

자녀들의 패스트푸드점 선호에 대한 어머니의 인식 및 견해 연구

Maternal Knowledge and Perceptions of Quick Service Patronage Regarding Children in South Korea

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◀ 목 차 ▶

I . Introduction
II . Methodology
III . Results

IV . Discussion
Reference

< Abstract >

The last half of the twentieth century brought many new opportunities and challenges to the traditional South Korean family. One area of change that challenges the traditional South Korean family is the availability of new food sources, specifically the introduction of commercial restaurants that offer new types of food in untraditional settings. This research investigated the perceptions of South Korean mothers' (n = 104) regarding the patronage of quick service style restaurants by their children through the use of Q sort methodology. The results showed that even though children do influence the decision making process when determining where to eat away from home, Korean mothers still play a very prominent role in planning the family's food consumption. While Western food styles and practices can provide a variety of food selections and service styles, care should be taken not to over utilize the quick service restaurants' in place of traditional foods.

한국의 현대사회는 점차 산업화, 도시화 되어지고 있고 또한 경제가 성장함에 따라 외식산업이 점차 발달되어지면서 패스트푸드가 우리 식생활에서 차지하는 비중 또한 증가하는 추세이다. 이렇게 가족단

위의 외식을 할 때 자녀들의 음식종류 결정권이 매우 크다는 점을 고려하고 14세미만의 어린이가 우리나라 전체인구의 21.8%를 차지하고 있는 점을 볼 때 패스트 푸드 산업에서 어린이들은 매우 중요한 고객이 되어질 수 있고 이러한 어린이들의 좋은 식습관 및 균형 잡힌 영양공급은 성인건강의 기초적인 요소라고 할 수 있겠다. 따라서 자녀들의 패스트푸드 소비에 관한 어머니의 견해를 조사함으로써 어린이들의 패스트푸드 소비를 바람직하게 유도하기 위한 방향을 제시하고 패스트푸드산업을 주도하는 생산자에게 기초자료를 제공하고자 Q-sort methodology로 본 연구를 실시한 결과, 패스트푸드점에서 가족들이 외식할 때 자녀들이 미치는 영향이 상당히 높음을 알 수 있었고 음식에 대한 어린 시절의 경험이 자녀들의 식습관, 기호도 발달, 바람직한 건강식품 선택에 매우 큰 영향을 미치므로 이때의 식품에 대한 올바른 지도가 필요하다고 어머니들은 생각하고 있었으며 패스트푸드점에서 아침식사를 하는 것은 매우 반대하는 견해를 가지고 있는 것으로 나타났다.

주제어(Key Words): 어머니의 견해(perceptions of mothers), 패스트푸드점 선호(patronage of quick service restaurants), Q-sort methodology

I. Introduction

The last half of the twentieth century heralded a significant change in South Korea. Beginning in the 1960, the economy of South Korea experienced unprecedented growth. The standard of living improved significantly and urbanization accelerated with an increase in emigration to cities. The urban population grew to 74% in 1990, up from only 28% in 1960. South Korean's exposure to the influence of Western science, technology and culture played an influential role in the country's transition to a modern industrialized society (Park & Cho, 1995).

These changes have brought many new opportunities and challenges to the traditional South Korean family. One area of change is the availability of new food sources, specifically the introduction of commercial restaurants that offer new types of food in nontraditional settings. This research seeks to investigate the perceptions of South Korean mothers regarding the patronage of quick service style restaurants by their children. An abbreviated background of South Korean family and cultural history will help to provide the basis

for this study.

1. Family Structure

In spite of recent changes, traditional family culture and roles are still evident. The ethics and values practiced in the Confucian period (1392-1910) are still reflected in family practices. In this system, authority rests with the male head of the household and the wife serves her husband and family. Research in 1990 revealed that the traditional concept of male superiority is still present, but also found that the social position of women has improved and their participation in social life has increased. Women also bear sole responsibility for rearing the children as the primary care giver and provider of food. (Park & Cho, 1995; Lee, et al, 1999). South Korean mothers more than fathers feel more responsibility and pressure to be good parents. Mothers are perceived to have a greater responsibility than fathers do for their child's well being and outcome. Even though wives hold jobs, they think that they have to take care of their children by themselves ("Korean Institute of Family Counseling & Education", 2000).

Wives have discretion over purchases related to children as well as the purchase of small household appliances, food and clothing. Husbands make decisions on employment for themselves and their wives, and also for the purchase of large-scale household appliances. Other financial decisions are shared by both husband and wife (Cho & Shin, 1996; Lee, et al, 1999).

