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The Relationship Between the Catering Service and Coronavirus

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Abstract: With the invasion of COVID-19 in 2020, many industries have been greatly affected. Especially the catering industry, in the past two years has received almost no stop to the negative impact. I first looked up some existing data on the impact of the virus for the restaurant industry and find three main reasons. The three main reasons for this influence are the policies set by the government at that time, the change of the market economy, and some reasons made by the catering industry itself. And then I try to dining practitioners conducted an interview, interview catering most cafe owner for operation for a long time, I gain a lot of information from the interview, and from the interview, some conclusions were summarized, including the current crisis, the catering industry for speculation about the future of catering industry. Finally, I combined these conclusions with the previous conclusions, and found some irrationality in the previous conclusions, and boldly put forward my own views.

Keywords: Catering, Services, COVID-19, Benefit

1. Introduction

China, a big country with a grand history about meals. It's pursuing of food have many thousand years'history. And recently, because of the thriving of the Internet and take-out food, it makes catering service more flourish than before. However, after 2020, the covid-19 breaks people's life and comes to every pieces of people's life. Whatever shopping, learning, or eating are all affected by the virus. So a many people have habits like only buying things on the Internet, only working at home, only eating the dish made by thenselves. Also, the industries which have relatioship with such things have huge destruction. Whatever big shopping mall or the rent of administration building or catering service all have negative effect. In the first quarter of 2020, the restaurant industry's revenue decreased about 44. 3% [1]. But the goods in the mall can be sold on the Internet. The rent of the administration building can restore after some days. The closed catering places are impossible to open again later. So how to survive and how to have a better future is a big trouble for the reccent catering services.

So compete the circumstance. Some catering places prefer to use the Internet to advertise their food. Some catering places prefer to decrease the price. Some place choose take-out service for surviving. There are a lot of ways about how to make them live longer.

This article choose the catering service to make a research. It's purpose is to know how the catering service live now. Whether their living ways have some rationality. The covid-19's meaning for the

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catering service. Also we will associate the influence to the catering services made by policies made by the government to make a guess about the catering services' future.

2. Literature Review

In 2020, COVID-19 swept across the globe, affecting almost everyone. People in the service industry are the most affected. For example, in the restaurant industry, the policy of not being able to eat in the restaurant has reduced the income of many restaurants. Office worker who like to patronize a fast food restaurant because the outbreak becomes less convenient and lost a lot of people, many web celebrity snack bar also because of the influence of the outbreak caused many people to dare not to consumption, some hotel due to the rules of the epidemic period shall not be eat-in, lost a lot of box during the outbreak and the lobby, Seventy-eight percent of restaurant companies lost more than 100 percent of their revenue. Many small stores are short of cash and close because of the cost of utilities, rent and so on [2]. In ordinary times, the catering industry is also suffering from the difficulty of recruitment. Due to the impact of the novel coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) epidemic, the catering industry across the country is generally "closed down", with no prospect of starting work. The catering consumption during the Spring Festival has evaporated up to 500 billion yuan in a short period of time, and the catering economy during the Spring Festival has suffered an unprecedented impact [3].From January to July 2020, the monthly revenue of national catering industry was significantly lower than the level of the same period in 2019, and the year-on-year decline curve showed an inverted "V" shape with high left and low right, indicating that the year-on-year decline of national catering industry gradually went from high to low with the development of COVID-19 epidemic, which proved that the impact of COVID-19 epidemic on catering industry showed obvious stages. This is because the outbreak of COVID-19 in China coincided with the Spring Festival holiday, which not only destroyed the "Spring Festival Golden week" of catering businesses, but also led to a long period of operating vacuum, with the turnover falling off a cliff [4].

However, due to the sharp decline in the income of the catering industry, fewer and fewer people choose to take the path of catering. Even if some people chose the catering industry before, they are slowly changing their new career under the current epidemic situation. New problems caused by the coronavirus are squeezing the restaurant industry. To combat the consequences of the coronavirus, many restaurant owners are using a variety of methods.

Thanks to the development of the Internet, more and more people can do things online that they could not do before. Like convenient takeout meals. Once upon a time, takeout was limited to phone orders. And the telephone order also has many disadvantages, such as can not see all dishes, can not see the price of dishes, need to ask taste and price one by one, very troublesome. But now, we can use special software on the phone to order food, so convenient, fast, time and effort, do not need to go to the store can eat directly. Because there is no need to go to the store, many restaurant owners have registered their shops in the delivery software to sell their own food. However, in the midst of the pandemic, some people believe that even ordering takeout is risky, so they are cooking at home after buying food. This undoubtedly has a great impact on the catering industry. After all, not only do people who do not order takeout cook by themselves, but also people who order takeout may give up ordering takeout and cook at home because of the risk. So takeout won't necessarily cut the restaurant industry's losses entirely.

