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Intention to purchase wellbeing food among Korean consumers: An application of the Theory of Planned Behavior

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ARTICLE INFO

Keywords:
Well-being
Yak-sun food
Theory of Planned Behavior
South Korea

ABSTRACT

Studies on consumers’ purchase intentions have been one of the focuses in academia; however, the complex decision-making process in terms of purchase intentions on well-being foods have not been well researched. This study applied the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) model using its core constructs to predict consumers’ purchase intentions of well-being food, namely Yak-sun. Questionnaires were gathered using a convenient sampling method for those who have experienced Yak-sun food in September of 2014. A total of 269 responses were used for data analysis. The results of the study aligned with past studies that supported the applicability of the TPB model. All constructs including attitude, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control were found to have made a significant contribution to the prediction of intention to purchase Yak-sun food among Korean consumers. Perceived behavioral control showed the strongest influence on the behavioral intention of purchasing Yak-sun food. Based on the results, theoretical and practical implications were suggested.

1. Introduction

Over the past few years, as diseases such as non-communicable diseases (NCD), Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS), African Swine Fever (ASF) and Mad Cow Disease (MCD) spread, consumers became more concerned about their health. These phenomena served as a catalyst for people to have healthy eating habits, which led to greater interest in wellbeing (Strong, Mathers, Epping-Jordan, & Beaglehole, 2006).

The term Wellbeing is a broad concept lacking a common definition. However, it seems that it mostly relates with health, food, positive emotions, calmness and satisfaction with life. It is worth noting that among the elements involved in wellbeing, food improves people’s perceived well-being (Ares, de Salamando, Giménez, & Deliza’s, 2014, 2015). Food in the context of wellbeing, it generally means food that has health functions (Kim, 2009); food with low cholesterol and low fat; also balanced in nutrition (Kim, 2002); is natural and organic food (Apao-laza, Hartmann, D’Souza, & López, 2018). Along with wellbeing trends, research has attempted to understand the role of food in wellbeing. Kapsak, Rahavi, Child, and White (2011) emphasized functional foods as a type of medicinal food. Similarly, in South Korea, Yak-sun is a well-being food and can be defined as a combination of the word “medicine” and the “food” which is meant to prevent disease and keep the body healthy by being cooked according to the recipes of Chinese oriental medicine. Simply put, Yak-sun is a food made by adding herbal ingredients to general food ingredients and is commonly known as a health-enhancing food. The term “Yak-sun” was first used in China and is a concept formed in the course of medical development that has become the philosophy of diet in South Korea (Park & Kim, 2003). Since it was introduced, Korean consumers visit restaurants and eat Yak-sun food as a way to protect their health.

As interest in and the importance of food has increased, research on Yak-sun has received more attention in the literature, especially in South Korea. According to Cha and Park (2003), in China, the home of Oriental traditional medicine, there is a Yak-sun pharmacy where doctors prescribe Yak-sun food after diagnosis which is becoming a popular tourist attraction for Asians as well as Westerners. Seo and Yoo (2011) examined the impact of restaurant employee’s ability to explain the Yak-sun food menu on customers’ perceived value and satisfaction. They indicated that marketing strategies are required to increase the value of Yak-sun food for the customers who visit Yak-sun restaurants. Understanding the relationship between food and well-being can contribute to a better...
understanding of how people’s eating patterns and consumption are made. Research on this has recently begun to draw attention from academia, but research on food, which plays an important role in the trend of well-being, is insufficient. Especially, empirical studies on the relationship of Yak-sun food as well-being food and consumer purchase intention have been limited. Thus, the model of the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) proven to successfully predict behavioral intention of individuals was applied in the current study as a framework in order to predict consumers’ purchase intention of Yak-sun food. This research is significant because the current study can demonstrate that psychological theories such as TPB can be applied to consumer dining behaviors. Beyond that, the current study aims to suggest marketing strategies for stimulating Yak-sun food consumption by promoting the importance of wellbeing food in the food and beverage industry and providing a rational for consumers to consume Yak-sun food more effectively.

