

Exploration of the successful glocalization of ethnic food: a case of Korean food

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Abstract

Purpose – This study aims to investigate the potential for successful glocalization of ethnic Korean food through the exploration of the reasons for preferring Korean food, the success factors for a Korean restaurant and the factors affecting the outcome variables of customer satisfaction, revisit intentions and changing the image of Korea.

Design/methodology/approach – A total of 265 Korean restaurant customers in the USA were collected.

Findings – Among the respondents' reasons for their food preferences, the novel and diverse factor was found to significantly influence customer satisfaction, revisit intentions and Korea's image. The "sociocultural" factor was found to positively influence customer satisfaction and Korea's image.

Originality/value – This study delved into an example of glocalization of a national food. The findings provide conceptual and practical implications that the extant ethnic restaurant literature has not elucidated.

Keywords Korean, Glocalization

Paper type Research paper

Introduction

Only a relatively small number of studies have explored ethnic foods from the perspective of acculturation and glocalization (Hall and Mitchell, 2002; Mak *et al.*, 2012a). Most previous studies have focused on examining patrons' perceptions of service quality/dining experience and identifying their preferences/requirements with regard to local ethnic restaurants. They are not substantially relevant to an investigation of food globalization or localization. Furthermore, very few studies have investigated the role of demographic variables in the ethnic restaurant industry, even though socio-demographic characteristics are important determinants of food preferences (Hwang *et al.*, 2012) and investigating the role of these variables would help in developing effective and efficient marketing strategies.

As part of a Korean Government project for the globalization of Korean food, this study was initiated to examine the potential for successful glocalization in the USA. The topics of ethnic Korean food/restaurant have been mostly studied in isolation despite the fact that



successful glocalization of a national cuisine plays an important role in the enhancement of national image and power (Mak *et al.*, 2012a). Thus, the main purpose of this study is to examine the responses of US consumers to Korean food/restaurants and to analyze strategic approaches for successful glocalization in the USA accordingly. More specifically, the research objectives were to investigate the following:

- the reasons for preferring Korean food;
- the success factors for Korean restaurants;
- differences related to demographic variables in the reasons for preferring Korean food;
- differences related to demographic variables in the success factors for Korean restaurants;
- differences related to demographic variables in the current and potential preferences for Korean menu items; and
- the effects of the reasons for preferring Korean food on three outcome variables (customer satisfaction, revisit intentions and changing Korea's image) that significantly affect the success of ethnic Korean restaurant businesses.

Literature review

Ethnic food acculturation model

Food globalization “generalizes” a particular product and localization “particularizes” a general product (Robertson, 1992). For instance, pizza is a particular food product that has its origin in Italy but has been, through globalization, generalized in the USA as a popular food. Among the generalized forms of the pizza, grilled *galbi* pizza (seasoned beef ribs pizza) is a product that has been particularized in Korea through a successful localization process. The term “globalization” is often used in a negative way, because it often refers to an imposed uniformity of food products or refers to standardization that hampers creativity (Robertson, 1992). However, regionalization, internationalization, localization and globalization are all part of an irreversible worldwide trend (Kim *et al.*, 2016). “Glocalization” encompasses the effect of the homogenization and heterogenization of ethnic food.

According to Berry's (1997) acculturation theory, four dimensions account for individual and psychological acculturation. People who consider it important both to maintain their ethnic identity and to forge relationships with people of the host country are said to adopt an *integration* strategy. Individuals who do not wish to forge relationships with the host culture but only to maintain their own culture are said to endorse a *separation* strategy. People who are less interested in maintaining their own distinctive culture than in forging relationships with the host country are said to adopt an *assimilation* strategy. Finally, individuals who are neither willing to maintain their own culture nor to forge relationships with people from the host country are said to be *marginalized* (Berry, 1997).

Applying the four dimensions of the acculturation model suggested by Berry to the ethnic restaurant market, an “integration” strategy appears to be consistent with the glocalization of ethnic food. More specifically, ethnic restaurants may cater to the needs of local residents and at the same time still maintain their own ethnic identity. Glocalization may attract both local residents and customers from the home country, creating high levels of customer satisfaction and loyalty. What is termed “separation” in acculturation theory may be termed “traditionalization” in the context of the ethnic-restaurant market. That is, some ethnic restaurants serve traditional food but attract only customers from the home

country and fail to appeal to local residents because the level of acceptance by the host culture is low. On the other hand, ethnic restaurants that no longer serve distinctively ethnic food might be regarded as having become overly “localized.” Then, “localization” does not seem to be a desirable phenomenon. Figure 1 illustrates the concept of ethnic food acculturation.

In studies of acculturation, the dominant group in a society is often found to exert a one-way influence on minority ethnic groups, but food acculturation is known to be a bi-directional process (Satia-Abouta, 2003; Wahlqvist, 2002). That is, ethnic food culture and host food culture affect each other. For example, a variety of ethnic supermarkets and ethnic restaurants exist in the USA, and local residents are influenced by the food culture of ethnic groups (Satia-Abouta, 2003). Wahlqvist (2002) examined food consumption and associated health consequences among Asian immigrants in Australia. The changes in the dietary patterns of Australians as they became Asianized were obvious: fresh food markets, the availability of exotic foodstuffs, household cooking skills and ethnic restaurants rapidly developed, allowing Australians to experience new types of cuisines with novel herbs and spices. In contrast, Asians in Australia have decreased their food caloric energy expenditure, increased the energy density of the food they consume (through consuming more fast food and sugar drinks) and decreased their consumption of certain healthy foods (such as lentils, soya products, green vegetables, and tea). Yet, while Asian migration to Australia has provided positive outcomes for Australians – such as increasing their consumption of various kinds of healthy food – there have been negative outcomes for Asian immigrants because of the negative effects of their assimilating certain elements of the food culture of the host country (Wahlqvist, 2002).

In this regard, the food acculturation process is dynamic and complicated because a mixture of positive and negative consequences of food acculturation coexist when different cultures encounter each other. Many countries attempt to successfully globalize and localize their own national dishes and base such attempts on investigations of customer preferences. First, Japanese food globalization dates back to the 1960s. The Japanese Government developed “Japanese-style grilled food” for Western consumers when Japan hosted the 1964

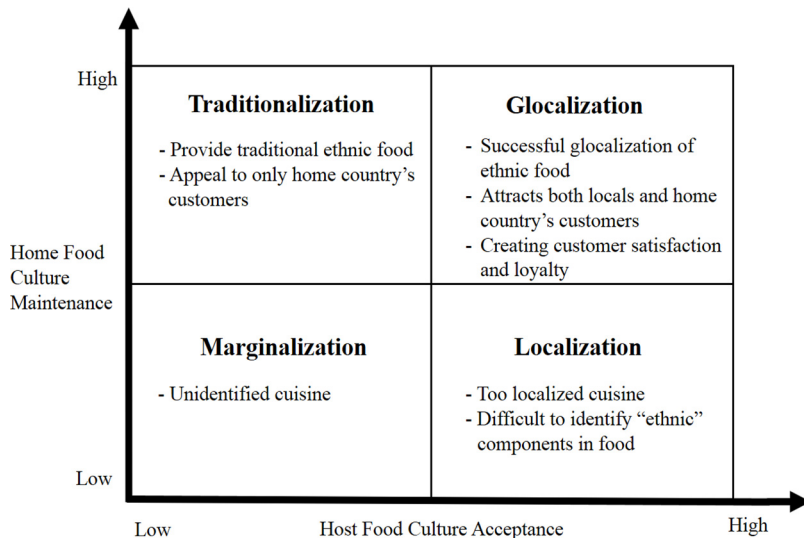


Figure 1.
Ethnic food acculturation model

Summer Olympics. At that time, Western people viewed eating sushi as a barbaric practice, much like eating raw meat (Issenberg, 2007). However, in the 1980s, in the context of the new, global popularity of Japanese products, Japanese cuisine and Japanese restaurants were introduced all over the world. At that time, Japanese ingredients, sauces, cooking utensils and interiors were all introduced and Japanese restaurants were promoted as providing an all-round experience of Japanese dining culture (Ceccarini, 2010).