2. Research Studies

A review of literature on South Korean children and food consumption reveals very little research in regard to mothers' perceptions regarding the patronage quick service restaurant's by their children, and only limited research in regard to commercial food service and children's influence on consumption by families. The majority of past research has focused on school food service and cultural practices of families.

In a 1997 survey of South Korea 11- and 12-year-old elementary school children, Dong investigated the frequency of eating out. Results showed that 56.9% of respondents ate out with their friends more than once a week at local snack shops. Snack shops are local restaurants which typically sell inexpensive menu items. Forty two percent of the children ate out with family members once a month, indicating that elementary children ate out with their friends more frequently than with their families. Respondents reported going to snack shops (29.5%), hamburger restaurants (23.9%) and bakeries (12.7%) when they ate out with friends. Yoo (1996), in a study of children and school food service, found that Korean children wanted more hot items and more western style foods. Another

study observed the effect of school lunch programs on the dietary habits and food preferences of elementary school children. Hamburgers were one of the top three choices as a main dish at lunch (Bak et al, 1996).

Lee (1996) also investigated the dietary habits and food preferences of elementary school children, and found that their dietary behavior was influenced by the mother since the mother is the primary provider of her family's menus and meals. A survey by Chung (1982) asked mothers of 6 to 7 year old elementary students about their children's dietary habits. Results indicated that mothers who were overprotective of their children lead to prejudice toward foods. The mothers also indicated lack of nutrition knowledge and the lack of time for meal preparation as major reasons that they failed to help their children form good dietary habits.

3. Commercial Food Service Industry

South Korea has recently experienced tremendous growth in the commercial food service industry, especially in quick service family style dining restaurants. Government statistics say that the number of restaurant increased from 41,193 in 1992 to 635,497(National statistical office, 2003).

The quick service industry in Korea began with the opening of the Korean owned Lotteria restaurant in 1979. This new concept was soon reinforced by the introduction of KFC (1984), Pizza Hut (1985), McDonalds (1988), Domino Pizza (1989) and Hardees (1990), illustrating the steady growth of western companies choosing to enter the Korean market ("Foreign enterprises," 1998).

The rapid growth of the commercial food

service industry, and especially the quick service segment, reflects the changing economy in South Korea. Economically, the average Korean family is enjoying a more prosperous life style, and in turn is spending more on eating out. Government statistics indicate that the average share of urban household spending on eating out increased from 7.6% in 1992 to 11.6% in 2002 (National statistical office, 2003). Increasing two-income families and the national income, change eating habits are factors contributing to Koreans eating out much more frequently (Im, 2000).

As the commercial food service industry increases in South Korea, the younger generation's preference for western foods is also increasing. According to Kim (1991), quick service restaurant lovers were primarily young people with rich parents, females, city dwellers and convenience pursuers. When quizzed about their favorite foods, a class of fifth graders named pizza, hamburgers and fried chicken (Ortiz, 1996). As they adopt western styles and products, children will be in a position to influence their family's dining habits toward the prevalently western quick service restaurants. Chun (1994) noted statistics from the YMCA, which found that one of every five Korean youngsters ate fast food once a week.

Population statistics are fundamental when looking at the growth of the restaurant industry in South Korea. The population of South Korea is 47,925,318, of which 20.28% are children 14 years old or younger (National Statistical Office, 2003). Since nearly one forth of the population is under 14 years of age, this age segment is expected to be a primary customer base for quick service restaurants.

In the United States, children are a key

marketing segment targeted by companies. According to McNeal (1992), over \$1 billion a year is spent on marketing to children, and these expenditures are backed by millions more invested in marketing research. In a Roper Poll conducted for USA Weekend, 78% of parents said their children influence where they go for fast food. Some 1.7 million American children under age 6 eat at quick service restaurants each day (Jacobsen & Maxwell, 1994). According to Reynolds and Kennon (1993), families are eating out more, especially they're eating out more at quick service restaurants. Murphy (1993) stated that young families (those with children younger than 12) indicate that when they eat out, the choice is almost always fast food.

Will South Korean children continue to mimic American children in the selection and patronage of fast food? How do South Korean mothers feel about fast food? The purpose of this study was to identify the effect of demographic factors on maternal perceptions of fast food consumption by their children.

II. Methodology

1. Survey Sample

A convenience sample was obtained from mothers with children age 12 and under who attended educational facilities, church groups, and neighborhood associations. All participants in the survey were female, since Korean women are primary care givers for their children (Park & Cho, 1995; Cho & Shin, 1996) and therefore most qualified to complete a survey regarding their

children's eating preference and habits. As noted by Cho & Shin (1996) in a review of family research and theory in South Korea, most research used the term "parents", but the information came predominantly from mothers.