2. Wellbeing food and Yak-sun

This study focuses on Korean consumers’ behavioral intentions towards Yak-sun, a well-being food that represents South Korea. The medicinal diet, Yak-sun, uses state-recognized edible ingredients that are based on theories of oriental medicine (Park & Kim, 2003). The importance of Yak-sun has long been recognized and applied for the purpose of control of disease symptoms and signs. However, restaurants serving Yak-sun food in South Korea are focused on improving stamina. Interests in Yak-sun food are also evident in the academic literature (Hwang & Lee, 2014; Lim, 2010; Shin, Lee, & Park, 2013). In 2010, Lim et al. examined the perception and the possibility of Korean foods and Yak-sun to be global foods among foreigners living in South Korea. The results revealed that “Korean dining culture” and “comprehensive menus” are the main components that could contribute to make Korean foods as global foods. Respondents in their study believed that Yak-sun food is an oriental medicinal food, which helps to improve health conditions and prevent disease. Among the respondents, Americans and Europeans revealed the highest interest in the concept of Yak-sun. In the study of Lee and Min (2009), respondents showed positive attitudes toward Yak-sun food in terms of efficacy, taste and nutrition. In the same vein, according to Shin et al. (2013), the main reason of respondents for choosing a Yak-sun food when eating out at restaurants was for health improvement. Participants in their study also highly agreed that Yak-sun food is nutritious with the combination of oriental medicinal herbs which have natural ingredients for the treatment of disease. Hwang and Lee (2014) emphasized the role of attributes (e.g. nutrition, professionalism, and service) in choosing Yak-sun food menus at a restaurant and the results indicated that service attribute significantly influenced on the satisfaction of customers. With the growing awareness of well-being, Yak-sun has received remarkable attention in practice and among academics in South Korea, but it has not yet received global attention as it is made uniquely using herbal medicines.

3. Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) and Yak-sun food

The Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) hypothesizes that behavior can be predicted by intention and that people are prone to behave a particular way if they think that certain behaviors will generate particular outcomes that align with values. The Theory of Planned Behavior consists of constructs such as attitude, subjective norms and perceived behavioral control which guide human behavior (Ajzen, 1991). TPB was first introduced by Ajzen, 1985 with beliefs constructs and other constructs such as attitude, subjective norms and perceived behavioral control. In 1991, Ajzen introduced a modified model of the TPB without the beliefs constructs, and measured the relationships among attitude, subjective norm, perceived behavioral control and intention in the model. Since then such a modified TPB model has been applied widely in previous studies in various settings (Al-Swidi, Huque, Hafeez, & Shariff, 2014; Alam & Sayuti, 2011; Fila & Smith, 2006; Kumar & Smith, 2018). Attitude is a way of feeling or thinking developed in a reliable way about things or products, which can be positive or negative. People look for specific groups when developing criteria for judgment. A group or individuals who served as a reference group might serve as an influence for a person’s beliefs, attitudes, and intentions due to a person conforming to preferences of a group (Moutinho, 1987). In order to measure a subjective norm, respondents can be asked to rate the degree to which an important person’s approval or disapproval would influence a given behavior. It is also determined by the social pressure recognized by others to act in a certain way and their motivation to follow the views of those people (Ajzen & Fishbein, 1980). Different kinds of influential groups can be identified by their ability to contact different groups (Schiffman & Kamuk, 1983). Subjective norms are social in nature because whether a person performs an act is on the basis of the opinions of those significant to him/her, which is also influenced by perceptions of social pressure to act in a particular way (Hee, 2000). The salient referents for purchasing well-being Yak-sun elicited in this study are friends, family members, and colleagues.