Second, the globalization of Thai food is attributed to initiatives made by the Thai Government. The initial project, called “Blue Elephant,” has led to the opening of ten fine dining restaurants overseas since 1980 (Blue Elephant, 2014). The second project, launched in 2004 and called “Kitchen to the World,” was supported by two government agencies: Thailand’s Department of Export Promotion and the National Food Institute (Sunanta, 2005). These projects have been nurturing professional cooks since 2001; they have introduced a restaurant quality-assurance system (called “Thai select”), and the aim is to achieve quality enhancement, maintain the identity of Thai food and secure standardization of Thai restaurant cooking (“Thai-ness”; Sunanta, 2005). Shaw (2008) viewed Thai food as “the ethnic food for beginners” because, of all the Southeast Asian cuisines, Thai food is the most common and approachable in North America. Thai food is considered to have been successfully globalized. Especially in the USA, many people are familiar with a number of Thai dishes, such as *pad Thai*, *pad see yew* and Thai curries (Shaw, 2008).

Third, for the case of Korean food, the initial attempt to globalize Korean traditional food was made by the industry itself. Since the 1990s, chicken that has been cooked using Korean recipes, *bibimbab* (rice mixed with vegetables and beef) and other traditional Korean dishes/snacks made by companies in Korea have been introduced to overseas markets, especially China and Southeast Asia (Kim *et al.*, 2016). Since 2010, diverse food globalization projects have been actively conducted under a Korean Government initiative. One of the government’s aims is to make Korean food one of the global top five foods, alongside French, Italian, Chinese and Japanese food (Kim *et al.*, 2016).

Acculturation theory has been adopted to account for the successful glocalization of ethnic food. To investigate the successful glocalization of a specific ethnic food, investigating patrons’ responses was the first, critical step in this study. With regard to ethnic food glocalization, few studies have used a comprehensive approach encompassing customers’ reactions (including, e.g. the reasons for their preferences), the success factors of ethnic restaurants, current and potential preferences for ethnic food, customer satisfaction and revisit intentions, changes in the image of the country in which a particular ethnic food originated and differences related to socio-demographic variables.

Conceptualization

First, as gastronomic globalization and localization go hand in hand, there is a need to understand local diners’ preferences and experiences in the context of ethnic restaurants (Hall and Mitchell, 2002). Ethnic restaurant food consumption is determined by various aspects of the consumers, the food and the restaurant environment (Mak *et al.*, 2012a, 2012b; Okumus *et al.*, 2007); identifying the characteristics of local diners is important in understanding the reasons for liking, or a preference for, ethnic food consumption (Mak *et al.*, 2012a, 2012b). Therefore, this study attempts to identify the reasons for preferring Korean food, initially in terms of socio-demographic characteristics (including gender, age, marital status, ethnicity, education and occupation).

Second, examining global marketing strategies helps in identifying the success factors of ethnic restaurants (Camillo *et al.*, 2010). The patronage of its customers determines the success or failure of a restaurant. Korean food is a newly emerging ethnic food, unlike

Italian, Mexican and Japanese food, which are already successfully localized in the world. However, most Korean restaurants are small family restaurants, and therefore investigating the success factors from the perspective of customers is important in assisting small businesses that may find it hard to conduct costly and detailed consumer research. Thus, this study attempts to explore success factors of a Korean restaurant and its differences in the demographic characteristics of ethnic restaurants' customers. Third, a necessary step for penetrating the foreign food market is to explore currently preferred menu items and potentially preferred menu items (Roseman, 2006). Some Korean dishes that may contribute to the successful glocalization of Korean food were identified through interviewing Korean restaurateurs. Thus, this study investigates current and potential preferences for Korean food in relation to consumers' demographic profiles.

Further, the study was designed to explore the effects of the reasons for preferring Korean food on restaurant customers' diverse evaluations such as customer satisfaction, revisit intentions, and change of national image. Customer satisfaction is a critical concept in service marketing because satisfied customers are more likely to become loyal customers, generating long-term benefits for companies (Han and Hyun, 2017; Han et al., 2017). A better understanding of the determinants of positive behavioral intentions can provide useful information for Korean restaurant practitioners (Ha and Jang, 2010a, 2010b). This study focused on revisit intention, which refers to an affirmative likelihood to revisit an ethnic restaurant (Jarvis and Wilcox, 1977) because repurchase intention is important to explain customer commitment or loyalty (Hwang and Han, 2017; Hwang and Hyun, 2017). Changing national image was operationalized to reflect how one ethnic cuisine can affect diners' perception of the country (Kim et al., 2012, 2014). Likewise, the relationship between reasons for preferring Korean food and modification of image of Korea was also explored in this study. Figure 2 indicates the conceptual framework of the current study.

