The Influence of Length of Stay on Traveler Purchase Decisions for Franchise Fast Food Establishments in South Korea.

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Abstract: Food plays a significant role in cultural expression and daily life creativity across various cultures. This study aims to investigate the impact of fast-food restaurants on food travelers in Korea, focusing on the evolving preferences of travelers and the role of franchise establishments in meeting those preferences. As food tourism gains popularity in Korea, travelers' perception of food influences their behavior, emphasizing the importance of understanding a destination's culinary reputation. The study delves into the preferences and decision-making process related to fast-food restaurants using the SIT. The study explores how the duration of a traveler's stay influences their purchasing decisions, specifically analyzing the purchasing behavior of travelers regarding different franchise fast food restaurants during their time in Korea.

Keywords: Food tourism, travelers, fast food restaurants, length of stay, purchase behavior, preference, SIT and EKB theories, quantitative method, snowball sampling, South Korea.

Introduction. Food and tourism are two significant, closely related sectors (Abukhalifeh & Pratt, 2022). As food tourism literature developed, it transitioned from early management-focused studies to more healthy and exploratory explorations of food and travel. (Everett & Aitchison, 2008). Food tourism frequently gives travelers the chance to enjoy unique and authentic experiences (Sims, 2009). One of the forms of special interest tourism that are expanding the fastest is food tourism, which is a strategy used by more and more destinations to broaden their target markets by luring travelers with their local cuisine (Wolf, 2014). Two of the most well-liked components of contemporary living are food and travel. The relationship between food and tourism is becoming increasingly important, as food experiences are now a key part of the travel experience for many people. Nonetheless, people occasionally encounter circumstances during both short and long-term travel periods where fast food ends up being the most practical option for their requirements and needs (Lee & et al., 2014).

In recent years, fast food consumption has seen a surge among Korean consumers, raising questions about the reasons behind this trend and its social and cultural implications (Watson,2020). The rise in fast food consumption is indicative of a changing food culture in South Korea, with many Koreans responding positively to the introduction of new and innovative fast-food items. This trend is largely attributed to a surge in discretionary income that many Koreans have experienced, allowing for greater affordability and accessibility to fast food options (Choe & Kim, 2018). Fast food restaurants have become an integral part of the global food culture and have come to symbolize Westernization, with their influence extending far beyond the realm of food. In South Korea, fast food restaurants are not only a source of fast and convenient food, but they also serve as a popular place for social interaction and entertainment (Lee, & Arcadia, 2011). This shift in food tourism has significant implications for travelers, as the consumption of fast food may reflect broader changes in lifestyle and social norms. Thus, understanding the reasons behind the rise in fast food consumption among foreign consumers and its social and cultural implications is crucial for researchers, policymakers, and the general public alike. This paper seeks to delve deeper into the factors driving fast-food restaurants in

South Korea and explore their impact on travelers in Korea. Specifically, this paper will examine the preference and purchase behavior, and how time at a location, and how the importance of food to travelers may influence restaurant preference and consumer behavior.

Today, tourists differ widely in terms of food taste and demand for food experience, and individuals prefer to eat fast food not only to save time but also for effective experiences developed during their travel time (de Groot, 2010). Consuming local food is an essential component of the travel experience (Kline, Lee, and Knollenberg 2018), and it is increasingly recognized as a means for visitors to gain a deeper understanding of the local way of life (Sthapit, Condoners, and Björk 2019). There is an inherent difference between domestic and international restaurants, particularly domestic travelers' social and cultural familiarity with a country's local food and their accessibility to food production regions (Kim, Park, and Lamb 2019). For example, there is limited knowledge regarding domestic travelers' preferences for foods available locally and the food styles to meet their needs and in developing promotional strategies, and research; therefore, exploring the understandings of domestic and international travelers is needed (Zhang et al. 2018).

Food tourism may be altered by the period of stay, which could be long-term or short-term traveling. Given the growing importance of food in the tourism industry, it is essential to explore the role of franchises in the fast-food industry and the ab catering to the changing demands of food tourism and its impact on local food markets and the development of new industries.

The length of stay in Korea's tourist sector might vary depending on several variables, including the traveler's objectives, financial situation, and personal preferences (Kang, Kim, & Nicholls, 2014). According to Debbage (1991), characteristics like party size, type of travel arrangement (packaged tour or independent travelers), familiarity level, and socioeconomic characteristics such as income, education, age, and occupation have little to do with how tourists behave. According to Debbage (1991) length of stay, degree of mobility, location of origin, and place of stay significantly influenced things like movement and time at location in a specific geographic location. Ain other words, it greatly affected your decisions while traveling in a specific region. Typically, international tourists concentrated into large cities at the beginning of their trip before progressively dispersing to regional sites. Domestic tourists' dispersal, however, was less affected by their duration of stay (Wu and Carson, 2008; Nicolau, & Más, 2009). Moreover, Kang (2016) has shown that the duration of a stay can be identified as a constraint related to the spatial patterns of travel. One recent study by Jin (2018) looks at the connection between visitors' length of stay and their spatial behavior and they discovered that the movements of tourists varied in time. There were differences between short-term and long-term journeys in terms of attraction visits; short-term visitors tended to visit the main attractions, whereas long-term tourists weakened the hierarchy of their movement by visiting more attractions closer together (Kang (2016) & Jin (2018).

