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# A Study on Selection Attributes of Dessert Cafes: Focusing on Literature Research<sup>1</sup>

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## Abstract

This study aims to examine the relationship between customer satisfaction and revisit intention according to the selected attributes of dessert cafes in Korea. Additionally, we would like to provide useful data to maintain a continuous competitive advantage by comprehensively reviewing the effective operation of dessert cafes and strategic plans and methods to identify customer needs in the rapidly spreading competitive environment of the domestic dessert restaurant industry in Korea. A qualitative analysis method was applied through a literature review on satisfaction and revisit according to the selected attributes of dessert cafes, and data using theoretical backgrounds obtained through web searches and existing cases. As a result, dessert quality and convenience showed inconsistent results, and coffee quality was found to have a statistically significant positive (+) effect in various data. Moreover, various attributes such as service, image, price, diversity, and service had a significantly positive (+) effect, and satisfaction with dessert cafes also had a significantly positive (+) effect on revisit intention. In conclusion, dessert cafe managers should develop various desires that reflect consumers' tastes and are competitive so that customers can revisit dessert cafes, which requires more in-depth analysis by obtaining a more systematic sample group in the future.

**Keywords:** Dessert cafes, Selection attributes, Satisfaction, Revisit Intention

**Major Classifications:** Restaurant Management, Customer Eating-out behavior, Restaurant Marketing

## 1. Introduction

Dessert cafes have become increasingly popular in South Korea in recent years. These cafes often feature a wide variety of sweet treats, including cakes, pastries, ice cream, and savory snacks and beverages. Many dessert cafes in Korea are known for their visually appealing and Instagram-worthy decor, and they often attract customers looking for a unique and memorable dining experience. One popular trend in Korean dessert cafes is the "café hopping" culture, which

involves visiting multiple cafes in one day or in a short period of time. This has led to a rise in the number of dessert cafes in urban areas, particularly in cities like Seoul. In addition, many Korean dessert cafes offer unique and creative menu items, such as bingsu (shaved ice desserts) with unique toppings and flavors, waffles, and even fusion desserts like ice cream tacos and soft serve in a cone made of cheese. Another trend is the incorporation of traditional Korean flavors and ingredients into modern desserts. For example, some cafes offer desserts made with traditional ingredients like red bean paste, sweet rice cakes, and

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fermented soybean paste. Overall, the dessert cafe culture in South Korea is known for its wide variety of sweet treats, visually appealing decor, and unique and creative menu items. The Incorporating of traditional Korean flavors and ingredients has become popular in recent years.

In the domestic restaurant industry, the psychology and behavior of restaurant consumers are becoming more complicated due to the expansion of women's social advancement, changes in lifestyle, and nuclear families. As a result, the food service market is developing various markets to meet the needs of consumers (Lee, 2016). Recently, as dessert-related menus and brands have been developed and entered the market in various places such as large companies, department stores, and convenience stores, the presence of the dessert market is gradually growing as existing bakeries, coffee shops, and restaurants self-employed people have gathered (Kwon, 2021). Following these changes, in the dessert market, where female consumers are the main customer base, dessert cafes where you can comfortably relax and enjoy conversation have become a new cultural space (Son, 2014).

These dessert cafes are emerging in various and new forms. In particular, as the number of bakery-type coffee shops increases, more consumers are enjoying brunch, which is used as a substitute for meals, and if coffee and dessert menus are sold together, sales increase by more than 40% compared to coffee alone (Song, 2012). Also, according to the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs(2016), The domestic dessert restaurant market grew 13.9% year-on-year based on sales of 8.9 trillion won in 2014, accounting for about 10.7% of the entire restaurant market(83.8 trillion won), but the rapidly growing domestic dessert restaurant industry is expected to reach a red ocean state due to fierce competition among brands and the reckless expansion of stores(Park, Yang, & Lee, 2017). In addition, current consumers are demanding high-quality products and services while experiencing a variety of qualitatively improved services. As a result, service providers are having a very difficult time meeting the needs of each consumer (Lee, 2010). In other words, it has reached its limit to meeting various needs of consumers through the cheap price of high-quality products, which was a key marketing tool in the past.

