

The Effects of Customer-appraised Physical Attractiveness of Employees on Emotional Response and Customer Satisfaction in Casual Dining Restaurants : Focused on University and Graduate Students in Seoul

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Abstract

The purpose of this study is to identify the associations among the customer-appraised physical attractiveness of employees, emotional response and customer satisfaction, which has not been fully explored in the foodservice literature. Based on total 249 samples obtained from the empirical research, this study reviewed reliability and fitness of the research model and verified total 3 hypotheses using Amos program. As a result, the physical attractiveness of employees had a significant effect on emotional response of customers and satisfaction. In particular, in casual dining restaurants, the physical attractiveness of employees had a significant positive effect on emotional response ($\alpha_{11}=.624$) and customer satisfaction ($\alpha_{21}=.495$). Also, customer's emotional response had a significant positive effect on customer satisfaction ($\beta_{21}=.312$). In addition, the effect of customer-appraised physical attractiveness of employees in casual dining restaurants on customer satisfaction was found to be partially mediated by the customers' emotional response. Limitations and future research directions were also discussed.

Key words: physical attractiveness of employees, emotional response, customer satisfaction, casual dining restaurants

I. Introduction

In light of the rapidly changing business market-environment in recent years, companies are focusing on personal selling as a way of maintaining their competitiveness. In particular, service businesses' employees and their services play a direct role in inducing customers to purchase their products or services and therefore, are recognized as the most important factor in determining customer behaviors and attitudes (Luoh HF · Tsaur SH 2011). This is because services as products have consumptive traits that play a very important part

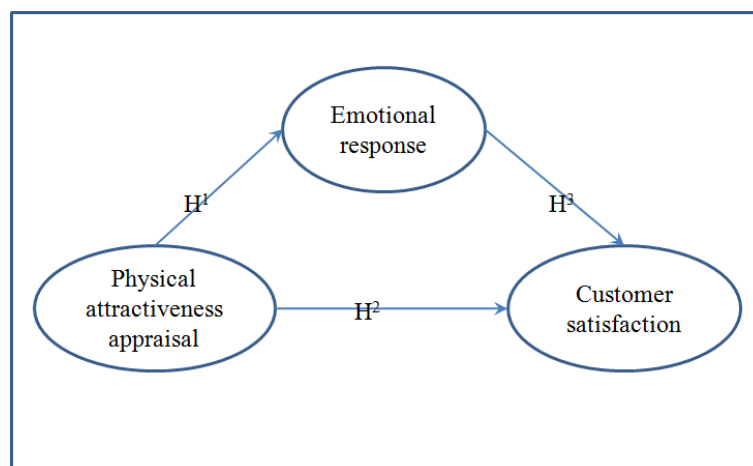
in customers' evaluation of them (Zeithaml VA 1988). Their intangible qualities lead customers to judge the services provided to them with visible exterior elements. As a result, the physical attractiveness of employees is a decisive factor in customer satisfaction with the services or evaluation of companies (Luoh HF · Tsaur SH 2009). In other words, in a services-based company providing services through its employees' face-to-face contacts with customers, the physical attractiveness of employees is considered very critical to the business's performance (Morrow PC et al. 1990; Frieze IH et al. 1991). Physical attractiveness is one of

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the easiest and most visible characteristics in judging a person's character, and a lot of studies have verified that attractive employees greatly affect their employer's business performance(Solnick SJ · Schweitzer ME 1999; Hosoda M et al. 2003; Cawley J 2004; Judge TA · Cable DM 2004; Case A · Paxon C 2008). Even though social viewpoints on or attitudes toward human physical attractiveness in general have varied over time, the physical attractiveness of employees is closely related to customer satisfaction with services(Gabbott M · Hogg G 2000; Shah P · Kleiner B 2005). Thus, companies prefer attractive employees to unattractive ones. The reason for this is because pleasant-looking people relative to others have traits needed by those companies. In the marketing area, studies related to physical attractiveness have focused on attractive advertising models' effectiveness or on the relationship between attractive employees and customer attitudes. They found that attractive models help customers have more favorable evaluations of the advertisements, boosting their purchasing intent and finally leading to their consumption of products/services(Petroshius SM ·

Crocker KE 1989). Especially when considering that young classes are sensitive to external appearance compare to elders(Ku YS et al. 2010) and that the major visiting customer brackets of family restaurants are young classes in their 20~30s(Lee YN et al. 2007; Song KS · Park KY 2009; Kim YS · Sim MY 2010), what closely examines the position that the appearance attractive level of service employees for family restaurant possesses in consumers in their 20~30s, who are primary customer brackets, is judged to be likely able to elicit significant result.

