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The Influence of Ramen Selection Attributes on Consumer Purchase Intention*

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Abstract

The purpose of this study is to investigate the ramen selection attributes of consumers. This research assigned taste, price, quantity, design, and brand as selection attributes, all of which have already been verified by previous studies as selection attributes when purchasing processed foods. A total of 500 questionnaires were issued, and the survey results were analysed to ensure validity and reliability. A Structural Equation Model was used to test the hypotheses of the study. Based on the analysis, taste, price, quantity, design, and brand had a statistically significant effect on satisfaction. Furthermore, satisfaction had a statistically significant effect on repurchase intention. Among the selection attributes (taste, price, quantity, design, and brand), only price had a statistically significant effect on repurchase intention. However, the influence of the selection attributes on satisfaction varied depending on the consumer's consumption value. In order to analyse the moderating effect of consumption value, the respondent group was divided into a hedonism group and pragmatism group, and analysed. It empirically proved that the hedonistic value-oriented group valued taste, and the practical value-oriented group valued price the most. This study empirically verified the relationship between ramen selection attributes and consumption value, and provided corresponding theoretical and practical implications.

Keywords: Instant noodle, Selection attribute, Satisfaction, Repurchase

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

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1. Introduction

'Ramen', which has been a national food for a long time, is growing negatively. Ramen started in Japan in 1958 and was first introduced in Korea by Samyang Foods in 1963, five years later. In harmony with our traditional eating habits, it has grown into a market with annual sales exceeding 1 trillion won since 1998, establishing itself as a commercial food (The Argus, 2020). In terms of consumption per capita in 2016, Indonesia ranked 3rd with 50.5 pieces, Vietnam ranked 2nd with 52.6 pieces, and Korea ranked first in the world. However, according to food industry statistics, the domestic ramen market sales 2.97 trillion KW in 2017 fell by 2.9% compared to the previous year. The ramen market, which was expected to resume growth, recorded 2 trillion won for the first time in 2016. In particular, the sales of bags ramen, which account for 60% of the market, declined by 7.2% to KRW 1.33.2 trillion (The Argus, 2020). The main reason for the stagnation of the ramen market is that the market is changing from a production-oriented market to distribution and consumption, and various and convenient foods such as imported processed foods and HMR have expanded in the market. In particular, the HMR market from 1.5 trillion won in 2014 has doubled to 3 trillion won in 2017. Another factor is the increased interest in health as a factor in the ramen market stagnation (Yonhap News, 2019). Therefore, it is necessary to respond to changes in consumer consumption by analyzing market analysis information that reflects the changing characteristics of the food market. With this study, the ramen market, which may have entered a recession, will find a way to make a leap forward and present strategic directions in corporate marketing plans. In this study, we consider how the selection attributes for commercial ramen affect satisfaction and purchase intention, and analyze the effect of adjustment of consumption value in this causal relationship to determine the actual proof. This study carries out the following research objectives. First, it examines the relationship between the importance of ramen's selection attribute and satisfaction. Second, the relationship between satisfaction when purchasing ramen and purchase intention is verified. Third, this study aims to study the moderating effect of consumption value when the importance of ramen selection attributes affects satisfaction.

