

Effect of Food Neophobia on the Relationships among Perceived Service Attributes, Brand Trust, Satisfaction and Behavioral Intention of Franchise Snack Bar

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ABSTRACT

This study performed to test the effect of food neophobia on the formulated model on the relationships among perceived service attributes (food, employee, and physical attributes), brand trust, satisfaction and behavioral intention as perceived by franchise snack bar consumers. Total 299 respondents were used for statistical analysis and SPSS 21.0 and AMOS 21.0 program were employed. The findings of current study verified that food attribute among perceived service attributes has positively influence on brand trust and satisfaction, and the employee attribute has only effect on the brand trust. Additionally, the brand trust was critical predictor of satisfaction, but it was not significant antecedent of behavioral intention in context of franchise snack bar restaurant. Furthermore, this study found the moderating effect according to level of food neophobia on the designed hypothesizes, so it has been identified the importance of people's propensity about food neophobia can significantly effect on brand trust and satisfaction in franchise snack bar restaurant. These findings will contribute to provide meaningful suggestion to develop marketing strategic in franchise snack bar business as well as provide the theoretical evidence in the new segmentation.

Keywords: food neophobia, perceived service attributes, brand trust, satisfaction, behavioral intention, franchise snack bar

INTRODUCTION

Modern consumers may face excessive foods and related industries, so it makes consumer better smart by considering various elements when they buy or select any products including foods. The snack bar restaurant industry has been also developed to adapt the fastidious consumers by considering not only taste, price, and amount of foods, but also image of company, environmental elements, convenience and so on (Park, Lee, & Yoo, 2016; Lee, Lee, & Hahm, 2015). Therefore, many companies including franchise snack bar restaurant in foodservice industry keep trying to improve diverse factors according to consider several perceived service attributes to derive positive brand image as well as consumer satisfaction and behavioral intention.

This study is performed to test the relationships among overall service attributes of franchise snack bars and other critical dependent variables such as brand trust, satisfaction, and behavioral intention. To verify the relationships, present

study consider various service factors (food, employee, and physical attributes) perceived by franchise snack bars and identify these factors have an effect on brand trust, satisfaction, and positive intention toward the snack bar restaurants.

In the prior scholars demonstrated the relationships among restaurants' service factors, food related elements, image, customers' satisfaction, and future intention to revisit or recommend (Kim & Oh, 2005; Sulek & Hensley, 2004; Wu & Liang, 2009). For instance, previous study revealed that consumers' behaviors are influenced not only from visible factors such as restaurants' interior like physical environment but also by nonvisible factors such as perceived personal value from employees (Sulek & Hensley, 2004). In addition, other scholar demonstrated that the numerous service attributes including employees service, food, attractiveness, and convenience are significantly related to consumers' satisfaction in restaurant context (Kim & Oh, 2005). Although previous studies reported the significant relationships among the various visible and nonvisible service attributes, but verifying the relationships in

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context of franchise snack bar restaurant is still insufficient. In the other words, general restaurant and franchise snack bar business are different service sector and it needs to evaluate to better comprehend the relationships in diverse service sectors. Furthermore, the foods especially in snack bar restaurants have been estimated as low quality foods to consumers, even though well-organized franchise companies are consistently investigating for the snack bar restaurant business.

Hence, present study conducted to identify the relationships among perceived service attributes (food, employee, and physical attributes) and other variables in context of franchise snack bar restaurant. In this study, specifically, consumers' propensity toward food neophobia can be critical moderator on the formulated model, so it was test the moderating effect to find any impacts on the formated hypothesizes.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Food Neophobia

Food neophobia is generally interpreted as a individual characteristics that people can be characterized according as their tendency to avoid or accept unfamiliar food (Piner & Salvy, 2006). Previous study identified that people with high level of food neophobia rated the taste pleasantness of new foods than people who are lower lever of food neophobia (Arvola et al., 1999; Choe & Cho, 2011). Since food neophobia can impact preferences toward unfamiliar foods (Tuorila et al., 2001), better understanding about food selection along with propensity of food neophobia has been an significant issue for food marketers and developers. Especially, the snack food can be recognized a street food or unsanitary food, and it can directly influence on consumers' food select attribution. Therefore, this study performed the effect of food neophobia's effect on the formulated model by using Food Neophobia Scale developed by Pilner & Hobden (1992) to provide practical implications for franchise snack bar business.

