# A Study on the Customers' Eating Out Behaviors in Food Consumption Patterns* 

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#### Abstract

This study aims to empirically analyze the differences between groups of customers who prefer delivery food, which is rapidly growing amid the COVID-19 pandemic, and those who prefer the traditional practice of visiting offline restaurants. Based on the eating out lifestyle, participants were divided into three groups: participants who prefer food delivery, those who prefer to visit restaurants, and those who favor both. The comparison of differences between the groups was analyzed. A total of 215 questionnaires were distributed, and reliability and validity were verified with a sample of 201 copies, excluding 14 unreliable respondents. Then, a multivariate analysis of variance was used to compare the groups. The results showed that regarding offline restaurants, the group of customers who prefer to visit restaurants valued their atmosphere, while the customers who prefer delivery food valued the reputation of the restaurant. Regarding delivery-specialized restaurants, the group of customers who prefer delivery placed greater value on coupon events and payment convenience than other groups. The results revealed that the difference between the customers who prefer to visit restaurants and those who prefer delivery food was identified through empirical analysis, which provides strategic implications for catering companies and restaurant industries during COVID-19 in Korea.


Keywords: Delivery Preference, Visiting Preference, Eating-out Motivation, Restaurant Selection Attributes

Major classifications: Restaurant Management, Customer Eating-out behavior, Restaurant Marketing

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## 1. Introduction

Lifestyle is a pattern of spending time and money on living, and is defined as a lifestyle that is represented by the individual's activities, interests, and opinions. Eating lifestyle is the basic needs related to food purchase. It refers to the culture and value throughout the way of eating, and consumption (Park et al., 2009). Lifestyle enables effective market segmentation by analyzing the daily behaviors, activities, attitudes, interests, and opinions of catering consumers, including demographic variables, to capture potential marketing opportunities that have not been discovered in the past (Zhu et al., 2009). Changes in dietary lifestyle can also be seen as changes in individual tendencies. While eating food at home has declined over the past 10 years, the eating out of home has been increasing. Over the next 10 years, it is predicted that inhome dining will continue to decline, and out-of-home dining is expected to increase further (Park \& Na, 2015). The food service industry provides delivery services to keep pace with the lifestyle changes of consumers. Delivery food apps industry are a popular and steadily increasing sector in recent years. The market for food delivery continues to expand due to the increasing number of single-person households who prefer simple consumption behavior and changing consumption platforms. The proportion of customers visiting and eating at restaurants, the traditional form of meals, is gradually decreasing, and more and more customers prefer delivery and packaging orders instead, which is the only way to ensure safety and healthy in the current COVID19 situation (Cha, 2020).
The purpose of this study is to find the difference in consumption behavior of customers who prefer to visit restaurants and customers who prefer delivery food according to the change of eating lifestyle. The purpose of this study is to analyze the differences in consumption behavior in terms of their eating out motives, visiting restaurant selection attributes, and delivery food selection attributes by dividing into a customer group who prefers to visit a restaurant, a customer group who prefers delivery food, and a customer group who prefer both. The analysis results will provide a basis for strategic planning when food service companies and those in the food service industry marketing sector suffering from the COVID19 pandemic conduct customer relationship marketing.

## 2. Theoretical background

### 2.1. Eating out lifestyle changes

Consumers with specific lifestyles may have different characteristics from consumers with other lifestyles, and as consumers' eating out lifestyle changes, their attitudes toward food and services also change (Park et al., 2009). Recently, as single-person households, eating alone, and drinking alone culture have increased, the order-delivery service of food is becoming an important form of food consumption. Moreover, after the COVID19 outbreak, the number of customers visiting traditional restaurants has been decreasing, while the take-out and delivery food markets are on a rapid increase. Due to such an increase in demand, competition to increase consumer satisfaction in areas such as delivery container packaging technology to become competitive among food service companies is increasing, and accordingly, the delivery service market is growing rapidly.