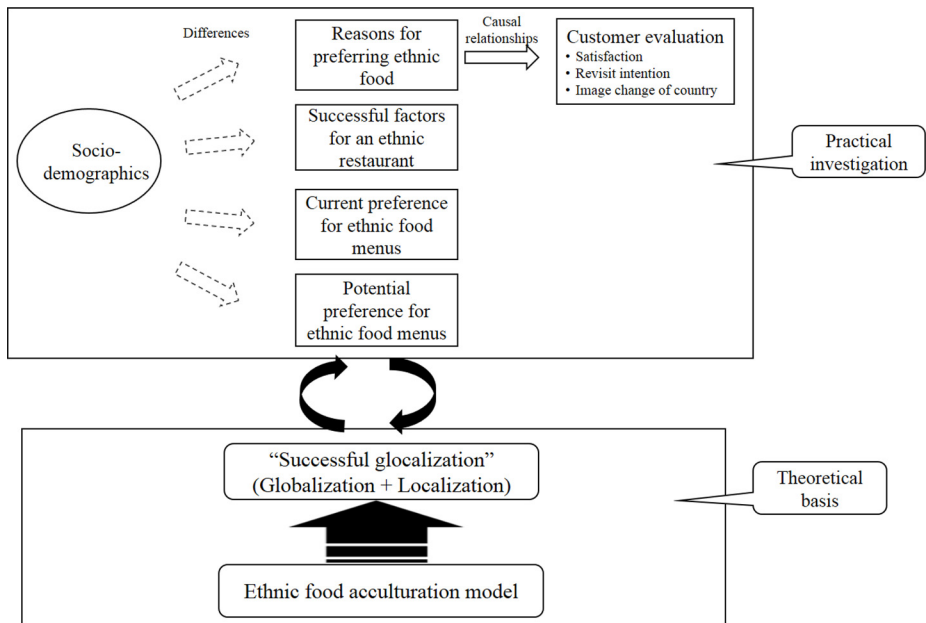


Figure 2.
Conceptual
framework

Methodology

Survey site

This project was commissioned by a public food agency to explore the potential for successful localization of Korean food in Chicago. There were several reasons for selecting Chicago. It is the third most populous city in the USA and a global center of finance, technology, commerce, industry, telecommunications and transportation. It is located near a portage between the Great Lakes and the Mississippi River watershed and is a well-known trading center for livestock and agricultural produce (including meat) with convenient transportation by road, rail, river/canal and air. In addition, as immigrants from both Asian and European countries have gathered there since the 1800s, it has an excellent culinary environment in which different national/ethnic foods are well developed (Camillo *et al.*, 2010): Chicago is one of three cities in the USA – the others being New York and San Francisco – that have been certified by the Michelin guide (Reed, 2010). Currently, about 100,000 Korean immigrants live in Chicago and there are about 46 Korean restaurants there (Chicago City Search, 2014). These restaurants may be small scale (having 10-20 tables in one room), medium scale (having 21-50 tables in two to three rooms) or large scale (having 51-100 tables in one or two main rooms and small banquet halls).

Measurement

A total of 12 items were used; these were based on a review of previous studies that measured diners' reasons for preferring Korean food (Kim *et al.*, 2012; Mak *et al.*, 2012a, 2012b; Roseman, 2006). Popular dishes served by Korean restaurants in the USA were chosen based on the results of interviews with seven restaurateurs in Chicago. In total, 16 items – indicators of the factors required for the success of Korean restaurants – were modified from factors found in previous studies to indicate the success and competitiveness of ethnic restaurants (Camillo *et al.*, 2010). The responses were given on a five-point Likert-type scale (ranging from 1 = *not at all important* to 5 = *very important*).

The questions about diners' experiences at Korean restaurants concerned their preferences for Korean cuisine, how often they had visited a Korean restaurant during the previous six months, the most important source of information, their level of satisfaction (e.g. *What was your level of satisfaction after your most recent experience of eating Korean restaurant food?*) adapted from Liu and Jang (2009) and their revisit intentions (e.g. *Following your most recent experience of eating Korean restaurant food, do you intend to visit a Korean restaurant again over the next three months?*) used by Ha and Jang (2010a, 2010b). Items concerning the respondents' experiences/perceptions of Korean restaurants covered the potential for successful globalization and image change (e.g. *Has your image of Korea changed since you experienced Korean food?*) cited from Kim *et al.* (2012) and were measured using a five-point Likert-type scale (ranging from 1 = *strongly disagree* to 5 = *strongly agree*).

Data collection

Restaurants were selected following analysis of the geographical distribution of the restaurants. Out of a total of 46 Korean restaurants listed in the Chicago yellow pages, 6 were selected from the northern area of Chicago alongside I-90, 4 were selected from an area densely populated by Korean Americans and 2 were chosen from the outskirts of Chicago. Three criteria were used to select these restaurants: the restaurants had to have more than 20 tables, their menu items had to offer traditional Korean dishes or fusion dishes based on Korean traditional food, and they had to be flourishing businesses. The third step was to develop sample quotas based on the geographical distribution of the restaurants. Thirty questionnaires were allocated to each of 12 restaurants.

The respondents were local customers who patronized Korean restaurants (ruling out temporary visitors from Korea). However, some of the respondents were Koreans who had secured US citizenship, so only English questionnaires were used. The questionnaires were distributed by restaurant staff (with the permission of the restaurateurs). To identify eligible respondents, customers were asked whether they were overseas tourists. Most of the customers of the participating restaurants were local residents. At each restaurant, a questionnaire was distributed to one in every five (local) customers. The questionnaires were distributed on two weekdays and over one weekend in February, 2012 to gather the responses of potentially different kinds of customers.

A total of 360 questionnaires were distributed. Of these, 22 questionnaires were not returned and 73 questionnaires were not completed properly. Nevertheless, the response rate (of 73.6 per cent) was high; this was for three reasons. First, the survey was directly conducted by the restaurant management or (with their endorsement) by the research team. Second, key rings of a traditional Korean design were provided as a gift to all sampled consumers. Third, a clear explanation of this project was given, and the fact that the Korean Food Foundation had commissioned it was mentioned.

Results

Demographic and travel-related profile of the sample

Approximately half of the respondents were male. About 10.2 per cent of the respondents were in the age range of 20-29 years; the second group consisted respondents of 30-39 years of age (26.8 per cent); and the third group consisted respondents who were 40 years of age or older (63.0 per cent). With regard to their educational levels, 46.0 per cent of the respondents had a bachelor's degree; the second-largest group was that of those who were high school graduates (15.8 per cent); the third-largest group was that of those who had a postgraduate degree (15.0 per cent); and the fourth-largest group was that of college students (12.8 per cent). Regarding their ethnicity, most of the respondents were Anglo-American (45.7 per cent), Asian (36.2 per cent) or Americans of European extraction (18.1 per cent). About half of them were residents of Chicago, while about 46 per cent resided close to Chicago. Approximately 58.1 per cent were single and 41.9 per cent were married. Concerning their occupation, about 39.2 per cent were company workers; the second-largest group was that of civil servants, professionals and teachers (19.2 per cent); and the third-largest group was that of students (17.4 per cent). Regarding their annual household income, 36 per cent had incomes of between US\$60,000 and US\$99,999, and the second-largest group (29 per cent) was that of those who had incomes of less than US\$59,999. Finally, 73 per cent reported that they had not visited Korea since 2005.

Reasons for preferring Korean food

The results of the exploratory factor analysis with varimax rotation generated a three-factor model (three factors had an eigenvalue greater than 1.0). An examination of the scree plot also supported the factor structure. The appropriateness of the extracted factor structure was assessed using the Kaiser–Meyer–Olkin (KMO) measure of sampling adequacy (this being a useful indicator of the validity of a factor model) and Bartlett's test of sphericity, which examines the existence of factors. The KMO value of 0.83 indicated that the factor model was valid. In addition, as Bartlett's test of sphericity showed significance ($p < 0.001$), the factor structure displayed one or more factors.

All the items' factor loadings, which measure the correlation between the observed measurements and the factors, were greater than 0.50. Thus, they were satisfactory in terms of the criterion proposed by [Comrey and Lee \(1992\)](#), who state that values greater than 0.45

indicate the derived factors can be classified as fair or above. In addition, communality explains the common variance within a variable (Field, 2000); the values were higher than 0.640 for all the items, indicating that each variable contributes to the factor model. Three domains of the factor model accounted for 61.69 per cent of the variance: 22.79 per cent (Domain 1), 19.96 per cent (Domain 2) and 18.94 per cent (Domain 3).

