

# INTERNET ENTREPRENEURSHIP IN THE IRAQI RESTAURANT INDUSTRY

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## ABSTRACT

With the corona virus epidemic, people's lifestyle changed. Many industries and services, including the restaurant industry, faced serious problems. And this increased the interest in internet entrepreneurship as a possible solution. In this regard, the main goal of the current research is to investigate the impact of some dimensions of Internet entrepreneurship on the purchase intention of customers in the restaurant industry of Iraq. This research has been carried out with a practical purpose and in a descriptive-survey manner. The statistical population of this research is all customers of online food ordering websites in Iraq, whose number of users is unknown and more than 10,000 people. The sampling method is available and based on Morgan's table, 384 people were considered as the sample size. A questionnaire was used to collect information. The validity of the questionnaire was confirmed by referring to experts' opinions and factor analysis. Cronbach's alpha method was also used to measure reliability. Then, the relationship between the variables was analyzed by the method of structural equations in Smart PLS software. The results showed that the visual attractiveness of online menus, the sufficiency of online menu information, the perception of risk-taking have a positive and significant effect on consumers' willingness to order food online in Iraq. The perception of risk-taking has a positive and significant effect on the perceived convenience of consumers of online restaurant stores in Iraq. The convenience of customers to order food online and the desire of consumers have a positive and significant effect on the purchase intention of customers of online restaurant stores in Iraq.

**Keywords:** Internet entrepreneurship, visual attractiveness of online menus, sufficient information of online menus, perceived convenience of online food consumers, customers' purchase intention

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## INTRODUCTION

Iraq was one of the countries that had many patients during the Covid-19. COVID-19 has significantly reduced restaurant sales and limited personal touch services that are critical to customer experiences. Therefore, improving the digital customer experience by promoting convenience services and offering appealing restaurant menus (through the restaurant website or

online food ordering platforms) could be one strategy to re-stimulate restaurant sales and create a new revenue stream. Therefore, the main goal of this research is to investigate the effect of ordering through online menus on the purchase intention of consumers of Iraqi restaurant websites during the Covid-19 pandemic period, and in response to the main research question, whether ordering through online menus affects the purchase intention of consumers of websites of restaurants in Iraq. Are restaurants in Iraq effective during the Covid-19 pandemic? is. By conducting such a research, the methods of stimulating customers to order through online menus have been identified and new ways of developing online restaurants can be suggested. The current research led the researcher to use online operating systems during the Covid19 epidemic to investigate the behavior of consumers in ordering food.

## LITERATURE REVIEW AND HYPOTHESIS DEVELOPMENT

Internet entrepreneurship Internet entrepreneurship is a process that uses the potential of the Internet to solve a problem by using innovation and initiative, so that people in the community are willing to pay for this solution. Usually, the result of this process appears in the form of an internet business and a website. An entrepreneur in internet entrepreneurship must always strengthen and develop his personal, general, technical and management skills, so that he can succeed in his internet business. In addition, like any other entrepreneur, an internet entrepreneur is committed to accepting many risks. (financial, social, psychological, etc.) Kasia, 2020).

Internet entrepreneurship Internet entrepreneurship is a process that uses the potential of the Internet to solve a problem by using innovation and initiative, so that people in the community are willing to pay for this solution. Usually, the result of this process appears in the form of an internet business and a website. Understanding risk taking The word risk in the Oxford dictionary is the possibility and type of adverse event in the future, a situation that may be dangerous or have adverse consequences and events. Risk occurs when the probability of expectations is less than 100%. Consumers' behavior involves risk, because any action they take leads to consequences that they are unable to predict, and some of these consequences turn out to be undesirable. Therefore, risk indicates the existence of uncertainty about the outcome of an action that leads to the possibility of physical damage or other damages (Nam et al., 2019). Perceived risk and probability of risk is uncertainty in the shopping environment; Perceived risk can be defined as the customer's perception of the uncertainty and risk of potential adverse outcomes of purchasing a product or service, where consumers may consider it a mistake or an inappropriate decision. It is unknown what the customer will face in the buying process. This phenomenon is caused by wrong or inappropriate decisions that are caused by the customer's mental assumptions. The customer's opinion about the negative and potential outcomes of electronic transactions is a simpler definition of perceived risk (Peters and Remod, 2020). According to Federman, in the simplest terms, risk can be defined as accepting a percentage of risk, which of course also brings opportunities; It means the possibility of not being a researcher of future predictions. The general feeling and thinking about the negative consequences of using a product or service is called perceived risk. In other words, the degree of uncertainty in a new experience that causes a person to feel risk. Risk is an inevitable element in world business and it can be considered as the cause of the opposite conclusions of a process or project. Risk comes from the lack of certainty, which is always present throughout the life of the organization, and it is quite obvious that risk cannot be completely eliminated, but it can be reduced with foresight, or properly managed and directed. Risk can be assessed and measured uncertainly. Risk affects many factors involved in business, for example, resources, products, services, customers and other cooperating organizations, as well as the effects of society and its business environment (Prestio et al., 2021).