In conclusion, the physical attractiveness of employees has a positive effect on customer behaviors because they play a role in transmitting overall information about the services and is very important in terms of service marketing(Koernig SK · Page AL 2002). For all its importance, there are just a few studies on employees in family restaurants(Jung HS · Yoon HH 2009). Jung HS · Yoon HH(2009) viewed that the physical attractiveness of employees had a significant effect on customers' favorable attitude in service company. In the casual dining restaurant industry, employees have



<Fig. 1> Research Model

very frequent contacts with customers, and therefore their appearance is very important to smooth communication with customers. Therefore, this study aims to investigate how customers recognize the physical attractiveness of employees in service encounters using a scenario-based questionnaire and verifies the effect of their physical attractiveness on the customers' emotional response and satisfaction in casual dining restaurants(See Figure 1).

II. Literature review and conceptual model

1. Physical attractiveness appraisal, emotional response, and customer satisfaction

A person's *physical attractiveness* is one of the features first encountered by another person, and once the latter has a powerful impression of the former's physical attractiveness, the former's personal character and other psychological factors are excluded from the latter's consideration. This is also well-explained by Implicit Personality Theory, which is a set of concepts that claim that an image conceptualized by a person's physical attractiveness is the result of the overall evaluation of the individual, and that the most important element of the image is his or her body(Pendry LF · Macrae CN 1994). The theory also argues that stereotyping of attractive people results in the common evaluation that they have positive personalities(Diener EM 1995). Therefore, this study views the physical attractiveness of employees as customer perception and evaluation of the attractiveness and impression of employees of a certain company(Koernig SK · Page AL 2002; Soderlund M · Julander CR 2009). The physical attractiveness of employees is crucial to their success or promotion and, in the long run, to the improvement in their performance in the

company(Gulas CS · McKeage K 2000; Case A · Paxon C 2008). Even though social viewpoints on or attitudes toward human physical attractiveness in general have varied over time, the physical attractiveness of employees is closely related to customer satisfaction with services(Sundaram DS · Webster C 2000; Shah P · Kleiner B 2005). Thus, companies prefer attractive employees to unattractive ones. In particular, restaurants whose employees have face-to-face contacts with customers in service contexts are considered to benefit positively from their employees' superior appearance. The reason for this is because pleasant-looking people relative to others have traits needed by those companies. Studies related to the physical attractiveness of employees hitherto can be divided into three categories: general social perception of the physical attractiveness of employees(Eagly AH et al. 1991; Feingold A 1992), and customer satisfaction and revisit(or re-purchase) intent (Gabbott M · Hogg G 2000; Till BD · Busler M 2000; Koernig SK · Page AL 2002; Soderland M · Julander CR 2009).

Regarding the *emotional response* of customers, Bergenwall M(1998) coined the definition that emotions were personal feelings arising from certain behaviors or responses. Thus, this study defines emotions as customers' state when receiving services in stores.

Customer satisfaction is a condition in which a purchaser recognizes that he or she has been rewarded in return for his or her consideration(Howard JA · Sheth JN 1969). Westbrook RA(1987) argued that satisfaction includes an evaluation of the consumption emotion elicited by product usage. Accordingly, this study defines customer satisfaction as a judgment of whether a product or service or its qualities have been pro-

vided on a satisfactory level.

2. Relationship between physical attractiveness and the emotional response of customers

In a study on the physical attractiveness of employees and on the emotional response of customers, Lang PJ et al.(1993) noted that awareness of the former's features was directly linked to the latter's emotions, and Mehrabian A · Blum JS(1997) also argued that more positively a customer recognized an employee's physical appearance, the more emotionally favorable the customer felt. Oliver-Rodriguez JC et al.(1999) said that customers' positive appraisal of the physical attractiveness of employees led to their favorable emotional response, and Hazlett RL · Hoehn-Saric R(2000) viewed that the physical attractiveness of employees had a significant effect on customers' favorable emotions. Sundaram DC · Webster C(2000) said that a service provider's physical attractiveness among his or her non-verbal communication tools had a significant effect on a customer's emotions, and Ryu KS · Jang SCS(2007) noted that customers' recognition of employees, including their physical attractiveness, had a close relationship with their emotional response. These arguments led to the establishment of the following hypothesis:

Hypothesis 1: The physical attractiveness of employees is positively related to the emotional response of customers.

