

An Exploration of the Relationships among Brand Value, Customer Satisfaction and Behavioral Intention in Fast Food Restaurant Visitors

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ABSTRACT: Fast food restaurants are one of the fastest growing industries in the world. Even though it is an emerging field, there are few studies about the relationship of fast food customer satisfaction about brand value and behavior intention. The current study examined which factor concerning brand value affects to customer satisfaction in fast food restaurants and investigated how customer satisfaction affects the behavior intention. The subjects of this study are current undergraduate students in Busan, South Korea. A self-administrated questionnaire survey was distributed to 528 students who have been to fast-food restaurants in Busan, Korea and 493 questionnaires were used for data analysis. Research findings indicated that food quality, brand image, brand awareness, and brand association through multiple linear regression were significant factors for customer satisfaction. In addition, the result of a simple linear regression showed that customer satisfaction was positively related to behavior intention. This study can provide valuable information and offer specific ways for fast food managers to increase customer satisfaction and behavior intention.

Keywords: fast food restaurant, brand value, college students, customer satisfaction, behavior intention

INTRODUCTION

The fast food restaurant is one of the most popular forms of dining-out. In Korea, the spread of the fast food restaurant began with the 1988 Seoul Olympic Games. Even though the growing trend of fast food restaurant bogged during the global economic crisis in 2008, the economic recovery allowed it to return immediately. The growth rate of fast food industry recorded 11.5% in 2010, and 24.8% in 2011, respectively (Food Journal 2012). According to the recent statistic data (Food Journal 2012), the to-

tal market size of the five main fast food restaurants is estimated to be about \$ 1.6 billion with an annual growth rate 14% in 2012. The five main fast food restaurants are Lotteria, McDonald's, KFC, Popeye's, and Burger King, which are all global business brands with western foods, and originated in the United States except for Lotteria. The continuous expansion of fast food restaurants could be expected with increase of one person household phenomenon.

Potential differences based on generation were suggested by previous researches. Paul P (2001) sug-

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gests that formative experiences have significant effects on consumers' preferences, values, and beliefs. A strong relationship among a generation's experiences are shaped by common events that the generational members can share. This relationship is thought to affect psychographic consumption tendencies. A particular age group or generation may hold general cultural characteristics (Kueh K, Voon BH 2007). In the different generation groups, both customer satisfaction and influence factors may appear different. Fast food restaurants became popular since 1988 Seoul Olympic Games. According to a research (Kim WG, Kim H 2004), relatively young generation are using fast food restaurants. Generation Y - simply Gen Yers or millennials - were grown with the prosperity of fast food restaurants. Gen Yers refers the generation who were born in raging from the early 1980s to early 2000s. In addition, this generation become a challenging market in the restaurant industry. However, they have many different characteristics with other generations in their purchasing behavior (Jang YJ, Kim WG, Bonn MA 2011).

Fast food restaurants are providing similar products and services. For this reason, it is very important for fast food restaurants to understand what affects customer behavior intention and satisfaction on fast food restaurants. This would be a first step for fast food restaurants companies to build up their marketing strategies.

Thus, the purpose of this study is (1) to investigate the influence factors to customer satisfaction in fast food restaurants, and (2) to assess how customer satisfaction affects behavior intention.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Brand Knowledge

According to Keller KL (1993), a brand knowledge is customer memories which have effect on how customers react to product, prices, communications, and marketing activity with increasing or decreasing a brand value. In other words, the brand knowledge is about all thoughts, perceptions, images, feelings, and experiences. These factors become the brand in the customer's mind. Based on the features, the brand knowledge divides into brand awareness and brand image.

1) Brand Awareness

The brand awareness was measured as brand recognition and brand recall (Keller KL 1993). These fundamentals are important to measure brand awareness, because customers recognize or retain the brand in their memories. Brand awareness plays a major role in buying products, because it is about costumers' ability to distinguish various brand elements from other brands under different conditions. Because the brand awareness provides consumers cues related to the brand, consumers are likely to remind the brand in the future. Therefore, brand awareness is an important first step to build up customer satisfaction and future behavior intention (Aaker JL 1997).