Visual appeal Visual appeal refers to the attractiveness of the environment that affects the customer's feelings in the direction of purchase. This atmosphere or environment in e-commerce is only limited to visual dimensions, which include: color, lighting, size and shape. In website design, customer attention is created on the first page of the website. Then he is either attracted or finds out that the information is not complete or leaves the website because he does not find it attractive. Attraction happens when the website is attractive to customers (McCormack et al., 2019). Visual attractiveness of restaurant menu and information. Previous researchers have conducted various studies on menus and designs to increase restaurant income. These analyzes include the effects of restaurant menu descriptions on consumers' behavioral intentions. The effect of restaurant menu design on consumers' perception of the results of descriptive menu labels in sales and the effect of pictures and food names on the evaluation of menus. Although many of these efforts have been somewhat successful in increasing consumers' purchase intentions and behaviors, little research has been conducted on how visually appealing and informative menus affect consumer buying behavior. Intentions Specifically, the least number of studies have explained how online restaurant menus have influenced consumers' food preferences, perceived convenience of ordering food online, and purchase intentions during a stressful pandemic. . In the context of online retail where customers can touch or see real products, the projected visual appearance of the product must be attractive to attract customers (Luke, 2020). Product photos are essential tools that retailers use to communicate with customers. These photos have the potential to increase purchase intention, consumer enjoyment and trust in online shopping. When Twitter and Instagram became popular, researchers found that high-quality, professionally taken photos had a positive impact on consumer engagement with social media posts. Similarly, the purpose of menu design in the restaurant business is to draw the attention of customers to the most profitable dishes that are served. An attractive menu not only provides information to customers and generally allows food establishments to increase effectively. The visual components of menu design that affect customer responses include background, text color, textures, photos, fonts, dialog box, menu size, items and price position (Mojica, 2020). Addressing the effects of photos on restaurant menus, previous researchers found that different ethnicities and cultural groups had different preferences for food photos on restaurant menus. For example, Japanese customers wanted photos of all food items, while English and Spanish speakers Speakers did not ask for pictures of food items they were familiar with (eg, pizza or hamburgers), but instead preferred pictures of deli and ethnic foods. These cases, for consumers who tend to process verbal information without forming mental images, adding photos to each of the restaurant menu items increases their positive attitude towards food (Kay et al., 2021).

The concept of perceived ease of use of the online store site Simplicity is the first word in online store design. Simplicity is actually an optimal and good design and 76% of consumers agree with it. Based on the surveys conducted, consumers believe that the most important feature of a good website is its ease of use. The convenience of using an online store helps buyers to make their final purchase as quickly and without unnecessary complications as possible, and to use what they want faster and more often. Convenience and ease is a multifaceted concept that has been proven as an essential factor in the consumer's purchase intention. In the context of retail, convenience plays a decisive role in the online shopping experience, especially in terms of website accessibility, product search, evaluation, and transactions. The trend has been significantly improved, which has led to an increased desire for convenience services, especially when it comes to food ordering and delivery. It is also mentioned that online food delivery services have increased in percentage. Convenience as one of the main drivers leads to greater consumer satisfaction and a positive attitude towards customized services and food and the intention to buy again in the future (Jun et al., 2022).