2. Theoretical background

2.1. Ramen selection attributes

Among the various characteristics of a product, the selection attribute can be defined as a decisive factor that influences consumers to lead to actual purchase (Lewis, 1981). The selection attribute is used to compare information collected through information search during the process of consumer's decision-making process such as problem recognition, information search, alternative evaluation, purchase decision, and post-purchase action, thereby determining the final product (Cha & Seo, 2019b; Cha & LYU, 2019; Cha & Shin, 2019; Cha & Seo, 2019c). It is explained that in the initial stage of information search, various attributes of a product are investigated, but when making a purchase decision, selection is made based on some of the most important attribute information. The choice attributes of a product or service are important factors that affect the importance and satisfaction of a consumer's purchase choice, and are closely related to the development and success of a new product or service (Rita, Oliveira, & Farisa, 2019; Cha & Shin, 2021). It has a significant impact on satisfaction in the order of internal factors such as taste and quality, external factors such as price or appearance, experience in purchasing, brand, and recommendation (Lee, Kwak, & Cha, 2020; Zhong & Moon, 2020). Consumers of Korean wheat noodles are found to think important in the order of price, packaging type, type of noodles, and brand (Cha & Noh, 2020; Farrand, Charlton, Crino, Santos, Rodriguez-Fernandez, Ni Mhurchu, & Webster, 2017). Other studies have shown that most of the time and frequently, emphasizing the importance of packaging design because of the fact that it happens when you see products on store shelves. In one study, the taste and package design of ramen determined the brand value of the product, and the brand image determined the consumer's desire to purchase (Cha & Wang, 2020; Cha & Rha, 2021). In addition, the quality factors such as taste, quality, nutritional ingredients, and raw materials (Cha & Seo, 2019a), as well as reliability factors such as recommendation, purchasing experience, manufacturing company, and brand, and price factors such as price, capacity, and appearance, were derived for the selection attributes of Korean adults' commercial ramen (Petrescu, Vermeir, & Petrescu-Mag, 2020). In another study, it was analyzed that consumers consider packaging design and brand very important. Based on these previous studies, the following research hypotheses were established.

H1: The taste of ramen will have a positive effect on the satisfaction.

H2: The price of ramen will have a positive effect on the satisfaction.

H3: The quantity of ramen will have a positive effect on the satisfaction.

- H4:** The brand of ramen will have a positive effect on the satisfaction.
- H5:** The design of ramen will have a positive effect on the satisfaction.
- H6:** The taste of ramen will have a positive effect on the purchase intention.
- H7:** The price of ramen will have a positive effect on the purchase intention.
- H8:** The quantity of ramen will have a positive effect on the purchase intention.
- H9:** The brand of ramen will have a positive effect on the purchase intention.
- H10:** The design of ramen will have a positive effect on the purchase intention.

2.2. Satisfaction and purchase intention

Consumer satisfaction is a measure of satisfaction by evaluating the experience of a transaction or use of a product or service traded by a consumer and measuring the consumer's assessment of each component of satisfaction (Cha & Lee, 2021). Purchasing intent is to measure whether a consumer is willing to buy and recognize the need and importance of a product through the process of information exploration and purchasing it by evaluating and selecting it. In a study by Engel, Blackwell and Miniard (1995), the intention to purchase was determined by the consumer as a determinant of the consumer's purchasing behavior. In addition, the increase in customer satisfaction suggests that customer satisfaction is a factor that affects repurchase or intention to purchase. Other studies show that the higher the satisfaction level of convenience food, the higher the repurchase, and the higher the satisfaction level, the higher the purchase intention, so it is necessary to focus on marketing strategies for consumers who are satisfied. Based on these prior studies, the following research hypothesis is established

- H11:** The satisfaction of ramen consumers will have a positive effect on repurchase intention.

2.3. Consumer consumption value

Consumption value, unlike general value, is a specific value related to consumption and has a potential influence in the process of selecting products and services to satisfy the basic needs of consumers (Sheth, Newman, & Gross, 1991). In addition, it was defined as having the greatest influence when consumers choose the market and having a strong and comprehensive influence on the cognitive process and purchasing behavior of individual products. Consumer value can be divided into practical value and pleasure value (Chandon, Wansink, & Laurent, 2000; Babin, Darden, & Griffin, 1994). In addition, the outcome consumers want varies according to their pursuit, and it can be classified into practical value and hedonistic value as acquiring something and performing an action (Triandis, 1977). Consumers who value practical consumption value can purchase the most reasonable product when shopping for their planned consumption needs (Engel et al, 1995), and can feel the practical value when they achieve their desired goal or discover the products they are looking for (Babin et al, 1994). Consumers who value hedonistic consumption value seek pleasure in the shopping process (Holbrook & Hirschman, 1982), and that hedonistic consumption value is subjective and personal compared to practical consumption value, and can be obtained through pleasure and fun rather than achievement of purpose (Bellenger, Steinberg, & Stanton, 1976). It is important for businesses to provide differentiated measures considering the practical and hedonic consumption values of consumers as they strive to increase service quality, as consumers who value practical values well consider product features. Based on these prior studies, the following research hypotheses are established.