Namely, by breaking away from the cafe culture, where it is difficult to compete with only coffee or beverage, and trying to differentiate by reflecting consumer tastes, it is necessary to have competitiveness beyond low prices and quality improvement of service products (Ra, 2017).

In this context, this study attempted to identify attributes that affect satisfaction with dessert cafes and intention to revisit. Previous studies on existing dessert cafes have been conducted from various perspectives, but it is difficult to find studies related to customer satisfaction and revisit according to service quality (Yoon, 2017). Meanwhile, as interest and

demand for dessert cafes increase, it is time to need independent concepts and marketing that are different from existing coffee shops and bakery cafes (Seo & Kim 2016).

Therefore, this study identifies the factors that influence the satisfaction and revisit intention of customers who use dessert cafes, in addition to providing services that identify customer needs, we aim to establish an effective dessert cafe operating strategy and provide useful data that can continuously maintain a competitive edge.

## 2. Literature Review

### 2.1. Dessert cafes

Dessert is the food served at the end of a meal (Moon & Lyu, 2013). This term refers to coffee or beverages, fruit or sweet cakes or various ice creams, etc., and means that all three elements of fruit, flavor, and sweetness are included (Kim, 2015). It originally originated from food served after meals in the West (Moon & Lyu, 2013). Desserts first appeared around the 14th century, and with the introduction of Russian-style services that provide meals per course since the mid-19th century, desserts became an essential element of Western food culture, and the concept of modern desserts to satisfy one's mouth with sweets after a meal was settled (Jeong, 2019). With the recent development of eating out culture, the definition is changing to something that can be eaten simply before or after a meal as an intermediate form between a meal and a snack, centering on the young. and with these factors, the composition of dessert menus is diversifying and specializing (Jung, 2016).

A dessert cafe refers to a cultural space where various kinds of desserts can be served with coffee and drinks (Jang, 2020). In other words, a dessert cafe is a restaurant that sells various kinds of desserts that can be eaten lightly before and after meals to enhance the taste with a sweet and sour taste, and it means that most customers who visit the cafe have a space to eat and talk with drinks and food while sitting in their seats (Jung, 2018).

The size of the dessert restaurant market seems to be showing steady growth every year. Specifically, it was revealed that the size and sales of the restaurant market for major dessert items accounted for a high proportion in the order of coffee, confectionery baking, juice, tea, and rice cakes. Dessert cafes, which commercialize such various items and provide them to consumers, are said to be growing rapidly due to the increase in consumer interest and demand (Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs, 2016). In a fiercely competitive environment, dessert cafes are attempting to differentiate themselves from ordinary cafes by providing unique menus and services characteristic of each cafe in addition to coffee and drinks, the main menu of the

cafe(Kim, 2015). For example, by providing luxurious menus, interiors, and services that go well with drinks such as bakery cafes, brunch cafes, and other tea cafes, we are developing differentiated competitiveness by establishing ourselves as a creative cafe type with a new concept, breaking away from the existing cafe type (Kim, 2015).

As such, in this paper, a dessert cafe means a cafe consisting of various dessert menus such as bakery, ice cream, and shaved ice, as well as coffee, beverages, and black tea. In addition, we want to define it as a cultural space where you can easily enjoy the sweet taste and aroma of desserts in a space where various types of desserts are prepared (Kim, 2013).

## 2.2. Selection attributes

Selection attributes of a dessert cafe in Korea may include a variety of factors as follows;

2.2.1. Menu: Dessert cafes in Korea are known for offering a wide variety of sweet treats, including cakes, pastries, and ice cream, as well as savory snacks and beverages. Customers may also look for unique and creative menu items that are not commonly found at other cafes.