3. Relationship between physical attractiveness appraisal and customer satisfaction

Till BD · Busler M(2000) said that an employ-

ee's physical attractiveness had a significant effect on customer satisfaction. Also, Koernig SK · Page AL(2002) noted that an employee's physical attractiveness had a positive effect on a customer's evaluation, and Reber R et al.(2004) suggested that an attractive employee induced more favorable evaluation or satisfaction in customers than an attractive one. Jung HS · Yoon HH(2009) suggested that employees' physical attractiveness had a significant effect on customer satisfaction. In an empirical study, Soderlund M · Julander CR(2009) demonstrated significant associations between the physical attractiveness of employees and customer satisfaction in a services-based company. These arguments led to the establishment of the following hypothesis:

Hypothesis 2: The physical attractiveness of employees is positively related to customer satisfaction

4. Relationship between emotional response and customer satisfaction

Donovan RJ · Rossiter JR(1982) said that the emotional response of customers triggered by employees' physical elements led to their increased satisfaction, thus having a direct effect on the performance of restaurants. Moreover, Turley LW · Fugate DL(1992) noted that the emotional response of customers arising from evaluation of store facilities would become a basis for their future favorable judgment of the company. Westbrook RA · Oliver RL(1991) closely looked into a significant, causal relationship between emotional response and customer satisfaction, and Donovan RJ et al.(1994) said that customers who experienced emotional pleasure spent more money because of their satisfaction with the company. Bagozzi RP et

al.(1999) considered customers' emotions as the most important factor in determining their behaviors, and Ryu KS · Jang SCS(2007) found that customers' favorable emotions caused their satisfaction. These arguments led to the establishment of the following hypothesis:

Hypothesis 3: The emotional response of customers is positively related to customer satisfaction

III. Research Methods

1. Research Design

For this study, casual dining restaurants as a representative foodservice company were selected and compared, and a scenario-based examination of them was conducted. A fictional scenario was written based on Koernig SK · Page AL(2002), Soderlund M · Rosengren S(2007), and Soderlund M · Julander CR(2009)'s precedent studies related to the physical attractiveness of employees of a service-based company. In case of scenario questionnaire, it is a virtual situation, which was manipulated similarly to the real situation, but is very useful in a sense of being able to express the real situation with virtual experimental method (Freedman JL 1969; Robinson MD · Clore GL 2007). Also, in case of scenario questionnaire, the questionnaire survey needs to be performed in a situation that is enough for temporal and spatial research. Thus, many researches are receiving questionnaire by utilizing class hour of university that this part can be satisfied(Soderlund M · Rosengren S 2007; Soderlund M · Julander CR 2009). Experiment was manipulated by dividing service providers' attractiveness level into high and low through photos. To design this experiment, the fictional scenario contained situations where cus-

tomers encountered attractive and unattractive service providers, with the photos of such employees being attached to the questionnaires (Bitner MJ 1990, Soderlund M · Rosengren S 2007). To produce the questionnaires, photos of service employees were selected. This study limited service employees' picture only to face. This is because the most important factor of deciding on physical attractiveness is face(Soderlund M · Julander CR 2009). In addition, this study restricted service employees only to women in order to prevent difference in perception of attractiveness in advance according to respondents' gender. Black and white photos of women with different levels of physical attractiveness were collected from diverse public media such as advertisements, magazines, and the internet(Soderlund M · Julander CR 2009). A total of 30 photos were chosen. Panels of comprising 2 undergraduates, 2 graduate school students, and 1 professor were allowed to extract service employees' attractive picture and unattractive picture, by 2 copies, respectively(Soderlund M · Julander CR 2009). Then, each of the 5 panels was asked to choose four pictures among which two were physically attractive faces and the other two, unattractive ones. Among the selected pictures, the four most frequently chosen pictures were used for this experiment. Actual scenario was prepared in a service situation of family restaurant based on a research by Soderlund M · Julander CR(2009), which considered physical attractiveness in employees for airline and bookstore.

