

The Impact of Brand Prestige on Patrons' Perception of Well-Being, Favorable Inequity, Affective Commitment, and Dedicational Behaviors in Luxury Restaurants: The Moderating Role of Brand Consciousness

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럭셔리 레스토랑의 브랜드 명품화가 고객의 웰빙 지각도, 호의적 평가, 정서적 몰입 및 헌신적인 행위에 미치는 영향에 관한 연구: 브랜드 의식도의 조절 효과

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Abstract

The purpose of this research was to investigate the impact of brand prestige on luxury marketing variables (patrons' perception of well-being, favorable inequity, affective commitment, and dedicational behaviors) in the luxury restaurant industry. Based on a thorough literature review, the clear definitions of each construct were established and theoretical causal relationships between the seven constructs were proposed (brand prestige, perception of well-being, favorable inequity, affective commitment, enhancement, advocacy, and brand consciousness). During this process, the moderating role of brand consciousness was also suggested. Integrating the proposed theoretical hypotheses, a structural model was created. This model was tested using the data collected from 527 luxury restaurant patrons in the United States. Data analysis revealed that brand prestige is a key determinant of favorable inequity and patrons' perception of well-being, thereby inducing two types of dedicational behaviors (enhancement and advocacy). More importantly, during this process, brand consciousness played a moderating role in the relationship between brand prestige and patrons' perception of well-being. Based on the data analysis results, the theoretical/practical implications were discussed.

Key words : Luxury restaurant, patrons' well-being perception, favorable inequity, affective commitment, enhancement, advocacy.

Introduction

Today, a large number of customers deny themselves to be treated same as other customers (Baek *et al* 2010). Customers want to be treated special and they are looking for something unique from consumption (Dubios & Czellar 2002). One of such behaviors is seeking prestigious brand/ luxury product (Phau & Prendergast 2000). Prestigious brands are usually more expensive, so they are infrequently purchased, and it requires a higher level of interest of consumers who have economic power (Vigneron & Johnson 1999). For this reason, consuming prestige brand/luxury product indicates a signal of social status,

wealth, or power. Consequently, consumers who purchase luxury brand (e.g. BMW, Louis Vuitton, Chanel) think that 'I am different from other people'. Recently, as customers are more interested in prestige brands, prestige markets have recently seen a great growth. For example, prestige brands, such as Louis Vuitton, BMW, and Audi reported that their annual sales is increasing 5% in average. Following this market trend, more than hundreds of dollars are being spent annually for luxury marketing (Naik *et al* 2008).

Restaurant industry is not an exception in this regard. A large number of restaurant companies are positioning themselves as a luxury restaurant. A luxury restaurant is defined as a restaurant operation that promises excellent food prepared by a highly paid chef, menu options that may include expensive and/or imported items, expensive glassware and sil-

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verware, and a superior physical environment (Kim *et al* 2006, Zinzi F 2010). A luxury restaurant generates an average check per person of more than US\$25 (Kim *et al* 2006). Recently, luxury restaurant market is growing more than 5% annually. One of the key strategies of luxury restaurant is creating prestigious image (Kim *et al* 2006). Because, it is strongly believed that brand prestige has a positive impact on luxury marketing factors, such as patrons' well-being perception (Grzeskowiak & Sirgy 2007), favorable inequity (Baek *et al* 2010, Vigneron & Johnson 1999), affective commitment (Chandon *et al* 2000, Vigneron & Johnson 1999), thus inducing positive enhancement and advocacy. While current research clearly indicates that brand prestige is a major factor influencing marketing attributes of luxury restaurants, our understanding of how brand prestige plays a role during the marketing process. Therefore, luxury restaurant owners/managers have been under constant pressure to find more effective marketing strategies that can take use of brand prestige level, but have no practical guidelines to do so. Therefore, the purpose of this research is investigating the impact of brand prestige on luxury marketing variables (patrons' well-being perception, favorable inequity, affective commitment, and dedicational behaviors) in luxury restaurant industry.

Literature Review

1. Brand Prestige

Brand prestige has been defined as relatively high status of product positioning associated with a brand (Steenkamp *et al* 2003). Customers tend to perceive consumption of prestige brands as a reflection of social status, wealth, power (Alden *et al* 1999). For example, when a person purchase BMW car, normally, the person is perceived as rich person or perceived to have a nice job position. When a group of people dine out at luxury restaurants, they are perceived as luxury consumers. This is common social perception towards prestige brand consumption (Dubios & Czellar 2002). Such social perception has critical influences on consumers' purchase behavior, so brand prestige has been a key marketing variable in the history of marketing (Baek *et al* 2010).