Perceived Service Attributes

Current study has employed three major attributes : 1) food attribute (e.g., amount, color, temperature), 2) service attribute (e.g., kindness of employee, employee appearance), and 3) physical attribute (e.g., interior or exterior, facilities) to access the

perceived service attributes in context of franchise snack bar restaurants

Food Attribute

Visible factors have considered any representative service or products made by company or manufacturers, and it has been regarded as a fundamental element for successful business (Wall & Berry, 2007). Various functional factors of foods such as the decoration and variety, taste of food, freshness, and temperature can be important predictor, which has influence on customer's perceived value, image, and so on. In food-service studies, visible factors were employed as food or food-related elements that can be a crucial clue for successful management in the business (Namkung & Jang, 2007; Wall & Berry, 2007). The functional elements such as food is consistently proved through significant impact on customers' experience, future behaviors (Choi & Jung, 2006; Quan & Wang, 2004).

Service Attribute

Service attributes are closely linked to the service providers (Bitner, 1992; Wall & Berry, 2007). In previous studies, some attributes related to employees are used for accessing general service from the destination. Specifically, previous study found that workers' kindness have positively influence on evaluation of restaurant service and it can derive people's revisit intention (Grandey et al., 2005). In similar vein, restaurant employees can contribute to built positive brand image and sustainable loyalty directly (Noone, 2008). In prior studies, various factors assessed to measure service attribute such as food, employee, environmental elements, internal factor like emotional aspects, conveyence, and so on. Hence, any factors related to humanic clue in foodservice segment are considered as vital antecedents that can affect consumers' perception about brand trust, satisfaction as well as behavioral intention.

Physical Attribute

Physical attribute is visible and touchable factor that can be controlled by person, so it has been used as a significant internal element for successful business (Bitner, 1992). In other words, the consumers enable receive direct impact because the visitors can feel through senses from the physical attribute

(Santos, 2002). In previous research, physical attribute has been regarded as an important predictor (Namasivayam & Mattila, 2007; Suh & Kim, 2011; Choi & Jang, 2006). For instance, physical facility such as music, interior, and scents have a critical impact on visitors final decision in franchise restaurant (Namasivayam & Mattila, 2007). Furthermore, comfortable equipment can be significant predictor of select attributes in franchise Bakery sector (Choi & Jang, 2006). In sum, physical attribute has been estimated as an essential factor and it can be significant antecedent with various dependent variables in context of franchise restaurant.

Brand Trust

Trust has been defined as a belief of certain brand that customers recognized and the belief is an critical element that affects customers' final decision when people purchase or repurchase any brands or service (Chaudhuri & Holbrook, 2001). For example, a consumer was satisfied from a product or service, it contributes to develop positive brand image and it can lead to trust of the brand (Delgado & Munuera, 2000). Therefore, if high brand trust was established through perceived service attribute (s), it is going to satisfy consumer as well as recommend or repurchase the product/service in the future.

Satisfaction

Satisfaction has been used as a vital determinant factor from long-term consumers future behaviors in the various hospitality sector (Chang & Chen, 2008; Mithas et al., 2005; Oliver, 1980). Numerous studies have demonstrated the relationships among the diverse antecedents along with dependent factors to better comprehend consumers' level of satisfaction (Hing, 2013; Kim & Kim, 2016). For instance, Kim & Kim (2016) identified positive relationships among predictors (e.g., visible and nonvisible factors), brand value, and satisfaction. Therefore, current study has been considered the satisfaction as an important dependent variable as well as vital mediator between other predictors and behavioral intention.

Behavioral Intention

Behavioral intention is kind of personal efforts to achieve a desired goal, and it has been identified as a direct antecedent of customer future behavior (Ryu & Han, 2010; Warshaw &

Davis, 1985). Warshaw and Davis (1985) defined behavioral intention as the degree to which a person has formulated a conscious plan to perform or not perform some specified future behavior.

In foodservice contexts, numerous studies shown that behavioral intention is an outcome variables that influenced by other constructs (Jang & Namkung, 2009; Parasuraman, Zeithaml, & Berry, 1985; Oliver, 1980). Therefore, the present study proposes that positive brand trust and satisfaction associates with positive behavioral intention in franchise snack bar restaurants.

METHODOLOGY

Current study distributed total of 350 questionnaires over about two weeks from October 1st to 17th, 2016 in Busan area. From the collected data 51 respondents were not included for the statistical analysing because of unfaithful respondents and unsuitable data through outlier verification method. Total 299 questionnaires were analyzed by SPSS 21.0 and AMOS 21.0. The confirmatory factor analysis and structural equation modeling (SEM) have been employed to verified the formulated hypothesizes along with general statistical analysis including frequency analysis and reliability analysis.