2) Brand Image

In brand knowledge, there is another aspect differs from brand awareness. Keller KL (1993) introduced brand image as another construct for brand knowledge. Brand image is consumers' perceptions about a brand reflected by associations in customer memory (Gwinner KP, Eaton J 1999). In other words, brand image is the consumers' reflection to the brand. It appears in the associations that consumers hold toward the brand.

In general, the brand image such as favor and distinctiveness are measured with brand awareness and brand association. Therefore, these factors are vital to determine customers' different response to the brand with their satisfaction and decision making (Lassar W, Mittal B, Sharma A 1995). Therefore, it suggests that the brand awareness and brand image positively influences customer satisfaction.

Hypothesis 1: Customers' brand knowledge has a positive effect on customer satisfaction.

Hypothesis 1a: Customer perception of brand awareness has a positive effect on customer satisfaction.

Hypothesis 1b: Customer perception of brand image has a positive effect on customer satisfaction.

Brand Association

Brand association consists of product traits, customer profit, product classes, uses, and competitors.

In addition, the brand association has a level of strength as well as existence (Keller KL 2003). Therefore, the associations affect purchase behavior of a customer with satisfaction. Even if the association is not important to the selection of a brand, they are able to reduce the enticement of purchasing other brands. In general, the brand associations are valuable to company operators. The brand associations are used to extend a brand or create a positive attitude towards a brand. Therefore, the operators enable brand association to suggest benefits of buying or using an explicit brand (Kamakura WA, Russell GJ 1993).

Hypothesis 3: Customer perception of brand association has a positive effect on satisfaction.

Perceived Quality

Perceived quality is the customer's perception of the general quality about product or service (Aaker JL 1997). Overall, it is intangible and conveys an emotion about a brand. To understand the perceived quality, it is useful to realize the identification and measurement of the essential dimension. Therefore, it can provide a competitive edge over the competitors in obtaining a latent market field by stimulating the customers. Also, the perceived quality provides a worth to customers through offering a reason or a value to buy the brand compared to competitor's brands (Keller KL 1993). Therefore, the customer's perception quality can be connected with their brand loyalty because customers who become more brand loyal favor the brand. Therefore, the perceived quality consists of service quality, food quality, and physical environment.

1) Service Quality

Service quality is defined as the customer's judgment of the overall excellence or superiority of the service (Zeithaml VA 1988). Also, the service quality has a close relationship with customer satisfaction, and it has been identified as an important feature of the service-profit chain (Sasser WE, Schlesinger LA, Heskett JL 1997). In addition, the service quality for customers is an important key to achievement in terms of maintaining the competitive advantage of service industries (Palmer A 2011). In particular,

previous studies which relate to customer expectation and service quality perception in the restaurant industry showed that low price, taste, and brand name were several important features in determining service quality (Johns N, Howard A 1998). Also, Johns N and Pine R (2002) studied how basic factors such as food, physical provision, and atmosphere contribute to customer satisfaction in the restaurant industry.

2) Food Quality

Food quality is defined as an essential element of the complete restaurant experience (Kivela J, Inbakaran R, Reece J 1999). The food quality is an important condition to satisfy customers' expectation in restaurants. According to Sulek JM and Hensley RL (2004), they studied the relationship among the importance of food quality, physical conditions, and service in full service restaurants. Based on their report, food quality appears to be the most important factor of customer satisfaction. Also, customers are more likely to revisit if the food quality is high. In addition, Susskind AM and Chan EK (2000) researched that superb food quality is a vital determinant of a positive customer assessment in the restaurant industry.

3) Physical Environment

Nguyen N and Leblanc G (2002) identified that a physical environment had an important positive impact on perceived brand image by new customers from a company. Furthermore, hotels and restaurants are effectively developed to support the brand image of their company or relocate the customer's perceptual quality among competitors. Therefore, it can directly improve their customer satisfaction with a service enhancement. Also, Baker J, Grewal D, Parasuraman A (1994) studied the role of physical environment that service industries in hotels and restaurants are increasing a brand image and pursue customer behaviors. For these reason, it is implied that perceived quality positively affect customer satisfaction (Lassar W, Mittal B, Sharma A 1995). Bitner MJ (1992) identified three primary aspect of physical environment affecting customer satisfaction. These three aspects are (a) ambient conditions, (b) spatial layout and functionality, and (c) signs symbols and

artifacts. We already mentioned the last aspect in the brand image part.