The mean scores for the items ranged from 2.65 to 4.05. The grand mean scores for the three domains were 3.84, 3.83 and 3.05. The reliability values for the domains ranged from 0.71 to 0.82, thus surpassing the criterion of 0.70 recommended by Nunnally (1978). Therefore, all domains confirmed the internal consistency of items within each item. As all factor loadings were greater than 0.50 – as recommended by Stevens (2012) – the convergent validity was also deemed acceptable. The extracted domains were labeled “healthy factor” (Domain 1), “novel and diverse factor” (Domain 2) and “sociocultural factor” (Domain 3). Table I indicates the results.

Success factors for an ethnic Korean restaurant

The results of the factor analysis to identify the underlying dimensions of the success factors for a Korean restaurant, an exploratory factor analysis with varimax rotation produced four factors with eigenvalues exceeding 1.0. The scree plot illustrated the four-factor model visually. All the items' factor loadings were greater than 0.58 and thus exceeded the (0.45) value proposed by Comrey and Lee (1992). Additionally, all communalities on the items were higher than 0.56, indicating that each of the variables contributed to the factor model. Overall, the explained variance was 72.68 per cent, consisting of 22.31 per cent in Domain 1, 20.89 per cent in Domain 2, 15.97 per cent in Domain 3 and 13.51 per cent in Domain 4.

The mean values of the items ranged from 3.75 to 4.68. The grand mean scores in the four domains were 3.96, 4.56, 3.60 and 3.98. The reliability alphas of the four domains ranged from 0.63 to 0.90; this confirmed that all domains indicated the internal consistency of items within each domain. All factor loadings were greater than 0.50 – as recommended by Stevens (2012) – thus indicating that the convergent validity was also acceptable. Table I shows the results.

Differences related to demographic variables regarding reasons for preferring Korean food

One-way ANOVA tests and *t*-tests were conducted to determine whether there were significant differences between the socio-demographic groups with respect to the respondents' reasons for preferring Korean food. In the case of gender, the results of the *t*-test indicated a significant difference ($p < 0.01$) with regard to “sociocultural factor”; the mean score of the women was higher than that of the men, indicating that female respondents were more likely to prefer Korean food due to sociocultural factor. Regarding age, the one-way ANOVA tests showed that there were statistically significant differences ($p < 0.001$) with the “sociocultural factor.” In the case of ethnicity, the results of the one-way ANOVA tests revealed a significant difference ($p < 0.01$) regarding the “sociocultural factor.” The Asian group had the highest mean score on the “sociocultural factor,” indicating that Asians are more likely to prefer Korean food because of sociocultural proximity or curiosity. In addition, those whose education did not go beyond high school, those who were college students and those who were company workers had the highest mean scores on the “sociocultural factor,” indicating that they prefer Korean food for sociocultural reasons. Table II presents the results.

Reasons for preferring Korean food	Factor loading
<i>Domain 1: Healthy factor (2.74^a, 22.79^b, 0.82^c)</i>	
Because of low calories	0.83
Because of balanced nutrients of carbohydrate, protein, and fat	0.76
Because of healthy food	0.76
Because of the good diet due to a range of vegetables	0.70
Grand mean = 3.84	
<i>Domain 2: Novel and diverse factor (2.40^a, 19.96^b, 0.75^c)</i>	
Because of unique and exotic relish due to having food different from that of other countries	0.80
Because of diverse food ingredients	0.75
Because of providing beautiful combination due to diverse food	0.74
Because of eating other side dishes with rice	0.50
Grand mean = 3.83	
<i>Domain 3: Sociocultural factor (2.27^a, 18.94^b, 0.71^c)</i>	
Because of feeling a familiarity with Asian food compared to Western food	0.77
Because of the Korean pop culture (K-pop, drama/movie, game etc.)	0.75
Because of feeling high class with a lot of efforts unlike instant food	0.68
Because of experiencing traditional culture through Korean food	0.68
Grand mean = 3.05	
Total explained variance = 61.69%; KMO measure of sampling adequacy = 0.83; Bartlett's test of sphericity ($p < 0.001$)	
Success factors for a Korean restaurant	
<i>Domain 1: Easy and convenient (3.57^a, 22.31^b, 0.86^c)</i>	
Quickness of service	0.79
Easy reservation	0.71
Availability of price discounts (e.g., group discounts or point-card)	0.68
Convenient facilities	0.66
Quickness of order	0.61
Location of restaurant	0.58
Grand mean = 3.96	
<i>Domain 2: Cleanliness and sanitation (3.34^a, 20.89^b, 0.90^c)</i>	
Cleanliness of restaurant and kitchen	0.90
Sanitation	0.86
Cleanliness of restroom	0.84
Quality of table service	0.68
Grand mean = 4.56	
<i>Domain 3: Awareness (2.56^a, 15.97^b, 0.84^c)</i>	
Famous chef	0.82
Brand image	0.78
Promoted well	0.66
Grand mean = 3.60	
<i>Domain 4: Food and culture (2.16^a, 13.51^b, 0.66^c)</i>	
Variety of food	0.81
Quantity of food	0.80
Experience of culture	0.63
Grand mean = 3.98	
Total explained variance = 72.68%; KMO measure of sampling adequacy = 0.89; Bartlett's test of sphericity ($p < 0.001$)	
Notes: ^a eigenvalue; ^b explained variance; ^c cronbach's alpha	

Table I. Results of exploratory factor analysis for reasons for preferring Korean food and the success factors for a Korean restaurant

Reasons for preference	Gender		<i>F</i> -value	<i>p</i> -value
	Male	Female		
Healthy factor	3.79	3.89	-0.24	0.215
Novel and diverse factor	3.81	3.85	-52	0.604
Sociocultural factor	2.90	3.19	-2.69**	0.008
Reasons for preference				
	20s	30s	40s and older	<i>F</i> -value
Healthy factor	3.95	3.74	3.86	1.27
Novel and diverse factor	3.79	3.80	3.85	0.27
Sociocultural factor	3.86	3.15	2.87	18.24***
Reasons for preference				
	Single	Married		<i>p</i> -value
Healthy factor	3.82	3.86	-0.41	0.681
Novel and diverse factor	3.81	3.86	-0.65	0.518
Sociocultural factor	3.12	2.94	1.70	0.090
Reasons for preference				
	Americans	Asians	Europeans	<i>F</i> -value
Healthy factor	3.79	3.84	3.93	0.75
Novel and diverse factor	3.80	3.85	3.89	0.36
Sociocultural factor	2.83	3.24	3.22	7.35**
Reasons for preference				
	High school	College student	College	<i>F</i> -value
Healthy factor	3.96	3.91	3.78	0.71
Novel and diverse factor	3.78	3.83	3.81	0.81
Sociocultural factor	3.55	3.29	2.86	6.14***
Reasons for preference				
	Company workers	Own business	Graduate school or above	<i>F</i> -value
Healthy factor	3.78	3.95	3.79	0.586
Novel and diverse factor	3.82	3.95	4.04	0.522
Sociocultural factor	3.00	2.79	3.06	0.000
Reasons for preference				
	Company workers	Civil servant, professional, teacher, technician	Student	<i>F</i> -value
Healthy factor	3.78	3.87	3.83	0.68
Novel and diverse factor	3.82	3.81	3.79	0.47
Sociocultural factor	3.00	2.78	3.55	8.51***