The moderating effect of food neophobia was confirmed by comparing constrained model and unconstrained model. Estimation of the significant differences in Chi-square value between the constrained model and unconstrained model, with one degree of freedom, used the critical value of 3.84 at the 0.05 level of significance (Anderson & Gerbing, 1988). The differences between high level of food neophobia and low level of food neophobia was only with respect to each path's coefficient, so the constrained model sets each of the structural coefficients to be equal between the two groups, but the unconstrained model allows this parameter to vary among groups.

RESULTS

Demographic Information

The demographic results shows that male was 51.8% and female was 48.2%. The average monthly visiting indicates that 34.8% people were the largest group visiting 2 times for a

Table 1. General characteristics of the subjects

Characteristic		n	%
Gender	Male	155	51.8
	Female	144	48.2
Average monthly visit (times)	1	37	12.4
	2	104	34.8
	3~4	84	28.1
	5~6	41	13.7
	Over 7	33	11.0
Companion	Family	11	3.7
	Couple	47	15.7
	Friend	206	68.9
	Colleague	2	0.7
	Alone	32	10.7
	Others	1	0.3
Average payment per visit	Under 3,000	9	3.0
	3,001~5,000	82	27.4
	5,001~10,000	179	59.9
	10,001~20,000	29	9.7
Total		299	100.0

month on average followed by 3~4 times (28.1%), 5~6 times (13.7%). In addition, almost 70% respondents visited the franchise snack bar restaurants with their friends, and around 60% consumers are spending between 5,001~10,000 won followed by 3,001~5,000 won (27.4%) when they visit a franchise snack bar restaurant.

Measurement Model and Discriminant Validity Analysis

1) CFA

To verify the structure of the six variables: food attribute, service attribute, physical attribute, brand trust, satisfaction, and behavioral intentions, present study identified reliability, unidimensionality, and validity of the factors before analyzing the structural model. The scores of Cronbach's alpha confirmed the internal consistency of the constructs on the formulated model and the reliability of the measurement. The results indicated that the ranges of Cronbach's alpha for the constructs (0.797 to 0.932) were acceptable for the level of internal con-

sistency (Nunnally, 1978). The ranges of composite reliabilities (0.795 to 0.912) were also suitable (Fornell & Larcker, 1981). Average variance extracted (AVE) of the variables (0.565 to 0.776) were sufficient according to the suggested level (Fornell & Larcker, 1981).

Discriminant validity was confirmed by comparing the AVE scores with the squared correlation between constructs (Fornell & Larcker, 1981); the range of AVE (0.565 to 0.776) exceeded the range of squared correlations for each pair of constructs (0.168 to 0.533) except the relationship between satisfaction and behavioral intention. Therefore, the two constructs was combined to make constrained model and compared the Chi-square difference the two model. Result found that the Chi-square difference was significant and verified the two constructs' discriminant validity. In addition, confirmatory measurement models identified the reliability of the measurement properties ($\chi^2=370.282$, $p<0.05$, $\chi^2/df=2.128$, Incremental fit index (IFI)=0.960, Tucker Lewis index (TLI)=0.951, Comparative fit index (CFI)=0.960, Goodness-of-fit index (GFI)= 0.890, and Root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA)= 0.062) (Table 2).

2) SEM

The results of structural equation modeling (SEM) validated the formulated model and tested assessment of the hypotheses. The Chi-square statistic for the structural model was 361.676 with 175 degrees of freedom ($p<0.01$; CMIN/DF=2.067; IFI= 0.962; TLI=0.954; CFI=0.962, GFI=0.893, and RMSEA=0.060), so general model fit was acceptable based on previous study reported by Anderson & Gerbing (1988). Table 4 indicates the path coefficients for all hypothesized paths in current model. The results shown that Hypothesis 1 and 2, which assumed that food attribute of the franchise snack bar restaurant would positively influence both brand trust (H1: $\beta=0.317$, $t=4.882$; $p<0.001$) and consumer satisfaction (H2: $\beta=0.345$, $t=4.993$, $p<0.001$) received support. Also, Hypothesis 3, which assumed that service attribute positively influences brand trust received support (H3: $\beta=0.432$, $t=6.991$, $p<0.001$). Likewise, Hypothesis 5, which indicated that physical attribute was critical antecedent of brand trust (H5: $\beta=0.199$, $t=3.615$, $p<0.001$). Furthermore, current study verified that brand trust was significant predictor of satisfaction (H7: $\beta=0.458$, $t=5.867$, $p<0.001$) and the satis-