Perceived behavioral control describes the ease or difficulty an individual believes will result from performing a specific behavior. There are two notions to explain the relationship between perceived behavioral control and intended behavior. First, perceived behavioral control will cause an increase in behavior intention and increase the probability of the action to be performed. Second, perceived behavioral control will directly affect behavior to the extent that perceived control reflects actual control (Armitage & Conner, 2001). Behavioral intention is defined as an individual’s expected or planned future action (Swan, 1981). According to Fishbein and Ajzen (1975), behavioral intention represents an individual’s expectation of a given action in a particular environment and can be used as a possibility of action. A broad range of studies have used the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) in predicting intentions and human behavior indicating that this theory has proven useful in predicting human behavior and intention especially in the field of travel destination choices and food choices especially in the context of wellbeing food choices.

Kumar and Smith (2018) found that variables such as concern for local economies, concern for the environment and health consciousness were found to be significant predictors of attitude towards purchasing local food. Attitude toward local food and subjective norms were also found to influence significantly on purchasing local food. Sparks, Conner, James, Shepherd, and Povey (2001) sought to understand food choice behavior focusing on chocolate and meat consumption of customers living in England by applying TPB. In their study, attitudes as well as subjective norms were found to be strong predictors of behavioral intentions for chocolate and meat consumption. According to Kassem and Lee (2004), attitude, subjective norm, and perceived behavioral control were found to significantly influence on behavioral intention to drink soft drinks. Thus, they suggested that parents or teachers should encourage adolescents to consume other types of healthy drinks. Similarly, Murnaghan et al. (2010) confirmed a significant relationship between attitude, subjective norms and perceived behavioral control to predict consumers’ intention in consuming fruit and vegetables. Alam and Sayuti (2011) applied TPB to examine consumers’ purchase intention of halal food in the case of Malaysia. The study indicated that attitude, social norm, and PBC were all significant to predict Malaysians’ purchasing intention of halal food. Similarly, Cook, Kerr, and Moore (2002) indicated that self-identity, subjective norm, perceived behavioral control, and attitude all had significant relationships with purchasing intention with genetically modified (GM) food. Thus, it is hypothesized that:

H1. Positive attitude towards Yak-sun food will positively influence intention to purchase Yak-sun food.
H2. Subjective norm will positively influence intention to purchase Yak-sun food.
H3. Perceived behavioral control will positively influence intention to purchase Yak-sun food.
3.1. Methodology

3.1.1. Data collection

Koreans who have experienced Yak-sun food from September 3 to September 28, 2014 were contacted as a sample using a convenient sampling method. The reason why convenience sampling was used in this study is that Yak-sun food is a traditional Korean food, so it is not easily accessible to people everywhere. Therefore, the researcher selected two representative Yak-sun restaurants in Busan, South Korea, and surveyed the customers who came out of the restaurant after eating the food. The researcher explained the purpose of the study and the contents of the questionnaire to respondents. Cronbach’s alpha was also checked for the internal consistency of the construct. Since the variables measured in this study were drawn from existing scales, Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) with maximum likelihood estimation was run to evaluate reliability and validity. Subsequently, Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) using AMOS 24 was applied to validate the research model and test hypotheses.

3.1.2. Questionnaire development

All items measuring the variables in this current research were based on the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) (Ajzen, 1991). The survey contained questions on the likely outcomes of choosing Yak-sun food (attitude); individuals whose views might affect respondents choosing Yak-sun food (subjective norm); factors that could facilitate or hinder respondents’ choice of Yak-sun food (perceived behavioral control); and likelihood of choosing Yak-sun food (behavioral intention). The questionnaire, which was originally developed in English was translated into Korean in order to survey Korean consumers. A group of 80 Korean customers who had experienced having Yak-sun food were invited for a pilot study. The Cronbach’s Alpha which indicates internal consistency of the constructs of the pilot questionnaire ranged from 0.88 to 0.96, above the satisfactory level of 0.70 (Nunnally & Bernstein, 1994).

3.1.3. Measurement of items

The questionnaire primary consisted of three sections. The first section comprised questions in terms of behavioral attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral controls and behavioral intention to purchase Yak-sun food.

