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# Food Quality and Preference

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

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## ARTICLE INFO

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

## ABSTRACT

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

### 1. Introduction

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

The term *Wellbeing* is a broad concept lacking a common definition. However, it seems that it mostly related with health, food, positive emotions, calmness and satisfaction with life. It is worth noting that among the elements involved in wellbeing, food improves people's perceived well-being (Ares, de Saldamando, Giménez, & Deliza's, 2014, 2015). Food in the context of wellbeing, it generally means food that has health functions (Kim, 2009); food with low cholesterol and low fat; also balanced in nutrition (Kim, 2002); is natural and organic food (Apolaza, Hartmann, D'Souza, & López, 2018). Along with well-being trends, research has attempted to understand the role of food in well-being. Kapsak, Rahavi, Child, and White (2011) emphasized functional foods as a type of medicinal food. Similarly, in South Korea, *Yak-sun* is a well-

being food and can be defined as a combination of the word "medicine" and the "food" which is meant to prevent disease and keep the body healthy by being cooked according to the recipes of Chinese oriental medicine. Simply put, *Yak-sun* is a food made by adding herbal ingredients to general food ingredients and is commonly known as a health-enhancing food. The term "*Yak-sun*" was first used in China and is a concept formed in the course of medical development that has become the philosophy of diet in South Korea (Park & Kim, 2003). Since it was introduced, Korean consumers visit restaurants and eat *Yak-sun* food as a way to protect their health.

As interest in and the importance of food has increased, research on *Yak-sun* has received more attention in the literature, especially in South Korea. According to Cha and Park (2003), in China, the home of Oriental traditional medicine, there is a *Yak-sun* pharmacy where doctors prescribe *Yak-sun* food after diagnosis which is becoming a popular tourist attraction for Asians as well as Westerners. Seo and Yoo (2011) examined the impact of restaurant employee's ability to explain the *Yak-sun* food menu on customers' perceived value and satisfaction. They indicated that marketing strategies are required to increase the value of *Yak-sun* food for the customers who visit *Yak-sun* restaurants. Understanding the relationship between food and well-being can contribute to a better

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<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.foodqual.2020.104101>

Received 29 December 2019; Received in revised form 2 October 2020; Accepted 5 October 2020

Available online 14 October 2020

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understanding of how people's eating patterns and consumption are made. Research on this has recently begun to draw attention from academia, but research on food, which plays an important role in the trend of well-being, is insufficient. Especially, empirical studies on the relationship of *Yak-sun* food as well-being food and consumer purchase intention have been limited. Thus, the model of the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) proven to successfully predict behavioral intention of individuals was applied in the current study as a framework in order to predict consumers' purchase intention of *Yak-sun* food. This research is significant because the current study can demonstrate that psychological theories such as TPB can be applied to consumer dining behaviors. Beyond that, the current study aims to suggest marketing strategies for stimulating *Yak-sun* food consumption by promoting the importance of wellbeing food in the food and beverage industry and providing a rational for consumers to consume *Yak-sun* food more effectively.

## 2. Wellbeing food and *Yak-sun*

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

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

The Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) hypothesizes that behavior can be predicted by intention and that people are prone to behave a particular way if they think that certain behaviors will generate particular outcomes that align with values. The Theory of Planned Behavior consists of constructs such as attitude, subjective norms and perceived behavioral control which guide human behavior (Ajzen, 1991). TPB was first introduced by Ajzen, 1985 with beliefs constructs and other constructs such as attitude, subjective norms and perceived behavioral control. In 1991, Ajzen introduced a modified model of the TPB without the beliefs constructs, and measured the relationships among attitude, subjective norm, perceived behavioral control and intention in the model. Since then such a modified TPB model has been applied widely in previous studies in various settings (Al-Swidi, Huque, Hafeez, & Shariff, 2014; Alam & Sayuti, 2011; Fila & Smith, 2006; Kumar & Smith, 2018). Attitude is a way of feeling or thinking developed in a reliable way about things or products, which can be positive