Ambience

Ambience or atmosphere as a factor of the physical environment has shown to be an important element in customer satisfaction of any restaurant. It creates an image of the surrounding space in the customers' minds with a perceived value (Kotler P 1973). In addition, the ambience was assessed by an impact of environment concerning human behavior with the customers' buying decisions (Mehrabian A, Russell JA 1974). By doing this, it affects customers' behavior in terms of satisfaction.

Location

The hospitality industry requires customers to be present where the services are provided. Therefore, a category such as a convenient location is an important factor for determining the number of customers. Because if restaurants are located in convenient places for customers, they can reach the restaurants easier while saving time (Lee M, Ulgado FM 1997).

Hypothesis 3: Customer perception of perceived quality has a positive effect on satisfaction.

Hypothesis 3a: Customer perception of service quality has a positive effect on satisfaction.

Hypothesis 3b: Customer perception of food quality has a positive effect on satisfaction.

Hypothesis 3c: Customer perception of physical environment, including ambience and location has a positive effect on satisfaction.

Satisfaction

Customer satisfaction is considered a basic factor of long-term customer behavior (Oliver RL 1980). Thus, service industries increasingly focus on pursuing customer satisfaction. According to Hunt HK (1977), customer satisfaction is an evaluation concerning customer experience. Also, Oliver RL (2010) described customer satisfaction as customer's response of gratification and a judgment about products or service. In addition, he stated that customer

satisfaction is a pleasurable step of consumption regarding a gratification. This is an approach to measure the level of customer satisfaction (Oliver RL 2010; Yi Y, Zeithaml VA 1990).

Hypothesis 4: Customer satisfaction has a positive effect on behavior intention.

Behavior Intention

Behavioral intention refers to revisit intention and intention of recommendation. Based on a number of studies, customer satisfaction as consequences in the service industry stated that the satisfaction and behavior intentions have a positive and direct relationship (Han H, Ryu K 2009). Consequently, they are connected as a relationship between customer satisfactions and repurchase intention (Anderson EW, Sullivan MW 1993). In other words, according to Kivela J, Inbakaran R, Reece J (1999), the satisfaction in dining service restaurants has an important factor to pursue customer behavioral intentions. Moreover, Getty JM and Thomson KN (1994) explored the relationship among service quality, satisfaction and behavioral intentions. As a result, satisfaction and repatronizing behavior in a restaurant is significantly associated to two intensions such as customers' expectations and needs. Therefore, these factors provided a positive relationship between customer satisfaction and behavior intention in the service industry (Kivela J et al 1999). Hence, these dimensions relate to restaurant brand in terms of customer satisfaction. Based on these studies, we suggest a conceptual model that includes as follows:

Research Methods

We began this study by reviewing past research related to brand value, customer satisfaction, and behavior intention. Based on the literature review (Parasuraman A, Zeithaml VA, Berry LL 1988; Stevens P Knutson B, Patton M 1995), we finalized a survey instrument consisting of nine parts. The first part of the survey included questions about food quality in five different fast food restaurants. The questions asked respondents to indicate their satisfaction for each fast food restaurant brand related to its taste, freshness, proper amount, variety, price, temperature, and flavor, respectively. The second section of

the survey asked the respondents to indicate their satisfaction about the five fast food brand restaurant's physical and emotional environments. The third and fourth parts questioned service quality. The remainder of the survey asked questions related to brand awareness, brand image, brand association, overall satisfaction, and behavior intention. The last part of the questionnaire included questions about demographics. To measure all the items, we used a five-point Likert-type scale ranging 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree).