- H12-1:** The impact of ramen taste on satisfaction will vary depending on consumers' consumption value.
- H12-2:** The impact of ramen price on satisfaction will vary depending on consumers' consumption value.
- H12-3:** The impact of ramen quantity on satisfaction will vary depending on consumers' consumption value.
- H12-4:** The impact of ramen brand on satisfaction will vary depending on consumers' consumption value.
- H12-5:** The impact of ramen design on satisfaction will vary depending on consumers' consumption value.

3. Research method

3.1. Operational definition of variables

Taste was defined as texture, degree of spicy taste, and type of noodles based on studies by Han and Kim (2019), Park et al. (2011), Park, Kim, and Yu (1999). Price was defined as the adequacy of capacity and price based on previous researches (Kwak, & Cha, 2021; Cha, & Lee, 2021). Quantity was defined as nutritional ingredients and raw materials based on studies by Han and Kim (2019). The brand was defined as a company's reliability, brand diversity and manufacturing company based on research by Park et al. (2011). The design was defined as external elements, packaging, and package design based on studies by Han and Kim (2019), Shin et al. (2014). Satisfaction is defined as a measure of satisfaction by evaluating experience based on research by Bolton (1998), and a measure of consumer evaluation of each component of satisfaction based on it, factors influencing conversion intent. The purchase intention was defined as purchase experience and recommendation based on research (Engel, 1995).