**Attitude:** Three items of behavioral attitudes (e.g. “Purchasing Yak-sun food is pleasurable”) drawn from previous research (Ajzen, 2006; Lam & Hsu, 2006) were measured on a five-point Likert scale (strongly disagree = 1, strongly agree = 5).

**Subjective norms:** Three statements (e.g. “My acquaintances under stand me choosing Yak-sun food as a wellbeing food.”) drawn from previous research (Ajzen, 2006; Lam & Hsu, 2006) were used to measure subjective norms on a five-point Likert scale (strongly disagree = 1, strongly agree = 5).

**Perceived behavioral control:** Three statements (e.g. “I can easily eat Yak-sun food whenever I want”) drawn from previous research (Ajzen, 2006; Lam & Hsu, 2006) were used on a five-point Likert scale (strongly disagree = 1, strongly agree = 5) to measure perceived behavioral control.

**Behavioral intention:** Three statements (e.g., “I will make an effort to purchase more Yak-sun food”) drawn from previous research (Ajzen, 2006; Lam & Hsu, 2006; Zeithaml, Berry, & Parasuraman, 1996) were measured on a five-point Likert scale (strongly disagree = 1, strongly agree = 5) to measure the behavioral intention of choosing Yak-sun food at a restaurant. The second section was comprised of six items asking demographic characteristics, while three general items on Yak-sun food purchase were described in the third section. All of measurement items are illustrated in the Appendix.

3.2. Data analysis

The Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) was utilized to analyze data. A frequency distribution of the respondents was used in order to identify general characteristics of the respondents and demographics. Cronbach’s alpha was also checked for the internal consistency of the construct. Since the variables measured in this study were drawn from existing scales, Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) with maximum likelihood estimation was run to evaluate reliability and validity. Subsequently, Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) using AMOS 24 was applied to validate the research model and test hypotheses.

4. Results

4.1. Profile of the respondents

Table 1 shows general demographic information of respondents. The majority of respondents were female (88.1%) and were married (84.0%) with the average age being 46. Over 23% of respondents were white

![Table 1](image-url)
4

Table 3
Convergent factor analysis of Yak-sun food purchase intention.

| Factor                | Measured Variable               | Factor Loading | S.E    | t-value | CR    | AVE   |
|----------------------|--------------------------------|----------------|--------|---------|-------|-------|
| Attitude toward the behavior | pleasurable                     | 0.832          | –      | –       | 0.928 | 0.887 | 0.724 |
|                       | favorable                        | 0.896          | 0.061  | 17.235  |       |       |
|                       | enjoyable                        | 0.823          | 0.061  | 15.861  |       |       |
| Subjective Norm       | understand choosing Yak-sun      | 0.588          | –      | 0.915   | 0.863 | 0.678 |
|                       | should eat Yak-sun               | 0.953          | 0.158  | 10.656  |       |       |
|                       | approve eating Yak-sun           | 0.883          | 0.148  | 10.593  |       |       |
| Perceived Behavioral Control | easily eat Yak-sun              | 0.844          | –      | 0.890   | 0.863 | 0.686 |
|                       | Purchasing yak-sun is up to me   | 0.922          | 0.062  | 16.603  |       |       |
|                       | confident that I can purchase yak-sun | 0.705       | 0.060  | 13.156  |       |       |
| Behavioral Intention  | will make an effort              | 0.852          | –      | 0.952   | 0.920 | 0.799 |
|                       | intend to purchase               | 0.925          | 0.047  | 20.268  |       |       |
|                       | want to purchase                 | 0.903          | 0.050  | 19.741  |       |       |

Note. 1. AB: Attitude toward the Behavior, SN: Subjective Norm, PBC: Perceived Behavioral Control, BI: Behavioral Intention.
2. The bold diagonal elements are the square root of the AVE.
3. Below the diagonal line is the correlation value between the constructions, and () is the correlation coefficient between the constructions.