### 2.2. Motive for eating-out

The motivation for eating out comes from satisfying the desire to eat out and gives direction to consumer behavior. Food and restaurant preferences vary depending on the motivation for eating out, and the behavior of restaurant selection attributes changes. Danesi (2012) conducted in-depth interviews with young adults aged 18-28 from two countries, France and Germany, found that when they ate alone, they could have their own time by enjoying, focusing only on food. It is the reason that positive emotions arise because there is no need to worry between personal needs and the needs of others when making menu decisions. Existing researchers on eating out motives generally agree that eating out motives are very complex because they deal with personal and psychological internal states, and they can vary according to culture or environment. The most fundamental cause of eating out motivation is to satisfy the desire to eat out. This is because motives arise in the case of trying to obtain satisfaction through consumption activities, and are also discussed as personal desires made to satisfy consumption needs (Assael, 2001). Steenkamp (1997) argues that the motivation is generated when the consumer seeks to obtain or enjoy satisfaction through consumption activities, and it is a personal desire and impulse that is performed to satisfy consumption needs. When this motive is applied to the food service industry, it can be called a food service motive. The hedonic and entertaining values of food service consumers have a positive effect on the satisfaction and
loyalty of the channel (Kang \& Chong, 2013). Food quality and taste influence customer satisfaction, and there is a positive relationship between food quality, taste and satisfaction (Cha \& Wang, 2020; Namkung, 2010). Based on these previous studies, the following hypothesis is proposed.

## H1: There will be a significant difference in the motivation for eating out between the customer groups.

### 2.3. Importance of restaurant selection attributes

Attributes refer to various tangible and intangible characteristics of products, and products consist of a group of these attributes (Kotler et al., 2017). In addition, the selection attribute can be seen as a fundamental method of analyzing consumer behavior in that it is the source which induces consumers' choice, can identify consumers' behavior, and satisfy the desires and expectations of decision making (Fodness, 1994). Whether a product has a certain level of attributes is closely related to positive consumer behavior such as consumer preference for that product or repurchase intention (Kotler et al., 2017). The selection attribute is a factor that serves as a criterion when consumers choose a restaurant or menu. In choosing a restaurant, it refers to the characteristics that influence purchasing decisions, such as whether eating out consumers prefer low-priced places, places with good menus, or places with good taste (Jin et al, 2014). Cha \& Noh (2020) analyzed the importance of attributes to determine the relationship between the selection attribute and satisfaction when college students select HMR products, and found that brand, safety, and curiosity are important to satisfaction and repurchase intention. Lee et al (2007) argued that food quality is an important factor that customers consider when choosing a restaurant. The selection attribute can be said to be a factor that influences the purchase choice when purchasing a certain product or service (Zikmund, 2014). For customers who prefer visiting restaurant, Kim et al. (1998) studied the difference in the selection attribute according to the customer's eating out motives. As factors that consumers choose, the taste of food, nutritional value, quantity of food, prompt service, variety of menus, place and atmosphere, price, hygiene and cleanliness, etc. were presented. Jin (2000) suggested five factors, taste, price and value, type of food, service, and nutrition as factors that influence the choice of restaurant when customers go eating out. Consumers compare their re-evaluation criteria with perceived store image characteristics and select a specific store when they match each other (Engel \& Blackwell, 1982). Looking at the previous studies on the selection attributes of the delivery food app, usefulness, reliability, and information are proposed as common selection attributes (Cha \& Seo, 2020). The delivery service of catering companies is becoming an important means of consumption by adding convenience to existing catering services as a means to enjoy meals in the space consumers want. Traditional delivery food was limited to Chinese food such as jajangmyeon, pizza, chicken, and jokbal, but the delivery market of restaurants is becoming more advanced and diversified as many restaurants offer differentiated delivery services due to increased consumer demand (Ko, 2014). Hong (2002) analyzed the quality of delivery service as a factor of merchandising, responsiveness, accessibility, and capability, centering on pizza delivery specialty stores, and reported on the positioning of delivery service quality. By referring to the preceding research above, the following hypothesis was presented.