Next, a scenario that may occur in a casual dining restaurant was written(see Appendix). To prevent respondents from judging employees solely on their physical attractiveness, employees' knowledge and capabilities regarding selling were adequately mentioned for respondents to obtain in-

formation about the fictional social exchange during transactions(Soderlund M · Julander CR 2009).

2. Measurement

The questionnaire in this study was developed based on a thorough literature review. All constructs included in the model were measured using multi-item scales designed to tap all relevant domains of the construct. While the scales used were based on prior work, all of the items were adapted so that the item content matched the industry. The survey instrument for this study was composed of four parts. The first three parts pertained to physical attractiveness, emotional response, and customer satisfaction. To measure customers' perceptions of the physical attractiveness of employees, this study adapted the multi-item scales used by Ahearne M et al.(1990), Morrow PC et al.(1990), Koernig SK · Page AL (2002), and Soderlund M · Julander CR(2009), modifying them to fit the study settings. The *physical attractiveness* of employees was appraised with the question, "What do you think about the employee in this company?" followed by three adjective pairs scores on a nine-point Likert scale(not good looking - good looking(P1), not attractive - attractive(P2) and negative impression - positive impression(P3)). *Emotional response* was measured using a four-item scale developed by Mehrabian A(1995), Mehrabian A · Blum JS(1997) and Jung HS · Yoon HH(2010), a scale that assesses feels such as unhappy-happy(E1), pleasure-displeasure(E2), arousal-non-arousal(E3), and dominance-submissiveness(E4) (four adjective paired score on a nine-point Likert scale). *Customer satisfaction* was measured with a four-item scale based on that by Fornell C et al.(1996), Spreng RA(1996) and Kim KY et al.(2007). Participants were asked to react

to the following four items: "I am satisfied with the employee(C1)," "I am pleased to visit this company(C2)," "I have really enjoyed the services at this company(C3)," and "Overall, I am satisfied with my experience at this company(C4)." The items in all scales were measured on a nine-point Likert scale anchored from 1 (strongly disagree) to 9 (strongly agree). Part four contained questions about participant demographic information (e.g., gender, grade, and monthly visiting frequency).

3. Sample and data collection

The scenario-based questionnaires were distributed to students at K University located in the Seoul metropolitan area of Korea. Preliminary research was conducted by giving them 50 copies of preliminary questionnaires, and based on those results, the questionnaires were completed and a main research study was performed over a period of five days from March 1, 2010 to March 10, 2010. It selected undergraduates and graduate-school students as primary samples in consideration of which the major customer brackets of casual dining restaurant are undergraduates, and of the place-based characteristic as saying of needing to respond to question for a long time in one place compared to general questionnaire, in light of characteristics of scenario questionnaire. Questionnaire was progressed by selecting 5 major subjects, which are installed in college related to tourism, and 1 major subject, which is installed in graduate school. Questionnaire was progressed after permission and understanding about questionnaire were made, by visiting professor for the corresponding major class before questionnaire. Questionnaire was offered only to students who visit casual dining restaurant once a month at least. Before conducting the survey, the content was thoroughly ex-

plained to students, and each class was given 20 minutes to complete the questionnaires. To stop respondents from comparing their questionnaires with each other, each respondent was given one desk and one chair. Two different scenarios were described in the questionnaires - a casual dining restaurant with attractive employees and unattractive ones - were randomly distributed to the six classes. There were a total number of 320 copies (160 copies for each type). After removing incomplete and unusable responses, a total of 249 usable surveys were kept, resulting in a usable response rate of 77.81%. Before analyzing the questionnaires, to examine whether respondents clearly recognized the difference in items from attractive and unattractive employees, a t-test with independent samples was used to analyze differences; the results showed that the average point of the sample with respect to unattractive models ($N=118$; 6.31 ± 1.70) was significantly ($t=3.718$; $p<0.001$) lower than that with respect to attractive models ($N=131$; 7.05 ± 1.42) indicating that respondents properly judged the differing levels of physical attractiveness of employees as distinguished by the panel survey.

4. Data analysis

The hypotheses were tested with two structural equation path models using AMOS, version 5.0. Following the two-step approach recommended by Anderson JC · Gerbing DW (1988), a confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) with maximum likelihood was first performed to estimate the measurement model, which determined whether the manifest variables reflected the hypothesized latent variables. Once the measure was validated, a structural equation model (SEM) was utilized to test the validity of the proposed model and hypotheses. Also, this study implemented an alternative model through a method of Baron & Kenny (1986) and then verified the mediating effect through comparison of chi-square value. This verification method is the one that is being used in many researches that were recently recorded (Chiang FFT · Birth TA 2010; Chiang CF · Hsieh TS 2011; Lee YK et al. 2011; Zaho X et al. 2011).