Notes: *** $p < 0.001$; ** $p < 0.01$

Table II. Results of *t*-tests and one-way ANOVA to identify differences regarding reasons for preferring Korean food according to demographic variables

Differences related to demographic variables in the success factors for an ethnic Korean restaurant

To examine the significant differences between the socio-demographic groups with regard to the important factors affecting the success of Korean restaurants, one-way ANOVA tests and *t*-tests were conducted (Table III). The results show that respondents in their 20s returned the highest mean score for the “easy and convenient” domain, the “awareness” domain and the “food and culture” domain. The single group returned a higher mean score for the “easy and convenient” domain and the “awareness” domain than the married respondents did. In addition, the married group returned a higher mean score for the “cleanliness and sanitation” domain than the single respondents did. Educational level also had an effect; high school students returned the highest mean score for the “easy and convenient” and “awareness” domains, while college students returned the highest mean score for the “food and culture” domain. In addition, those who were students had the highest mean score on the “easy and convenient” domain, while those who were civil servants, professional teachers or technicians showed the highest mean score on the “cleanliness” and “sanitation” factor.

Differences related to demographic variables in current preferences for Korean dishes

Significant differences were noticed in current food preferences across all demographic variables, with the exception of ethnicity. Regarding age, the results indicate that there was a statistically significant difference in the ratings of *bibimbap* (rice mixed with vegetables and beef), *bulgogi* (beef in a soy sauce marinade), *grilled galbi* (seasoned ribs), *stew* (seafood stew, kimchi stew) and *juk* (porridge). The respondents who were 40 or older showed a higher level of preference for *bibimbap*, *bulgogi* and *grilled galbi*; the respondents in their 20s demonstrated a higher level of preference for *stew* and *juk*. The others can be viewed in Table IV and most are addressed in the discussion section.

Differences related to demographic variables in potential preferences for Korean dishes

Significant differences were observed in potential food preferences across all demographic variables. Considering the influence of education level, graduate students showed a higher level of potential preference for *bibimbap*, *bulgogi* and *grilled galbi*; college students displayed the highest level of potential preference for *kimchi* seafood stew. Interestingly, respondents who had a first degree or a higher qualification showed the highest level of potential preference for *dakgalbi*. Explanation of other food items is listed in Table V. Further discussion is made in the discussion section.

Correlation analysis of the reasons for preferring Korean food, customer satisfaction, revisit intention, and change in Korea's image

According to the bivariate correlations among the independent variables (reasons for preferring Korean food) and dependent variables (customer satisfaction, revisit intention, and change in Korea's image), customer satisfaction was positively associated with the healthy factor (0.24), the novel and diverse factor (0.41) and the sociocultural factor (0.26). Revisit intention was positively related with the healthy factor (0.22) and the novel and diverse factor (0.47), but was not significantly associated with the sociocultural factor. Change in the image of Korea was found to be positively and significantly correlated with the novel and diverse factor (0.32) and the sociocultural factor (0.20), but it was not significantly related with the healthy factor.

Important success factors	Gender		<i>F</i> -value	<i>p</i> -value
	Male	Female		
Easy and convenient	3.95	3.98	-0.35	0.727
Cleanliness and sanitation	4.60	4.53	0.85	0.398
Awareness	3.59	3.62	-0.24	0.810
Food and culture	3.98	4.00	-0.24	0.808
Important success factors				
	Age			
Easy and convenient	20s	30s	40s older	<i>F</i> -value
Cleanliness and sanitation	4.37	4.04	3.86	6.75**
Awareness	4.61	4.55	4.56	0.07
Food and culture	4.07	3.84	3.42	6.28**
	4.41	4.08	3.88	9.17***
Important success factors				
	Marital status			
Easy and convenient	Single	Married	<i>t</i> -value	<i>p</i> -value
Cleanliness and sanitation	4.05	3.83	2.54*	0.012
Awareness	4.19	4.58	3.34***	0.000
Food and culture	3.71	3.44	1.87	0.064
	4.04	3.91	1.63	0.104
Important success factors				
	Ethnicity			
Easy and convenient	Americans	Asians	Europeans	<i>F</i> -value
Cleanliness and sanitation	3.83	3.98	4.01	0.779
Awareness	4.64	4.47	4.57	0.153
Food and culture	3.54	3.58	3.79	0.90
	3.95	3.97	4.11	1.11
Important success factors				
	Education			
Easy and convenient	High school	College student	Graduate	<i>F</i> -value
Cleanliness and sanitation	4.19	4.17	3.88	2.72*
Awareness	4.67	4.60	4.43	0.64
Food and culture	4.02	3.87	3.31	0.633
	4.18	4.28	3.85	2.93*
				3.96**
Important success factors				
	Occupation			
Easy and convenient	Company workers	Own business	Student	<i>F</i> -value
Cleanliness and sanitation	3.82	4.00	4.18	2.79*
Awareness	4.49	4.70	4.46	2.91*
Food and culture	3.51	3.79	3.95	2.63
	3.88	4.07	4.23	3.42*

Notes: *** $p < 0.001$; ** $p < 0.01$; * $p < 0.05$

Table III.
Results of *t*-tests and one-way ANOVA to identify the success factors for a Korean restaurant according to demographic variables

Table IV.
Differences in
current preference
for Korean food
menus among
demographic
variables