The concept of perceived ease of use of the online store site Simplicity is the first word in online store design. Simplicity is actually an optimal and good design and 76% of consumers agree with it. Based on the surveys conducted, consumers believe that the most important feature of a good website is its ease of use. The convenience of using an online store helps buyers to make their final purchase as quickly and without unnecessary complications as possible, and to use what they want faster and more often. Informational content In order to inform customers, restaurant menus contain options of various types of food, which provide necessary information to consumers. Because consumers expect menus to be provided to them in restaurants that contain nutritional information and food preparation methods. Other studies have stated that the detailed description of restaurant menus has a positive effect on consumer choice; Therefore, when consumers have the necessary information about restaurant options, there is a greater possibility of ordering and intending to buy products. Food quality can combine all food characteristics in one variable. According to this, food quality has different characteristics, namely temperature, variety, taste and presentation of menu items. Therefore, the high quality of food will have a positive effect on the purchase intention of customers. The information related to the amount of calories in food can be effective on the decisions and purchase intention of customers. It has a nutritional menu. In their study, they pointed out that the consumer's attitude towards the calculation of calorie information when buying fast food has a positive effect on their intention. The design of the website affects the emotional state of the consumers and the efficiency of the information content affects their cognitive state. This emotional and cognitive state, in turn, affects the purchase intention of consumers (Ikhsa et al., 2019).

Consumer's desire for food and purchase intention Absorption of food is a necessary human activity that is regulated by mechanisms related to pleasure and homeostatic mechanisms in the brain. Craving for food is related to strong feelings that arise from eating food. Craving for food is influenced by factors. Like the feeling of hunger, viewing and images of food in the media or watching others eat. Sometimes hunger is related to negative emotions, because people feel better when their hunger is satisfied. When people are under stress, they try to reduce these feelings by eating, and in response to negative feelings, higher absorption of food occurs. The desire for food may be caused by watching pictures of people who have different expressions on their faces by eating different types of food. They show that it should be provoked since the disease of Kovid-19 appeared. Consumers are looking for foods that match their stress and anxiety. Therefore, when the desire of consumers is stimulated by online menus, they are more likely to buy online. Behavioral intention expresses the intensity of an individual's intention and will to perform the target behavior. A relationship between behavioral intention and behavior shows that people tend to participate in behaviors that they intend to do (Rizato et al., 2016).

Unlike the physical store, all the products in the online store are described through text, photos and multimedia files. Many online stores provide links to learn more about their products. On the other hand, online customer behavior (user action when searching, buying, using products) has become a research area where an increasing number of researchers understand the unique nature of online shopping. The main goal of a business is to provide products and services that best meet customer needs. Businesses that satisfy customer needs with visual appeal meet very good satisfaction, are more successful than their competitors because they encourage buyers to buy again (Brewer and Sebi, 2021). Therefore, the following hypothesis can be stated: H1: The visual attractiveness of online menus has a positive and significant effect on the willingness of consumers in online food ordering sites in Iraq.

Another one of the most important challenges of setting up online stores around the world, which can cause many problems, is customer authentication. Visitors and new customers of online stores may

not register their real and genuine information and face difficulties in the authentication process. The inaccuracy of customer information causes problems in processes such as delivering orders, providing telephone services, and communicating with customers, and in some cases, it can also cause losses to the business; Therefore, you must make sure that your customers' information is correct (Cardi et al., 2015). Therefore, the following hypothesis can be stated: H2: Sufficient online menu information has a positive and significant effect on consumers' willingness to order food online in Iraq.

The intention to buy online is another important challenge in setting up online stores. Gaining customer trust in cyberspace and e-commerce-based businesses takes time, but we must know that the probability of reselling to existing customers is much higher than the probability of selling to new customers. Also, attracting a new customer costs a lot more than keeping a previous customer. Since there is no face-to-face interaction in online stores, you must provide unique services, establish a good interaction with your customers, and create a positive experience for them in order to gain their satisfaction and the chance to buy again from your customers. increased (Balls and Gaskin, 2020) so the following hypotheses can be stated: H3: Perception of risk-taking has a positive and significant effect on consumers' willingness to order food online in Iraq. H4: The perception of risk-taking has a positive and significant effect on the perceived convenience of consumers of online restaurant stores in Iraq.

Online security and privacy are also concerns for consumers. In particular, security issues typically revolve around the transmission of personal and financial information (eg addresses, phone numbers, credit card numbers, etc.) over the Internet. Another privacy concern is related to the use of online demographic information and consumer preferences. Online stores collect this information and can use it to target customers or sell to marketing companies for marketing analysis (Dorte et al., 2018). Scientific findings also address some consumer concerns. Research shows that consumers are concerned about on-time delivery, product quality, and the limited selection and variety of products available on the site. It was found that after registration, buyers do not order in the same session because they do not have enough time or cannot find their favorite brands. Consumers have easily stopped online shopping due to bad experiences, including consumers' perceived lack of convenience in finding their favorite products (Fakih et al., 2016). Therefore, the following hypothesis can be stated: H5: The willingness of consumers has a positive and significant effect on the purchase intention of customers of online restaurant stores in Iraq.