The Korean government has recognized the potential of tourism as a driver of economic growth and has been investing in developing tourism infrastructure to attract more visitors. However, one of the major attractions of Korea is its food. Korean cuisine is known for its unique flavors and health benefits and has gained popularity worldwide. The Korean government has been promoting its food culture through initiatives such as the Korean Food Foundation and the Seoul Food and Hospitality Expo. Additionally, the rise of food tourism has led to an increase in the number of tourists visiting Korea to try its cuisine. The government's gastro diplomacy program seeks to make Korean cuisine more accessible and attractive to international consumers. According to KFF (Korean Food Foundation), the campaign's goals are to promote job opportunities in the food industry, support Korean chefs, boost exports of Korean food and agricultural products, and strengthen Korea's national brand. One good example of this is Korean traditional food which is used in fast food menus, such as McDonald's, an international brand. When the Seoul Olympics were taking place in 1988, McDonald's first encountered

customers in Korea. The first McDonald's restaurant in Korea (Kim, Kong, Choi, Shin & Lee, 2012). Apgujeong celebrated its grand opening. Regarding Korean flavor, the Bulgogi Burger is the most well-liked food in Korean McDonald's, and many patrons declare it to be their favorite. The bulgogi burger is not representative of South Korea because the hamburger did not come from there, however, adding a version of the traditional Bulgogi creates an opportunity for visitors that may be resistant to new foods to expand their understanding of Korean taste in a safe less risky environment (Judkis, 2019).

Food tourism, according to Lee and Scott (2015), is a significant draw for travel destinations and has beneficial economic impacts on it as a result and a lot of nations tend to create food tourism items for promotion and destination management. The South Korean government has been supporting and expanding food tourism for destination management and marketing since 1988 and is aware of its significance. For the supply side of tourism, regarding South Korean government has established and put into practice food tourism-focused strategies (KTO, 2015). On the demand side, this study examines how these strategies compare to the psychological and behavioral tendencies of persons who claimed to have been to South Korea primarily for food tourism. To better understand food tourism in South Korea that the South Korean government has established and put into practice food tourism-focused strategies. The South Korean government designated a specific budget for this all-encompassing strategic approach, which it called "K-Food" (National Assembly Budget Office, 2012). To raise knowledge of food tourism and encourage consumption, the Ministry of Agriculture, Food, and Rural Affairs created K-Food Experience Centers abroad and publicized them (Ministry of Agriculture, Food, and Rural Affairs, 2012).

Literature review: According to Hae-Joang (2005) and Pinem (2015), K-Drama showcases not only captivating storytelling and top-notch filmmaking, but also a variety of aspects of Korean culture, including unique foods, rituals, fashion, lifestyle, and tourism attractions including picturesque locations used as the backdrop for the pictures. K-drama quickly gains worldwide acclaim and establishes new fashion trends.

Franchise Fast Food Restaurants

McDonald's, a global fast-food chain, has had a significant impact on South Korean culture, as noted in a study conducted by Kim (2018). Following McDonald's entry into the South Korean market, the fast-food industry in the country started to expand globally. The study by Kim (2018) suggests that McDonald's has influenced South Korean eating habits by encouraging more consumers to incorporate fast food into their daily diets. As part of their efforts to enhance customer service, McDonald's has installed digital menu boards in approximately 10 stores nationwide, including branches in Yongin and Pohang, with the Chimsan branch in Daegu being the first. By implementing various customer service technologies, such as digital menu boards, McDonald's aims to continually improve the service it provides to its visitors (Lee, 2012).

Lotteria, a well-known South Korean fast-food restaurant established in 1979, offers a range of fast-food items, including burgers and fried chicken. It is generally perceived by Koreans as representative of Western culture while also providing a convenient and affordable dining option. Lotteria gained popularity by positioning itself as a native alternative to most Western-style fast-food restaurants in Korea. The introduction of Korean franchise fast-food outlets, including Lotteria's famous kimchi burger, played a role in the restaurant's success, as highlighted by Lankov & Andrei (2007-2010). This native alternative approach resonated with many Koreans, leading them to view Lotteria as a more familiar option compared to other Western-style fast-food establishments.