After the survey instrument was finalized, we conducted a self-administrated questionnaire survey with undergraduate students in Busan, Korea. Five hundred and twenty eight questionnaires were collected in spring, 2015. After data cleaning, 493 (93.4%) usable questionnaires were used for the analysis. Data processing and statistical analysis were conducted by using SPSS 22.0 for Windows software. Descriptive statistics were used for general demographics. An exploratory factor analysis (EFA) was conducted for finding the conceptual frameworks. Stepwise multiple regression was employed to test the relationship among perceived quality, brand knowledge, brand association, and customer satisfaction. The relationship between customer satisfaction and behavior intention was tested with simple linear regression.

RESULTS

Characteristics of Respondents

The sample consisted of 192 male (39.1%) and 301 female (60.9%) respondents, whose average age was 22.9 years. Four hundreds respondents (81.1%) out of 493 are living with their family. Only 93 respondents (18.9%) are not living with their family. Big majority of respondents (90.9%) spend less than 20,000 won per visit. Only 3 percent of respondents spend more than 30,000 won per visit at fast food restaurants. The main reason for visiting fast food restaurants are food (81.1%), social relationship (16.2%), business (1.6%), and family (1.0%). The main sources of information about fast food restaurants are word of mouth (38.7%), TV (36.7%), Internet (21.3%), newspaper (0.4%), and others (2.8%) (Table 1).

Exploratory factor analysis (EFA) was employed to

examine the validity of conceptual frameworks (Table 2). A principal axis factor analysis with the 38 Likert-type scale questions was conducted by a Varimax rotation. The examination of the Kaiser-Meyer Olkin measure of sampling adequacy suggested that the sample was factorable ($KMO=.940$).

Seven Influence Factors

Six items loaded onto the first factor are related to the quality of employee service. This factor loads onto the quality in employees' appearance, politeness, cleanliness, knowledge for menus, friendliness, and rapidity of service. This factor was labelled, "Service Quality."

Five items are loaded onto Factor 2. Factor 2 is clearly related to customer's awareness of brand. It loads onto the awareness in ease of brand name, high brand awareness, well-known to the public, memorable symbol, and good reputation. We labelled this factor, "Brand Awareness."

Seven items that loaded onto Factor 3 are related to the physical environment. Atmosphere, interior decoration, music, comfortable tables and chairs, indoor temperature, cleanness of restroom, and enough space for the guests are related to this factor. This factor was labelled, "Ambience."

Another set of seven items are loaded on to Factor 4. This factor identifies the quality of foods in food temperature, proper amounts, flavor, price, freshness, taste, and diversity of menu choices. Factor 4 was labelled, "Food Quality."

Items loaded for Factor 5 are related to customer image for the brand. Factor 5 loads customer brand image in differentiation from other restaurant, novelty, trustworthiness, reliability, and good image. This factor was labelled, "Brand Image."

Three items loaded for Factor 6 are related to another physical environment. This factor loads physical environment in accessibility, easiness to use public transportation, and easiness of arrival. This factor differs from Factor 4, "Ambience." We labelled this factor, "Location."

Items loaded onto the final factor related to relationship with customers in information provision, card alliance, benefit programs, and marketing strategies. This factor was labelled, "Brand Association."

Table 1. Demographic profile of the sample

Characteristics	Category	N=493	%
Gender	Male	192	39.1
	Female	301	60.9
Age in year	Under 20	190	38.5
	21 ~ 25	244	49.5
	26 ~ 30	27	5.5
	Over 30	32	6.5
Living with family	Yes	400	91.1
	No	93	18.9
Average expenditure per a fast food restaurant visit	Less ₩20,000	448	90.9
	₩20,000 ~ ₩30,000	30	6.1
	₩30,000 ~ ₩40,000	13	2.6
	₩40,000 ~ ₩50,000	1	0.2
	Over ₩50,000	1	0.2
Main purpose to visit fast food restaurant	Food	400	81.1
	Social relationship	80	16.2
	Business	8	1.6
	Family	5	1.0
Main informational source for fast food restaurants	TV	181	36.7
	News paper	2	0.4
	Internet	105	21.3
	Word of Mouth	191	38.7
	Others	14	2.8

A multiple linear regression was employed to predict customer satisfaction based on food quality, service quality, ambience, location, brand image, brand awareness, and brand association (Table 3). A significant regression equation was found ($F(7, 2455)=376.151, p<0.001$), with an R^2 of 0.517. Food quality, brand awareness, brand image, and brand association are significant predictors of customer satisfaction. However, service quality and physical environment, which is including ambience and location, did not have significant affects on customer satisfaction in fast food restaurants.

