park, 2004; Ryu et al., 2012), customers are increasingly seeking dining experiences that fulfill hedonic needs - providing enjoyable, memorable moments that may involve novelty, social sharing, or cultural exploration (Björk & Kauppinen-Räisänen, 2017; Warde & Martens, 2000). In a competitive market, upscale establishments like Haidilao must listen closely to adapt and create memorable, if not extraordinary, experiences that leave lasting impressions on customers (Hwang & Seo, 2016). By actively listening to feedback, Haidilao can tailor its offerings to align with these higher-order needs, enhancing its brand reputation and maintaining a strong competitive edge.

1.3 Research Purpose and Objectives

The report aims to gain insight into customer perspectives at Haidilao and identify specific service improvement areas through effective listening and feedback survey analysis methods. The project aims to systematically gather and analyze customer feedback to assess Haidilao's service performance in two target regions, Vietnam and Taiwan, allowing for a comprehensive evaluation of how service elements impact customer satisfaction. This approach seeks to provide actionable recommendations, enhancing Haidilao's service quality and aligning with regional expectations to strengthen its competitive positioning in diverse markets.

The objectives of this research are: *(1) To systematically collect and analyze customer feedback from Haidilao locations in Vietnam and Taiwan to assess service performance and customer satisfaction. (2) To evaluate how well Haidilao's service offerings meet upscale restaurant customer preferences for unique ambiance, high-quality food, and cultural engagement. (3) To provide actionable recommendations that help Haidilao refine its service strategy, enhancing its ability to deliver exceptional, memorable dining experiences across diverse markets.*

2. Methodology

2.1 Selected Listening to Customers Methods

This study examines customer satisfaction and loyalty dynamics at Haidilao through two methods of listening to customers: An online questionnaire (Cannell et al., 1981; Evans & Mathur, 2005) and the Critical Incident Technique (CIT) (Bitner et al., 1990; Flanagan, 1954). Each of the methods has its own strengths and weaknesses which is why this combination offers a comprehensive perspective on Haidilao's service quality. The combination of an online questionnaire and CIT provides a comprehensive understanding of customer satisfaction at Haidilao, allowing for the capture of both broad statistical data and rich experiential details. Questionnaires offer a broad view of service perceptions, while CIT captures the emotional nuances of individual experiences (Bitner et al., 1990), essential for examining Haidilao's distinctive approach to personalized service.

2.1.1 Listening by Online Questionnaires' Strengths and Weaknesses

Questionnaires are widely used in service research for their ability to capture quantitative data on customer perceptions and satisfaction (Evans & Mathur, 2005; Lietz, 2010; Rowley, 2014; Singh & Sagar, 2021). The online questionnaire for this study is created and distributed through Google Forms which is a free platform, available to use with a friendly interface to efficiently gather responses from Haidilao customers and provide an objective assessment of customer satisfaction and service experiences. For strengths, the online questionnaire method enables data collection from a broad customer base, which is critical for capturing the perspectives of Haidilao's diverse clientele across different demographics and locations (Singh & Sagar, 2021). This method allows for quick, cost-effective feedback on key service attributes (Lietz, 2010), making it a practical tool for understanding general satisfaction levels among Haidilao customers. Additionally, Google Forms provides a convenient and accessible format for respondents, aligning well with the digital habits of Haidilao's digital experience practices (Twimbit, 2020). Despite its strengths, online questionnaires have notable limitations, such as non-response bias, where specific customer segments (e.g., older demographics) may be underrepresented, reducing the generalizability and the accuracy of questionnaire findings (Singh & Sagar, 2021). Questionnaire fatigue is another concern, as lengthy questionnaires can lead to incomplete or inaccurate responses, impacting data quality and skewing insights on customer satisfaction (Lietz, 2010; Singh & Sagar, 2021). Furthermore, while online questionnaires can capture overall satisfaction trends, they lack the depth needed to understand complex emotional responses or subtle service interactions, which are critical in assessing Haidilao's highly personalized services.

2.1.2 Listening by Critical Incident Technique (CIT)'s Strengths and Weaknesses

The Critical Incident Technique (CIT) focuses on capturing detailed, specific incidents that highlight customers' significant positive or negative experiences (Bitner et al., 1990; Flanagan, 1954). CIT allows researchers to explore the emotional dimensions of customer satisfaction and dissatisfaction, providing a nuanced perspective on Haidilao's service model. CIT's strengths are particularly suited to Haidilao's unique service context, where distinctive gestures—such as offering hair ties or deploying robotic servers—can significantly impact customer loyalty and perception of brand quality (Twimbit, 2020). By focusing on specific incidents, CIT provides a rich, qualitative understanding of how Haidilao's efforts to create memorable experiences translate into customer perceptions, thereby enabling researchers to gain insights into both positive and negative service encounters (Bitner et al., 1990). This method allows researchers to identify the fine balance Haidilao must strike between attentive service and customer boundaries, a balance that is integral to customer satisfaction in a high-touch service environment like Haidilao. While CIT captures in-depth experiences, it often relies on a smaller sample size, which may not fully represent Haidilao's customer diversity, potentially affecting the representativeness and comprehensiveness of the insights. Additionally, analyzing CIT data can be time-consuming and may pose challenges in deriving consistent themes, particularly in a culturally diverse customer base where service expectations may differ across regions (Flanagan, 1954; Gremler, 2004).

2.1.3 Listening to Customers by Combining Online Questionnaire and CIT
The combination of an online questionnaire and CIT is ideal for this study because it integrates the strengths of both quantitative and qualitative data collection. The questionnaire captures broad, quantitative insights into customer satisfaction trends, providing statistically significant data on general service perceptions (Evans & Mathur, 2005; Rowley, 2014; Singh & Sagar, 2021). CIT complements this by offering in-depth qualitative insights that reveal the underlying reasons for satisfaction or dissatisfaction through specific customer experiences (Bitner et al., 1990; Flanagan, 1954; Gremler, 2004). This mixed-methods approach enables a holistic analysis of Haidilao's service quality, where the questionnaire provides a quantitative baseline and CIT offers detailed contextual understanding, capturing both general trends and specific incidents.

2.2 Data Collection Process:

2.2.1 Customer Verification

To ensure data accuracy and verify that participants in both the online questionnaire and interviews were genuine Haidilao customers, our team incorporated specific screening steps. For the online questionnaire, distributed via Google Forms, we employed a series of verification questions. Respondents were asked about the frequency of their visits to Haidilao, such as the number of people accompanying them on each visit, and the amount of money typically spent. These questions aimed to confirm that participants had authentic, recent experiences with the restaurant, thus enhancing data reliability. And we apply Chinese six service quality dimensions to assess service (Stanworth et al., 2015) in the survey as Haidilao is a Chinese restaurant. For interviews, we used convenience sampling, reaching out to friends, family, and community contacts to identify potential participants. Prior to scheduling interviews, we verified whether individuals had dined at Haidilao. This preliminary check ensured that all interviewees had firsthand experience with the restaurant, a necessary criterion to maintain the integrity of the collected data.