## H2: There will be significant differences in the selection attributes of restaurants between customer groups

### 2.4. Menu selection importance

The menu aims to increase sales and generate high profits by creating new consumers while continuing to maintain consumers through customer satisfaction. It is a style, and the higher the menu quality, the higher the customer satisfaction in terms of evaluation based on consumption experience (Cha \& Seo, 2019). There are various definitions depending on the researchers who studied the menu, but in general, the menu can be defined as an internal control tool and a marketing tool including sales, sales promotion, and advertisement. For all catering businesses, menus are a major management tool and a source of profits, so research using various menu analysis techniques is required (Yoo, 2010). Price can be defined as the amount of money a company pays to acquire a product or use a service, the degree of value or appreciation for the product or service it provides. The price of a menu has a direct impact on the sales revenue and the number of customers, and the most important thing in determining the price is to understand the customer's evaluation (Pavesic, 1989). The eating out consumption trend can be considered to be a new type of consumption propensity that reflects consumers' lifestyles and value judgments according to social changes and trends of the times. The consumer's desire for HMR, which considers taste, nutrition, and convenience, rather than simply eating a meal, is growing (Cha \& Noh, 2020; Kim et al., 2014). The level of health knowledge of consumers has a great influence on the health-related behavior of individuals (Glanz et al, 2008). In the
same context, the same applies to consumers' consideration of healthy eating (Grunert et al., 2010). For example, consumers with a higher understanding of nutritional information tend to actively use the given nutritional information when choosing an actual healthy diet (Burton et al., 1999).
Looking at the preceding studies, the factors influencing menu selection are suggested as food quality, nutrition, taste, price, menu design, and menu selection motivation (Ju, 2016). Taste, quantity, price, organic food, nutrition (Jung \& Cho (2019), or food taste, menu diversity, price, discount system, brand reputation were presented (JeGal et al, 2009). Referring to the study on the importance of menu selection in the preceding study, in this study, price, visual, new menu, cost performance, and healthy food were set as criteria for investigating the attributes that delivery food preferred customers and visiting restaurant preferred customers consider important when selecting a restaurant menu. . Based on the previous researches, the following hypothesis is proposed.

## H3: There will be significant differences in menu selection attributes between customer groups.

## 3. Research method

### 3.1. Sample and survey method

A survey was conducted to prove the hypotheses presented above. The survey was conducted from 2020 December 2, 2020 to 23 using Google Drive. The collected questionnaire was 215 copies, and after excluding 14 unfaithful or incomplete questionnaires, a total of 201 questionnaires were used for variance analysis. This study was conducted with the following analysis method. The following method was used to classify delivery food preferred customers, visiting restaurant preferred customers, and customers do not care. In the questionnaire, the survey respondents were asked to directly fill in the rate of use of delivery and visits, so that more than $50 \%$ of delivery purchases were made as delivery-preferred customers, and more than $50 \%$ of visited restaurant were made as visiting-preferred customers. Other customers were considered middletier customers. First, to verify the reliability and validity of the measured variables, reliability analysis and exploratory factor analysis were performed using SPSS V20, and then unsuitable factors were removed. After that, analysis of variance was performed as a statistical method for hypothesis testing in this study. Table 1 shows the demographic status of survey participants.

Table 1: General characteristics of respondents

|  |  | Delivery preferred | Both preferred | Visiting preferred | Total |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
| Gender | Male | 28 | 20 | 48 | 96 |
|  | Female | 59 | 11 | 35 | 105 |
| Age | Teenager | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 |
|  | 20's | 82 | 29 | 68 | 179 |
|  | 30's | 3 | 2 | 8 | 13 |
|  | Over 40's | 2 | 0 | 6 | 8 |
| Occupation | Student | 54 | 13 | 40 | 107 |
|  | Company worker | 22 | 12 | 20 | 54 |
|  | House wife | 1 | 0 | 3 | 4 |
|  | Misc. | 10 | 6 | 20 | 36 |
| Incomeper month(Thousand. KRW) | < 500 | 38 | 9 | 30 | 77 |
|  | 500~1000 | 16 | 4 | 13 | 33 |
|  | 1001~3000 | 28 | 16 | 25 | 69 |
|  | 3001~5000 | 4 | 2 | 12 | 18 |
|  | 5001~10000 | 1 | 0 | 2 | 3 |
|  | > 10000 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 |
| Eating-out | < 4 | 13 | 6 | 13 | 32 |


| frequency <br> per month | $5 \sim 9$ | 44 | 10 | 43 | 97 |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
|  | $10 \sim 19$ | 20 | 12 | 17 | 49 |
|  | $>20$ | 10 | 3 | 10 | 23 |
| Eating-out <br> expenditure per month <br> (Thousand. KRW) | $<50$ | 10 | 2 | 8 | 20 |
|  | $50 \sim 100$ | 17 | 7 | 12 | 36 |
|  | $101 \sim 200$ | 29 | 12 | 25 | 66 |

## 4. Empirical results

### 4.1. Validation of measurement validity and reliability

First, reliability analysis and validity were conducted for the measurement items of the compositional concept measured in multiple items (Churchill 1979). Factor analysis was conducted to evaluate reliability and validity, and Cronbach's alpha coefficients were examined. Principal component analysis was used for factor extraction, and factors were extracted based on Eigen-Value 1. As the factor rotation method, Varimax rotation was applied. The following shows the results of the exploratory factor analysis, and the Cronbach's alpha coefficient for each item is 0.64 for the hedonistic consumption value measurement item and 0.88 for the practical consumption value measurement item, ensuring internal reliability.