2. Well-Being Perception

The well-being perception is defined as consumers' perception of the extent to which a brand positively contributes to a quality of life (Grzeskowiak & Sirgy 2007). The concept of

well-being perception has been in the spotlight by practitioners and scholars in the marketing area, as consumers have begun to consider quality of life as an important goal of life (Lee & Sirgy 2004, Sirgy MJ 2001, Sirgy *et al* 2007). High levels of well-being perception leads to higher level of quality of life, which reflect greater life satisfaction, overall happiness with life, greater social well-being, and other positive attributes (Grzeskowiak & Sirgy 2007). For these reasons, well-being perception is one of the most important criteria that today's consumers look for when they purchase a brand's products and/or services (Sirgy *et al* 2007).

As previously mentioned, customers' desire for prestige brands is used as proxies for a group membership (Vigneron & Johnson 1999). Buying a prestige brand product reflects that the person has certain degree of richness and higher level of social status. Consequently, the person is perceived to keep higher-level quality of life (Dubios & Czellar 2002). In other words, purchasing prestige brand reflects higher level quality of life. Empirical studies further support his theoretical argument (e.g. Grzeskowiak & Sirgy 2007). For example, Grzeskowiak & Sirgy (2007) tested the theoretical relationship between brand prestige and perceived well-being perception using the data collected from 275 coffee shop consumers. Their data analysis revealed that consuming prestige-brand coffee is perceived to keep higher level of quality of life. Integrating theoretical and empirical backgrounds, the below hypothesis can be derived:

Hypothesis 1: Brand prestige positively influences well-being perception.

3. Favorable Inequity

The concept of favorable inequity explains commercial exchange rule in the marketing (Oliver & DeSarbo 1988). In the commercial exchange process, the company provides a product/service to customers, in contrast, customers pay money to the company. When the customer perceives that the product/service equals (deserves) the price they paid, the customer feels proportional equity (Szmigin & Bourne 1998). When the customers feel that they got better service than they paid, they feel favorable feelings towards the commercial exchange, thus inducing favorable inequity (Andreassen TW 2000). Vice versa, when the service could not satisfy the customers' commercial payment, the customers should feel unfavorable inequity.

The concept of favorable inequity has been in the spotlight in the service recovery literature (de Ruyter & Wetzels 2000,

Lapidus & Pinkerton 1995). Lapidus & Pinkerton (1995) practically applied fairness theory to analyze the effects of fairness and compensation on service recovery. Fairness theory provides theoretical background about how service failure (negative inequity) can be transformed into favorable inequity. According to fairness theory, unfavorable inequity is formed when three situations are fulfilled (Wangenheim & Bayon, 2007): First, an unfavorable condition should be present. Second, perpetrator should be accountable for the condition. Third, the harmful action must be viewed as a violation of some moral or ethical code.

In this sense, this study posits that brand prestige is positively related to favorable inequity (Baek *et al* 2010, Vigneron & Johnson 1999). Customers tend to perceive prestige-product as a signal of greater value (Alden *et al* 1999). Consequently, they tend to evaluate prestige product favorably. In this sense, Oliver & Swan (1989) stated that the luxurious products leads to more favorable inequity. Based on the below theoretical logic, the below hypothesis can be thus derived:

Hypothesis 2: Brand prestige positively influences favorable inequity.

As previously stated, consumer well-being refers perception of the extent to which a brand positively contributes to a quality of life (Grzeskowiak & Sirgy 2007). Psychologically, consumers' well-being perception is consists of cognitive and affective elements (Xia W 2009). When consumers perceive that a product can enhance their quality of life, they think the product's quality (cognitive aspect) highly, and emotionally (affective aspect) evaluate the product favorably (Sirgy *et al* 2006). Therefore, even a product's price is expensive, consumers pursue the product because they favorably evaluate the well-being focused product (Sirgy MJ 2001). In this sense, consumers' well-being perception has a positive impact on favorable inequity. Based on the discussion, we propose the following:

Hypothesis 3: Well-being perception positively influences favorable inequity.

4. Affective Commitment

Affective commitment is defined as a psychological state that has motivational implications for the continuation of a relationship (Gruen *et al* 2000). Affective commitment results from a customer's emotional attachment to a service provider

and is associated with a customer's favourable feelings towards a service provider (Gruen *et al* 2000). Customers are likely to connect the prestige of a brand to their own identity (Bizman & Yinon 2002) and brand identification is related to affective constructs (Ahuvia AC 2005). Further, brand identification with a brand resulting from brand prestige can induce enthusiastic and passionate feelings, thus inducing affective commitment (Sharma & Patterson 1999). Moreover, prestige-seeking consumers tend to create positive emotional responses towards the consumption of prestige product, which leads to affective commitment towards the brand (Chandon *et al* 2000, Vigneron & Johnson 1999). Therefore, we expect brand prestige positively influences affective commitment.