2.2.2 Practical Data Collection: Questionnaire and Interview Design

For data collection, our team employed a snowball sampling approach, where each team member initially shared the questionnaire with friends, family, and personal social networks, who were then encouraged to share it within their own circles. Each member also shared the survey with at least five online community groups on social media, expanding our reach to a more diverse sample. This snowball technique allowed us to gather responses from a broader pool while maintaining some randomness within a convenience sampling framework, following practical recommendations for data collection in service research. In the interview phase, we adopted the Critical Incident Technique (CIT) as outlined by Bitner et al. (1990),

aiming to collect detailed narratives of specific positive and negative service experiences at Haidilao (Bitner et al., 1990). Our team used an interview guide based on CIT principles, focusing on memorable service encounters that participants had at the restaurant. This technique enabled us to categorize incidents and identify key themes related to service satisfaction and dissatisfaction, reflecting the structured approach from the "Service Encounter" study to ensure consistency and depth in our qualitative data (Bitner et al., 1990). Each incident needed to fulfill four specific criteria: *(1) it must involve an interaction between an employee and a customer, (2) it should be highly satisfying or dissatisfying from the customer's perspective, (3) it should represent a distinct event, and (4) it must contain enough detail for the interviewer to visualize the experience* (Bitner et al., 1990).

3. Data Analysis Approach

3.1 Quantitative Analysis of Survey Results

Stage 1: Design questionnaires following the six dimensions of service quality: professionalism, comfortableness, sense of sincerity, respect, active service and chin-chieh (Stanworth et al., 2015). The survey contains five sections. The first section provides the introduction and guidelines, while the remaining four sections include 21 multiple-choice questions, with five sub-questions under each of the six questions about service quality dimensions. Additionally, an optional open-ended question is included to capture any additional information or ideas.

Stage 2: Distribute the survey to personal and business contacts. We distribute the survey to groups of people who have been to Haidilao in Taiwan and Vietnam.

Stage 3: Collect data and eliminate invalid responses (responses that contain conflicting data or from respondents who have not been to Haidilao). Data from 111 responses were collected, including 2 invalid responses from respondents who have not been to Haidilao. During the analysis, we discovered a response with conflicting data: all the answers chosen for the six dimension-related questions were "strongly disagree," yet the respondent also selected "high expectation" and "much better than expected.". Therefore, the response was eliminated from further data analysis.

Stage 4: Analyze data to generate useful information and insights. Trends and patterns were identified through frequency analysis and visualized using graphs and charts. These insights provided a clearer understanding of customer experience and satisfaction, guiding strategic decisions for improvement.

3.2 Qualitative Analysis of CIT Data

3.2.1 Data Collection

To collect the critical incidents, we conducted interviews with a sample of 11 Haidilao customers, capturing both satisfactory and dissatisfactory experiences. Interviewees were recruited from a variety of backgrounds and frequencies of dining experiences at Haidilao, ranging from first-time visitors to regular customers. Each interview lasted approximately 20 to 30 minutes, allowing participants to recount specific instances that they found either memorable or impactful in shaping their perception of Haidilao's service quality. Participants were guided to recall a memorable experience at Haidilao, either positive or negative, using prompts similar to those in Bitner's study. Interviewers asked participants to detail the following: *(1) The timing and context of the incident. (2) The specific circumstances leading to the experience. (3) The actions taken by Haidilao employees during the interaction. (4) The resulting impact of the interaction on the participant's overall satisfaction.*

The aim was not to prompt participants to analyze the service but rather to narrate specific events or behaviors that shaped their service experience. This approach aligns with Bitner's method, allowing us to

gather rich, qualitative data that reveals the nuances of service encounters without influencing participants' interpretations. We reviewed all 11 interviews and confirmed that each one meets the four essential criteria: (1) involving an interaction between an employee and a customer, (2) reflecting a highly satisfying or dissatisfying experience from the customer's perspective, (3) representing a distinct event, and (4) containing sufficient detail for the interviewer to visualize the experience (Bitner et al., 1990).. With this confirmation, we will proceed to the next steps in our analysis, examining the data further to identify patterns, insights, and implications relevant to our study objectives.

3.2.2 Structure of Analysis Using Bitner's Method and Procedure

For the analysis, we structured the data into categories based on Bitner's Method and Procedure, which groups service encounters into three main areas: *(1) Employee Response to Service Delivery System Failures*: Incidents in which employees responded to service breakdowns, such as long wait times or unavailable items. *(2) Employee Response to Customer Needs and Requests:* Incidents where employees responded to specific customer requests or preferences, including special needs or individualized services. *(3) Unprompted and Unsolicited Employee Actions:* Instances where employees took proactive actions without customer prompting, adding unexpected value or comfort to the customer experience. Each interview transcript was reviewed to identify statements and stories that aligned with these categories. The categorized data was then labeled as satisfactory or dissatisfactory depending on the outcome of each incident and its impact on the customer's perception of Haidilao's service quality.

3.2.3 Coding and Thematic Analysis

To systematically organize the data, we coded each incident according to its incident type, outcome (satisfactory or dissatisfactory), and relevant customer quotes. Coding allowed us to track recurring themes and patterns in customer feedback across different service encounters, facilitating an understanding of common positive or negative behaviors. We also used thematic analysis to identify broader themes that emerged across the categorized incidents. Key themes included responsiveness to customer requests, proactive service behaviors, and handling of service breakdowns. This thematic insight complements the CIT data, highlighting which aspects of service quality are most influential in shaping customer perceptions.

3.2.4 Ensuring Objectivity and Consistency

To ensure objectivity in our qualitative analysis, all team members reviewed the coding and thematic organization independently, then discussed discrepancies. This collaborative review helped maintain consistency in interpreting the CIT data, ensuring that incidents were accurately classified and that themes were representative of the overall data.

4. Findings

4.1 Key Customer Profiles Identified

4.1.1 Online survey

Out of 111 responses, 48 are from individuals aged 18-24, 52 are from those aged 25-34, 6 are from those aged 35-44, 3 are under 18, and 2 are invalid responses. These 2 invalid responses have been eliminated from further data analysis. Among the 109 valid respondents, 14 are regular customers (those who visit Haidilao at least once a month), 64 are occasional customers, and 31 are first-time visitors.

4.1.2 Interview

A total of 11 interviews were conducted, with participants ranging in age from 22 to 40. The majority of interviewees were Asian, with one from Central America. Interview durations varied between 18 to 31 minutes with 4 hours, 30 minutes and 57 seconds in total. Among the participants, two were regular customers, visiting Haidilao frequently; six were occasional customers with varied visit frequencies; and three were first-time visitors. Most interviewees reported a mix of satisfactory incidents with minor dissatisfactory experiences, reflecting both positive interactions and occasional service challenges.

4.2 Key Themes from Critical Incidents

Our analysis of customer interviews at Haidilao revealed three distinct categories that shape customer perceptions of service quality: Employee Response to Service Delivery Failures, Employee Response to Customer Needs and Requests, and Unprompted and Unsolicited Employee Actions. Each group provides a different lens through which customers assess their experiences, with unique expectations and responses driving satisfaction or dissatisfaction.

4.2.1 Employee Response to Service Delivery Failures

This group highlights how employees handle disruptions in core services, including delays, unavailability of items, or other service errors. Customers often expect some form of proactive response when service falls short, and the way these issues are managed can significantly impact their experience. For instance, one customer appreciated the honesty and transparency of the staff when informed about a long wait time, describing it as *"honesty that we appreciate" (004E)*. This proactive communication helped manage expectations and prevented dissatisfaction. However, when such failures were not effectively addressed, it led to negative experiences. *"I waited about six hours... but when I came into the restaurant area, I think every bad feeling disappeared." (011P)*. This incident underscores that while some customers may tolerate delays, effective communication is critical in maintaining their patience and understanding.