Table 2: Exploratory factor analysis

|  | 1 | 2 |
| :---: | :---: | :---: |
| Uti101 | .935 | .117 |
| Util02 | .932 | .137 |
| Hed01 | .042 | .874 |
| Hed02 | .194 | .831 |
| Variance(\%) : Total variance $81.74 \%$ | 44.58 | 37.16 |
| Cronbach alpha | .88 | .64 |

### 4.2. Hypothesis test result

Table 3 investigates the attributes that delivery-preferred customers and visiting-preferred customers consider important when choosing an offline restaurant. Through the questionnaire, 'How important do you value the following attributes when choosing an offline restaurant?' the investigation was conducted. As a result, in terms of atmosphere and reputation, there were significant differences in the three groups of delivery-preferred customers, visiting-preferred customers, and middle tier customers.

Table 3: Offline restaurant selection attributes of visiting preferred and delivery preferred customer

| Item | Group | Mean | $F$-value | $p$-value |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
| Interior | Delivery Preferred | 4.83 | 0.284 | 0.753 |
|  | Both preferred | 4.74 |  |  |
|  | Visiting Preferred | 4.65 | 3.278 | 0.040 |
|  | Delivery Preferred | 4.75 |  |  |
|  | Both preferred | 4.84 | 0.538 | 0.585 |
|  | Visiting Preferred | 5.29 |  |  |


| Brand | Delivery Preferred | 4.07 | 0.562 | 0.571 |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
|  | Both preferred | 3.90 |  |  |
|  | Visiting Preferred | 3.80 |  |  |
| Service | Delivery Preferred | 6.00 | 1.329 | 0.267 |
|  | Both preferred | 5.84 |  |  |
|  | Visiting Preferred | 5.73 |  |  |
| Reputation | Delivery Preferred | 5.91 | 7.917 | 0.000 |
|  | Both preferred | 4.97 |  |  |
|  | Visiting Preferred | 5.36 |  |  |

Table 4 examines the selection attributes of delivery food specialized restaurant for delivery-preferred customers and visiting-preferred customers. Table 4 reads 'How important do you value the following attributes when choosing a delivery food restaurant? Through the survey, it was investigated how low prices, fast delivery, coupon events, restaurant reliability, payment convenience, and menu diversity affect the importance of selection attributes for delivery food specialized store. As a result, in terms of coupon event and payment convenience, there were significant differences in the three groups.

Table 4: Delivery restaurant selection attributes of visiting preferred and delivery preferred customers

| Item | Group | Mean | $F$-value | $p$-value |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
| Cost-effectiveness | Delivery Preferred | 5.47 | 2.035 | 0.133 |
|  | Both preferred | 5.06 |  |  |
|  | Visiting Preferred | 5.08 |  |  |
| Delivery | Delivery Preferred | 5.34 | 1.507 | 0.224 |
|  | Both preferred | 5.26 |  |  |
|  | Visiting Preferred | 4.99 |  |  |
| Coupon Event | Delivery Preferred | 4.92 | 3.753 | 0.025 |
|  | Both preferred | 4.45 |  |  |
|  | Visiting Preferred | 4.25 |  |  |
| Reliability of webpage | Delivery Preferred | 5.00 | 2.621 | 0.075 |
|  | Both preferred | 4.74 |  |  |
|  | Visiting Preferred | 4.48 |  |  |
| Convenience for payment | Delivery Preferred | 5.68 | 5.027 | 0.007 |
|  | Both preferred | 5.19 |  |  |
|  | Visiting Preferred | 5.19 |  |  |
| Variety of menu | Delivery Preferred | 5.00 | 2.621 | 0.075 |
|  | Both preferred | 4.74 |  |  |
|  | Visiting Preferred | 4.48 |  |  |

Table 5 investigates the attributes that delivery-preferred customers and visiting-preferred customers concern when selecting a restaurant menu. In the survey, "How important are the following attributes when you choose a menu?" It was investigated how important customers think the price, visuals, new menus, cost-effectiveness, and healthy foods that are considered when choosing a menu. As a result, there were no significant values in all items, and there were no significant differences between the three groups of delivery preferences, visiting preferences, and middle tier customers.