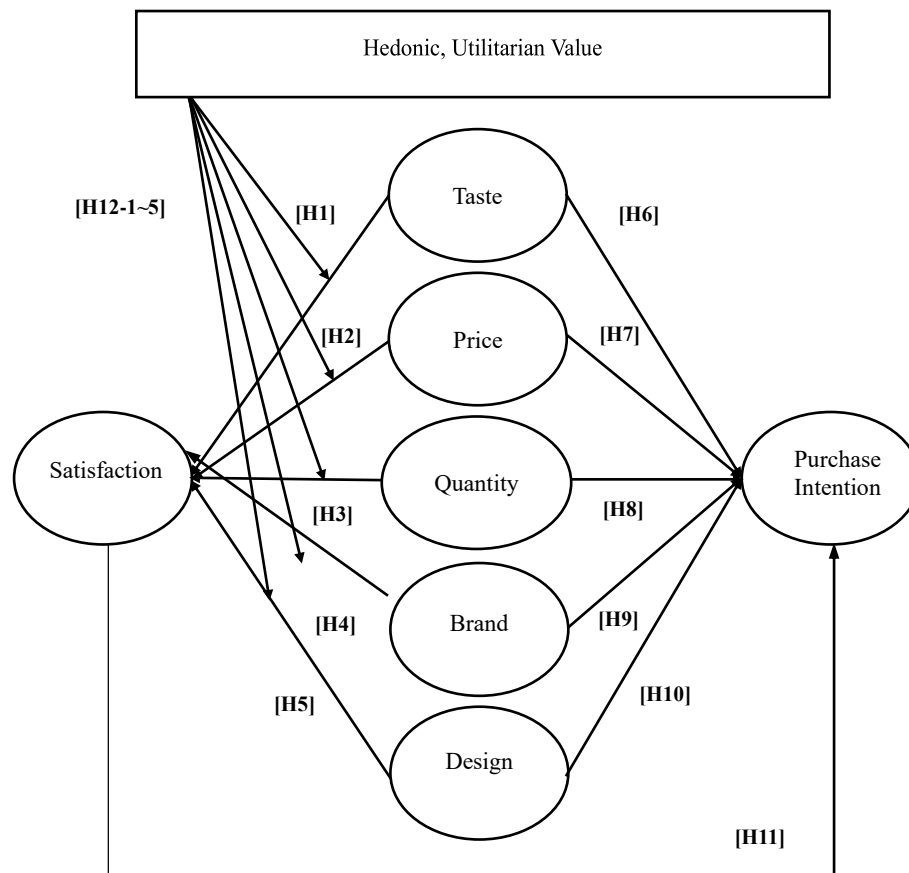


Figure 1: Research Model

3.2. Samples and Investigation Procedures

The survey items for the study were modified and supplemented to fit the existing researchers into this study. The literature of prior research was reviewed and corrected to determine the selection and refinement of the survey items. Of the total 500 respondents, 160 (32 percent) were men and 340 (68 percent) were women. By age, one person (2%) was in his or her teens, 487 (97.4%) were in his or her 20s, four (8%) were in his or her 30s, and eight (1.6%) were in his or her 40s. The monthly salary was 318 people (63.6%) with less than 500 thou. won, 140 people (28%) with 100~300 million won, 32 people (6.4%) with 3~5million won, and 2 people (0.4%) with more than 10 million won. In case of jobs, students were 480 (96%), 8 professionals (1.6%), 9 office workers (1.8%), 2 housewives (0.4%).

Table 1: Demographic status

Variables		Sample (person)	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	160	32
	Female	340	68
Age	10-19	1	0.2
	20-29	487	97.4
	30-39	4	0.8
	39 <	8	1.6
Salary (KRW)	< 500 thou.	318	63.6
	500 - 1 Million	140	28
	Over 1mil - 3mil	32	6.4
	Over 3mil - 5mil	8	1.6
	Over 5mil	2	0.4
Job	Student	480	96
	Specialist	8	1.6
	Office worker	9	1.8
	Housewife	2	0.4
	Misc.	1	0.2
Consuming Ramen	More than 4 times per week	15	3
	2~3 times per week	94	18.8
	1 time per week	178	35.6
	1 per 2~3 weeks	137	27.4
	1 per month	76	15.2

4. Empirical results

4.1. Metric evaluation

First, reliability analysis and validity analysis were conducted for the measurement items of the compositional concept measured by multiple items (Churchill, 1979). For reliability and validity evaluation, exploratory factor analysis was conducted and Cronbach's coefficient was reviewed. The factor extraction method used principal component analysis, and the factor was extracted based on the Eigen value 1. VARIMAX was applied as the factor rotation method. Table 2, Table 3 show the results of the exploratory factor analysis. As shown in Table 2, Table 3. Cronbach's Alpha coefficients are all above 0.7, ensuring reliability (Nunnally, 1967). As a result of the exploratory factor analysis, the discriminant validity and convergence validity were confirmed to some extent, and the confirmatory factor analysis was performed using Amos 20.0 for statistical verification of the validity.

Table 2: Exploratory factor analysis result

	Variables				
	Quantity	Brand	Price	Taste	Design

qua01	.909	-	-	-	-
qua02	.908	-	-	-	-
qua03	.860	-	-	-	-
qua04	.720	-	-	-	-
bra01	-	.831	-	-	-
bra02	-	.812	-	-	-
bra03	-	.824	-	-	-
bra04	-	.855	-	-	-
pri01	-	-	.755	-	-
pri02	-	-	.884	-	-
pri03	-	-	.895	-	-
pri04	-	-	.821	-	-
tas01	-	-	-	.863	-
tas02	-	-	-	.871	-
tas03	-	-	-	.831	-
tas04	-	-	-	.787	-
des01	-	-	-	-	.708
des02	-	-	-	-	.558
des03	-	-	-	-	.853
Variance (%): Total Variance 71.6%	20.7	13.7	13.4	13.4	10.4
Cronbach's Alpha	0.907	0.888	0.902	0.886	0.749