collar employees, 29.4% of respondents were self-employed. Regarding household income, over 31% of respondents fell within the categories of $2000–$2999 per month (31.6%). The highest education level of respondents was university (32.0%), high school (33.1%), and college (27.9%) levels of education. Table 2 shows the overall characteristics of the respondents related to purchasing Yak-sun food. The purpose of visiting a restaurant of respondents was for ‘family gathering’ (37.2%), ‘eating out’ (29.0%), ‘to meet friends’ (21.9%), ‘for business’ (7.8%), and ‘for events’ (4.1%). Slightly less than half of respondents purchased Yak-sun food with friends (45%), others purchased it with their spouse (23.0%), or their parents (13.0%). In terms of expenditure, 36.1% of respondents spent $20–$29 individually when they visited a Yak-sun food restaurant and 29.4% of respondents spent $10–$19.

4.2. Confirmatory factor analysis and reliability test

In order to establish convergent and discriminant validity of the constructs and to measure the measurement model fit, a Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) using AMOS was undertaken as the results shown in Table 3. The estimate of Cronbach’s alpha ranged from 0.863 to 0.920, with the internal consistency level of each structure showing satisfactory levels. To be more specific, the Cronbach’s alpha for Attitude toward buying Yak-sun food was 0.887, Subjective Norm was 0.863, Perceived Behavioral Control was 0.863, and Behavioral Intention was 0.920.

All of the composite reliabilities of the constructs exceeded the cut-off value of 0.50 as the composite reliability of Attitude toward buying Yak-sun food was 0.915, perceived behavioral control was 0.890 and behavioral intention was 0.952, which ensures proper internal consistency of the constructs. In terms of convergent validity, most of confirmatory factor loadings exceeded 0.7, thus it was satisfied. The predictive validity of the four factors with a structural model was tested. The goodness-of-fit indices confirmed that the confirmatory factor model fit the data well ($\chi^2 = 164.737$, degree of freedom (df) = 45, goodness-of-fit index (GFI) = 0.916, adjusted goodness-of-fit index (AGFI) = 0.854, NFI = 0.929, CFI = 0.947, RMR = 0.044, RMSEA = 0.100).

Moreover, as Table 4 shown, the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) of all constructs was above the minimum standard of 0.5 (Fornell & Larcker, 1981), which indicates that a significant portion of that variance has been explained by the constructs. The AVE values for each structure were checked for discriminatory validity by comparing them with the square of the correlation between the same constructs as the remaining latent variables. In this study, discriminant validity was supported as the AVEs were greater than the squared correlations between any pair of constructs. The confirmatory measurement model of four factors has demonstrated robustness of the measurement properties.

Table 4
Discriminant validity test—correlations for the constructs and the square root of AVE.

| Measured Variable | AB   | SN   | PBC  | BI   |
|-------------------|------|------|------|------|
| AB                | 0.724| 0.678|
| (0.385)           |      |      |
| SN                | 0.148| 0.055| 0.686|
| (0.347)           | (0.234)|      |
| PBC               | 0.205| 0.112| 0.204| 0.799|
| (0.453)           | (0.335)| (0.450)| |

Note. 1. AB: Attitude toward the Behavior, SN: Subjective Norm, PBC: Perceived Behavioral Control, BI: Behavioral Intention.
2. The bold diagonal elements are the square root of the AVE.
3. Below the diagonal line is the correlation value between the constructions.

Fig. 1. The result of SEM with standardized coefficients. Note. *p < 0.05, **p < 0.01, ***p < 0.001.