IV. Results

1. Descriptive statistics of the samples

The characteristics of the respondents are presented in Table 1. Respondents consisted of 48.5%

<Table 1> Profile of the Samples

(N=249)

Characteristic		N Percentage	
Gender	Male	121	48.5
	Female	128	51.5
Grade			
Freshmen		46	18.5
Sophomores		45	18.0
Juniors		58	23.3
Seniors		62	24.9
Graduates		38	15.3
Frequency of Visits (/month)	1	133	53.5
	2~3	84	33.8
	4	32	12.7

male and 51.5% female. The proportion of freshmen, sophomores, juniors, seniors, and graduates was 18.5%, 18.0%, 23.3%, 24.9%, and 15.3%, respectively. A large majority 53.5% of respondents visited a casual dining restaurant 1 time per month.

2. Measurement Model

Following Anderson JC · Gerbing DW(1988)'s two-step approach, a confirmatory factor analysis was first undertaken to assess the overall fit of the three-factor model, which was composed of physical attractiveness, emotional response, and customer satisfaction. As shown in Table 2, the level of internal consistency in each construct was acceptable, with Cronbach's alpha estimates ranging from .929 to .977. Composite reliability estimates ranging from .860 to .994 were considered acceptable(Fornell C · Larcker DF 1981). In addition, all variance-extracted estimates(physical attractiveness=.857; emotional response=.862; and customer satisfaction=.912) exceeded the recommended .50 threshold(Fornell C · Larcker DF 1981).

Convergent validity was observed since all confirmatory factor loadings exceeded .80 and were significant at an alpha level of .001(Anderson JC · Gerbing DW 1988; Marsh HW · Hau KT 1996). Thus, these results are evidence of the convergent validity of the measures. Discriminant validity was assessed by comparing the average variance extracted(AVE) with the squared correlation between constructs. Discriminant validity was evident since the AVE estimates, ranging from .857 to .912, exceeded all squared correlations for each pair of constructs, ranging from .364 to .439. These results suggested that the three factors were distinct and unidimensional. Also, confirmatory measurement models demonstrated the soundness of measurement properties($\chi^2_{(41)}=78.907$; $p<.001$; $\chi^2/df=1.925$; GFI=.948; AGFI=.916; NFI=.979; CFI=.990; RMSEA=.061).

Table 3 illustrates the intercorrelations among the three constructs in this study. An assessment of the bivariate correlations showed that the items used to measure physical attractiveness were positively related to the items associated with emo-

〈Table 2〉 Reliabilities and Properties of Confirmatory Factor Analysis

Construct (Cronbach's alpha)	Standardized factor loadings	t-value	Composite reliabilities	AVE ^a
Physical attractiveness appraisal (.929)			.860	.862
P ₁ (7.26±1.57) ^b	.938	fixed		
P ₂ (6.67±1.58)	.941	28.316***		
P ₃ (6.84±1.68)	.908	25.338***		
Emotional response (.962)			.894	.863
E ₁ (6.44±1.71)	.926	fixed		
E ₂ (6.51±1.65)	.922	26.031***		
E ₃ (6.55±1.77)	.933	27.153***		
E ₄ (6.67±1.82)	.936	27.365***		
Customer satisfaction (.977)			.994	.914
C ₁ (6.73±1.64)	.974	fixed		
C ₂ (6.71±1.64)	.955	39.629***		
C ₃ (6.62±1.66)	.938	35.362***		
C ₄ (6.74±1.67)	.959	40.725***		

Note: ^aAverage Variance Extracted; ^b M±SD; ***p<.001

<Table 3> Correlations among the Latent Constructs

Construct (M±SD)	1	2	3
1. Physical attractiveness appraisal (6.81±1.62)	1		
2. Emotional response (6.57±1.64)	.604***	1	
3. Customer satisfaction (6.70±1.58)	.663***	.608***	1

Note: ***p<.001

tional response($r=.604$). Also, the items associated with customer satisfaction were positively related to physical attractiveness($r=.663$) and emotional response($r=.608$)