4.2.2 Employee Response to Customer Needs and Requests

This theme focuses on how employees respond to specific customer requests and preferences, an important aspect for customers seeking personalized service. Many customers reported positive experiences when staff attentively met their preferences. For example, one customer appreciated the guidance they received at the sauce station: *"They instructed me how to make the sauce... and they even told you... the specific amount of food would be recommended by them also" (004E)*. However, when employees failed to honor requests, such as disregarding a request to skip the noodle dance, it led to discomfort. One customer noted, *"We asked them to not perform the noodle dancing... we didn't want to have the other people's attention" (003T)*. This incident highlights that respecting individual preferences is essential to maintaining a positive experience.

4.2.3 Unprompted and Unsolicited Employee Actions

Unlike the previous groups, this category is defined by employees taking initiative without explicit customer prompts. These unprompted actions often reflect Haidilao's commitment to going above and beyond basic service expectations. Customers valued small, thoughtful gestures, such as offering hair ties, towels, or aprons—unexpected items that made them feel cared for and added to their enjoyment. One customer highlighted this aspect, saying, *"They gave us hair ties, small towels to clean our glasses, aprons, and lots of other small things I didn't expect" (007L)*. Such gestures reinforce the brand's dedication to customer satisfaction. However, the data also shows that over-attentiveness or actions that clash with the customer's comfort can backfire. For example, when an employee's enthusiasm clashed with a customer's preference for privacy, it diminished their comfort: *"I feel like they provide the service beyond my expectation, but sometimes they just like to take care of us. So it's kind of annoying for me" (003T)*. Thus, the balance between attentive service and respecting customer boundaries emerges as crucial in this group.

4.3 Quantitative Survey Findings

4.3.1 Overall Experience

Among 109 valid respondents, 107 responded having positive experiences at Haidilao. Only 2 reported negative memorable experiences. They rarely visit Haidilao, spending under NTD 500 and NTD 999. However, there is no evidence that these experiences deter them from returning to Haidilao.

4.3.2 Expectation of service quality

It was revealed that regular customers have higher expectations for service quality. Around 86% stated that they have high or very high expectations for Haidilao service. In comparison, 77% of occasional customers and 68% of first-time visitors reported having high or very high expectations for the service. Customers who have already experienced the service tend to expect it to remain consistent with their prior experiences (Gao & Fan, 2021). Therefore, the increasing percentage of high expectations in relation to the frequency of visits can be viewed as a positive sign, as this high expectation likely reflects the perceived service quality from their past visits.

4.3.3 Perceived service vs Expectation

For regular customers, overall, the perceived service at least met their expectations. Only 7.7% reported that the perceived service was much better than expected, while 69.2% felt it was slightly better, and 29.1% considered it aligned with their expectations. This aligns with their previously analyzed high expectations. Therefore, it is reasonable that most perceive the service as meeting or slightly exceeding their expectations. Notably, regular customers with average expectations all reported experiencing a service that was much better than expected.

For occasional customers, 96% responded that the perceived service at least met their expectations. The remaining respondents reported having very high expectations. For first-time visitors, only a small group reported dissatisfaction over the service. 32.3% reported that the service was much better than expected, while 36.7% felt it was slightly better. Additionally, 22% found the service met their expectations, and 6.5% considered it slightly worse than expected. This 6.5% of customers reported to have high or very high expectations, which may be set by media coverage and word-of-mouth, as indicated in interview responses.

4.3.4 Prioritization of Service Dimensions Among Customers

Overall, among the six dimensions, Active Service, Chin-Chieh, Comfortableness, and Professionalism were most prominent to respondents. By frequency of visits, notably, about 50% of first-time visitors found Chin-Chieh (Warmth and Familiarity) to be the standout aspect, followed by Comfortableness (12.9%) and Sense of Sincerity (12.9%). For occasional customers, Comfortableness was most noted (26.6%), with Professionalism and Chin-Chieh tied at 23.4%. Most importantly, most regular customers also prioritized Chin-Chieh, with the other four dimensions sharing equal importance, making Sense of Sincerity least significant for them. By expectation level, for respondents with high expectations, Active Service, Comfortableness, and Chin-Chieh stood out the most. Meanwhile, respondents with very high expectations showed interest in all six service dimensions. CAll respondents who identified Active Service and Sense of Sincerity as the most important dimensions reported that the service at least met their expectations. Among those who value Chin-Cheh, only 4.3% indicated that the perceived service was slightly worse than expected, while the others felt it at least met their expectations. Respondents prioritizing Comfortableness, Professionalism, and Respect reported high satisfaction levels, with around 80% agreeing that their perceived service at least met their expectations.

4.4 Integration of Findings

Our findings reveal notable alignment between the quantitative survey data and qualitative insights from the Critical Incident Technique (CIT) interviews, providing a more holistic view of customer experiences at Haidilao. Firstly, survey data indicated that 6.5% of slightly disappointed first-time visitors entered Haidilao with high or very high expectations, potentially influenced by media coverage and word-of-mouth. This is supported by CIT interviews, where several customers expressed elevated expectations, especially first-time visitors who were drawn by Haidilao's reputation. These findings suggest that customers' prior perceptions shape their experience, particularly among those with limited familiarity with the brand. Furthermore, the survey highlighted that Active Service, Chin-Chieh, Comfortableness, and Professionalism were the most valued dimensions among customers, aligning with key themes from the interviews. In both data sets, Active Service emerged as a core element of customer satisfaction. Interview participants frequently cited proactive service behaviors, such as employees refilling drinks without prompting or offering small amenities like hair ties and aprons. This proactive approach reinforced the high expectations customers had for attentive service, a consistent expectation across both new and returning customers.

The dimension of Chin-Chieh—a culturally resonant concept involving warmth and a sense of caring—was similarly emphasized. Survey results showed that customers who valued Chin-Chieh were largely satisfied, with only 4.3% reporting slightly lower-than-expected service. This aligns with CIT findings where customers appreciated gestures reflecting warmth and attentiveness, such as celebrating birthdays with personalized attention. Both datasets underscore that a culturally sensitive, caring service approach significantly enhances customer satisfaction. Comfortableness and Professionalism also surfaced as crucial elements in both CIT and survey findings. Survey respondents who prioritized these dimensions reported high satisfaction, with approximately 80% noting that service met or exceeded expectations. This was mirrored in interviews, where customers consistently valued the respectful and efficient manner of Haidilao staff, particularly in maintaining a comfortable, professional environment even during busy hours. The alignment of these dimensions in both the survey and CIT findings reinforces the consistency of customer expectations and satisfaction across different demographics and service contexts. By addressing these core areas—Active Service, Chin-Chieh, Comfortableness, and Professionalism—Haidilao can continue to meet and exceed customer expectations across locations and customer segments.