Table 5: Menu selection attributes of visiting preferred customers and delivery preferred customers

| Item | Group | Mean | $F$-value | $p$-value |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
| Price | Delivery Preferred | 5.59 | 0.609 | 0.545 |
|  | Both preferred | 5.35 |  |  |


|  | Visiting Preferred | 5.39 |  |  |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
| Visual | Delivery Preferred | 6.28 | 0.691 | 0.502 |
|  | Both preferred | 6.29 |  |  |
|  | Visiting Preferred | 6.46 |  |  |
| New menu | Delivery Preferred | 4.09 | 0.326 | 0.722 |
|  | Both preferred | 3.97 |  |  |
|  | Visiting Preferred | 3.88 |  |  |
| Cost-effectiveness | Delivery Preferred | 5.45 | 0.031 | 0.969 |
|  | Both preferred | 5.39 |  |  |
|  | Visiting Preferred | 5.45 |  |  |
| Healthy menu | Delivery Preferred | 3.98 | 2.705 | 0.069 |
|  | Both preferred | 3.97 |  |  |
|  | Visiting Preferred | 4.51 |  |  |

## 5. Conclusion

Dietary lifestyle means culture and values throughout the diet. The food service industry provides delivery services tailored to the lifestyle of delivery consumers. In line with these eating out trends, this study was conducted to analyze the differences in eating out motives, restaurant selection, menu selection, and order patterns of customers who prefer delivery food and restaurant visits. First, the degree of importance of the customer's eating out motivation among the three groups of delivery-preferred customers, visiting-preferred customers, and middle tier customers was examined. As a result, there was no significant difference between each group regarding the motivation for eating out. Second, it was investigated the attributes that delivery-preferred customers and visiting-preferred customers consider important when choosing an offline restaurant. As a result, there was no significant difference in appearance interior, accessibility, brand, service, etc., but there was a significant difference in atmosphere and reputation. Third, it was investigated the properties that delivery preference customers and visiting preference customers value when choosing menus. As a result, there was no significant difference between each group in menu selection.

## 6. Implications

The three groups of delivery-preferred customers, visiting-preferred customers, and middle tier customers showed significant differences in the atmosphere, reputation when visiting an offline restaurant, while in the coupon events, payment convenience when ordering delivery food. And in terms of their reputation, coupon events when visiting a delivery restaurant, and payment convenience. This is because visiting-preferred customers value the atmosphere of the store more than delivery-preferred customers, and delivery-preferred customers value the store's reputation more than visiting-preferred customers. In addition, since delivery-preferred customers have more experience using delivery apps than visiting-preferred customers, they have more experience in using coupons or paying for delivery apps, so it can be judged that coupon events and payment convenience are more important. This study presents the following implications. First, in a study on the impact of franchise image on corporate reputation and consumer purchasing behavior, Lee et al (2020) proved that what kind of restaurant image and atmosphere creates is an important means of enhancing customer satisfaction for catering managers. These preceding studies have a similarity in that as a result of a study on the restaurant selection attribute between three groups of customers who prefer delivery, visit customers, and middle customers in our study, there are significant differences in the atmosphere and reputation. Second, a study by Cheng \& Koo (2018) found that the usefulness and ease of use of delivery apps significantly positively influenced users' continuous usage in a study of perceived value for delivery apps and the quality of information they provide. In other words, it can be said that users have empirically verified that they intend to continue to use the delivery app because of the advantages of reducing time and effort and being able to easily find the desired information when using the delivery app. The practical implications that can be presented to catering business managers and delivery app developers through the results of this study are as follows. First, as a result of this study, it can be seen that it is more efficient when different marketing is conducted by separating delivery-preferred and visiting-
preferred customers. Customers who prefer delivery need to make the payment environment more convenient and use promotion strategies such as coupon events. Prior research and our study that competition to increase consumer satisfaction in areas such as delivery container packaging technology is increasing further in order to gain competitiveness among food service companies, accordingly the delivery service market is growing rapidly. When it comes to relevance, a new strategy to increase customer satisfaction with a platform called delivery app will also be needed. Second, the three groups showed significant differences in the atmosphere and reputation of the restaurant. For customers who prefer visiting restaurants, it is necessary to conduct marketing to improve the atmosphere, and for customers who prefer delivery, it is necessary to focus on image marketing through word of mouth.
This study compared and analyzed the differences in preferences between delivery-preferred customers, intermediate customers, and visiting-preferred customer groups. However, the subject and timing of the questionnaire have the following limitations, and this is a task that needs to be supplemented in the future. The survey was conducted in a special situation in which the number of customers who prefer to visit significantly decreased and the number of customers who prefer to deliver relatively increased in a situation where the number of customers using delivery rapidly increased due to the COVID 19. Therefore, it was somewhat difficult to confirm the difference between delivery-preferred customers and visitingpreferred customers in the general restaurant market. In future studies, after the end of the COVID 19, a study comparing before and after is considered to be more meaningful.

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