2. Development of the Instrument

The instrument design was patterned after a survey developed by Reynolds and Kennon (Reynolds et. al, 1998) in their research on the parents' perceptions of fastfood consumption by children in the United States. The survey was modified to reflect typical Korean survey methods and terminology. A cover letter explaining the survey and inviting respondents to participate on a voluntary basis was included.

A two-part Q-sort instrument was developed and administered to Korean mothers to determine maternal reasons for quick service patronage, maternal responsibility for providing healthy food choices for children, and children's influence on fast food selection. Part I contained questions designed to ascertain demographic and background characteristics of respondents. It also contained questions asking the mother to list what amenities for children were missing from quick service restaurants. The survey also contained a section asking how influential their children were in deciding what type of restaurant the family would patronage. Part II consisted of a Q-sort with 44 perception statement cards. Q methodology is a way of rank-ordering objects such as items, questions, stimuli, or indicators, and then assigning numbers to subsets of these objects for analytic purposes (in this instance, 44 statements were utilized). The participants were instructed to

place a specific number of statements shown separately on cards in seven stacks (A-G). The entire ranking made up a normal distribution. The individuals were asked to describe themselves according to the criteria, "What is my point of view?" The stacks were then intercorrelated and the "principle analysis focused on the correlation among persons and on factor or cluster analysis" (Kerlinger, 1973). Since only the extreme responses were statistically significant, the research focused on those results.

3. Survey Sample and Data Collection

A field representative living in Seoul, South Korea collected the data in that city for three months. The field representative was trained in specific procedures in survey dissemination and collection. Survey participants were asked to complete the survey; participation was voluntary. A total of 104 samples were collected and analyzed.

4. Data Analysis

All data were analyzed using SAS for Windows Release 6.12. Demographics were analyzed by frequencies and percentages. Chi-square test was used to determine the significance of each demographic value in family dining practices. Analysis of variance was used to identify the significant behavior of consumers by demographic factors.

III. Results

Most of the respondents (86%) were between 31

and 40 years of age (See Table 1). Sixty nine percent of participants indicated having completed college and another 16% reported having a graduate degree. Fewer than half (45%) of participants reported that they had a job. The respondents were well educated in comparison to the overall rate for South Korean women. Over 85% of respondents from Seoul had college degrees compared to 14.4% of all females in South Korea (National Statistical Office, 2001). After converting Korean Won to U.S. dollars, 27% of participants indicated their yearly income was between \$25,221 and \$33,628, and 26% reported income between \$16,814 and \$25,221. The currency conversion was based on an average 1999

exchange rate of 1189.48 won per U.S. dollar (Ministry of Finance & Economy, 2000). The majority of participants (77%) reported having two children, and 17% of respondents indicated they had only one child.

Chi-square test was used to determine the significance of each demographic factor (See Table 2). In reviewing perception statements selected for Stack A ("most like my point of view"), the highest-ranking statement chosen by respondents was "My child's early experience with food and eating are important in the development of his/her food preferences" (31%). "It is important for my children to learn to identify healthy choices" was

<Table 1> Demographic Attributes of Respondents

(N = 107)*

	N	%
Age		
30 years and younger	4	3.7
31 - 35 years	44	41.1
36 - 40 years	48	44.9
41 years and older	11	10.3
Highest level of education		
Completed high school	8	7.5
Some college	7	6.6
Completed college	74	69.8
Graduate degree	17	16.0
Employed		
Yes	45	45.9
No	53	54.1
Yearly income (won)		
Under 1,000,000 won (under \$8407.60)	3	2.9
1,000,000 - 2,000,000 won (\$8,407.60-\$16,814.07)	7	6.8
2,000,000 - 3,000,000 won (\$16,814.07-\$25,221.11)	27	26.2
3,000,000 - 4,000,000 won (\$25,221.11-\$33,628.14)	28	27.2
4,000,000 - 5,000,000 won (\$33,628.14-\$42,035.18)	23	22.3
Above 5,000,000 won (above \$42,035.18)	15	14.6
Number of children		
One	18	16.8
Two	82	76.86
Three	7	6.5

* Responses for each characteristic may not total 107 due to missing responses on some questions.

<Table 2> Comparison of "point of view" Indicators of Family Dining Practices by Parents

Perception Statements	%	Influenced by	Chi-Square Statistic
Most like my point of view			
<i>My child's early experience with food and eating are important in the development of his/her food preferences</i>	30.8	# of Children	(8, N = 104) = 15.946*
		Respondent's age	(18, N = 104) = 30.428*
<i>It is important for my children to learn to identify healthy choices</i>	30.2	Respondent's age	(15, N = 104) = 23.926**
Most unlike my point of view			
<i>I enjoy eating at fastfood restaurants that serve breakfast</i>	38.5	Respondent's age	(18, N = 104) = 36.873**
<i>I like to eat at fastfood restaurants because I am concerned about my child's health</i>	30.8	Respondent's age	(12, N = 104) = 24.118*
		# of Children	(8, N = 104) = 15.946*

P ≤ 0.05; * P ≤ 0.01

the next highest-ranking statement (30%).