or negative. People look for specific groups when developing criteria for judgment. A group or individuals who served as a reference group might serve as an influence for a person's beliefs, attitudes, and intentions due to a person conforming to preferences of a group (Moutinho, 1987). In order to measure a subjective norm, respondents can be asked to rate the degree to which an important person's approval or disapproval would influence a given behavior. It is also determined by the social pressure recognized by others to act in a certain way and their motivation to follow the views of those people (Ajzen & Fishbein, 1980). Different kinds of influential groups can be identified by their ability to contact different groups (Schiffman & Kanuk, 1983). Subjective norms are social in nature because whether a person performs an act is on the basis of the opinions of those significant to him/her, which is also influenced by perceptions of social pressure to act in a particular way (Hee, 2000). The salient referents for purchasing wellbeing *Yak-sun* elicited in this study are friends, family members, and colleagues.

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

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

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

3.1. Methodology

3.1.1. Data collection

Koreans who have experienced *Yak-sun* food from September 3 to September 28, 2014 were contacted as a sample using a convenient sampling method. The reason why convenience sampling was used in this study is that *Yak-Sun* food is a traditional Korean food, so it is not easily accessible to people everywhere. Therefore, the researcher selected two representative *Yak-Sun* restaurants in Busan, South Korea, and surveyed the customers who came out of the restaurant after eating the food. The researcher explained the purpose of the study and the contents of the questionnaire to participants who agreed to take the survey. A self-administered questionnaire was distributed to participants to complete and 285 questionnaires were returned after 300 questionnaires were distributed (95% response rate). Of these, 269 (94.4%) were usable and 16 (5.6%) were excluded because of incompleteness of the responses.

3.1.2. Questionnaire development

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

3.1.3. Measurement of items

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

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

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

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

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

3.2. Data analysis

The Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) was utilized to analyze data. A frequency distribution of the respondents was used in order to identify general characteristics of the respondents and demographics. Cronbach's alpha was also checked for the internal

**Table 1**  
Demographic characteristics of *Yak-sun* food consumers (n = 269).

Variable	Category	Frequency	Percent (%)
Gender	Male	32	11.9
	Female	237	88.1
Marriage	Single	43	16.0
	Married	226	84.0
Age	20 s	13	4.8
	30 s	66	24.5
	40 s	105	39.0
	50 s	70	26.0
	60 s	13	4.8
Occupation	Student	10	3.7
	Housekeeper	57	21.2
	Self-employed	79	29.4
	Office worker	63	23.4
Household income (per month)	Professional	60	22.3
	Less than \$2000	32	11.9
	\$2000-\$2999	85	31.6
	\$3000-\$3999	54	20.1
	\$4000-\$4999	45	16.7
Education	Above \$5000	53	19.7
	Middle school	4	1.5
	High school	89	33.1
	College	75	27.9
Total	University	86	32.0
	Graduate	15	5.6
Total		269	100

**Table 2**  
Overall characteristics of the respondents (n = 269).

Variable	Category	Frequency	Percent (%)
Purpose of visiting a restaurant	To eat out	78	29.0
	To spend time with friends	59	21.9
	For family gathering	100	37.2
	For business	21	7.8
	For events	11	4.1
Accompany	Parents	35	13.0
	Spouse	62	23.0
	Children	29	10.8
	Friends	121	45.0
	One's lover	22	8.2
Expenditure per person	Less than \$ 10	15	5.6
	\$10 - \$19	79	29.4
	\$20 - \$29	97	36.1
	\$30 - \$39	25	9.3
	\$40 - \$49	24	8.9
	Over \$50	29	10.8
Total		269	100

consistency of the construct. Since the variables measured in this study were drawn from existing scales, Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) with maximum likelihood estimation was run to evaluate reliability and validity. Subsequently, Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) using AMOS 24 was applied to validate the research model and test hypotheses.