A simple linear regression was conducted to test if customer satisfaction significantly predicted be-

havior intention (Table 4). The result of the regression indicated the predictor explained 61% of the variance ($R^2=0.611, F(1,2463)=3,868.267, p<0.001$), It was found that customer satisfaction significantly predicted behavior intention ($\beta=0.782, p<0.001$).

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The descriptive analysis provided respondents' demographic information and eating behavior in fast food restaurants. The average age of the sample was 22.9 years. Though the sample was selected from a relatively young generation, the profile of a respondents' survey conducted by Korea Food &

Table 2. Constructs of scale Items

Denomination of factors		Factor			
		1	2	3	4
Service quality	Employees have a decent appearance.	.690			
	Employees are polite.	.686			
	I like the employees' cleanliness.	.672			
	Employees have proper knowledge for the menus.	.660			
	Friendly, employees deal with complains.	.644			
	Employees handle the orders rapidly.	.550			
Brand awareness	The restaurant brand name is easily memorized.		.736		
	The restaurant has high brand awareness.		.736		
	The restaurant is well known to the public.		.652		
	The restaurant has a good symbol to be remembered.		.566		
	The restaurant has good reputation.		.452		
Ambience	I like the atmosphere of this restaurant.			.728	
	I like the interior decoration of the restaurant.			.697	
	I like the music in the restaurant.			.600	
	The restaurant provide comfortable tables and chairs.			.586	
	The indoor temperature is proper.			.536	
	The restroom of the restaurant is clean.			.475	
	The restaurant has enough room to serve guests.			.433	
Food quality	The temperature of food is proper.				.630
	The restaurant provides proper amounts of food.				.613
	The food flavor is good.				.600
	Food prices are appropriate.				.597
	Foods are fresh.				.568
	Foods are delicious.				.413
	The restaurant has various menu choices.				.413
		Factor			
		5	6	7	
Brand image	The restaurant differs from other restaurants.	.633			
	The image of the restaurant has novelty.	.618			
	I trust the product and service from the restaurant.	.541			
	The product (menus) are reliable.	.525			
	The restaurant has a good image.	.439			
Location	The restaurant is accessed easily.		.754		
	It is easy to use public transportation to get to the restaurant.		.754		
	The restaurant has high accessibility.		.747		
Brand association	The restaurant provides information about the upcoming events.			.735	
	The benefit from card alliance is good.			.682	
	The restaurant provide diverse benefit program to the customer.			.637	
	The restaurant adds various marketing strategies.			.635	

Kaiser-Meyer Olkin (KMO)=0.940.

Note. Factor loadings <.4 are suppressed.

Table 3. Effect of influence factors on customer satisfaction

Variables	B(S.E.)	β	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i> -value
Intercept	-2.004 (0.328)		6.102	<0.001
Service quality	-0.010 (0.016)	-0.012	0.627	.531
Food quality	0.169 (0.016)	0.200	10.802	<0.001
Ambience	0.037 (0.015)	0.049	2.538	.011
Location	0.028 (0.020)	0.024	1.384	0.166
Brand awareness	0.176 (0.016)	0.210	10.874	<0.001
Brand image	0.280 (0.019)	0.292	14.824	<0.001
Brand association	0.196 (0.018)	0.180	10.881	<0.001
R^2		0.517		
<i>F</i>		376.151		
Significance level		<0.001		

Restaurant Information for fast food consumer showed the average age was approximately twenty seven years (Kim WG, Kim H 2004). This study found that the majority of the respondents (90.9%) spend less than 20,000 won per fast food restaurant visit. It is about same result with previous surveys (Kim WG, Kim H 2004). The respondents were using fast food restaurants mainly for food (81.1%) and social relationship (16.2%). These results are supported by a comparison research conducted between Korean and Filipino college students using fast food restaurants (Baek S, Ham S, Yang I 2006).