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All of the composite reliabilities of the constructs exceeded the cut-off value of 0.50 as the composite reliability of Attitude toward buying Yak-sun food was 0.915, perceived behavioral control was 0.890 and behavioral intention was 0.952, which ensures proper internal consistency of the constructs. In terms of convergent validity, most of confirmatory factor loadings exceeded 0.7, thus it was satisfied. The predictive validity of the four factors with a structural model was tested. The goodness-of-fit indices confirmed that the confirmatory factor model fit the data well ($\chi^2 = 164.737$, degree of freedom (df) = 45, goodness-of-fit index (GFI) = 0.916, adjusted goodness-of-fit index (AGFI) = 0.854, Normed fit index (NFI) = 0.929, root mean square residual (RMR) = 0.044, comparative fit index (CFI) = 0.947, root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA) = 0.100).

Moreover, as Table 4 shown, the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) of all constructs was above the minimum standard of 0.5 (Fornell & Larcker, 1981), which indicates that a significant portion of that variance has been explained by the constructs. The AVE values for each structure were checked for discriminatory validity by comparing them with the square of the correlation between the same constructs as the remaining latent variables. In this study, discriminant validity was supported as the AVEs were greater than the squared correlations between any pair of constructs. The confirmatory measurement model of four factors has demonstrated robustness of the measurement properties.

Table 5
Hypothesis Path  Standardized Path Coefficients t-Value Results

| Hypothesis | Path | Standardized Path Coefficients | t-Value | Results |
|------------|------|--------------------------------|---------|---------|
| H1         | AB → BI | 0.296                          | 4.109***| Supported |
| H2         | SN → BI | 0.138                          | 2.146** | Supported |
| H3         | PBC → BI| 0.316                          | 4.949***| Supported |

$\chi^2 = 154.676$, df = 42, CMIN/DF = 3.683, GFI = 0.919, AGFI = 0.850, NFI = 0.933, CFI = 0.950, RMR = 0.042, RMSEA = 0.100.

Note. 1. AB: Attitude toward the Behavior, SN: Subjective Norm, PBC: Perceived Behavioral Control, BI: Behavioral Intention.
2. *p < 0.5, **p < 0.01, ***p < 0.001.
4.3. Hypothesis test

Fig. 1 and Table 5 presents the results of the hypotheses tests using Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) for the consumers’ purchasing Yak-sun food. The estimates produced the following statistics: $\chi^2 = 22.393$, degree of freedom ($df$) = 48, adjusted goodness-of-fit index (AGFI) = 0.825, comparative it index (CFI) = 0.922, goodness-of-fit index (GFI) = 0.893, root mean square residual (RMR) = 0.048, Normed fit index (NFI) = 0.904, root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA) = 0.116. These indices showed a somewhat unsatisfactory model fit. Therefore, six path coefficients ($e1 = e5$, $e2 = e3$, $e2 = e5$, $e2 = e6$, $e2 = e8$, $e9 = e12$) were analyzed. After adding path coefficients, the model fit slightly improved as follows: $\chi^2 = 154.676$, degree of freedom ($df$) = 42, goodness-of-fit index (GFI) = 0.919, adjusted goodness-of-fit index (AGFI) = 0.850, normed fit index (NFI) = 0.933, comparative it index (CFI) = 0.950, root mean square residual (RMR) = 0.042, root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA) = 0.1. Not all indices were satisfactory; however, the majority of indices such as GFI, NFI, and CFI were at satisfactory levels. As Table 5 indicated, Hypothesis 1 which is that Attitude toward buying Yak-sun food will positively influence on Behavioral Intention was supported as the t-value showed 4.109. Hypothesis 2 which stated that Subjective Norm will positively influence on Behavioral Intention was supported as the t-value showed 2.146. Hypothesis 3 which specified that Perceived Behavioral Control will positively influence on Behavioral Intention was supported as the t-value was 4.949.