Table 2. Confirmatory factor analysis and discriminant validity

	FOD	SER	PHY	BTR	SAT	BEI
FOD	0.565 ^a					
SER	0.245	0.700				
PHY	0.168	0.146	0.656			
BTR	0.373	0.442	0.245	0.688		
SAT	0.429	0.298	0.192	0.533	0.774	
BEI	0.475	0.267	0.184	0.433	0.837	0.776

$\chi^2=370.282$, $df=174$, $IFI=0.960$, $TLI=0.951$, $CFI=0.960$, $GFI=0.890$, $RMSEA=0.062$

FOD=Food attribute, SER=Service attribute, PHY=Physical attribute, BTR=Brand trust, SAT=Satisfaction, BEI=Behavioral intention, IFI=Incremental fit index, TLI=Tucker-Lewis index, CFI=Comparative fit index, GFI=Goodness-of-fit index, RMSEA=Root mean square error of approximation. Note: a AVE is on the diagonal. Squared of paired constructs are on the off-diagonal.

Table 3. Structural parameter estimates

Hypothesized path	Coefficient	<i>t</i> -value	Results
Hypothesis 1: Food attribute → Brand trust	0.317	4.882***	Supported
Hypothesis 2: Food attribute → Satisfaction	0.345	4.993***	Supported
Hypothesis 3: Service attribute → Brand trust	0.432	6.991***	Supported
Hypothesis 4: Service attribute → Satisfaction	0.060	0.978	Not supported
Hypothesis 5: Physical attribute → Brand trust	0.199	3.615***	Supported
Hypothesis 6: Physical attribute → Satisfaction	0.056	1.070	Not supported
Hypothesis 7: Brand trust → Satisfaction	0.458	5.867***	Supported
Hypothesis 8: Brand trust → Behavioral intention	-0.045	-0.799	Not supported
Hypothesis 9: Satisfaction → Behavioral intention	0.958	14.472***	Supported

$\chi^2=361.676$, $df=175$, $IFI=0.962$, $TLI=0.954$, $CFI=0.962$, $GFI=0.893$, $RMSEA=0.060$

* $p<0.05$, ** $p<0.01$, *** $p<0.001$.

faction was significant predictor of behavioral intention (H9: $\beta=0.958$, $t=14.472$, $p<0.001$) on the model. However, the relationship between service attribute and satisfaction (H4: $\beta=0.060$, $t=0.978$), physical attribute and satisfaction (H6: $\beta=0.056$, $t=1.070$), and brand trust and behavioral intention (H8: $\beta=-0.045$, $t=-0.799$) were not supported in current study.

These findings show that critical elements of service attributes that can differently influence on brand trust and customer satisfaction in context of franchise snack bar restaurants, and the relationships among brand trust, satisfaction, and behavioral intention need to be identified in various sectors.

Moderating Effect

To prove the influence of perception toward food neophobia on formulated nine paths, chi-square differences has been compared the two models (constrained model versus unconstrained model) with one degree of freedom for each of the three paths' coefficients. The χ^2 score from the unconstrained model was subtracted from the χ^2 score of the constrained model. Table 4 indicates the differences of χ^2 between the unconstrained model and the constrained model on constructs along with the *t*-value of the two different level of food neophobia group: high and low. The results demonstrated that there were moderating effects from two paths for the association between food attribute and brand trust for the difference of χ^2 between the constrained model ($\chi^2=631.933$, $df=176$) and the unconstrained model ($\chi^2=623.951$, $df=175$) was significantly different at $p<0.001$ level ($\Delta\chi^2=7.982$, $df=1$). In addition, the relationship between service attribute and brand trust for the difference of χ^2 between the constrained model ($\chi^2=628.588$, $df=176$) and the unconstrained model ($\chi^2=623.951$, $df=175$) was also significantly different at $p<0.05$ level ($\Delta\chi^2=4.637$, $df=1$).