Korean Cuisine Menus	Gender		Age			Marital status		Ethnicity			Education					Occupation			
	Male	Female	20s	30s	40s+	Single	Married	Americans	Asians	Europeans	Ed1	Ed2	Ed3	Ed4	Ed5	Oc1	Oc2	Oc3	Oc4
Kimchi	3.67 <i>t</i> = 0.44	3.60	3.72 <i>F</i> = 0.84	3.49 <i>F</i> = 0.84	3.70	3.62 <i>t</i> = 0.84	3.65	3.63 <i>F</i> = 0.04	3.66 <i>F</i> = 0.04	3.59	3.42	3.91 <i>F</i> = 0.65	3.62	3.63	3.64	3.67	3.71 <i>F</i> = 0.12	3.62	3.55
Bibimbap (rice mixed with vegetables and beef)	4.37 <i>t</i> = 1.01	4.26	4.36 <i>F</i> = 3.03**	4.13	4.48	4.31 <i>t</i> = 0.87	4.33	4.33 <i>F</i> = 0.49	4.35 <i>F</i> = 0.49	4.19	4.11	4.48 <i>F</i> = 1.68	4.41	4.04	4.25	4.34	4.54 <i>F</i> = 2.39*	4.46	4.05
Bulgogi (beef in a soy sauce marinade)	4.48 <i>t</i> = 1.28	4.33	4.33 <i>F</i> = 2.54*	4.32	4.61	4.42 <i>t</i> = 0.77	4.39	4.40 <i>F</i> = 0.03	4.40 <i>F</i> = 0.03	4.44	4.29	4.50 <i>F</i> = 1.46	4.48	4.04	4.45	4.49	4.54 <i>F</i> = 0.97	4.38	4.26
Grilled Galbi (seasoned ribs)	4.57 <i>t</i> = 1.52	4.41	4.57 <i>F</i> = 4.91***	4.25	4.65	4.53 <i>t</i> = 0.35	4.43	4.37 <i>F</i> = 1.91	4.59 <i>F</i> = 1.91	4.57	4.44	4.63 <i>F</i> = 0.90	4.55	4.26	4.39	4.64	4.50 <i>F</i> = 2.33*	4.25	4.45
Samgyetang (ginseng chicken soup)	3.33 <i>t</i> = -1.67*	3.61	3.52 <i>F</i> = 0.08	3.44	3.47	3.45 <i>t</i> = 0.68	3.52	3.36 <i>F</i> = 0.94	3.61 <i>F</i> = 0.94	3.41	3.48	3.84 <i>F</i> = 1.37	3.30	3.71	3.50	3.46	3.41 <i>F</i> = 1.03	3.19	3.70
Naengmyeon (buckwheat noodles in a cold broth)	3.22 <i>t</i> = -1.21	3.43	3.29 <i>F</i> = 0.09	3.32	3.38	3.36 <i>t</i> = 0.67	3.28	3.31 <i>F</i> = 0.15	3.38 <i>F</i> = 0.15	3.24	3.30	3.50 <i>F</i> = 0.74	3.19	3.33	3.58	3.21	3.59 <i>F</i> = 0.75	3.33	3.17
Stew (seafood stew, Kimchi stew)	3.86 <i>t</i> = 1.59	3.61	3.96 <i>F</i> = 4.42**	3.73	3.40	3.81 <i>t</i> = 0.23	3.62	3.64 <i>F</i> = 1.42	3.88 <i>F</i> = 1.42	3.58	3.75	4.09 <i>F</i> = 2.10*	3.53	4.05	3.72	3.83	3.72 <i>F</i> = 0.35	3.62	3.68
Dakgalbi (chicken ribs)	3.81 <i>t</i> = 0.43	3.74	3.88 <i>F</i> = 1.07	3.79	3.59	3.87 <i>t</i> = 0.15	3.64	3.64 <i>F</i> = 1.59	3.94 <i>F</i> = 1.59	3.69	3.59	4.00 <i>F</i> = 1.43	3.63	4.09	3.89	3.85	3.73 <i>F</i> = 1.54	3.44	3.94
Beef Bone Soup (ox bone soup, short rib soup)	3.73 <i>t</i> = 0.58	3.63	3.82 <i>F</i> = 1.53	3.67	3.48	3.70 <i>t</i> = 0.74	3.65	3.53 <i>F</i> = 1.72	3.84 <i>F</i> = 1.72	3.63	3.84	3.84 <i>F</i> = 1.15	3.50	3.91	3.70	3.84	3.73 <i>F</i> = 1.22	3.44	3.69
Juk (porridge)	3.00 <i>t</i> = -1.44	3.26	3.33 <i>F</i> = 3.04**	3.20	2.79	3.28 <i>t</i> = 0.07*	2.95	2.91 <i>F</i> = 2.18	3.32 <i>F</i> = 2.18	3.20	3.21	3.21 <i>F</i> = 1.48	2.93	3.62	3.21	3.11	3.18 <i>F</i> = 0.15	3.06	3.24

Notes: ****p* < 0.01; ***p* < 0.05; **p* < 0.1; Ed 1: High-school graduate, Ed 2: College student, Ed 3: Bachelor's degree, Ed 4: Graduate student, Ed 5: Graduate school or above; Oc 1: Company workers, Oc 2: Own business, Oc 3: Civil servant, professional, teacher, technician, Oc 4: Student

Korean Cuisine/Menus	Gender		Age		Marital status		Ethnicity			Education				Occupation					
	Male	Female	20s	30s	40s +	Single	Married	Americans	Asians	Europeans	Ed1	Ed2	Ed3	Ed4	Ed5	Oc1	Oc2	Oc3	
Kimchi	3.17 <i>t</i> = -2.38**	3.50	3.24	3.47	3.28	3.21	3.50	3.38	3.33	3.20	3.00	3.38	3.31	3.52	3.57	3.31	3.22	3.57	3.05
Bibimbap (rice mixed with vegetables and beef)	4.20 <i>t</i> = -0.13	4.22	4.14	4.28	4.22	4.19	4.23	4.28	4.28	3.88	3.69	4.13	4.29	4.36	4.42	4.18	4.29	4.47	3.80
Bulgogi (beef in a soy sauce marinade)	4.40 <i>t</i> = -1.10	4.50	4.40	4.55	4.41	4.49	4.40	4.50	4.52	4.19	4.00	4.52	4.50	4.68	4.51	4.40	4.43	4.53	4.41
Grilled Galbi (seasoned ribs)	4.50 <i>t</i> = -0.08	4.50	4.54	4.43	4.53	4.54	4.44	4.47	4.64	4.29	4.20	4.63	4.51	4.71	4.53	4.51	4.54	4.49	4.49
Samgyetang (ginseng chicken soup)	2.88 <i>t</i> = -2.38**	3.26	2.91	3.21	3.13	2.99	3.17	3.17	2.97	3.05	2.61	3.24	3.11	3.05	3.26	3.01	3.16	3.29	2.77
Naengmyeon (buckwheat noodles in a cold broth)	2.70 <i>t</i> = -2.18**	3.03	2.72	2.94	2.97	2.83	2.91	2.99	2.78	2.76	2.56	3.13	2.78	2.84	3.19	2.83	3.07	2.90	2.64
Stew (seafood stew, Kimchi stew)	3.26 <i>t</i> = -0.86	3.38	3.36	3.34	3.23	3.29	3.35	3.32	3.32	3.31	2.81	3.63	3.32	3.53	3.39	3.45	3.14	3.43	3.02
Dakgalbi (chicken ribs)	3.31 <i>t</i> = -0.80	3.44	3.38	3.48	3.24	3.38	3.36	3.30	3.61	3.03	2.94	3.59	3.33	3.50	3.69	3.45	3.21	3.31	3.28
Beef Bone Soup (ox bone soup, short rib soup)	3.03 <i>t</i> = -1.54	3.26	3.21	3.15	3.06	3.14	3.16	3.15	3.23	2.98	3.12	3.50	2.97	3.19	3.35	3.25	3.12	3.09	2.90
Juk (porridge)	2.58 <i>t</i> = -1.95*	2.90	2.75	3.02	2.43	2.82	2.64	2.59	2.95	2.66	2.52	2.83	2.80	2.79	2.70	2.82	2.52	2.71	2.58

Notes: ****p* < 0.01; ***p* < 0.05; **p* < 0.1; Ed 1: High-school graduate, Ed 2: College student, Ed 3: Bachelor's degree, Ed 4: Graduate student, Ed 5: Graduate school or above; Oc 1: Company workers, Oc 2: Own business, Oc 3: Civil servant, professional, teacher, technician, Oc 4: Student

Table V.
Differences in potential preference for Korean food menus among demographic variables

Effects of the reasons for preferring Korean food on customer satisfaction, revisit intentions, and changes in Korea's image

Table VI provides the results of the hierarchical regression analyses of the effect of the reasons for preferring Korean food (healthy factor, novel and diverse factor and sociocultural factor) on customer satisfaction, revisit intentions and changes in the image of Korea. The regression coefficients, standardized errors, standardized beta coefficients (β), t -values and p -values of the variables in each step are summarized. A three-step procedure was used in which the independent variables were entered according to the degree of correlation between the independent and the dependent variables.