4. Results

4.1. Profile of the respondents

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

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

Factor	Measured Variable	Factor Loading	S.E	t-value	CR	Cronbach's $\alpha$	AVE
Attitude toward the behavior	pleasurable	0.832	–	–	0.928	0.887	0.724
	favorable	0.896	0.061	17.235			
	enjoyable	0.823	0.061	15.861			
Subjective Norm	understand choosing <i>Yak-sun</i>	0.588	–	–	0.915	0.863	0.678
	should eat <i>Yak-sun</i>	0.953	0.158	10.656			
	approve eating <i>Yak-sun</i>	0.883	0.148	10.593			
Perceived Behavioral Control	easily eat <i>Yak-sun</i>	0.844	–	–	0.890	0.863	0.686
	Purchasing <i>yak-sun</i> is up to me	0.922	0.062	16.603			
	confident that I can purchase <i>yak-sun</i>	0.705	0.060	13.156			
Behavioral Intention	will make an effort	0.852	–	–	0.952	0.920	0.799
	intend to purchase	0.925	0.047	20.268			
	want to purchase	0.903	0.050	19.741			

$\chi^2 df = 164.737, =45, CMN/DF = 3.661, GFI = 0.916, AGFI = 0.854, NFI = 0.929, CFI = 0.947, RMR = 0.044, RMSEA = 0.100.$

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

Measured Variable	AB	SN	PBC	BI
AB	<b>0.724</b>			
SN	0.148 (0.385)	<b>0.678</b>		
PBC	0.120 (0.347)	0.055 (0.234)	<b>0.686</b>	
BI	0.205 (0.453)	0.112 (0.335)	0.204 (0.450)	<b>0.799</b>

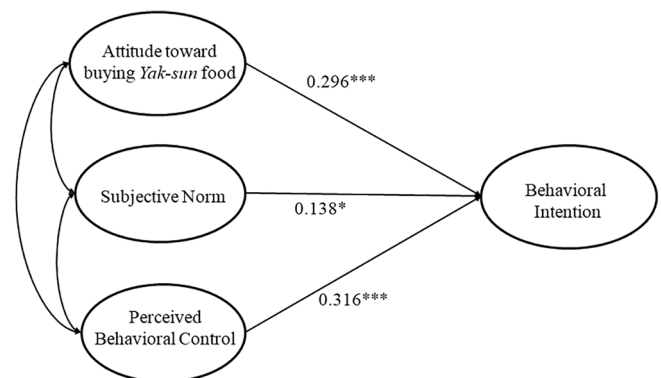
Note. 1. AB: Attitude toward the Behavior, SN: Subjective Norm, PBC: Perceived Behavioral Control, BI: Behavioral Intention.  
2. The bold diagonal elements are the square root of the AVE.  
3. Below the diagonal line is the correlation value between the constructions, and () is the correlation coefficient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

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

4.2. Confirmatory factor analysis and reliability test

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

All of the composite reliabilities of the constructs exceeded the cut-off value of 0.50 as the composite reliability of Attitude toward buying *Yak-sun* food was 0.928, subjective norm was 0.915, perceived behavioral control was 0.890 and behavioral intention was 0.952, which ensures proper internal consistency of the constructs. In terms of convergent validity, most of confirmatory factor loadings exceeded 0.7, thus it was satisfied. The predictive validity of the four factors with a structural model was tested. The goodness-of-fit indices confirmed that



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

the confirmatory factor model fit the data well ( $\chi^2 = 164.737$ , degree of freedom ( $df$ ) = 45, goodness-of-fit index (GFI) = 0.916, adjusted goodness-of-fit index (AGFI) = 0.854, Normed fit index (NFI) = 0.929, root mean square residual (RMR) = 0.044, comparative fit index (CFI) = 0.947, root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA) = 0.100).

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

**Table 5**

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

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

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

### 4.3. Hypothesis test

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

## 5. Discussion and conclusion

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

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

of them eating *Yak-sun*, the more willing they are to purchase it. In other studies, respondents tended to be influenced by what other people think when they purchase organic food (Maya et al., 2011) and *halal* food (Alam & Sayuti, 2011; Kamariah & Muslim, 2007; Karijin et al., 2007). A similar result was found in the study of Lam and Hsu (2006), indicating that behavioral intention to visit Hong Kong for Taiwanese people was related to perceived social pressure from important people around them.

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

## 6. Implications

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

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

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

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

7. Limitation

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

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

Appendix A

See Table A1

Table A1 Measurement.

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

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