5. Discussion and Insights

5.1 Strengths and Weaknesses of Haidilao's Service

One strength of Haidilao's service is the warmth and familiarity (Chin-Chieh) that stood out to many customers (especially first-time visitors) and the comfortableness. From the survey and CIT data, a clear strength of Haidilao's service is its ability to provide warmth and familiarity, commonly referred to as Chin-Chieh. This quality resonated particularly with first-time visitors, who appreciated the caring and personal approach that Haidilao employees offered. Many customers felt welcomed and well-attended to, often describing experiences where staff proactively met their needs. For instance, unprompted gestures, like providing hair ties, aprons, and towels, conveyed attentiveness and a commitment to enhancing customer comfort. These thoughtful touches align with Haidilao's reputation for going beyond standard service, creating a memorable experience that encourages customer loyalty. Another strength is the comfortableness provided by the staff's demeanor and environment. Many interviewees noted that Haidilao's attentive, friendly staff helped create a relaxing atmosphere, even during busy periods. Staff were frequently described as polite and respectful, which reinforced a sense of professionalism and consistency. This level of attentiveness, coupled with the unique service offerings, such as the noodle dance and hotpot guidance, added to the overall enjoyment of the dining experience, particularly for customers unfamiliar with hotpot dining.

However, some weaknesses also emerged. One significant challenge is the wait time, which can be lengthy, especially during peak hours. Customers who experienced extended wait times often expressed frustration when these delays were not communicated or managed effectively. While some appreciated honesty about

delays, others felt that prolonged waits detracted from the overall experience. Additionally, certain service elements, such as the enthusiastic attention to customers, were occasionally perceived as intrusive rather than supportive. A few interviewees mentioned feeling uncomfortable with overly attentive service, suggesting that a balance between attentiveness and respecting personal space could improve customer satisfaction. Overall, Haidilao's strengths lie in its attentive, warm service, while its weaknesses include issues with wait times and occasional mismatches in customer comfort preferences.

5.2 Evaluation of Listening Approach

The combination of the CIT method and survey data proved effective in capturing a nuanced view of Haidilao's service quality. The CIT interviews provided in-depth insights into specific incidents that shaped customer experiences, allowing us to identify detailed themes related to service interactions. Through CIT, we could understand how particular service actions impacted customer satisfaction on a personal level, bringing forward the emotional aspects of service encounters, such as feelings of warmth or discomfort. On the other hand, the quantitative survey helped quantify and validate these themes across a broader sample. By examining patterns in survey responses, we could see which service attributes were consistently valued by a larger customer base, such as Active Service and Comfortableness. This data provided statistical support for the qualitative findings, confirming that these were indeed common expectations among Haidilao's customers. However, there were limitations to each method, which will be discussed in the following part. Together, the two methods complemented each other by combining personal, incident-based insights with generalizable quantitative data, giving us a more comprehensive understanding of Haidilao's service strengths and weaknesses.

5.3 Limitations of the Study

5.3.1 Limitation of Online Questionnaire

The first limitation is the reliability of data collected. The survey was primarily designed based on the six dimensions of Chinese service quality (Stanworth et al., 2015). However, respondents were not limited to Chinese and Taiwanese participants, which may affect the results. Additionally, since the survey was written in English and Chinese, there may be potential language and interpretation issues for Vietnamese respondents. Furthermore, the service gap between Haidilao in Vietnam and Taiwan, along with cultural differences, may impact the reliability of the findings, even though Chinese and Vietnamese cultures share similarities. The second limitation is that among the 109 valid respondents, only 14 are regular customers. More than half of respondents are occasional customers and one-third are first-time visitors. This means the findings may not truly reflect Haidilao's repeated customer's point of view.

5.3.2 Limitation of the Interview

This study's interview process faced several limitations affecting the depth and generalizability of our findings. First, unlike Bitner's study, which included a large number of participants, our research was limited to only 11 interviewees. This smaller sample size reduced the number of incidents available for analysis, potentially overlooking critical insights into Haidilao's service experiences. Additionally, the interviewees lacked cultural diversity, as all participants were of Asian descent, which may limit the study's relevance for a broader customer demographic. The interview guide itself was not fully optimized to capture a wide range of critical incidents, as some questions may not have encouraged participants to share detailed experiences. Lastly, team members had limited interviewing experience, potentially affecting the quality and consistency of the data collected.

6. Recommendations

6.1 Recommendation for Service Improvements

After our research, we tailored some suggestions for Hadilao to improve and diligence their services. Firstly, they should optimize wait time management, such as implementing a digital queue system that provides real-time wait updates to customers, potentially with options for pre-ordering or reserving items to enhance the waiting experience. This will reduce frustration during peak times and improve overall customer satisfaction. Secondly, they should personalize service balance, for example, train staff to assess the level of attentiveness desired by different customers. For instance, offer a brief survey upon seating to gauge if customers prefer higher or lower engagement. This can reduce instances of perceived "over-service" and ensure each customer's comfort. Thirdly, they can enhance entertainment options for all demographics since Haidilao offers unique amenities like manicures and toys, and consider additional options for other demographics, such as quiet relaxation areas or small, personalized activities. This can appeal to a broader customer base, including male customers or older guests. Fourth, Haidilao should encourage staff to be flexible with special requests, such as quieter birthday celebrations or adjustments to entertainment elements. Training can focus on handling requests with sensitivity to ensure customer comfort and positive experiences. As Haidilao operates internationally, providing materials and menu translations in multiple languages can enhance accessibility and comfort for diverse customer backgrounds, especially in locations with multicultural clientele.

6.2 Recommendations for Future Customer Listening Strategy

To enhance customer experience, Haidilao can implement a range of targeted feedback mechanisms. By designing region-specific surveys and feedback forms, Haidilao can capture cultural nuances in customer expectations across different locations. Adding QR codes to tables for real-time feedback collection will allow customers to quickly share their thoughts on staff attentiveness, comfort, and improvement suggestions. A mystery shopper program can provide unbiased insights into service quality, identifying issues that regular feedback might miss. Additionally, social listening tools will help track customer emotions on social media and review sites, offering valuable data on service perception trends. Finally, regularly updating staff on feedback trends during training sessions ensures that employees are aligned with customer expectations, creating a culture of continuous improvement. Together, these approaches will help Haidilao maintain its reputation for exceptional service across regions.

7. Conclusion

To conclude this study, we have identified both strengths and challenges in Haidilao's service approach based on our integration of survey and Critical Incident Technique (CIT) findings. Haidilao excels in providing attentive, culturally resonant service that aligns with customers' expectations, particularly through aspects like Chin-Chieh (warmth and familiarity) and proactive service actions, which are appreciated across different customer demographics. This approach fosters customer loyalty by creating memorable, personalized dining experiences. However, our study also highlighted some areas for improvement. Issues such as extended wait times and occasional discomfort with overly attentive service suggest a need for balancing attentiveness with customer comfort preferences. These findings indicate that while Haidilao's high-touch service model is a core strength, it can be refined to avoid perceptions of "over-service." Our study emphasizes the effectiveness of combining qualitative and quantitative methods to gain a comprehensive understanding of customer experiences. The insights derived here can guide Haidilao in enhancing its service strategy to better cater to diverse customer expectations, ultimately supporting its goal of delivering exceptional, culturally sensitive service. Further research with a more diverse sample and a refined methodology could provide even deeper insights into optimizing Haidilao's service offerings across various markets.