2.2.2. Location: Convenience and accessibility are key factors when it comes to selecting a dessert cafe in Korea. Many customers prefer cafes located in busy, urban areas, such as in the heart of Seoul, or near popular tourist destinations.

2.2.3. Atmosphere: Dessert cafes in Korea are often known for their visually appealing and Instagram-worthy decor. Many customers look for cafes with a unique, memorable atmosphere that will make for a good photo opportunity.

2.2.4. Service: Good service is another important factor when it comes to selecting a dessert cafe in Korea. Customers may look for cafes with friendly and attentive staff who can recommend menu items and make recommendations.

2.2.5. Price: While many dessert cafes in Korea can be quite expensive, customers may also look for cafes with reasonable prices, especially if they are planning to visit multiple cafes in one day or in a short period of time.

2.2.6. Brand reputation: Brand reputation and popularity of the cafe can also be a consideration for customers, they may look for a cafe that is well-known, with a good reputation, and has positive reviews from other customers.

2.2.7. Incorporation of traditional ingredients: With the rise

of incorporating traditional Korean flavors and ingredients into modern desserts, customers may look for cafes that offer desserts made with traditional ingredients like red bean paste, sweet rice cakes, and fermented soybean paste.

Selective attributes are factors that have a direct impact on selection, which means that each group has different results of selection (Zikmund, 1994). In addition, these are the factors that consumers collect and compare information about a specific product in the decision-making process and finally select the product according to some of the most important attributes (Yu, 2019). In particular, in a dessert cafe where a variety of desserts are prepared, visual aspects such as beautiful desserts with good pictures or the atmosphere of the cafe and psychological aspects such as happiness that can be felt while enjoying sweet fragrance and taste may be more important(Yoon, 2017).

In other words, the selection attribute is an essential factor in understanding customers and is a very important characteristic that consumers decide whether to choose a product. In fact, consumers sometimes visit dessert cafes to purchase services or products and sometimes visit certain dessert cafes for gatherings with acquaintances regardless of purchasing (Jeon, 2017). As such, selection attributes are used as important variables in consumer behavior analysis because they directly affect product selection by differentiating attitudes toward products (Oh & Ko, 2009).

## 2.3. Satisfaction

Satisfaction with F&B stores in Korea can be influenced by a variety of factors, including taste and quality of food, atmosphere and décor, service, price, brand reputation, popularity, incorporation of traditional ingredients, convenience, and accessibility (Cha & Seo, 2018; Cha et al., 2018; Cha & Seo, 2019). The taste and quality of the desserts and other menu items offered at a cafe can have a major impact on customer satisfaction. Customers may be more satisfied with cafes that offer high-quality, well-crafted desserts that are fresh and visually appealing. The atmosphere and decor of a cafe can also play a role in customer satisfaction. Customers may be more satisfied with cafes that have a unique and memorable atmosphere, that is visually appealing and instagrammable. Good service is another important factor in determining customer satisfaction at a dessert cafe in Korea. Customers may be more satisfied with cafes that have friendly and attentive staff who can recommend menu items and make recommendations. The price of the desserts and other menu items offered at a cafe can also impact customer satisfaction. Customers may be more satisfied with cafes that offer reasonable prices and good value for their money. Brand reputation and popularity of the cafe can also be a

consideration for customers, they may be more satisfied with a cafe that is well-known, with a good reputation, and positive reviews from other customers. With the rise of incorporating traditional Korean flavors and ingredients into modern desserts, customers may be more satisfied with cafes that offer desserts made with traditional ingredients like red bean paste, sweet rice cakes, and fermented soybean paste. The convenience and accessibility of the location of the cafe can also play a role in customer satisfaction, customers may be more satisfied with cafes located in busy, urban areas, or near popular tourist destinations, that are easy to reach and have good accessibility.