qua=quantity, bra=brand, tas=taste, pri=price, des=design

Table 3: Exploratory factor analysis result

	Variables	
	Satisfaction	Purchase Intention
sat01	.841	-
sat02	.825	-
sat03	.852	-
sat04	.818	-
pur01	-	.842
pur02	-	.877
pur03	-	.783
pur04	-	.824
Variance (%): Total Variance 74.8%	46.1	28.7
Cronbach's Alpha	0.929	0.924

sat=satisfaction, pur=purchase intention

As shown in Table 3, although the chi-square values for the measurement model are significant ($p=0.00$), GFI (goodness-of-fit index), NFI (normed fit index), CFI (comparative fit index) were considered reasonable to evaluate model fit,

(Bagozzi & Yi, 1988). The overall model fit was evaluated as satisfactory as GFI=0.927, AGFI=0.896, NFI=0.929, and CFI=0.964. The construct reliability and average variance extracted (AVE) meet the criteria (CR 0.6 or higher, AVE 0.5 or higher) suggested by Bagozzi and Yi (1988), and both loads are statistically significant ($p < 0.01$). Convergent validity was confirmed. Table 4 shows the results of confirmatory factor analysis.

Table 4: Confirmatory factor analysis result

Variables		CR	AVE
Quantity	qua01	0.90	0.71
	qua02		
	qua03		
	qua04		
Brand	bra01	0.88	0.66
	bra02		
	bra03		
	bra04		
Price	pri01	0.90	0.71
	pri02		
	pri03		
	pri04		
Taste	tas01	0.88	0.66
	tas02		
	tas03		
	tas04		
Design	des01	0.83	0.58
	des02		
	des03		
	des04		
Satisfaction	sat01	0.93	0.77
	sat02		
	sat03		
	sat04		
Purchase intention	pur01	0.92	0.76
	pur02		
	pur03		
	pur04		

Chi-Square = 232.638 ($p=0.00$, $df=120$), GFI = 0.927, AGFI=0.896, NFI=0.929, CFI=0.964, RMR=0.031, RMSEA=0.054(* $p < 0.001$), qua=quantity, bra=brand, tas=taste, pri=price, des=design, sat=satisfaction, pur=purchase intention

The square root of the average variance extraction (AVE) was used to verify the discriminant validity between the factors that proved single-dimensionality. As a result, as shown in Table 4, the value of the square root of AVE was greater than 0.5, and it was found that all correlation values other than the diagonals in the related row and column were greater. Therefore, it can be said that the validity of discrimination between the different constituent concepts, in which a corresponding difference should appear in their measurement results is verified.

Table 5: Discriminant validity through correlation analysis

	SAT	TAS	QUA	BRA	DES	PUR	PRI
SAT	0.878						
TAS	0.653	0.818					
QUA	0.309	0.126	0.847				
BRA	0.542	0.465	0.220	0.813			
DES	0.446	0.320	0.228	0.430	0.764		
PUR	0.749	0.548	0.194	0.502	0.400	0.874	
PRI	0.410	0.220	0.479	0.246	0.272	0.279	0.845

Note) The value presented on the diagonal is the square root of AVE

4.2. Research hypothesis verification

The study hypothesis was verified using Amos 20.0. For the study model, $X^2 = 204.500$ ($df = 124$, $p = 0.000$), $GFI = 0.934$, $AGFI = 0.909$, $NFI = 0.938$, $CFI = 0.974$, $RMR = 0.026$, $RMSEA = 0.045$, indicating a satisfactory level of fitness index. Table 6 shows the hypothesis test results for the main effects from Hypothesis 1 to Hypothesis 5.