Today, due to the expansion of the online space and the availability of the Internet for all people, the ease and ease of shopping through the virtual space and the Internet, despite the many challenges for setting up an online store, online businesses, and generating income from the Internet have become very popular. Is. According to statistics, the growth of online stores in the last decade was about 19%, and it is expected that the income from online businesses will reach 6.54 trillion dollars by 2023. Launching a new website and business based on e-commerce brings many challenges, including obtaining some trade licenses or finding a suitable host and infrastructure to start online stores. All entrepreneurs face many problems at the beginning of the journey, and the obstacles and challenges of setting up an online store and finding a suitable solution to remove these obstacles are among their most important concerns (Ahorshu et al., 2020). Therefore, the following hypothesis can be stated H6: The convenience of customers to order food online has a positive and significant effect on the purchase intention of online customers of restaurants in Iraq. Figure 1 shows the conceptual model of the research.

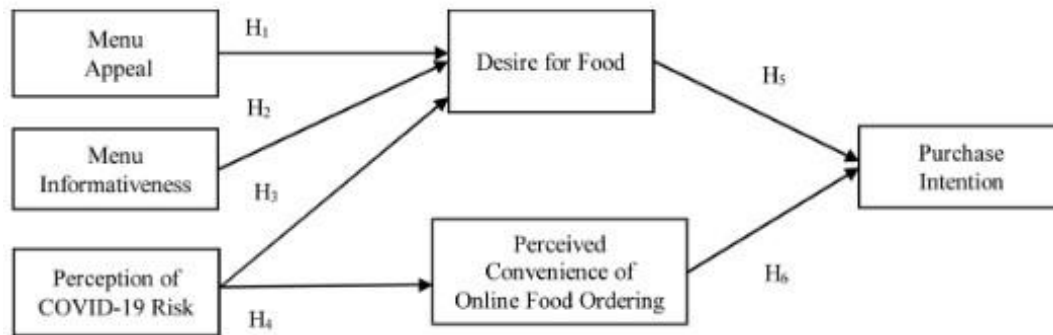


Figure 1 conceptual model

## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The current research is applied in terms of its purpose, and descriptive-survey in terms of its method. The statistical population of this research is all the customers of online food ordering websites in Iraq, which can be mentioned as an example of the applications of Talabat, Katshfood, Totters, Warin, Jilan, Zeitah, whose number of users was considered unlimited.

The survey instrument entailed the use of scales from previous research. The measurement for the Menu Visual Appeal factor consisted of five items adapted from Brewer (2017) and Montoya-Weiss et al. (2003). Menu Informativeness was measured by five items adapted from Feldman et al. (2006). To assess the Perception of COVID-19 Risk, seven items were adopted from Ahorsuet al. (2020), with some wordings modified after the pilot test was conducted. The Desire for Food factor was measured by seven items, in which four items were adapted from Fedorikhin and Patrick (2010), and three were new items. The Perceived Convenience of Online Food Ordering was assessed by seven items, in which five items were adapted from Ganesh et al. (2010) and Kimes (2011a), and two items were new. The last factor, Intention to Purchase, was measured by three items adapted from Wang et al. (2011). All variables were measured using a seven-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree; 7 = strongly agree). The survey included respondents' socio-demographics such as age, race, gender, marital status, income, and online food ordering patterns (frequency of ordering foodonline) for screening and demographic questions.

## RESULTS

Reliability is one of the technical characteristics of measuring instruments. The mentioned concept is related to the extent to which the measurement tool gives similar results in the same conditions. The range of the reliability coefficient is between zero and one, and the more this coefficient tends to one, the more reliable it is, and the values above 0.7 of this coefficient indicate the reliability of the questionnaire, and the values less than 0.6 are considered unfavorable.