Customer satisfaction is defined as a customer's fulfillment response that reaches the customer's expectations above a set level, usually in the post-purchase evaluation of a product or service (Oliver, 1981). In other words, satisfaction is an emotion such as pleasure or disappointment felt by comparing people's expectations and the degree of perception of a product, and the level of satisfaction means the difference between perception and expectation. Therefore, satisfaction means that the judgment made by an individual's subjective experience meets or exceeds the initial expectations (Kotler, 1988). Oliver (1980) defined satisfaction as a comprehensive psychological state arising from a complex combination of expectations that were not consistent with pre-thought emotions about the consumption experience, and it was called satisfaction on the assumption that the purchase experience was an evaluation that exceeded expectations. In addition, the U.S. Marketing Association defined customer satisfaction as satisfaction occurs when it meets or exceeds expectations generated by customers' demands, and on the contrary, dissatisfaction occurs when it falls short of expectations (Kim, 2008). In other words, customer satisfaction is not only related to a company's product or quality of service, but also contributes to customer retention and corporate profitability (Jeong, 2010), especially one of the company's core marketing strategies, and is often dealt with in the industry related to customer service.

#### 2.4. Revisit Intention

Revisit intention refers to the feelings or thoughts of customers who want to use the service again based on their experience of using the service (Suh & Kim, 2011). In other words, the intention to revisit refers to the probability that consumers' attitudes and beliefs will shift to practical purchasing behavior and the will of planned future action (Parasuraman, Zeithaml, & Berry, 1988). Oliver (1999)'s study defined it as a sub-dimensional customer loyalty as a future behavior in which consumers attempt to buy and then repurchase services and food that they are satisfied with (Cha & Wang, 2020). In the case of a

restaurant or cafe, it has been empirically proven that if customers are satisfied, the intention to revisit is very high (Cha, 2020; Kwak et al., 2021).

In conclusion, revisit intention is recognized as a very important concept in marketing as a substitute for customer maintenance and revisit behavior, which is a very important factor that continues to generate corporate profits or performance from a long-term perspective. This is explained in marketing-related literature as the concept of customer loyalty, customer retention, or relationship continuation (Song, 2008). In addition, Oliver (1980) revealed that satisfaction affects post-purchase attitudes and repurchase intentions, and the results of tourists' satisfaction and dissatisfaction vary widely, so they are changed to revisit other tourist destinations depending on the degree of satisfaction and dissatisfaction (Moutinho, 1988). In this way, customer re-visit is a very important factor that has a direct impact on the company's performance because it can secure continuous profits and lay the foundation for long-term loyal customers.

### 3. Research Methods and Materials

In this study, we are going to examine the influence of choice attributes on customer satisfaction and intention to visit again in consumers who use dessert cafes. At this time, related papers were collected using Korean academic journals Quoted Index (KCI), Korean Academic Information (KISS), Academic Research Information Service (RISS), and Nuri Media (Dbpia), and there was no restriction on the search year and publication period of the paper at the time of the search. In addition, to analyze papers related to dessert cafes, papers within the main topic categories were finally selected in each database.

As a result of analyzing the selected paper, Choi (2022) presented coffee quality, dessert quality, interior decoration, service, and convenience as optional attributes. At this time, it has a statistically significant positive (+) effect on satisfaction in the order of dessert quality ( $t = 6.259$ , significance level  $p < .001$ ) and convenience ( $t = 3.444$ ,  $p < .01$ ). In the revisit intention part, dessert quality ( $t = 3.606$ , significance level  $p < .001$ ) and coffee quality ( $t = 2.548$ , significance level  $p < .01$ ) showed significant positive (+) effects. However, this study overlooked the fact that women generally visit dessert cafes more frequently than men, and the possibility that a biased empirical analysis conclusion was drawn cannot be excluded because women accounted for 59.6% of the 260 participants, a sample similar to that of men.