3. Structural equation modeling (SEM)

Structural equation modeling was conducted to test the validity of the proposed model and hypotheses. The chi-square statistic indicated that the overall model did not fit the data well: $\chi^2_{(41)}=78.907(p<.001)$. Given the sensitivity of the chi-square statistics to sample size(Bentler PM · Bonett DG 1980), other fit indexes were also examined. First, the normed chi-square($\chi^2/\text{degree of freedom}$) was considered in order to reduce the sensitivity of the chi-square statistic. The value of the normed chi-square was 1.925, which was below the cut-off criterion of 3.0 and showed that

the model fit the data well. Other goodness-of-fit indices proved that the structural model fit the data reasonably well(GFI=.948; NFI=.979; CFI=.990; RMSEA=.061). The model's fit, as indicated by these indexes, was deemed satisfactory; thus, it provided a good basis for testing the hypothesized paths. The parameter estimates of the structural model exhibited the direct effects of one construct on the other. Thereby, a significant coefficient at a certain level of alpha reveals a significant causal relationship between latent constructs(Table 4 and Figure 2). Hypothesis 1, which suggests a positive relationship between the physical attractiveness of employees and the emotional response of customers, is supported($\alpha_{11}=.624$; $t=11.016$; $p<.001$). In conclusion, more positively customers recognize the physical attractiveness of employees, the more favorable their emotional response to the emplo-

<Table 4> Structural Parameter Estimates

Hypothesized Path (stated as alternative hypothesis)	Standardized Path Coefficients	t-value	Results
H1: Physical attractiveness appraisal → Emotional response	.624	11.016***	Supported
H2: Physical attractiveness appraisal → Customer satisfaction	.495	8.003***	Supported
H3: Emotional response → Customer satisfaction	.312	5.115***	Supported
$\chi^2_{(41)}=78.907$ ($p<.001$)			
$\chi^2/\text{df}=1.925$			
GFI = .948			
NFI = .979			
CFI = .990			
RMSEA = .061			
Goodness-of-fit statistics			

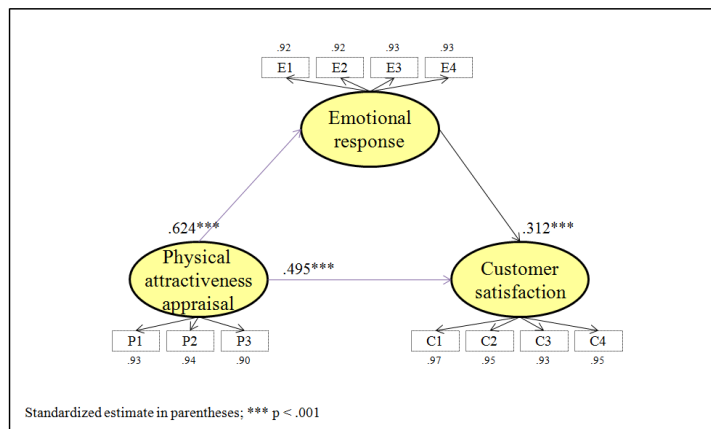
Note: GFI = Goodness-of-Fit Index; NFI = Normed Fit Index; CFI = Comparative Fit Index; RMSEA = Root Mean Square Error of Approximation; ***p<.001

yees. Also, hypothesis 2, which predicted a positive relationship between the physical attractiveness of employees and customer satisfaction, is supported($\alpha_{21}=.495$; $t=8.003$; $p<.001$). In this study, the physical attractiveness of employees had a significant, direct impact on customer satisfaction. Based on the result, this study posits that the physical attractiveness of employees has a direct effect on customer satisfaction, and there may be indirect influences linked with the emotional response of customers. The result is discussed in Table 5. Hypothesis 3, which suggested a positive relationship between the emotional response of customers and customer satisfaction, is supported($\beta_{21}=.312$; $t=5.115$; $p<.001$). This result shows that customers' favorable emotions about service providers lead to their satisfaction.