One statement dominated the selection in Stack G placement ("Most unlike my point of view"). "I enjoy eating at fast food restaurants that serve breakfast" was most frequently selected for this stack (39%). The next most frequent selection for "Most unlike my point of view" was "I like to eat at fast food restaurants because I am concerned about my child's health" (31%).

When responding to the statement "most like my point of view", two demographic factors had a significant effect on the parents' perception: the number of children and the respondent's age. The 31-35 year old age group was significantly different in their responses than respondents in other age groups. Proportionately, the 31-35 year old age group (39.53%) and mothers with one child (41.18%) tended to agree with the perception statement, "My child's early experience with food and eating are important in the development of his/her food preferences", more than respondents in other age categories. And respondents with two

children were significantly different than respondents with one or three children. Respondents with two children (30.86%) tended to agree more frequently with the perception statement, "It is important for my children to learn to identify healthy choices".

These same two demographic factors (respondent's age and number of children) also had a significant effect on parents' choice of what was most unlike their point of view. The 31-35 year old age group was again significantly different in their responses than other age groups. The 31-35 year old age group (52.38%) tended to disagree with the perception statement, "I enjoy eating at fast food restaurants that serve breakfast". The 36-40 year old age group (36.96%) and respondents with two children (32.91%) tended to disagree with the perception statement, "I like to eat at fast food restaurants because I am concerned about my child's health".

Participants identified how influential their children were in the decision making process

<Table 3> Influence of Korean Children on Families' Restaurant Patronage

Variables	Mean* \pm Standard Deviation
Children's influence in deciding to go to a quick service restaurant	4.36 \pm 1.02
Children's influence in deciding to have home delivery service	3.89 \pm 1.18
Children's influence in deciding to go to a white table cloth restaurant	2.75 \pm 1.33
Children's influence in deciding to go to a Korean food restaurant	2.65 \pm 1.30

* 1 = not influential to 5 = very influential

<Table 4> List of Missing Amenities Viewed as Important in Accommodating Children at Quick Service Restaurants

	N	%
Playground	39	33.62
Menu development (increase # of item, taste)	31	26.72
Improve sanitation in facility	14	12.07
Provide utensils for children	14	12.07
Provide chair for infants (high chairs)	12	10.34
Activity packets (pen, paper and puzzle)	3	2.59
Improve quality of food	2	1.72
Offer of beverage refill	1	0.86

regarding the family eating out. Given a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 indicated that the children did not influence the decision, and 5 meant they were very influential in the decision of where the family would eat, results indicated that the children were most influential in the family's decision to eat at quick service restaurants (mean = 4.36) (see Table 3). The next category in which Korean children were most influential was home delivery of food (mean = 3.89). Typical home delivery service in Seoul includes pizza, fried chicken and Chinese food.

Korean mothers were asked what amenities were currently missing from restaurants which would enhance the accommodation for children (see Table 4). The lack of a playground was identified by 26.7% of the mothers as the most missed amenity. This was followed by menu development, which included an increase in the number of items for children and an improvement in the taste of foods targeted at children.

IV. Discussion

South Korea is a society in transition, heavily influenced by Western practices and ideas. The completion of the 1988 Seoul Olympics found Korea embracing many aspects of Western food culture. In Seoul, quick service restaurants have attracted hordes of young Korean customers. In Korean homes, foreign snack foods and soft drinks share shelves with traditional rice and noodles ("Food Culture", 1996).

What effect will fast food have on South Koreans, particularly young children who are exposed to the advertising and increased availability by quick service restaurants? Korean mothers in this survey responded that their children were most influential in the family's decision to eat at quick service restaurants. Alternatively Korean mothers responded that their child's early experience with food was important

in the development of his/her food preferences and that it was important for their children to learn to identify healthy food choices. Additionally they did not want to eat breakfast at fast food restaurants and also they disagreed with the statement "I like to eat at fast food restaurants because I am concerned about my child's health".

Even though children do influence the decision making process when determining where to eat away from home, Korean mothers are still very prominent in planning the family's food consumption. While Western food types and practices can provide a new variety of food selections and service styles, care should be taken not to over-utilize fast food. Future studies on nutrient content and daily intake of calories, especially fat calories, and calories consumed away from home, would be advised.

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- 、 (2003년 9월 6일 접수, 2004년 3월 5일 채택)