As all the variance inflation factor (VIF) values were less than 1.0, they met the criterion of being below the threshold of 10 (Field, 2000). That is, multicollinearity is not a concern. Regarding customer satisfaction, in Model 1, the healthy factor was a significant predictor of customer satisfaction ($\beta = 0.13, t = 1.99, p < 0.05$). This significance remained ($\beta = 0.13, t = 2.17, p < 0.05$) when the other independent variables were entered in Model 3. In Model 2 also, the results of the hierarchical regression analysis show that the novel and diverse factor was a significant predictor of customer satisfaction ($\beta = 0.34, t = 5.71, p < 0.001$), explaining for significant incremental change of R^2 (4 per cent) of the variance in customer satisfaction. The sociocultural factor was included in Model 3 and was a significant predictor of customer satisfaction ($\beta = 0.21, t = 3.58, p < 0.001$).

In Model 1, the healthy factor was not a significant predictor of change in the image of Korea. This insignificance was maintained when the other independent variables were entered in Model 3. The results of the hierarchical regression analysis also show that in Model 2, the novel and diverse factor was a significant predictor of change in Korea's image ($\beta = 0.35, t = 5.86, p < 0.001$). Model 3 further confirms that the novel and diverse factor and the sociocultural factor were significantly related to change in Korea's image ($\beta = 0.35, t = 5.94, p < 0.001$, and $\beta = 0.18, t = 3.08, p < 0.01$, respectively).

Conclusion

To conclude, this research enhances knowledge of how a national cuisine can be successfully globalized and localized successfully in another country. During the process of food acculturation, the host and ethnic food cultures may influence each other. To achieve successful glocalization, ethnic restaurants should aim to generate positive outcomes for both host and ethnic communities. The successful glocalization of a national food benefits a variety of stakeholders, including the producers and distributors of special ingredients, kitchenware makers, kitchen utensils, magazine companies and restaurateurs. Ethnic food can even be a way of attracting tourists to the place where various food options originated (Mak *et al.*, 2012a, 2012b). Therefore, successful glocalization of a national cuisine may mean more than the success of restaurants serving an ethnic cuisine: it may contribute to the economy of the nation in which the ethnic cuisine has its origins. Although this study is limited to the glocalization of Korean food, other countries may also have an interest in the glocalization strategy.

Implications

This study investigated US customers' responses regarding Korean food and examined the possibility of successful glocalization of Korean food in the USA. The results of the data analyses have key theoretical and managerial implications.

Dependent variable: customer satisfaction	Model 1				Model 2				Model 3						
	B	SE	β	t	Sig.	B	SE	β	t	Sig.	B	SE	β	t	Sig.
Constant	4.07	0.06	0.13	71.82	0.000	4.07	0.05	0.13	76.32	0.000	4.07	0.05	0.13	78.16	0.000
Healthy factor	0.11	0.06	0.13	1.99	0.048	0.11	0.05	0.13	2.11	0.036	0.11	0.05	0.13	2.17	0.031
Novel and diverse factor						0.31	0.05	0.34	5.71	0.000	0.31	0.05	0.34	5.84	0.000
Sociocultural factor											0.19	0.05	0.21	3.58	0.000
Overall R^2			0.02					0.13					0.18		
ΔR^2			0.02					0.12					0.04		
ΔF			3.96*					32.55**					12.85**		
<i>Dependent variable: revisit intention</i>															
Constant	4.13	0.05	0.14	77.02	0.000	4.13	0.05	0.14	85.39	0.000	4.13	0.05	0.14	86.40	0.000
Healthy factor	0.12	0.05	0.14	2.17	0.031	0.12	0.05	0.14	2.43	0.016	0.12	0.05	0.14	2.42	0.016
Novel and diverse factor						0.36	0.05	0.43	7.50	0.000	0.36	0.05	0.43	7.49	0.000
Sociocultural factor											-0.01	0.05	-0.01	-0.15	0.884
Overall R^2			0.02					0.21					0.21		
ΔR^2			0.02					0.19					0.00		
ΔF			4.71*					56.24**					0.02		
<i>Dependent variable: image change of Korea</i>															
Constant	3.67	0.05	-0.03	71.24	0.000	3.67	0.05	-0.03	76.02	0.000	3.64	0.05	-0.03	77.89	0.000
Healthy factor	-0.03	0.05	-0.03	-0.48	0.632	-0.02	0.05	-0.03	-0.51	0.612	-0.03	0.05	-0.03	-0.53	0.595
Novel and diverse factor						0.28	0.05	0.35	5.86	0.000	0.28	0.05	0.35	5.94	0.000
Sociocultural factor											0.15	0.05	0.18	3.08	0.002
Overall R^2			0.00					0.13					0.16		
ΔR^2			0.00					0.13					0.03		
ΔF			0.23					34.31**					9.50**		

Notes: ** $p < 0.01$; * $p < 0.05$

Table VI.
Results of hierarchical regression analysis: the effect of reasons for preferring Korean food on customer satisfaction, revisit intention and image change of Korea after eating

Theoretical implications

First, three domains were derived from the 12 reasons for preferring Korean food; these were “healthy,” “novel and diverse” and “sociocultural” factors (see [Table I](#)). In previous studies on ethnic food, scholars have strongly argued that factors in these three domains significantly affect diners’ preferences for ethnic foods ([Liu and Jang, 2009](#); [Roseman, 2006](#)). For instance, [Roseman \(2006\)](#) identified such reasons as the following for choosing ethnic food: a desire to eat “food that is different from that which I eat at home,” “food that belongs to an ethnicity/ culture different from my own,” “food with a variety of different flavors” and “food that is healthy for me.” In this regard, this study extends the existing literature by identifying three groups of factors affecting diners’ preferences in Korean restaurants in the USA.

Second, this is the first study to explore significant differences between socio-demographic groups’ reasons for preferring Korean food ([Table II](#)). The results indicate that those in their 20s or younger, women, Asians and those with a high-school or college students are more likely to prefer Korean food; this suggests that socio-demographic characteristics may be important in explaining differences in people’s reasons for preferring Korean food. This result confirms the importance of studying socio-demographic profiles regarding customers’ food preferences ([Hwang et al., 2012](#); [Roseman, 2006](#)). As a practical implication, it is recommended that for Korean restaurants, management must emphasize the importance of particular Korean sociocultural features to develop a menu or service tailored to particular socio-demographic groups. For example, for elderly customers, traditional Korean paintings could be hung on the walls of banquet rooms; for those in their 20s or younger, K-pop could be the background music. In addition, it may be beneficial to use famous *hallyu* celebrities in restaurant advertisements.