4. The mediating effect of the emotional response of customers

The overall structural model showed that physical attractiveness had positive effects on the emotional response of customers, and subsequently that emotional response influenced customer satisfaction. For further test the mediating effect of emo-

tional response on customer satisfaction, structural equation modeling analyses were conducted. To test the mediating effect of emotional response, the structural equation was re-estimated by constraining the direct effect of the emotional response of customers on customer satisfaction($\beta_{21}=0$). Baron RM · Kenny DA(1986)'s four conditions for mediating effects were examined. The first condition was satisfied if the independent variable(physical attractiveness) was significantly correlated with the mediator(emotional response). The second condition was satisfied if the mediator(emotional response) was significantly correlated with the dependent variable(customer satisfaction). The third condition was satisfied if the independent variable(physical attractiveness) was significantly correlated with the dependent variable(customer satisfaction). The first three conditions were met (Table 4), given the significant correlation among the three constructs. The fourth condition was also satisfied(see Table 8); the parameter estimate between the physical attractiveness of employees and customer satisfaction in the mediating model became more significant(partial mediation) than the parameter estimate(mediating model $\alpha_{21}=.495$; $t=8.003$



〈Fig. 2〉 Structural Equation Model with Parameter Estimates

<Table 5> Mediating Test of Emotional Response (Partial Mediator)

Constrained model ($H_{\beta 21} = 0$)			Mediating model		
	β	t-value		β	t-value
$H2_{(a21)}$.699	13.600***	$H2_{(a21)}$.495	8.003***
χ^2 (df=42)		104.039	χ^2 (df=41)		78.907
			$\Delta\chi^2$ ($\Delta df=1$) = 25.942*		

Note: * $p < .05$; *** $p < .001$

versus constrained model $_{a21}=.699$; $t=13.600$) in the constrained model. The difference in the χ^2 value between the constrained model ($\chi^2_{(42)}=104.039$) and the mediating model ($\chi^2_{(41)}=78.907$) was statistically significant ($\Delta\chi^2_{(1)}=25.942$; $p < .05$), indicating that the mediating model is a significant improvement over the constrained model.

V. Conclusion

This study examined how customers perceive the physical attractiveness of employees in relation to emotional response and customer satisfaction in casual dining restaurants. This study found that the physical attractiveness of employees had a significant positive effect on the emotional response of customers. This is consistent with prior studies' conclusions that more positively customers recognize the physical attractiveness of employees, the more favorable the emotional response customers show (Lang PJ et al. 1993; Mehrabian A · Blum JS 1997; Hazlett RL · Hoehn-Saric R 2000; Sundaram DC · Webster C 2000).

In addition, the physical attractiveness of employees had a significant effect on customer satisfaction, and as described in previous studies' results (Till BD · Busler M 2000), when customers favorably recognize the physical attractiveness of service providers in a company, their satisfaction with its products or services increases. Even though restaurants were not examined, as shown

in the studies by Koernig SK · Page AL (2002), Jung HS · Yoon HH (2009), and Soderlund M · Julander CR (2009), the more favorable customers recognize the physical attractiveness of employees, the more satisfaction with the employees and their company that they feel. In terms of services, customer satisfaction is mainly determined by the psychological relationship between customers and employees, so customer's satisfaction has an important influence on their behavioral intent, which is a measure of their potential for sustaining a relationship with the company. In particular, restaurants' services are different from tangible goods sold by ordinary companies in that they are intangible and consumptive. So customers are induced to purchase them unlike in the case of ordinary companies, where the physical attractiveness of employees is very important in their purchasing decisions. Furthermore, the emotional response of customers had a significant effect on their satisfaction, showing the same result as previous studies (Donovan RJ · Rossiter JR 1982; Westbrook RA · Oliver RL 1991; Turley LW · Fugate DL 1992; Bagozzi RP et al. 1999; Ryu KS · Jang SCS 2007).

Based on the result of this study, first, a questionnaire survey on casual dining restaurants was conducted and verified that the physical attractiveness of employees had a significant effect on the emotional response of customers and satisfaction. An empirical analysis of the survey provided a theoretical basis. In fact, most previous studies have

been conducted on ordinary companies, and there were no studies on foodservice companies. It is worth referring to an earlier study on the physical attractiveness of employees of casual dining restaurants. Also, this study verified that the physical attractiveness of employees has a positive effect on the emotional response and satisfaction of customers and that customers' favorable emotions trigger their satisfaction. In particular, customers' evaluation of the physical attractiveness of employees has a stronger effect on their emotional response than satisfaction. The physical attractiveness of employees is a very external factor, and an individual's emotions resulting from another person's behaviors or responses are more greatly affected by physical attractiveness than their final satisfaction. Also, in case of restaurant, the service, which is offered by human resources, possesses the important weight in deciding on customers' satisfaction, compared to other industry. Service comes to be provided through an exchange for the relatively longer time with employee at the service contact point. Due to this reason, the recognition on service employee's physical attractiveness level is judged to have significant influence upon customers' emotion and satisfaction. Accordingly, even the service employee's physical attractiveness level can be said to have important significance in deciding on satisfaction along with other elements that customers come to experience at the service contact point. This study also suggests the importance of managing customer emotions in stores by examining how the emotional response of customers affects their future satisfaction and behaviors. The result of this empirical analysis shows that customer satisfaction is a crucial factor in a restaurant's performance, and managers are expected to maintain a high level of attractiveness

among his employees.