This study extends research on brand equity, customer satisfaction, and behavior intention in fast food restaurants. Even though main fast food restaurants are providing Western food, Generation Y in Korea have grown with fast food restaurants in their daily lives. Therefore, understanding of norms of

perception related to brands is a key component for the comprehension of customer satisfaction and their behavior intention. The results of this study clearly shows that brand awareness, brand image, brand association, and perceived quality affect customer satisfaction positively. However, the effect of perceived quality on customer satisfaction varies by its underlying dimensional norms. Though food quality has positive effect on customer satisfaction, service quality and physical environment are not important factors for the customer satisfaction. This may be explained by the indifference of service quality and physical environment of fast food restaurant brands. It is true that many fast food restaurants are neighboring with each other in major traffic points. Additionally, customers could not distinguish the differences for service quality and physical environment among fast food restaurant brands.

Table 4. Effect of customer satisfaction on behavior intention

Variables	B(S.E.)	β	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i> -value
Intercept	2.357 (0.186)		12.699	<0.001
Customer satisfaction	0.854 (0.014)	0.782	62.195	<0.001
R^2		0.611		
<i>F</i>		3,868.267		
Significance level		<0.001		

In summary, brand awareness, brand image, brand association, and perceived food quality has shown a significant positive effect on customer satisfaction. The finding demonstrates that customer satisfaction is an important predictor onto behavior intention.

The current study has some limitations and also leads to possible future research. First of all, the study was conducted in a limited area and generation. The majority of respondents are attending undergraduate college programs. Difference of occupation may affect customers' behavior and perception on fast food restaurants. Secondly, this study used two regression analyses. One multiple regression identified the effect of influence factors on customer satisfaction. A simple regression analysis was employed for testing the relationship between customer satisfaction and behavior intention. However, this hierarchic structure may be tested by structural equation model as a whole. Lastly, a study for generational differences would be studied as a future research.

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Received: 15 September, 2015

Revised: 12 October, 2015

Accepted: 20 October, 2015

패스트 푸드 레스토랑 방문자들의 행동의도, 고객 만족 브랜드 가치들에 대한 관계성의 연구

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국문초록

패스트푸드 레스토랑은 급속도로 성장하고는 산업들 중에 하나이다. 이렇게 급성장하고 있는 분야임에도 불구하고, 패스트푸드 레스토랑에 대한 고객들의 브랜드에 관한 평가, 만족도, 그리고 이에 따른 행동 의도에 관한 연구는 소수에 불과했다. 그래서 본 연구는 패스트푸드 레스토랑에서 브랜드 가치를 형성하는 어떤 요인이 고객 만족도에 영향을 미치고, 그 고객만족도가 어떻게 고객의 행동의도에 영향을 미치는지를 조사 연구하였다. 이 연구는 부산에 있는 대학생 528명을 대상으로 자기기입식 설문 조사법을 통해 자료를 수집하였다. 통계분석에 적절하지 않는 35명의 데이터를 제외한 후, 493명의 자료를 최종분석에 사용하였다. 이 연구가 시사하는 바는 다음과 같다. 다중 회귀분석의 결과, 음식의 질(Food quality), 브랜드 이미지(Brand image), 브랜드 인식(Brand awareness), 브랜드 연관성(Brand association)들은 고객 만족에 중요한 요인이 된다. 또한 단순 회귀분석을 통해 고객 만족은 행동 의도에 긍정적인 영향을 미친다는 알아내었다. 그러므로 이 연구는 고객들의 행동 의도와 그들의 만족도를 증가시키기 위하여 노력하는 패스트푸드 매니저들에게 특별한 방법들과 가치 있는 정보를 제공할 수 있다.

주제어: 패스트푸드 레스토랑, 브랜드 가치, 대학생, 고객 만족, 행동 의도