Table 6: Results of the Research hypothesis

Hypotheses	Path	Standardized Regression Weight	t- value	p- value	Result
H1	Taste → Satisfaction	0.068	2.173	***	Support
H2	Price → Satisfaction	0.210	4.863	***	Support
H3	Quantity → Satisfaction	0.137	3.900	***	Support
H4	Brand → Satisfaction	0.578	11.239	***	Support
H5	Design → Satisfaction	0.122	3.578	***	Support
H6	Taste → Purchase Intention	-0.034	-1.058	0.290	Reject
H7	Price → Purchase Intention	0.117	2.626	0.009**	Support
H8	Quantity → Purchase Intention	-0.021	-0.569	0.569	Reject
H9	Brand → Purchase Intention	0.082	1.475	0.140	Reject
H10	Design → Purchase Intention	0.057	1.581	0.114	Reject
H11	Satisfaction → Purchase Intention	0.768	15.672	***	Support

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

As shown in Table 6, as a result of hypothesis verification on the main effects of this study, taste, quantity, price, brand, and design all had a significant effect on satisfaction. This suggests that the quantity, taste, price, brand, and design of ramen's selection attributes can be major factors in customer satisfaction. On the other hand, the path coefficient leading to purchase intention is shown to be significant only for price, suggesting that only price can be a major factor in consumer purchase intention.

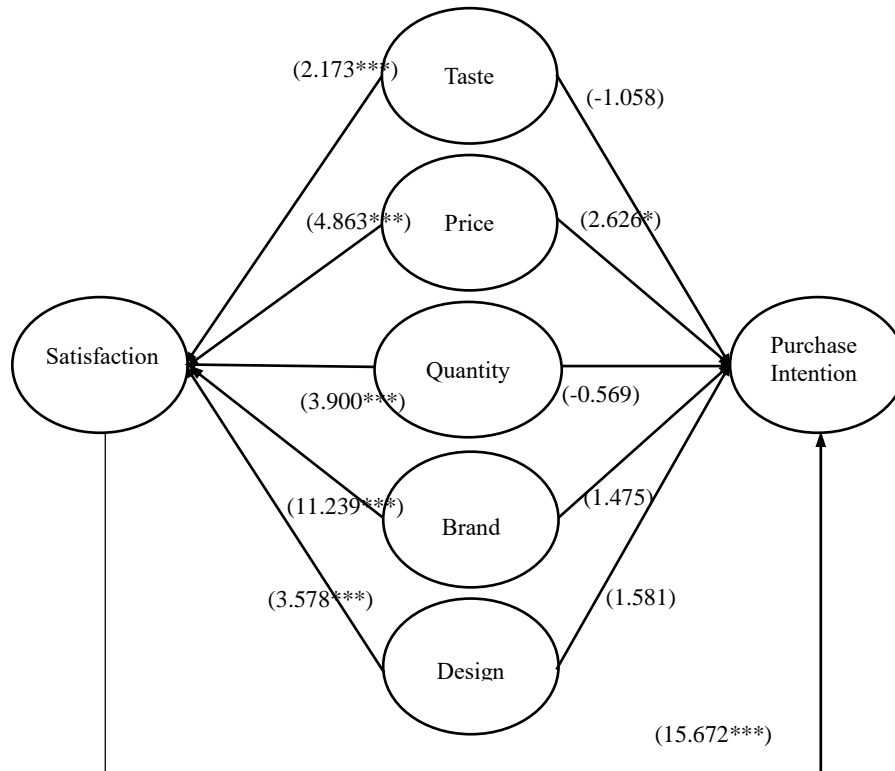


Figure 2: The result of Research

4.3. Verification of the moderating effect of consumers’ consumption value

To verify the moderating effect of consumer consumption value for ramen, the entire sample (n=318) was divided into a hedonic value group and a utilitarian value group, and the path coefficients were compared. It was divided into low hedonic (utilitarian) group, high hedonic (utilitarian) group. It was measured on a 4-item Likert 5-point scale (1=not at all, 3=medium, 5=very much) of the level of hedonistic value. It was also measured on a 4-item Likert 5-point scale of practical value (1=not at all, 3=medium, 5=very much). Table 7 compares the path coefficients of the hedonistic consumption value group and the practical consumption value group. As a result of the comparison between the two groups, it was found that the effect of quantity, taste, and brand on satisfaction had more influence in the group that valued the pleasure value. On the other hand, the influence of price and design on satisfaction was found to have more influence in the group that values practical value.