In addition, the differences of *t*-value identified which group has more significant influence on the relationships. Interes-

Table 4. Moderating effects of level of food neophobia

Hypothesized path	Unconstrained χ^2	Constrained χ^2	<i>t</i> -value		$\Delta\chi^2$ ($\Delta d.f.=1$)
			Low	High	
H1: Food attribute \rightarrow Brand trust	623.951	631.933	5.659***	1.716	7.982**
H2: Food attribute \rightarrow Satisfaction	623.951	625.583	1.813	4.662***	1.632
H3: Service attribute \rightarrow Brand trust	623.951	628.588	3.371***	5.746***	4.637*
H4: Service attribute \rightarrow Satisfaction	623.951	624.547	0.083	1.125	0.596
H5: Physical attribute \rightarrow Brand trust	623.951	625.124	2.002*	3.291***	1.173
H6: Physical attribute \rightarrow Satisfaction	623.951	624.812	1.515	0.215	0.861
H7: Brand trust \rightarrow Satisfaction	623.951	623.988	3.362***	4.700***	0.037
H8: Brand trust \rightarrow Behavioral intention	623.951	625.460	0.429	-1.296	1.509
H9: Satisfaction \rightarrow Behavioral intention	623.951	624.691	8.825***	9.903***	0.740

* $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$.

tingly, current study found that the food attribute of low level of food neophobia group has more significantly influence on satisfaction (high=5.659***, low=1.716), while service attribute of high level of food neophobia group has more significant influence on satisfaction (high=3.371***, low=5.476***).

CONCLUSIONS

Due to the increasing desire for franchise snack bar restaurants along with well-organized system, current study developed based on existing previous studies by formulating a conceptual model to explore the influence of perceived service attributes on brand trust, satisfaction, and behavioral intention. In addition, the people has some different perception about street foods and the major food products of snack bar restaurants have been developed based on the street foods. Hence, present study tested the moderating effect of propensity toward food neophobia on the formulated model by distinguish the respondents as high and low level of food neophobia group. Based on the results, this study contributes several important implications for both academia and franchise snack bar industry.

This study delineates three elements of perceived service attribute: food, service (employee), and physical attribute. Prior researchers related to franchise restaurants just assess the general norm of service attribute, but in this study, measurements of three attributes are more accurate for reflecting the characteristics of various service characteristics. In addition,

this study include brand trust and satisfaction as mediator variables between the perceived service attributes and behavioral intention to better understand visitors of franchise snack bar restaurants. In addition, current study found the moderating effect by level of food neophobia propensity. Based on the demonstration of the moderating effect, current study can be theoretically contribute to develop expended model or theoretical approach by considering the propensity of food neophobia for future study.

This study can suggests some practical implications based on the results. First, this study found that food attribute is the most closely affecting on brand trust and satisfaction, and those results partially supported by previous studies (Joung & Yoon, 2010; Lee et al., 2016; Yang et al., 2013). Therefore, the food attribute can be critical element to develop faithful brand and satisfaction as well. Therefore, the manager or organizers carefully consider the characteristics related to food such as taste, food temperature, and amount of food in snack bar restaurant business. As a result, service attribute and physical attribute have significantly influence on the brand trust in this study, so the restaurateur (s) need to consider the attribute related to employee. To do so, regular service education can help to remind the impotence employees' service. Many restaurants are giving some benefits or incentive for outstanding service employee annually or monthly, so the snack bar restaurateur (s) also consider similar event for their employees. Although the snack bar restaurant was developed based

on street foods, this study found that positive physical attribute can derive positive brand trust. Therefore, the franchise snack bar companies need to invest for improving the facilities in the restaurants, and it will contribute to satisfy consumers as well as positive behavioral intention such as recommendation or revisit. Last, present study found moderating effect of food neophobia on the formulated model (food attribute and brand trust, service attribute and brand trust). Therefore, the restaurateur (s) can increase more advertisements using SNS to reduce repulsion about the menus in snack bar restaurants because the food attribute in low level of food neophobia group has significant influence on brand trust, but there was not significant influence in high level of food neophobia group. Although the attribute related to employee has impact on the brand trust in both high and low level of food neophobia propensity, but consumers who have higher propensity about food neophobia are more sensitive to employees' attitude. Hence, the restaurateur (s) need to concern to improve the employees' overall service quality in snack bar restaurant.

Despite the significant of present study, a few limitations are worthy of note. First, the sample of current study includes only Busan area consumers, so a more comprehensive respondents from various area in South Korea would be a useful endeavor for future study to improve external validity. Second, even though the franchise snack bar restaurant are of significant interest to foodservice business, scant empirical research has addressed the potential behavioral consequences arising from the service quality. To better comprehending the formulated concept among variables, other potential mediators and moderators could be considerations in further studies.

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