Third, from the results of the factor analysis, the following four factors were extracted from the 16 success factors of a Korean restaurant: “easy and convenient,” “cleanliness and sanitation,” “awareness” and “food and culture” (see [Table I](#)). This finding is consistent with those of previous studies of ethnic restaurants ([Ha and Jang, 2010a](#); [Liu and Jang, 2009](#)). [Liu and Jang \(2009\)](#), who investigated US customers’ perceptions of Chinese restaurants, found that food quality (e.g. taste), service (e.g. prompt service) and atmospherics (e.g. environmental cleanliness) are important attributes when visiting ethnic restaurants. [Ha and Jang \(2010b\)](#) also suggested that service quality (e.g. staff responsiveness) and food quality (e.g. taste) play a significant role in influencing customer satisfaction in Korean restaurants in the USA. In this respect, the present study has replicated existing studies’ findings by empirically identifying four types of success factors in Korean restaurants in the USA.

In addition, we found significant correlations between the respondents’ demographic characteristics and what they deemed to be the success factors of a Korean restaurant ([Table III](#)). That is, what people consider to be the key success factors of a Korean restaurant vary according to their demographic characteristics. More specifically, those in their 20s regarded easy and convenient, awareness and food and culture as important success factors of Korean restaurants. In a first attempt at examining significant differences in the perceptions of different socio-demographic groups regarding important factors affecting the success of ethnic Korean restaurants, this research expands existing knowledge by empirically identifying two factors having a significant influence: a person’s age and marital status.

Practical implications

This finding also has practical implications for ethnic restaurant owners. First, it is essential for them to take heed of the fact that respondents in their 20s indicated the highest levels in most of the success factors. Those in their 20s – sometimes called Generation Y – are the most important customer group because they are the most affluent. These young people

tend to eat out more often and spend more money than those in other age groups (Farris *et al.*, 2002). These young people are particular about easy and convenient, awareness and food and culture in Korean restaurants.

Second, interestingly, the married group deemed cleanliness and sanitation to be the most important success factor of an ethnic Korean restaurant, while the single group considered easy and convenient to be the most important success factor. This finding has practical implications when a new Korean restaurant is about to open in the USA. If it is a Korean casual-dining restaurant and targets single people, a restaurant manager should consider ease and convenience to be the most important success factor. However, if a restaurant is more likely to attract/targets family groups, cleanliness and sanitation should take priority over the other factors. Moreover, the responses to the questionnaire indicate that food and culture should also be regarded as a critical factor for the success of an ethnic Korean restaurant in the USA.

Third, respondents' demographics determined preference for Korean food menu items. For example, age was found to be an important component because it showed differences among a number of dishes. Customers in their 40s showed a higher level of current preferences for *bibimbap*, *bulgogi* and grilled *galbi* than the other two age groups. On the other hand, younger generations appear to prefer stew and *juk* compared with people in their 40s. The most popular and well-known Korean food (e.g. *bibimbap*, *bulgogi* and grilled *galbi*) seem to be preferred more by older generations who are more likely to be fond of familiar menu items. Based on these findings, current Korean restaurant managers can identify whether their target customers match the customers' current preference for Korean menu items (Table IV).

Fourth, there were significant correlations between the different demographic groups and their potential preferences for Korean dishes, and there are fruitful implications. For example, *kimchi*, *samgyetang*, *naengmyeon* and *juk* have higher level of potential preference by female customers than by male customers. When restaurant managers wish to promote *samgyetang* and *naengmyeon* during the summer because of the typical Korean lifestyle, the management team is advised to market those dishes to female customers first. Likewise, if restaurateurs plan to develop new types of *kimchi* and *juk*, these menu items should be more emphasized to females (see Table V).

Finally, the results of the hierarchical regression analysis showed that there are positive relationships between three of the reasons for preferring Korean food and the outcome variables (Table VI): the "novel and diverse" factor was found to have a significant impact on all three dependent variables, namely, customer satisfaction, revisit intention and change in Korea's image (Table VI). This confirms the finding of previous studies that the novel and diverse characteristics of food play an important role in enhancing diners' customer satisfaction levels and future behavioral intentions (Ha and Jang, 2010a; Jang *et al.*, 2012). According to a survey conducted by the Korea Tourism Organization (2009), the first images that come to mind when foreigners think of Korea are *kimchi* (fermented spicy cabbage) and *bulgogi* (Korean barbecue). This means that novel and diverse ethnic food plays an important role in influencing the overall image of the country (Du Rand *et al.*, 2003).

Another interesting finding was that the sociocultural factor had a positive influence on customer satisfaction and on changing the image of Korea (Table VI). This can be explained by the increase in popular Korean sociocultural products, including K-pop, TV drama/movies, games and food. This syndrome is called the "Korean Wave," and it has boomed in Asian regions and is expanding to other continents (Kim *et al.*, 2012). As the findings of this study indicate, the sociocultural dimensions of Korean food are likely to assist in motivating US diners to visit Korean restaurants. These findings are consistent with those of previous studies that the sociocultural factor is important in attracting restaurant patrons (Creighton,

2009). The findings have key practical implications for Korean restaurant managers. For example, it is recommended to include a famous Korean singer or actor in a menu or promotional material or to play Korean pop songs as the background music. In addition, it is widely known that Hanbok is the representative example of traditional Korean dress, so restaurant employees need to wear Hanbok, which could address the interest in social factors.

The hierarchical regression analysis also revealed that a customer's perception that the food is good for his/her health is one of the key factors affecting customer satisfaction and revisit intention. This reflects a current dining trend: healthy ethnic food is preferred in the USA. It seems obvious why many US citizens should wish to consume healthy food made with fresh ingredients and more vegetables. A recent culinary forecast report (National Restaurant Association, 2015) announced the top 20 food trends; most of them were associated with health-related factors (some of the examples mentioned are "healthful kids' meals," "natural ingredients" and "non-wheat noodles/pasta"). Thus, ethnic food that is regarded as healthy will be more likely to be selected by consumers, and patrons who prefer healthy food will tend to be satisfied with Korean restaurants and be loyal customers.

Limitations and future research

There are several limitations involved in this study. First, data were only collected in Chicago. Second, the findings may not apply to other types of ethnic restaurants because this study ascertained only the possibility of glocalization in Korean restaurants. Third, the respondents were local residents who had US citizenship without considering their ethnic backgrounds. Therefore, future research is needed to assess the preferences of customers in other metropolitan cities and in other ethnic restaurants. Now that food preferences are likely to vary by ethnicity/cultural community and national/regional locations (Camillo *et al.*, 2010; Kim *et al.*, 2014), future research is required to determine whether there are differences among respondents' diverse ethnic background when they experience different types of ethnic foods. Further, future research is required to develop both practical strategies and theories to facilitate penetration of markets in other countries. Finally, although this study used a single-item to measure the three dependent variables of customer satisfaction, revisit intentions and image change, it is recommended that future research use multi-item measures.

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