This study's limitations and future tasks are as follows. First, the sample was made up of undergraduates and graduates in the Seoul metropolitan area. Also, this study is based on a convenience sample from a specific university. Thus, the sample may not adequately represent the casual dining restaurant customer, and generalizability of the study results is limited. However, considering that the main age levels of visiting casual dining restaurant are their 20s~30s, a significant implication is considered to be likely able to be suggested from a manager's position. A future research is deemed to be necessarily performed in consideration even of older adults sample. In addition, as mentioned above, a scenario study is not the same as the real situation. Second, in measuring the physical attractiveness of employees, only their faces were focused on. In addition, the items for measuring physical attractiveness are just 3 questions, thereby being probably able to be said to be a little unreasonable in considering service employees' physical attractiveness more comprehensively. Third, in this study, only female employees' photos were attached to the scenarios, making it impossible to verify the modulating effect with respect to gender differences. If future research examines differences in customers' response to the physical attractiveness of employees in accordance with their personal tastes, they will provide more specific strategic suggestions. Fourth, this study model itself is limited in that the emotional response and satisfaction of customers do not translate into customers' overall behaviors toward companies. And the nonexistence of relevant prior studies makes it impossible to perform a comparative analysis. Thus, future studies should be able to reflect restaurants' special characteristics

and examine variables that can objectively estimate the physical attractiveness of employees. Such studies should complement the limitations above in order to produce more objective and substantial results.

Appendix

Your close friend's birthday is approaching. You head for a casual dining restaurant for your friend's birthday dinner you have made a reservation for two days earlier. As you enter the restaurant, a waiter welcomes you and shows you to your seats. After seated, you asks the waiter to keep the birthday cake you have brought in and confirms that you want a birthday celebration event for your friend in the middle of dinner without him knowing. He promises not to forget to prepare the event and explains that you can choose one of the two special birthday gifts the restaurant offers: a free meal from main courses or a discount on your order. After a while, the rest of the party including your friend arrive and everybody starts studying the menu, when you find a few new dishes on the menu. You ask the waiter for an explanation on the new dishes and the waiter gives you a detailed description on them based on his own experience as well as an explanation on the ingredients and the recipes. And then, he recommends you a seafood and steak combo platter, which you find rather expensive than expected. The waiter, who reads dissatisfaction in your face, recommends you choose a free meal offer over a discount offer so that you can get more benefit eventually. After much consideration, you decide on the combo platter plus some other dishes. As taking your order, the waiter says he would also be happy if he received this kind of celebration for his own birth-

day next month. In the middle of the dinner, the waiter and other staff come to your table and present a celebration song and some other shows. After dinner, you show the waiter your gratitude for his help and leave the restaurant with great satisfaction of the evening.

한글 초록

본 연구에서는 대학생 및 대학원생을 대상으로 패밀리레스토랑의 서비스 상황에서 지각된 직원의 신체적 매력도가 감정적 반응 및 고객만족도에 미치는 영향을 고찰하였으며, 이러한 인과관계에서 감정적 반응의 매개역할을 추가적으로 검증하였다. 패밀리레스토랑에서의 서비스 상황에 대한 시나리오 설문을 통해 총 249명의 대학생으로부터 자료를 수집하였다. 분석 결과, 고객에게 인지된 직원의 신체적 매력도는 감정적 반응($\alpha_{11}=.624$)과 고객만족도($\alpha_{21}=.495$)에 유의한 정(+)의 영향을 주는 것으로 나타났으며, 감정적 반응은 고객만족도($\beta_{21}=.312$)에도 유의한 정(+)의 영향을 주는 것으로 조사되었다. 또한 직원의 신체적 매력도가 고객만족도에 미치는 영향은 감정적 반응에 의해 부분적으로 매개되는 것으로 나타났다.

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