Consumer's purchase decision

In the literature on temporary marketing, consumer purchase decisions have been extensively studied. Salem (2018) defined it as the procedure that begins when a consumer detects a need, looks for possibilities, weighs alternatives, and then chooses a specific good or service. Consumers go through

several phases before making a purchasing choice, which can be conceptualized as a series of steps. It includes different elements, like what to buy, when to buy, where to buy from, which brand or model to buy, what payment method will be utilized, and how much to spend (McClure, & Seock, 2020). The views that consumers have of a company's products and brand name are likely to influence their purchasing decisions.

Fast food has grown in popularity as a quick and practical supper alternative for customers. However, several circumstances can have an impact on the decision to purchase fast food (Pérez-Villarreal, Martínez-Ruiz, MIzquierdo-Yusta, & Gómez-Cantó, 2020).

•	Price is a significant aspect that affects consumer decisions to buy fast food. Fast food is frequently seen as an inexpensive and accessible option, which appeals to consumers who are watching their spending. Fast food meals can frequently cost more than home-cooked meals; therefore, this idea may not always be true (Otnes, Ruth, & Crosby, 2014).

•	Another important element influencing consumer purchase decisions is the food's taste and quality. Fast food restaurants are well renowned for their distinctive flavors, which might appeal to customers seeking a particular flavor profile. But a consumer's decision to buy fast food may also be influenced by worries about the food's freshness and healthfulness (Silayoi, & Speece, 2004).

•	Fast food consumer buying decisions are significantly influenced by marketing and advertising as well. To entice people into their restaurants, several fast-food franchises employ snappy slogans and alluring imagery (Liao, Chung, & Chang, 2019). Advertising that features mouthwatering burgers or crisp fried chicken, for instance, can be quite successful in persuading customers to purchase.

•	Social and cultural variables may also have an impact on consumers' decisions to buy fast food. For instance, among some demographics, such as teenagers or busy professionals, fast food may be regarded as a preferred and socially acceptable option (Lin, Featherman, Brooks, & Hajli,2019). On the other hand, some customers might completely shun these eateries due to worries about the detrimental effects of fast food on their health. In the food industry, where purchasing decisions are made, improving perceived value helps customers have a good time, which raises their level of satisfaction and quality.

Theoretical Framework

The Social Identity Theory can be used to create a theoretical framework for analyzing how fast-food restaurants affect consumers' purchasing and social behavior (SIT). According to this theory, people's purchases from fast-food restaurants may have an impact on their conduct and social interactions while they are around those restaurants (Homans, 1958; Best, 2017). In SIT, people form a sense of social identity as a result of their interactions with others and their consumption patterns. Fast food establishments can use this theory to better understand how it affects customers' social identities and purchasing decisions.

SIT Theory can be used to help restaurant chains better understand how to react to changes in consumers' purchasing behavior. With this knowledge, marketers may develop more effective targeted advertising campaigns and promotions that make use of people's social identities, thought processes, purchasing behaviors, and prior experiences. Also, marketers can determine the most effective marketing strategies by looking at how marketing efforts impact consumer behavior. This can assist fast-food companies in developing more effective marketing strategies and expanding consumer options.

In order to comprehend traveler behavior, purchasing choices, preferences, and relationships with fast-food restaurants, the theoretical framework put forth in this context blends Social Identity Theory (SIT) with the length of stay. The framework also includes the idea of choices, which can change depending on a traveler's relationship with a particular fast-food chain and the length of their stay.

Conclusion. In conclusion, food tourism plays a significant role in travelers' choices and preferences. Food plays a particularly important role in the development of the tourism industry, as it makes up a significant portion of tourism expenditures (Karim & Chi, 2010; Abukhalifeh & Pratt, 2022). Food tourism increasingly represents a place to rise the experience of eating different types of food, influencing travel plans and areas (Hall & Sharples, 2004). Today, tourists differ widely in terms of food taste and demand for food experience, and individuals prefer to eat fast food not only to save time but also for effective experiences developed during their travel time (de Groot, 2010). Food tourism focuses on food as a major attraction, and for many travelers, local food and food experiences are an essential part of their traveling periods.

The duration of a traveler's stay can influence their spatial behavior and the sites they visit. Short-term tourists tend to prioritize main attractions, while long-term tourists have more flexibility and explore a wider range of attractions. This finding suggests that the length of stay is a constraint that impacts travel patterns and preferences.

A significant part of the food service sector is franchise fast food, which is defined by individual franchisees operating under a larger brand's license. Fast food chains can grow quickly and without making sizable investments thanks to franchising, which offers scalability. Models of successful franchise fast food restaurants are McDonald's and Lotteria. For business owners, franchising fast food offers entrepreneurial opportunities on both the domestic and global markets. It gives the franchisor and the franchisee a platform for revenue growth in domestic and international marketing.

In general, it is important for establishments in the food service industry to understand the connection between food tourism, travelers' preferences, and franchise fast food. These observations can guide purchasing behavior with relation to two establishments, and the significance of food at a place, specifically location choices to meet the various demands and preferences of travelers.

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