In this study, both exploratory factor analysis (EFA) and confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) were performed. First, EFA with Maximum likelihood extraction and Promax rotation were applied Check the underlying dimensions of the constructs and group them into a small subset to measure different factors. Results No cross-loading was found and 34 items loaded on six factors. All items with loadings greater than 0.50 were retained for further analysis (Hair et al., 2010). Next, a CFA was conducted to assess the validity and reliability of the measurements used in this study. The results of the first model provided sufficient evidence of acceptable fit of the measures ( $\chi^2 = 1100.99$ ,  $\chi^2/DF = 2.18$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ,

CFI = 0.95, GFI = 0.86, NFI = 0.92, and RMSEA = 0.05). The standardized loading estimates of all items were greater than 0.50. As shown in Table 1, the composite reliability of all average variance

extracted (AVE) values was greater than the cutoff value of 0.50, indicating sufficient evidence of convergent validity (Hair et al., 2010).

| <b>Factors and items</b>  | <b><math>\alpha</math></b> | <b>CR</b>   | <b>AVE</b>  | <b>Factor Loading</b> |
|---|----------------------------|-------------|-------------|-----------------------|
| <b>Menu Visual Attractiveness (MVS)</b>   | <b>0.78</b>                | <b>0.88</b> | <b>0.7</b>  |                       |
| The way of displaying the online menu of this restaurant is attractive                |                            |             |             | <b>0.87</b>           |
| I like the layout of this online menu   |                            |             |             | <b>0.86</b>           |
| I like the graphics of this online menu   |                            |             |             | <b>0.79</b>           |
| <b>Menu Information (MIF)</b>   | <b>0.71</b>                | <b>0.80</b> | <b>0.50</b> |                       |
| The way to display the online menu of this restaurant is informative.                 |                            |             |             | <b>0.76</b>           |
| The menu provides good descriptions of the dishes on offer.                           |                            |             |             | <b>0.81</b>           |
| The menu provides clear details about the ingredients and methods of food preparation |                            |             |             | <b>0.76</b>           |
| The menu provides a comprehensive picture of the dishes offered to potential guests   |                            |             |             | <b>0.69</b>           |

|  |                |
|--|----------------|
| The menu gives me enough detail to decide whether the food on offer is suitable for my appetite. | <b>0.88</b>    |
| Perception of risk of COVID-19 (PCV)   | 0.65 0.76 0.61 |
| I am afraid of contracting COVID-19.   | <b>0.77</b>    |
| Thinking about COVID-19 makes me sad   | <b>0.82</b>    |
| I am afraid of losing my life because of covid-19.   | <b>0.74</b>    |
| I get anxious when watching news and stories about COVID-19 on social media                      | <b>0.92</b>    |
| I'm having trouble sleeping because I'm worried about contracting COVID-19                       | <b>0.83</b>    |
| I am hesitant to go out because I am afraid of contracting COVID 19.                             | <b>0.91</b>    |
| I avoid meeting other people because I don't want to get COVID 19                                | <b>0.78</b>    |
| Desire for food (DSF)  | 0.71 0.82 0.50 |
| After seeing the restaurant menu, I feel hungry  | <b>0.87</b>    |
| The menu made my mouth water   | <b>0.86</b>    |
| It made me want to eat. 0.85 While I was seeing me, my saliva started to flow                    | <b>0.79</b>    |
| After seeing the menu, I felt motivated to eat   |                |



|   |      |      |      |             |
|---|------|------|------|-------------|
| When I saw me, I wanted to grab and eat food.   |      |      |      | <b>0.76</b> |
| When I saw the menu, I felt an irresistible urge to eat                               |      |      |      | <b>0.87</b> |
| Perceived convenience of ordering food online (COF)                                   | 0.84 | 0.88 | 0.69 |             |
| I love the ability to order food without leaving the house.                           |      |      |      | <b>0.87</b> |
| I like the ability to transact online   |      |      |      | <b>0.81</b> |
| I like to have food delivered directly to my home                                     |      |      |      | <b>0.94</b> |
| I like to have the food ready for me to pick up as soon as I arrive at the restaurant |      |      |      | <b>0.92</b> |
| Ordering food online allows me to not have to think about preparing my own meals.     |      |      |      | <b>0.73</b> |
| Ordering food online allows me to avoid the crowds.                                   |      |      |      | <b>0.81</b> |
| Ordering food online makes my daily lifestyle easier during the pandemic.             |      |      |      | <b>0.76</b> |
| Purchase intention (PCI)  | 0.96 | 0.91 | 0.76 |             |
| After seeing me, I plan to order food from this restaurant                            |      |      |      | <b>0.77</b> |
| After seeing the menu, the probability of ordering food from this restaurant is high  |      |      |      | <b>0.82</b> |