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Appendix A: Interview Guidelines

SERVICE MANAGEMENT - CHINESE PERSPECTIVE
Haidilao Service Quality Interview Guide
Team: Beauty and The Beast

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Purpose:
To collect specific, memorable service experiences at Haidilao, both positive and negative from customers, using the Critical Incident Technique (CIT). These insights will contribute to understanding what influences Haidilao's service quality from the customer's perspective.

Why Haidilao?
Haidilao is an ideal subject for studying service quality due to its reputation for high-contact, customer-centric service, its challenges in balancing attentiveness with customer comfort, and its effective service marketing strategy. As a leading brand in China's restaurant industry, Haidilao exemplifies innovative practices that other businesses strive to emulate. Its personalized services, like providing hair ties and companion dolls for solo diners, showcase how thoughtful gestures impact customer satisfaction and create memorable dining experiences (Liu, 2023; Wong, 2018).

Haidilao also encounters challenges with "overservice," where some customers feel the attentiveness borders on intrusiveness. This makes it a prime case for exploring how service providers can balance personalization with respect for customer boundaries. Additionally, Haidilao's success in service marketing and employee-driven innovation solidifies its brand identity, linking service quality directly to brand loyalty. The brand's diverse customer base further supports its selection, allowing for an analysis of how various demographics perceive and respond to service quality (Liu, 2023; Wong, 2018)).

Our team chose Haidilao because Haidilao's unique approach, service challenges, and broad customer reach make it a rich source of insights into the dynamics of customer satisfaction, personalized service, and brand loyalty in the restaurant industry.

Interview Duration:
Approximately 20 - 30 minutes

Stage 1: Interviewer Preparation and Training

1. *Introduction to the Interview Process:*
    a. Review the objectives of the study and the importance of listening without leading.
    b. Practice active listening techniques, aiming for neutral, open-ended prompts.

c.   Conduct role-playing sessions to practice handling various types of responses.

2.   ***Pre-Interview Setup:***
   a.   Choose a quiet, comfortable location for the interview.
   b.   Use a standardized questionnaire to maintain consistency across interviews.

3.   ***Recording & Consent:***
   a.   Always request permission to record the conversation for accurate transcription.
   b.   Ensure recordings are stored securely.

Stage 2: Interview

1. Opening & Purpose
Interviewer:
"Hello, and thank you for participating in this interview. We're working on a research project to learn more about customer experiences at Haidilao. We're interested in hearing about specific incidents that stood out to you—whether positive or negative. Your insights will help us understand key aspects of Haidilao's service quality and how it affects customer satisfaction."

[Confidentiality & Consent for Recording]
Interviewer:
"We want to assure you that all information shared in this interview is completely confidential. Your identity will not be linked to your responses, and the information you provide will only be used for research purposes. To ensure accuracy, we would like to record this conversation. The recording will be securely stored and used solely for transcribing and analyzing your responses. Once the research is completed, the recording will be deleted.
Do we have your permission to record this interview?"

[Wait for participant's response and confirm consent before proceeding]

2. Demographic Information
-   **Interviewer:**
   ○   Age Range: "To help us understand your perspective, may I ask about your age range?" (Under 18, 18–24, 25–34, 35–44, 45–54, 55–64, 65 and above).
   ○   Which of the following best describes your descent (Cultural background / Where are you from?).
   ○   Frequency of Visits: "How often do you typically visit Haidilao?" (First-time visitor, Occasionally (once every few months), Monthly, Weekly, More than once a week).
   ○   Group Size: "Do you usually visit alone or with a group, and how many people are typically in your group?" (Alone, 2 people, 3–4 people, 5 or more people).

3. Incident Reporting [Instructions for the Respondent]
Interviewer:
"During this interview, We'd love to hear about your experiences at Haidilao, both good and bad. We'll go over each in detail."

[Main Questions: For each incident (positive and negative), proceed with the following questions]

A.   **Incident Type & Context**
-   **Interviewer:**
   ○   "Can you tell me about a time when you had a really satisfying (or dissatisfying) with a Haidilao employee?"

- ○ "When did this happen?"
- ○ "Why did it happen?"
B. Expectations vs. Reality
- **Before the Experience**:
  - ○ "Why did you choose Haidilao (among all hotpot restaurants)? (You decided to go there on your own or your friends/family/your company asked you to go?)
  - ○ "What is usually the main purpose of your visit to Haidilao?"
  - ○ "What did you expect from the Haidilao staff before this visit?"
  - ○ "Were you hoping for anything specific based on past visits here or at other restaurants or from what you heard/ online posts and reviews?"
- **During the Experience**:
  - ○ "How did what actually happened compare with what you expected?"
  - ○ "Did the staff do anything surprising—either good or bad—that wasn't what you expected?"
- **Unmet or Exceeded Expectations**:
  - ○ "Was there something you hoped for that didn't happen?"
  - ○ "Did the staff do something even better than you expected? How did that make you feel?"
- **Impact of Expectations on Satisfaction**:
  - ○ "Thinking about it now, did this experience meet your expectations, fall short, or go beyond them?"
  - ○ "How important is it for you that Haidilao meets these expectations every time?"
- **Reflection on Expectations**:
  - ○ "After this visit, have your expectations of Haidilao changed in any way?"
  - ○ "If you visit again, would you expect the same level of service or something different?"
C. **Employee Actions**
- **Interviewer:**
  - ○ "What exactly did the employee say or do during this experience?"
  - ○ "Can you describe any specific behaviors or actions taken by the employee?"
- **Communication**:
  - ○ "How would you describe the way the employee spoke to you?"
  - ○ "Was there anything about how the employee talked that was memorable?"
- **Behavior and Body Language**:
  - ○ "Did you notice anything specific about the employee's behavior or body language?"
  - ○ "Was there anything about how the employee acted that got your attention?"
- **Helpfulness**:
  - ○ "How did the employee try to help you during this situation?"
  - ○ "What did the employee do to take care of your needs?"
D. Customer Feelings & Outcomes[
- **Interviewer:**
  - ○ "What about this experience made you feel it was especially satisfying (or dissatisfying)?"
  - ○ "How did this interaction impact your overall impression of Haidilao?"
  - ○ Did you share this experience with anyone else? If so, what did you say?
  - ○ Have you ever recommended Haidilao to your family & friends?
E. Improvement Suggestions (for Dissatisfactory Incidents)
- **Interviewer:**
  - ○ "Is there anything you feel Haidilao could have done differently to make this experience better?"
  - ○ If you can make the decision, will you choose Haidilao again in the future? (on your own decision)

[Note: Encourage the respondent to be as specific as possible, describing actions and outcomes in detail.]

4. Closing the Interview
"Thank you very much for sharing your experiences with me. Your feedback is incredibly valuable to our study and will play an essential role in helping us understand how Haidilao can continue to provide excellent service. Please remember that all your responses will remain confidential, and the recording will only be used to ensure accurate transcription for research purposes."

5. Post-Interview Instructions
- **Transcription:**
  - Transcribe the interview verbatim as soon as possible after completion.
  - Review the transcript carefully to clear up any typos or transcription errors.
- **Data Organization**
  - Organize each transcript under clear headings for each incident type (satisfactory and dissatisfactory) and incident details.
- **Data Coding:**
  - Please refer to Bitner's article: The service encounter: diagnosing favorable and unfavorable incidents

Appendix B: Online Questionnaire

Haidilao Service Quality Survey (海底撈服務品質調查**)**

(Chinese introduction below / 下面有中文介紹)

Welcome!