Increasing sales volume is one of the difficulties facing catering enterprises, and online sales is a better choice. First of all, in addition to the traditional e-commerce platform, network broadcast is also an important way to bring goods. Live streaming with goods is more suitable for food sales, in the form of live tasting, can bring consumers intuitive feelings [3].After the outbreak of the epidemic, to the catering industry has brought a full range of serious blow, all kinds of catering enterprises have encountered great difficulties[6].

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With the increasing impact of COVID-19 on the catering industry, it is no longer just a matter of taking out food to expand its profits. So, some restaurants have come up with the idea of premade dishes. So called premade dishes, is to preopare all the material for one dish before you cook it, and let the comsumer take it and cook it at home. This can avoid eat in the restaurant, decline the contamination of the virus and it can make the consumer feel more enjoyable when they are cooking. Because of the new pattern of selling food, it brings a lot of reputation for the restaurant. Even the premade dish is made in home, it has similiar taste to the dish made by restaurant. Also because you can eat it immediately after cook. The dish is very fresh and have it's best taste. But the remade dish is not perfect. All the material is prepared by the restaurant, so you may worried about whether the restaurant's chef have the virus. Because of that, even the premade dish is so delicious, not a lot of people want to try the it [2].

Since neither of these methods can completely save the restaurant industry, many restaurants have lowered the prices of their food or given out lots of electronic and paper coupons to entice people to spend money. Because of the reduced price, it will attract many people to try it. But there are benefits and costs involved. Few people do anything they think the benefits are lower than the costs. For example, if you can buy a sandwich for a dollar, no one's going to think about buying it for two dollars. Similarly, many people will also see the restaurant issued coupons after careful comparison, still feel that cooking at home is the most profitable decision, which is a big blow to the restaurant policy.

Many in the food and beverage industry have responded to the impact of COVID-19 by turning to themselves to improve the quality of their outlets. From the recruitment of personnel to the selection of dishes and then to the decoration style are compared with the previous made a great change. However, this kind of drastic change is uncertain, whether in a small restaurant or a large restaurant implementation there are certain risks. Small restaurants with low income are unable to carry out such a costly transformation. And big restaurants before because of its reputation and long history has formed a considerable number of repeat customers, the new improved these repeat business for restaurants may not be satisfied, which can cause consumption reduced, and some of the diners who were previously after saw such a big change also think hotel is suspected deception, which reduces the word of mouth.

Since small stores cannot withstand such a big transformation, many people have come up with ways to take advantage of the street stall economy. The so-called "stall economy" uses guerrilla tactics, using small food trucks to move sales around many locations [7].

Because there is no bills, store rental fees, small risk, less investment, only need to ensure food safety can open a shop, very convenient. Moreover, this strategy is equivalent to using a mobile billboard, so that many people who try to buy can continue to consume in the store after they are satisfied. Besides, street sales like this will give customers a sense of relaxation and increase their goodwill towards the store. However, due to the type of food stall, many people are still not very optimistic about the hygiene of the small food truck, such as whether the purchased food ingredients are fresh or not, whether the usual food ingredients are put into the refrigerator, and only take them out when needed, whether the food is handled with gloves, whether the people in the store wear masks, and whether the food is kept in the refrigerator. If the buyer does not wear a mask, will there be the risk of saliva spatter-these problems are a great test for the food truck sales model.

3. Method

The method I used is qualitative method. The reason I prefer this method is it is very hard for me to imagine all the answers the interviewee may give me, I am not a catering employee or a professional person in this aspect. So there are a lot of things I can't predict at frist.

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I interviewed some catering places' owners in a food street and some people who can use their phone order food. They gave me some kinds of reply about the impact on the catering service made by the coronavirus. I associated all of them and made some conclusion and wrote them below.

The first is impact of physical store. All the owners thought the virus impact their business a lot. They told me in that street, nearly half of the catering places changed their owner, even there are still some old bars still working but the waiter in them don't need to work a lot because there are only a few people purchase now. And also the impact made by the virus can't retore till now. Even some places have some consumer, but that only because they sell some popular goods. After some days these popular goods will become ordinary and these bars will transform and sell another popular goods again. But for some old catering places, because in the old days they may were famous because of some classical dish they can't change their selling style now.

The second one is about resource. Because of the virus, a lot of place can't get the raw material they ordered before. Also the raw material also increase after the break out of the virus. Some places' rent increase too.

The third is the impact of the take-out service. Maybe this service sounds have no relations with virus, but it still suffers from many influences. Even the policy made people can't go to the physical places for meals, the people still don't prefer cook at home. They think the man for takeaway may get the virus and they will be infected by the man for takeaway. Also because of some policy, the take-out service doesn't work in some region. The high price is also a reason.

4. Results and Discussion

After the above investigation, the research on catering industry has become more profound. Even though we have summarized some ways about how catering industry save themselves before, such as premade dishes and improving the quality of stores, many restaurants are still unable to do this kind of improvement. Most of their solution is still in the takeaway. Many restaurants have almost lost confidence after experiencing the blow of the new coronavirus, and many people are waiting for their own fail and are ready to change a new career. As a result, they don't have innovative for making new ideas for their stores. After investigation, only now some hotel and large factory try to make and sold premade food on the Internet, a lot of famous small prefabricated food purchase business hotel did not launch, this also means that the in the restaurant industry, there are some blank parts, so a few bars can fill up this blank part in order to create their own prefabricated dishes to profit.