Table 7: Comparison between the Hedonic Consumption Value Group and the Utilitarian Consumption Value Group

	Coefficient		Result	Chi-Square Incremental	p-value
	Utilitarian Value Group	Hedonic Value Group			
Quantity→ Satisfaction	-0.025	0.055	<	0.691(d.f.=1)	0.406
Price→ Satisfaction	0.396	0.101	>	6.455(d.f.=1)	0.011*
Taste→ Satisfaction	0.192	0.629	<	12.648(d.f.=1)	0.000***
Design→ Satisfaction	0.191	0.094	>	1.611(d.f.=1)	0.204
Brand→ Satisfaction	-0.036	0.173	<	0.024(d.f.=1)	0.876

* p< 0.05, ** p< 0.01, *** p< 0.001

However, as a result of comparing the chi-square increment value with the p value, it was found that there was a statistically significant difference in the effects of price and taste on satisfaction. As a result of this analysis, the effect of moderating effect was empirically verified that pragmatism-oriented consumers react more sensitively to the price of ramen, and pleasure-oriented consumers are more influenced by the taste of ramen. This means that both the pleasure group and the pragmatic group were sensitive to the influence of the ramen selection factor on consumer satisfaction. Hypothesis testing has adopted a hypothesis that hedonic groups will have more influence when taste diversity affects satisfaction, and practical groups will have more influence when price affordability affects satisfaction. On the other hand, design, brand, and quantity were not significant.

5. Conclusion and Suggestions

The purpose of this study was to find out what factors influence consumers' satisfaction and purchase intention among the selection attributes of consumers who have ramen. Through the survey of the existing research, the influence of five selection factors that were judged to be more suitable for ramen purchase among the selection attributes on satisfaction and purchase intention was examined, and the causal relationship that satisfaction leads to purchase intention was examined. As a result, it was found that the quantity, taste, price, brand, and design of ramen had a significant effect on customer satisfaction, whereas only the price had a significant effect on purchase intention. Moreover, it was found that the path coefficient leading to customer satisfaction to purchase intention was statistically significant. In addition, as a result of comparison by dividing into the practical consumption value group and the hedonistic consumption value group, the consumers were different according to the consumption value. As for the effect of quantity on satisfaction, it was found that the pleasure-oriented group had a positive effect and the practical-oriented group had a negative effect. In terms of the effect of price, taste, and design on satisfaction, both the pleasure-oriented group and the practical-oriented group had a positive effect. As for the influence of brand on satisfaction, it was found that the pleasure-oriented group had a positive effect, and the practical-oriented group had a negative effect. However, as a result of comparing the chi-square increment value and the p value, it was found that there was a statistically significant difference in the effect of only price and taste on satisfaction. Therefore, it can be seen that ramen selection attributes that affect satisfaction vary according to the consumption value of ramen consumers. Practical consumers are more sensitive to the price of ramen, and pleasure-oriented consumers are more affected by the taste of ramen, which means that both hedonic and practical groups are more sensitive to the influence of ramen choice on consumer satisfaction. This study drew similar conclusions with previous studies, but has some limitations, and accordingly, future research directions can be suggested as follows. First, the selection attributes were limited to taste, price, brand, design, and quantity. In addition, it is necessary to study by adding new optional attributes such as quality, nutrition, origin, familiarity, and health. Second, the sample is concentrated as students in their twenties, and objective selection attributes are not reflected. In future studies, it is believed that there will be a need to diversify groups and conduct more general studies.

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