Thank you for taking a few minutes to share your feedback. This survey is part of a project by IMBA students from the Service Management class at National Cheng Kung University (NCKU). Our goal is to study Haidilao customers' opinions on its service quality to understand what makes your dining experience memorable and where improvements can be made.

How to complete the survey:
 You'll see statements related to six key areas of service: **Professionalism, Sincerity, Comfort, Warmth, Active Service, and Respect**. Please rate each statement based on your recent experience, using the following scale:

- 1 = Strongly Disagree
- 2 = Disagree
- 3 = Neutral
- 4 = Agree
- 5 = Strongly Agree

Your answers are confidential and will directly impact our insights and recommendations for improving service quality and our project. Thank you for helping us learn and improve!

歡迎！

感謝您花幾分鐘時間分享您的意見。這份調查是國立成功大學（NCKU）IMBA服務管理課程期中專題的一部分。我們的目標是研究海底撈顧客對其服務品質的看法，以了解什麼使您的用餐體驗難忘，以及在哪些方面可以改進。

如何填寫：

您將看到與六個服務重點相關的陳述，包括專業性、真誠度、舒適度、溫暖度、積極服務和尊重。請根據您最近的體驗，使用以下量表對每個陳述進行評分：

- 1＝非常不同意
- 2＝不同意
- 3＝中立
- 4＝同意
- 5＝非常同意

請放心，您的回答將被保密，並將直接影響我們對提升服務品質和優化項目的洞察和建議。感謝您幫助我們學習與改進！

I. Demographic Information 人口資訊

Before we start, it would be great to know a little bit about you with some general information.

在開始之前，我們希望能先了解一些您的基本資訊。

1. Please select your age range:

請選擇您的年齡範圍：

·   Under 18 (低於18歲)

·   35–44

·   45–54

·   55–64

·   65 and above (65歲或以上)

·   Other...

2. Average Spending at Haidilao (per visit/person)
Approximately, how much do you usually spend at Haidilao per visit/person?

每次在海底撈的平均消費（每人/每次）
請問您每次在海底撈的平均消費大約是多少？

·   Under NTD500 / VND400,000 / USD16 (低於新台幣500元)

·   NTD500–NTD999 / VND400,000–790,000 / USD16–32

·   NTD1000–NTD1499 / VND790,000–1,200,000 / USD32–50

·   Over NTD1500 (高於新台幣1500元) / VND1,200,000 / USD50

·   Other...

3. Frequency of Visits to Haidilao
How often do you visit Haidilao?
您大概多久會光顧一次海底撈？

- First time visitor 第一次光顧
- Once every few months 每隔幾個月一次
- Once a month 一個月一次
- 2–3 times a month 一個月2–3次
- Weekly 每週一次
- More than once a week 每週多次
- Other...

4. Descent (Cultural Background)
Which of the following best describes your descent (Cultural background / Where are you from?)
血統 (文化背景)
以下哪一項最能描述您的血統（文化背景或您來自哪裡）？

- Asian 亞洲人

- European 歐洲人
- African 非洲人
- Latin American 拉丁美洲人
- North American 北美洲人
- Middle Eastern 中東人
- Other...

5. Type of Visit
When you visit Haidilao, do you usually go alone or with others? (You can choose more than one option)
光顧時的類型
當您光顧海底撈時, 您通常是獨自前往還是與他人同行
(您可以選擇多個選項)

- Alone 獨自前往
- With a group 與一群人一起
- Other...

6. Typical Group Size
If you usually go with a group, how many people (including yourself) are in your group on average?
平常前往群體的大小
如果您通常與一群人一起去, 平均有多少人(包括您自己)在您的團隊中？

- 2 people 2人
- 3–4 people 3–4人
- 5–6 people 5–6人
- 7–8 people 7–8人
- More than 8 people 8人以上
- Other...

7. Purpose of Visit
What is usually the main purpose of your visit to Haidilao? (You can choose more than one option)
光顧的原因
您光顧海底撈的主要目的通常是什麼？(您可以選擇多個選項)

- Casual dining 休閒用餐
- Special occasion (e.g., birthday, anniversary) 特殊的場合(譬如說：生日、紀念日)
- Business meeting 商務交際
- Family gathering 家庭聚會
- Social gathering with friends 與朋友的聚會
- Other...

B. Service quality at Haidilao 海底撈的服務品質
Please rate the following statements on a scale from 1 to 5 請根據以下陳述使用1到5的評分標準進行評分：

8. Section 1: Chin-Chieh (Warmth and Familiarity)
第一部分：親切(熱情與熟悉感)
Showing kindness and friendliness, making you feel appreciated through personal and attentive service.
展現友善與親切, 通過個人化和細緻的服務讓您感受到被重視

	= Strongly sagree 強烈不同意	= Disagree 不同意	= Neutral 中立	= Agree 同意	= Strongly ree 強烈同意
e staff made me feel welcome and wed warm concern during my visit. 工 人員在我來訪期間讓我感到受歡迎並 現出熱情的關心。					
ff maintained a friendly and pleasant avior at all times.工作人員始終保持友 和愉快的行為。					
ff avoided any unpleasant expressions, king me feel comfortable.工作人員避免 可不愉快的表情, 讓我感到舒適。					
e staff's interactions felt enthusiastic her than cold.工作人員的互動感覺熱情 非冷漠。					
ff created a sense of familiarity, not tance, in their interactions.員工在互動 創造了熟悉感, 而不是距離感。					

9. Section 3: Respect

第3部分：尊重

Treating you with courtesy and regard for the dignity, regardless of background or preferences.

以禮貌和尊重對待您, 無論您的背景或偏好如何。

	= Strongly agree 強烈不同意	Disagree 不同意	Neutral 中立	Agree 同意	= Strongly ree 強烈同意
t that staff provided equal service to all omers and did not favor others based on earance.我感覺到員工對所有顧客提供 的服務, 並不會根據外貌偏袒他人。					

f used polite language, such as "please" "thank you," showing respect.員工使用 的的語言, 如「請」和「謝謝」, 表現出對 の尊重。					
s served in the order I arrived, without y.我按照到達的順序獲得服務, 沒有 。					
f interactions were fair and did not lay any arrogant behaviors.員工的互動 平的, 並未表現出任何傲慢的行為。					
f was consistently courteous and avoided rude behaviors.員工始終保持禮貌, 並 任何粗魯的行為。					

10. Section 4: Sense of Sincerity

第四部份:真誠感

Providing genuine and honest service, making you feel valued through transparent and authentic interactions.

提供真誠和誠實的服務, 通過透明和真實的互動讓您感到被重視。

	= Strongly agree 強烈 不同意	Disagree 不 同意	Neutral 中 立	Agree 同 意	= Strongly ee 強烈同 意
staff never forgot any service promises e during my visit.員工在我訪問期間所 的服務與承諾從未被忘記。					
f was responsive to my requests without delay.員工對我的請求反應迅速, 沒有 丁延遲。					
f did not assign blame to customers for nderstandings or mistakes.工作人員對 解或錯誤不會將責任推給顧客。					
t the staff put genuine effort into helping without making excuses.我感覺到員工真 力地幫助我, 並沒有找藉口。					

staff showed generosity and avoided any ...gy service.員工表現出慷慨，並避免提 ...氣的服務。					

11. Section 6: Comfortableness

第六部分：舒適度

Creating a welcoming environment where you feel at ease, with attention to all the physical and emotional well-being.