In addition, according to Jeon (2017), taste and nutrition, service level, atmosphere and facilities, and product diversity were defined as optional attributes, at which time service

level ( $t=2.084$ ,  $p<0.05$ ) and product variety ( $t=4.308$ ,  $p<0.01$ ) showed a significantly positive(+) effect on satisfaction. On the other hand, taste and nutrition ( $t=-1.313$ ,  $p<0.10$ ), and atmosphere ( $t=-0.657$ ,  $p<0.10$ ) were found to be non-significant. This is similar to a study by Kim and Nam (2015), which analyzed market segmentation based on the selected attributes of dessert cafes. However, since the study was conducted by limiting the subjects to Seoul and the metropolitan area, it is unreasonable to generalize various dessert cafes.

According to Kim (2020), image, convenience, dessert quality, cost performance, and coffee quality were defined as optional attributes, and at this time, coffee quality ( $\beta=.465$ ,  $t=7.676$ ) showed the most significant positive (+) effect on satisfaction, followed by cost-effectiveness ( $\beta=.152$ ,  $t=2.327$ ) and image ( $\beta=.151$ ,  $t=2.422$ ) had a significantly positive (+) effect on satisfaction, and dessert quality and convenience did not show a significant positive effect. The study was also centered on romantic cafes in Busan, there are limitations in viewing it as a result of all dessert cafes.

By integrating the above contents, dessert cafes are generally evaluated by customers based on various attributes, and through this, they are found to affect satisfaction and intention to visit again. However, research on customer satisfaction and revisit intention of dessert cafes was mainly conducted because the research subjects were not suitable or research results using specific groups were mainly analyzed, so there were different results even if each paper analyzed the same attributes. Accordingly, later, it seems necessary to supplement the study through a sample group with high reliability.

#### 4. Results and Discussion

This study collected data through selected papers and analyzed the results of the study on the relationship between satisfaction with the selected attributes of dessert cafes and intention to visit again. As a result, among the selection attributes, dessert quality and convenience showed statistically diverse results. Rather, it was found that the quality of coffee had the same significant influence in various data. In addition, the results that satisfaction had a significant effect on repurchase intention were also consistent. In addition to this, attributes such as service, image, price, variety, and service show significant positive (+) values. Therefore, dessert cafes are affected by customer satisfaction and revisit due to various factors. In other words, dessert cafes seem to affect customer satisfaction and revisit intention with various attributes due to personal tastes or rapidly changing trends. Therefore, for dessert cafes to maintain and operate a continuous competitive advantage, they will have to develop their competitiveness by

differentiating themselves from existing cafes.

However, this study needs to expand the scope of the survey focusing on areas where dessert cafes are concentrated, and conduct research on female consumers, the main customer base of desserts, to form a reliable sample group. The above studies were conducted in Seoul, the metropolitan area, and Busan without much distinction between women and men, it is somewhat unreasonable to generalize the research results

#### 5. Conclusions

In Korea, the selection of a café can be a complex process for consumers, as it often involves a variety of attributes that are important to them, such as atmosphere, service, location, menu, and price. However, in comparison to other countries, there are some unique attributes that are valued by Korean consumers when selecting a café. One attribute that can be particularly important for Korean consumers is the atmosphere of a café. In Korea, café culture is deeply ingrained in society and many people visit cafes to socialize, relax and enjoy a cup of coffee. The atmosphere of a café is often considered as an extension of the consumer's personal space, thus, the design and decor of the café, the lighting, and the noise level are important factors. The café should provide a comfortable and cozy atmosphere that can be a deciding factor when choosing a café. Another important attribute is the service provided by a café. Korean consumers may value attentive and friendly service, and they may appreciate when the staff greets them warmly and make them feel welcome. The speed of service can also be an important factor, as some customers may be in a rush and want to be served quickly, while others may prefer to take their time and relax while they enjoy their meal or drink. Location is another attribute that can be important for Korean consumers. They may prefer a café that is located in a busy and convenient area, such as in a shopping center or near a public transportation stop, or they may prefer a café that is located in a more quiet and peaceful area, such as in a residential neighborhood. The menu offered by a café can also be an important attribute for Korean consumers. They may prefer a café that offers a wide variety of food and drinks, or they may prefer a café that specializes in a specific type of cuisine. Additionally, some Korean consumers may be looking for a café that offers healthy and organic options, while others may be looking for a café that offers more traditional and comforting options. Finally, price can be an important attribute for Korean consumers when choosing a café. They may prefer a café that offers affordable prices, or they may be willing to pay more for a café that offers high-quality food and drinks. However, they may also consider the value of the experience they will have in the café, and they may be willing to pay a bit more