5. Discussion and conclusion

Although there is no clear definition of what well-being is, this well-being is receiving great attention both in academia and in our daily lives. There have been many factors related to well-being, and studies on food and well-being have been active as food has been shown to have a significant impact on people’s perception of well-being (Ares et al., 2015; Ares, de Saldamando, Giménez, & Deliza, 2014). This phenomenon is similar in South Korea. People began to exercise or care about consuming more healthy foods to be physically healthy. Along with these trends, recently, Yak-sun has attracted attention in South Korea to meet the needs of consumers who want to purchase safer and healthier foods along with changes in diet amid the trend of well-being. As Yak-sun is recognized as South Korea’s representative well-being food, research on it has been actively carried out. Through these studies, it has also been found that people’s awareness of Yak-sun increases (Chung & Cha, 2005; Lee & Min, 2009). Therefore, the current study aimed to understand the decision-making process of Korean consumers’ behavioral intention to purchase Yak-sun by analyzing the principal antecedents of intention. To achieve such research objective, the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) was applied. A total of 269 customers who had Yak-sun at a restaurant in South Korea were surveyed.

When it comes to the model fit of the measurement model showed that the majority of indices such as GFI, NFI, CFI, and RMR were at satisfactory levels as GFI, NFI, and CFI were above 0.90 and RMR was below 0.05. When looking at the relationships between variables, statistically significant relationships were identified. More specifically, attitude was positively related to behavioral intention, which means that if Korean consumers have a more positive attitude toward Yak-sun food consumption, they will have a stronger tendency to purchase Yak-sun food. Such a finding is supported by previous research indicating that attitude was found to be a strong predictor of purchase intention of either GM food or organic food (Arvola et al., 2008; Cook et al., 2002; Tarkiainen & Sundqvist, 2005; Zagata, 2012). A positive relationship between subjective norm and behavioral intention identified in this study is consistent with previous studies (e.g. Alam & Sayuti, 2011; Karijin, Iris, Florence, & Wil, 2007; Maya, López-López, & Munuera, 2011). This shows that the more Korean consumers think they understand about Yak-sun food, the more they think that they should eat it. Also, the more people around them approve of them eating Yak-sun, the more willing they are to purchase it. In other studies, respondents tended to be influenced by what other people think when they purchase organic food (Maya et al., 2011) and halal food (Alam & Sayuti, 2011; Kamariah & Muslim, 2007; Karijin et al., 2007). A similar result was found in the study of Lam and Hsu (2006), indicating that behavioral intention to visit Hong Kong for Taiwanese people was related to perceived social pressure from important people around them.

This study also confirmed that perceived behavioral control is a significant predictor and was the strongest predictor of purchasing intention of Yak-sun food for Koreans. This indicates that Koreans make more in-depth efforts to experience Yak-sun food. Also, it means that it is up to Korean consumers to consume Yak-sun, not others, but it is their own decision. In addition, they show strong confidence in buying Yak-sun food. The finding was consistent with previous research which showed that Muslims are willing to put more effort into trying halal food which emphasized that perceived behavioral control is a significant predictor in influencing consumers’ behavioral intention to buy halal food (Karijin et al., 2007; Lam & Hsu, 2006). According to Cook at al. (2002), perceived behavioral control was found to be a more substantial determinant of behavioral intention than any other construct. Regarding gender differences in that study, males tended to be more in control over purchasing GM food than females. Similarly, Lam and Hsu (2006) suggested that perceived behavioral control had a significant influence on Taiwanese behavioral intention to travel to Hong Kong. This suggests that certain constraints may reduce respondents’ travel intentions to Hong Kong but not eliminate them at all. This study applied TPB theory to predict Korean consumers’ behavioral intention to purchase Yak-sun food. Based on the results, several suggestions are made in the following section.

6. Implications

Above all, the theoretical implications for this study are the validation of the TPB model and contribution to the better understanding of important components in terms of consumption patterns of those who dine out with empirical evidence. A number of prominent practical suggestions were drawn based on the findings of current study.

First, when it comes to behavioral attitude towards purchasing the Yak-sun foods, trust has been found to be a crucial factor (Han, 2013; Huh, 2005; Scio, 2010). Foods consumed by consumers are directly associated with their health. Therefore, providing accurate information including the basic components drawn from empirical analysis such as certificate mark, information of origin of the food, price, and nutritional values as well as other diverse information will help consumers purchase more Yak-sun food.