營造一個讓您感到舒適的環境，關注所有的身體和情感上的舒適度。

	= Strongly agree 強烈不同意	Disagree 不同意	Neutral 中立	Agree 同意	= Strongly ...ee 強烈同意
staff maintained a comfortable distance ...out making me feel observed.員工保持 ...個舒適的距離，讓我沒有被觀察的感					
...f did not look me up-and-down, avoiding ...appearance of judgment.員工沒有上下 ...我，避免了任何被評判的感覺。					
...t relaxed and unpressed by the staff's ...ence.我感覺在員工的陪伴下放鬆而不 ...到有壓力。					
...restaurant environment felt safe and free ...a judgment.餐廳的環境讓我感到安全 ...，並且沒有評判的氛圍。					
...s physically comfortable, and the staff ...ected my personal space.我感到身體上 ...適，員工尊重我的個人空間。					

12. What aspects of Haidilao's service stood out to you the most?
海底撈的服務中，哪些方面讓您印象深刻？

1. Chin-Chieh (Warmth and Familiarity) 親切（熱情與熟悉感）
2. Active Service 主動服務
3. Respect 尊重
4. Sense of Sincerity 真誠感
5. Professionalism 專業性
6. Comfortableness 舒適度

13. Are there any areas where you think Haidilao could improve its service?
您認為海底撈在哪些方面可以改進其服務

14. Have you ever recommended Haidilao to your family & friends?
您是否曾經向家人和朋友推薦過海底撈？

- Yes 是的
- No 否

15. **Memorable Experience (If any)**
任何難忘的經歷（如果有的話）

16. **Was your memorable experience at Haidilao mostly positive or negative?**
您在海底撈的難忘經歷是主要正面還是負面的？

- Positive 正面的
- Negative 負面的

17. When did that experience take place?
這次的經歷是在什麼時候發生的呢？

- Within the last month 在過去的一個月內
- 1–3 months ago 1-3個月前
- 3–6 months ago 3-6個月前
- Over 6 months ago 超過6個月以前

18. What was the main reason for that visit?
您光顧的主要原因是什麼？

- Special occasion 特殊場合
- Regular dining 一般平常的用餐
- First-time visit 第一次來訪
- Social gathering 社交聚會
- Other...

19. **Expectations vs. Reality** 期望值與實際狀況的比較

Description (optional)

20. What were your expectations for the Haidilao staff before your visit?
您來訪之前對海底撈員工有何期望？

- Very high 很高的期待
- High 還算高的期待
- Average 一般得期待
- Low 算低得期待
- Very low 很低的期待

21. **How did the actual experience compare with your expectations?**
實際體驗與您的期望相比如何？

- Much better than expected 比預期的好很多
- Slightly better than expected 比預期的好一點
- About the same as expected 和預期的差不多
- Slightly worse than expected 比預想的稍微差一些
- Much worse than expected 比預想的差很多

22. Did anything about the service surprise you?
它們的服務有什麼讓您感到驚訝的嗎？

- Yes 有的
- No 沒有的

23. If yes, what surprised you? (Optional)
如果有，是什麼讓您感到驚訝？（可選答）

Appendix C: Interview Data Analyze Results

No.	Age	Cultural background	Interview length (minutes)	Check criteria of the interview			
				(1) involving employee-customer interaction	**(2) being very satisfying or dissatisfying from the customer's point of view**	**(3) being a discrete episode**	**(4) having sufficient detail to be visualized by the interview**
1	27	Asian	0:26:23	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
2	28	Central America	0:28:02	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
3	26	Asian	0:21:57	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
4	26	Asian	0:28:05	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
5	23	Asian	0:31:00	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
6	33	Asian	0:20:00	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
7	25	Asian	0:20:34	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
8	25	Asian	0:20:58	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
9	22	Asian	0:18:00	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
10	40	Asian	0:28:00	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
11	25	Asian	0:27:58	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Average / Total	**27**		**4:30:57**				

Group 1: Sample Incidents - Employee Response to Service Delivery Failures

	Incident	
	Satisfactory	**Dissatisfactory**
A. Response to Unavailable Service	"I waited about six hours... but when I came into the restaurant area, I think every bad feeling disappeared." (011P)	"Maybe next time, they could have more staff for the makeup and nail service. I didn't really need it, but since they offer it, why not try it? If it were available next time, that would be great." (001M)
		"I feel like they provide the service beyond my expectation, but sometimes they just like to take care of us. So it's kind of annoying for me." (003T)
		"We had to wait like four hours... the elders in the family cannot sit and wait

		for four hours." (004E)
		"Most of the pre-dining services seem to cater to women, and I can't say what kind of services would appeal specifically to men. For me, a respectful, customer-centric attitude and consistency in flavor are most important. If the taste changes after a year or two, that would affect my decision to return."
B: Response to unreasonably slow service	*"Meeting my expectations included things like how they took my order... The makeup and nail service also met my expectations, though, due to too many people, we didn't actually do it... Exceeding my expectations were the toys they prepared while we waited, as well as cooking the soup and noodles for us." (001M)*	*"We ordered multiple types of soup, and it took a while for them to serve everything. It felt like the wait was too long. I don't want to wait 30 minutes just ordering food in a hotpot restaurant." ; "Yes, but they told us to just wait a little bit more. I was not hungry at that time, but my friends were, and they were really upset about it." (007L)*
	"Well, I would rate the Haidilao restaurant as very good. The times I went there...It was between 12 PM and 2 PM. I consider the customer service good. I remember one day...I went there, and the restaurant was full. So we needed to...wait a little bit, like 10 or 20 minutes. But the way the waiters organized the...seating and everything...was very efficient. *"Well, maybe that one time we had to wait...because, you know, when you're hungry, you want to go directly to order. That was the only downside, but again, they handled it... very well and professionally." (002K)*	
	"They actively tell us in advance that okay, you will have to wait for very long... that's the honesty we appreciate." (004E)	
C: Response to other core service failures	*"They just say sorry to us and try to collect the bill... I think it's the best solution to make the customer satisfied." (011P)*	*"They once delivered our order to another table, and we only noticed after paying the bill." (009W)*

Group 2: Sample Incidents - Employee Response to Customer Needs and Requests

	Incident	
	Satisfactory	**Dissatisfactory**
A. Response to "Special Needs" Customers	"One of us had a birthday, and when we informed the employees, they prepared a small candle and brought a tablet to play a birthday song. It was a very happy memory." "The birthday celebration surprised me because they brought out a tablet and made it dramatic. I expected maybe a small cake or a cute cookie, but it was more than I anticipated." (001M)	"...that's actually feedback. There was not a way to call someone...from the table because the restaurant...is a little bit big. That restaurant in TS Mall. Yeah. So...maybe that would be good feedback because if it's big and it's also full...and if you need something, you need to stand up and then look for someone." (002K)
	"Yeah, maybe...trying new ingredients… But I ate hot pot each time. I did change a bit, like the type of meat and ingredients. I remember one day...I tried...the non-spicy soup… and then I tried the spicy one. So I was trying to...taste different flavors." (002K)	
	"The most exciting thing I've seen is how they celebrate customer birthdays. They bring out a giant banner and lights to celebrate, attracting attention from the customers and staff." (008P)	
	"We went to celebrate my friend's birthday. We informed the staff that he was a bit socially anxious, so they sang "Happy Birthday" in a quieter manner, and whenever someone passed by, they pretended to be doing something else. Once the person passed, they continued singing." (009W)	
B: Response to customer preferences	"Things like complimentary services—maybe nail care, makeup, things like that. Also, I expected them to fulfill any requests we had." (001M)	"We asked them to not perform the noodle dancing... we didn't want to have the other people's attention." (003T)
	"They instructed me how to make the sauce... and they even told you... the specific amount of food would be recommended by them also." (004E)	
	"Haidilao staff always ask me before going in... we have a birthday, they give a gift, sing a birthday song."	