But for the take-out service, we have a similiar conception to before. Because of the impact of the virus, people in a lot of region can't use this service. So the take-out service can hardly give the catering service big help.

The plight of raw materials' getting in the restaurant industry is a topic that has rarely been mentioned before. Many material's production areas have been unable to send food because of the coronavirus. The economics of this can be represented by a simple graph. In that graph. The upward sloping line is what we call the supply curve (And the reason why it's upward sloping is because if the price per unit goes up and the cost stays the same makes the profit goes up so the seller wants to sell more in order to gain more), And the other curve goes down is what we call the demand curve (and it's going down because the more expensive the unit is, the fewer people have interest to buy it). The units on the left are prices, and the units on the right are quantities.In this case of reduced supply, the supply curve shifts to the left, resulting in higher prices but lower quantities. This situation will not only make the restaurant lose their consumer because of the increasing of their food's price but also let increase the posibility about demand exceeds supply, that will also decrease their consumer in order to decrease their benefit.

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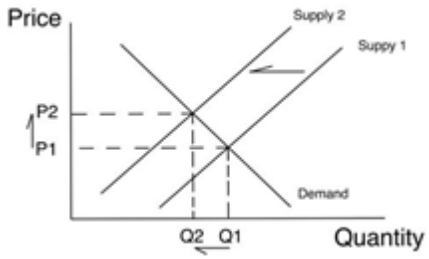

Figure1： Supply's effect on the market

And due to the influence of the above raw material price, fewer and fewer stores can attract more customers by offering more coupons to users as we mentioned before. In view of their performance in real life, more and more restaurants increase the price of dishes, reduce the quantity of dishes and then tell customers that they can get a discount to get more benefits. But this practice does not have long time effect, as the price increases and the number of dishes decreases fewer and fewer people will like this restaurant. In the economic world we often refer to this phenomenon as the marginal revenue effect. Simply put, when the happiness at the end of using one object cannot be greater than the happiness at the end of using another object, people often choose the object that gives them the greatest happiness. It can also use in this condition. If the happiness from spending in this restaurant cannot be greater than the happiness from spending in another restaurant, then customers will naturally choose another restaurant.

However, the problem of food car is more obvious. I found in the investigation that many small bars affected by COVID-19 had very few waiters, and many of bars were run by one family, so they could not allocate a part of people to sell food trucks. Also, as we noted in the literature review, it is difficult to let the consumer convince that food is hygienic and safe when selling food from a food truck. This will have a negative impact on their own restaurants.

During the survey, few people told me about the shortage of staff in the restaurant. I think this should be caused by some restaurants' own defects itself, not the virus.

After a series of investigation and analysis, I think the impact of COVID-19 on the catering industry can be summed up by the word "acceleration".

Why the word "accelerate"? That's because I think the coronavirus for these restaurants is more like throwing them into a desert with few supplies and for surviving they must compete, and in the previous peaceful period without COVID-19, it's more like live in a simple jungle, even they still compete but at that time they have more resources and more ways to survive. What philosophy do we follow in the jungle? That must be the law of the jungle, survival of the fittest, and the concept of survival of the fittest is even more cruelly expressed in the desert. In my opinion, the stores that go out of business are like failed survivors who have been weeded out by other stores and other factors, and the remaining survivors tend to develop a fewer characters is a abattoir. The reason for few is that the living environment has become worse than before, while the essence is that the remaining stores must be suitable for the taste of most people. However, this will also lead to a big problem in the future. Due to the priority of efficiency, there will be a lack of more novel dishes in the future, and many dishes with unique taste but not necessarily favored by everyone will be shunned. This will be a big blow to the future of the catering industry. I think the overall income of the catering industry in the future may further decline, and then the price will rise again until the market environment is almost back to before the emergence of the new coronavirus, but it is difficult to recover to the original standard. For example, the confidence of many restaurant workers may be destoried and they won't have the courage to open the next bar after the closure of the bar, because the shadow brought by the coronavirus will always be hanging over their hearts. In addition, before the COVID-19, some

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industries had been developing for many years. If they want to develop again, they must go through many years of precipitation, which is difficult for most people to accept.

5. Conclusion

There are still some defects in this research, for example, the number of interviewees is not enough, which leads to the conclusion is not very comprehensive, and even the interviewed people are not able to honest tell all their plight completely, and it is also difficult for the investigators to find the closed restaurant workers to interview.

In my opinion, the rules of the catering industry should be loose. In addition, the government should provide some unemployment benefits to those engaged in the catering industry and set up some food TV programs for advertising. In this way, the catering industry may try to open a shop for the second time after the first failure, which can also promote the diversity of the catering industry. But in my opinion because I think the coronavirus is just an accelerated process for the restaurant industry, I don't think there is any very effective direct external force that can help the restaurant industry for a long time, only the time can transform the catering service.

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