Second, utilizing the concept “Food is the Best Medicine,” by following traditional values while developing modern cooking and menus to appeal to the potential customers of well-being foods, the invigoration of Yak-sun menus are highly viable. With the advancement of marketing and development of such foods, the satisfaction level of customers and the values of farmers and eating-out culture will be elevated as well.

Third, an important factor influencing behavioral intention to purchase Yak-sun food was the subjective norms (perception of influential social connections) on a person’s ability to behave a certain way or not. Therefore, it would be good to have a system in which people who have experienced Yak-sun foods can actively share it with people who have not experienced them and encourage them to try Yak-sun foods. Or, when promoting Yak-sun foods, it would be good to target those who haven’t eaten Yak-sun foods by sharing reviews of experiences with Yak-sun foods. Since customers’ behavioral intention on purchasing Yak-sun food is influenced by people they are with at a restaurant or know, marketing strategies should focus on how to recommend Yak-sun food to one’s friends and significant others.
7. Limitation

The limitations of current study and future research directions are as follows. Firstly, the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) not only identifies behavioral intentions but also actions. This requires the same consumer to be surveyed twice over a certain period of time. Therefore, this study only investigated the behavioral intention of consumers who intend to purchase Yak-sun food due to the limitations of the survey process. Therefore, in future studies, looking at the structural relationships of consumers who actually purchase Yak-sun food would be more meaningful. Secondly, in terms of sampling, the current study used convenience sampling. This was done because Yak-sun food is not the type of food people can eat everywhere as it is a very traditional Korean food. Thus, the researchers decided to contact customers who came out of restaurants who serve such food after customers finished a meal in order to get enough of a sample. Thus, to make up for such a limitation, future research should require a wide selection of regions to randomly select consumers who consume Yak-sun food.

Thirdly, there is an issue related to sample representativeness. Current study collected data from residents living in the area called Busan, so the sample representation of the area was localized to some extent. Therefore, if samples are taken from various regions in Korea, such as Seoul and Gyeonggi Province, to complement the representativeness of the samples, then more accurate results can be obtained. Fourthly, in many previous studies of the Theory of Planned Behavior, the post-conversion pattern of behavior may vary depending on past experience and the addition of variables to past experiences is noted. Therefore, it is believed that in future studies, it will also be meaningful to look at changes in purchasing intention due to the presence or absence of past purchasing experiences.

Appendix A

See Table A1

Table A1

| Measurement                        | Item                                                                 | Reference                      |
|------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Attitude toward consuming yak-sun  | 1. Purchasing Yak-sun food is pleasurable.                          | Ajzen (2006) Lam and Hsu (2006) |
| food                               | 2. Purchasing Yak-sun food is favorable.                            |                                |
|                                    | 3. Purchasing yak-sun food enjoyable.                               |                                |
| Subjective Norm                    | 1. My acquaintances understand me choosing Yak-sun food as a         | Ajzen (2006) Lam and Hsu (2006) |
|                                   | wellbeing food                                                     |                                |
|                                   | 2. My acquaintances think that I should eat Yak-sun food            |                                |
|                                   | 3. My acquaintances approve me eating Yak-sun food                  |                                |
| Perceived behavioral control       | 4. I can easily eat Yak-sun food whenever I want.                   | Ajzen (2006) Lam and Hsu (2006) |
|                                   | 5. Purchasing yak-sun food in the future is up to me.               |                                |
|                                   | 6. I am confident that I can purchase yak-sun food in the future    |                                |
| Behavioral Intention              | 7. I will make an effort to purchase more Yak-sun food              | Ajzen (2006) Lam and Hsu (2006) |
|                                   | 8. I intend to purchase Yak-sun food in the future                  | Zeithaml et al. (1996)         |
|                                   | 9. I want to purchase Yak-sun food in the future                    |                                |

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