	"They took the time to explain the menu and recommended some popular broth options. Then, they led me to the sauce mixing station. One staff member walked me through the process of creating my dipping sauce." (007L)	
C: Response to admitted customer error		*"They once delivered our order to another table, and we only noticed after paying the bill.* *They gave us a discount coupon in compensation." (009W)*
D: Response to potentially disruptive others	*"We went to celebrate my friend's birthday. We informed the staff that he was a bit socially anxious, so they sang "Happy Birthday" in a quieter manner, and whenever someone passed by, they pretended to be doing something else. Once the person passed, they continued singing." (009W)*	

Group 3: Sample Incidents - Unprompted and Unsolicited Employee Actions

	Incident	
	Satisfactory	**Dissatisfactory**
A. Attention Paid to Customer	"Yes, when we were cooking noodles, we didn't know when they'd be done. The employees stopped by, even if they were busy, to let us know when it was ready." "Yes, I noticed their body language... most were friendly and directed toward us, showing they were paying attention. Some just stopped by briefly for quick updates." (001M)	
	"Even though we were waiting, they paid attention to the tables that became available and informed us ahead of time so we could prepare." "Oh, it was good. They were open...and attentive; they were paying attention to what we wanted." "Because...I have seen in other restaurants...where the waitress...takes many orders at the same time and goes to several tables. Or they are lifting dishes, but in this restaurant, I saw that...she was talking with my friend...and she was taking the orders. She was also writing some notes, so that...made me feel that she was paying attention to us." (002K)	
	"They have to smile and check your table every like 15 or 30 minutes." (003T)	
	"They always have a smile... they don't have any negative facial	

	expressions." (004E)	
	"The way they proactively ask to help me with the cook when they are less busy serving other tables, and refill my drinks without waiting for me to ask, or simply just their positive energy and their politeness" (005T)	
	"I think they are friendly and helpful compared with other restaurants. When we were at the seasoning counter, I was surprised that one staff member approached us and asked if we needed help or needed recommendations. I think it's nice because in the seasoning bar, there were a lot of things and we didn't know what to do" (006B)	
	"When I first arrived, the staff immediately asked if it was my first time at Haidilao. I told them it was, and they were genuinely excited to share the experience with me." (007L)	
	"They were quick to refill our drinks, brought out any extra items we requested immediately, and even had small thoughtful touches, like offering wipes for my glasses." (008P)	
	"We went to celebrate my friend's birthday. We informed the staff that he was a bit socially anxious, so they sang "Happy Birthday" in a quieter manner, and whenever someone passed by, they pretended to be doing something else. Once the person passed, they continued singing." (009W)	
	Not exactly surprising, but for example, when I dropped my chopsticks, they immediately handed me a new pair. This might be basic, but you can tell they're attentive and trained to notice what's happening with their customers. (010D)	
	"I just talked to my friend... the staff heard that and brought it to me." (011P)	
B: Truly out-of-the-ord inary employee behavior	*"Usually when we have hotpot right, we usually have to take the sauce out ourselves but in Haidilao... it's really good that they help us to do so." (003T)*	
	"There was a time when I was sitting on one side of the table with my friend and a staff suddenly brought a huge mascot? and put it on the other side, and she said it was to fill the table, fill happiness." (005T)	
	"They gave us hair ties, small towers to clean our glasses, an apron, and lots of other small things that I was surprised what are those for? I had never expected them, but suddenly they came." (006B)	
	"One staff member walked me through the process of creating	

	my dipping sauce, showing me how to combine ingredients... They even offered to mix it for me." (007L)	
	"I wasn't comfortable with the noodle-pulling show. I couldn't help but think about hygiene, especially with COVID at the time." (010D)	
	"They have a nail station, they have a beverage, they have a board game for the people who are waiting in the queue." (011P)	
C: Employee behaviors in the context of cultural norms	*"While I was eating, they didn't hover around or interrupt us unless we raised a request. They gave us our space, which was nice. But when we needed something, they were there to help, which made us feel relaxed." (001M)*	*"Most of the pre-dining services seem to cater to women, and I can't say what kind of services would appeal specifically to men. For me, a respectful, customer-centric attitude and consistency in flavor are most important. If the taste changes after a year or two, that would affect my decision to return." (010D)*
	"Their body language was good. Haidilao has a good reputation for professionalism among its staff. They have consistent uniforms, and the staff looks professional, which adds to the customer experience." (007L)	
	"I'd say they're very professional and thoughtful. They maintain professionalism without coming across as cold." (008P)	
	"We went to celebrate my friend's birthday. We informed the staff that he was a bit socially anxious, so they sang "Happy Birthday" in a quieter manner, and whenever someone passed by, they pretended to be doing something else. Once the person passed, they continued singing." (009W)	
	"Friendly" means that you can feel that they are your friends... they always make you relax and not confused in the restaurant." (011P)	
D: Gestalt evaluation	*"It's hard to say. Some parts met my expectations, and some went above and beyond."* *"The experience made me feel happy, and though it was expensive, I felt it was worth it." (001M)*	

	"Yeah, yeah. Overall, it was very satisfying." *"It was above my expectations. Above my expectations, yes."* *"Well, I would say the food is very good, it's delicious. And also the time...they take to prepare the food. You don't have to wait too...long...because we were at a table of five, and they took...a maximum of 15 minutes...10 to 15 minutes." (002K)*	
	"Every time I get there, I am satisfied... the first priority would still continue to be Haidilao." (004E)	
	"Compared with other restaurants, I think Haidilao is in the really high range of satisfying." (011P)	
	"One of the impressive things about Hadilao was that most of the staff could maintain their positive energy and be really friendly" (005T)	
	"I was impressed not only by the facilities but also by how they predict the customer needs. As a manager myself, I started to wonder how they could maintain such a high standard of service so seamlessly. The staff were incredibly helpful, understanding customer needs in a way that made us feel supported and cared for, without being intrusive." (006B)	
	"My expectations were met. I was neither disappointed nor overly impressed. It was a decent experience, just as I had expected." (007L)	
	"It actually exceeded my expectations." (008P)	
E: Performance under adverse circumstances		*"For dissatisfaction, it wasn't with me but rather something I overheard between employees. One of them mentioned they weren't feeling well, possibly with a fever. This made me feel concerned about the company's treatment of employees. If a company doesn't treat its employees well, it makes me feel like I shouldn't support them." (001M)*