### HYPOTHESIS TESTING

Structural equation modeling (SEM) was performed to analyze the relationships between variables in our model using the AMOS 26 program with the maximum likelihood method. The fit indices of the model were  $\chi^2 = 11.17$ ,  $\chi^2/DF = 3.72$ ,  $p < 0.011$ , CFI = 0.99, GFI = 0.99, NFI = 0.99, and RMSEA = 0.08, which shows that the model The proposal has a good fit to the data. (Hair et al., 2010). As shown in Table 2, the results of the hypotheses test are explained by estimating the standardized regression of the variables in the structural model and the importance of the weight of the path. The effects of "Visual attractiveness of the menu" have a positive effect on "Desire for food" and "Perceived ease of ordering food online". In the next step, the effects of "menu notification" were investigated. This variable was found to have a strong positive effect on "perceived convenience of ordering food online" and "appetite". For the effects of 'consumers' perception of the risk of COVID-19, this variable has a positive effect on both 'desire to eat' and 'perceived convenience of ordering food online'. Therefore, hypotheses 3 and 4 were confirmed. Finally, the relationships between "food desire", "perceived convenience of ordering food online" and "purchase intention" were tested. Positive and significant effects of "desire for food" and "perceived ease of ordering food online" on "purchase intention" were found. Therefore, all hypotheses were confirmed. Table 1 shows this issue.

**Table 1 Results of Hypotheses Testing**

| Structural path   | Std. estimate | C.R.  | Test results     |
|---|---------------|-------|------------------|
| H1: Menu visual appeal → Desire for food                    | 0.45          | 10.21 | <b>Supported</b> |
| H2: Menu informativeness → Desire for food                  | 0.36          | 7.96  | <b>Supported</b> |
| H3: Perception of COVID-19 risk → Desire for food           | 0.61          | 5.6   | <b>Supported</b> |
| H4: Perception of COVID-19 risk → Food ordering convenience | 0.45          | 9.5   | <b>Supported</b> |
| H5: Desire for food → Purchase intention                    | 0.52          | 8.64  | <b>Supported</b> |
| H6: Food ordering convenience → Purchase intention          | 0.49          | 6.21  | <b>Supported</b> |

## DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The success of a retail store depends on how to provide a pleasant experience for the audience and customers and how to present and introduce products, prices and discounts that attract the attention of the audience. Based on this, retail store owners can benefit from hygiene principles in their retail environment and in this way create a unique experience for their customers. The Corona epidemic around the world, in addition to causing panic, has caused the stagnation of many businesses, especially those active in the restaurant industry. On the other hand, in order to maintain social distance and prevent the increase in the number of patients, the activities of restaurants and cafes were suspended from the beginning of the official announcement of the outbreak of Corona virus in Iraq, as in most countries.

In this regard, in the published list of "high-risk businesses during the Corona era", the names of restaurants and cafes are also among those whose activities require the presence of more people and it is necessary to be closed until further notice. The present research was conducted with the aim of investigating the effect of online restaurant menus on customers' purchase intentions during the covid-19 disease. The results indicate that at the confidence level of 95%, the visual appeal of the menu, the informational content of the menu and the understanding of the risk of the covid-19 disease have a significant effect on the consumer's desire for food and the perceived ease of ordering food online by the consumer, which ultimately leads to the intention to buy. will be a consumer. Therefore, according to the findings, it can be concluded that during the time of the Corona virus, due to the stress and fear of the people and the travel restrictions, restaurants can provide online services to consumers using up-to-date technology equipment, and on the other hand, consumers Easily view the restaurant menu and buy at the desired time and place using applications and communication tools such as mobile phones. In this research, it is assumed that consumers are looking for those welfare services from restaurants that will allow them to avoid close contact with other people during the outbreak of this infectious disease. . When social stimuli or marketing stimuli such as an attractive restaurant menu are combined in the online food ordering environment, the consumer's intervening states are likely to be triggered and reflected in purchase decisions. It is obvious that creating an attractive menu in restaurants is one of the main driving forces for driving consumer purchase intentions in a competitive digital world.

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