for a café that offers a unique and memorable experience. In conclusion, the selection of a café in Korea can be a complex process for consumers as it involves a variety of attributes such as atmosphere, service, location, menu, and price. The unique attributes that are valued by Korean consumers when selecting a café, such as the atmosphere, the service, and the value of the experience, should be taken into consideration by café owners and managers in order to attract and retain customers. Understanding the preferences of Korean consumers and creating a comfortable and welcoming atmosphere with good service and a diverse menu can help café owners to create a better experience for their customers.

The future prospects of dessert cafes in Korea seem to be very promising. Over the last decade, there has been a growing trend of consumers in Korea opting for high-end, premium desserts and this trend is expected to continue in the future. Additionally, the Korean dessert cafe market has been expanding rapidly and is now considered one of the most innovative and dynamic in the world as follows; First, contributing to the success of dessert cafes in Korea is the increasing popularity of social media. Many Korean consumers are looking for visually appealing and Instagram-worthy desserts, and cafes have been quick to capitalize on this trend by offering a variety of visually stunning, artisanal desserts. Second, driving the growth of the dessert cafe market in Korea is the rise of health consciousness among consumers. Many Korean consumers are now looking for healthier dessert options, and cafes have responded by offering a range of options made with healthier ingredients such as fruit, nuts, and whole grains. Third, there is a growing demand for unique and innovative desserts in Korea, and many cafes are experimenting with new flavors and textures to meet this demand. For example, some cafes are now offering desserts made with new and exotic ingredients such as matcha, black sesame, and purple sweet potato. Fourth, the future prospects for dessert cafes in Korea appear to be very positive. With a growing demand for high-end, premium desserts, a rise in health consciousness, and a desire for unique and innovative options, the Korean dessert cafe market is expected to continue its growth and success in the coming years.

This study tried to provide useful implications for the operation of dessert cafes by identifying satisfaction with the selected attributes of dessert cafes and the intention of repurchasing them. To achieve the purpose of this study, the results of the study were derived from literature analysis from previous studies, and in conclusion, in this study, it was found that dessert cafes are evaluated by customers by various attributes, affecting satisfaction and revisit intention. These analysis results are consistent with Oliver (1980)'s research findings that satisfaction affects post-purchase attitude or repurchase intention, and Moutinho (1988)'s result of satisfaction and dissatisfaction of tourists is very

diverse, so it is consistent with the result that they may revisit or change to another tourist destination. This also means that from the standpoint of providing services, it is necessary to have competitiveness by satisfying various needs that reflect consumers' tastes, and it can be seen that a more in-depth analysis is required.

The implications of this study are as follows. A literature study was conducted to strategically understand the influence of choice attributes on customer satisfaction and intention to visit again for customers who use dessert cafes in Korea, which is rapidly spreading recently. Although several prior studies were conducted on marketing strategies for general cafes, this study is significant in that it focused on dessert cafes. The limitations of this study were that the analysis of existing literature materials without direct investigation or analysis did not produce new results and that the analysis was limited because there were not many papers that matched the topic in the domestic research materials. In the future, the scope of the survey will be expanded focusing on areas where dessert cafes are concentrated, and a survey will be conducted directly targeting female consumers, the main customer base for desserts, and Since there is a possibility that another factor exists, it is necessary to continue research systematic marketing methods and various measures and supplements for dessert cafes from the consumer's point of view.

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