Hypothesis 4: Brand prestige positively influences affective commitment.

Consumer well-being indicates the extent to which a particular brand enhances perceived quality-of-life (Grzeskowiak & Sirgy 2007). Such enhanced quality of life perception therefore has positive impact on emotional feelings of the consumer (Lee & Sirgy 2004). When such positive outcome occurs continuously, it leads to positive relationship formation (affective commitment). In this regard, Lee & Sirgy (2004) postulated that consumer well-being is an important antecedent of affective commitment formation. Empirical studies further support this argument. For instance, Kim & Ok's study in 2009 analyzed empirical data collected from 475 restaurant patrons. They found that when restaurant patrons perceive higher well-being perception via the dining experiences, it leads to higher level of affective commitment. Integrating theoretical and empirical backgrounds, the below hypothesis was derived:

Hypothesis 5: Well-being perception positively influences affective commitment.

Favorable inequity is the key ingredient to customer satisfaction (Oliver & Swan, 1989). Satisfaction as a predictor of commitment is a result widely accepted in various studies (Bolton RN 1998, Fullerton G 2005, Johnson *et al* 2008). Therefore, it is possible to infer the relationship between favorable inequity and affective commitment. Empirical analysis revealed both direct and indirect effect of favorable equity on affective commitment. Kim & Ok (2009) provided empirical evidence of the positive impact of favorable inequity on customer satis-

faction using a sample of 411 customers in the full-service restaurant setting. Satisfaction is regarded as a primary antecedent of commitment (Bansal *et al* 2004, Bolton RN 1998, Johnson *et al* 2008) and it is expected that favorable inequity has an indirect effect on affective commitment. Therefore, we can propose the sixth hypothesis :

Hypothesis 6: Favorable inequity positively influences affective commitment.

5. Dedicational Behaviors (Enhancement and Advocacy)

In restaurant industry, patrons' dedicational behaviors are usually categorized into two specific behaviors: enhancement and advocacy (Kim & Ok 2009).

1) Enhancement

Enhancement refers to making the broad and deep relational bonds with service provider (Bendapudi & Berry 1997). For instance, customer's additional buying, participation to the company's charity events, or information sharing with the relationship partner are enhancement behaviors (Bendapudi & Berry 1997). Such enhancement behaviors helps to maximize the revenue of a company, thus plays a critical role in today's marketing success (Verhoef PC 2001). The feeling of a favorably treated customer leads to satisfaction in commercial exchange and, thus induce a positive impact on affective commitment (Kim & Ok 2009). Therefore, favorable inequity plays an important role in inducing consumers' enhancement behaviors (Levinger G 1979).

Hypothesis 7: Favorable inequity positively influences enhancement.

Enhancement can be created based on dedicated relationships between a customer and service provider (Macintosh G 2002). Emotionally dedicated customers are more likely to invest in their relationships with the service provider than do customers lacking affective commitment (Kumar *et al* 1994). Thus, customer's enhancement behaviors are likely to rely on the presence of affective commitment (Kim *et al* 2010). Empirical studies further support this theoretical argument. In 2010, Kim *et al* conducted an empirical study to investigate causal relationship between affective commitment and patrons'

enhancement behaviors. They analyzed the data collected from 293 patrons, and found that restaurant patrons' affective commitment significantly influences enhancement. Combining theoretical and empirical evidences, it can be hypothesized that affective commitment positively influences enhancement.

Hypothesis 8: Affective commitment positively influences enhancement.

2) Advocacy

Lastly, Advocacy is defined as a customer's willingness to recommend and make referrals, due to the widely held belief that referrals are the most important method of obtaining new customers (Raymond & Tanner 1994). It is commonly argued that favorable inequity is closely associated with customer's switching behavior (Kim & Ok 2009). Logically, when customers perceive a favorable relationship to a partner, there is no desire for a switching behavior and a higher level of commitment. Under this favorable situation, consumers tend to create positive word-of-mouth. Therefore, customer commitment plays an important role in building up customer advocacy (Price & Arnould 1999). Customers who have favorable feeling toward a service provider are likely to speak on behalf of service firms (Gremler & Gwinner 2000).

Hypothesis 9: Favorable inequity positively influences advocacy.

Advocacy is an important outcome of customer commitment (Morgan & Hunt 1994). Customers' emotional attachment with the service provider creates relational bonds between the customer and service provider, which leads to spreading positive word-of-mouth and referrals (Gremler & Gwinner 2000; Macintosh G 2002). Fullerton G (2005)'s empirical further support the theoretical statement. Fullerton G (2005) examined causal relationships between customer' affective commitment and advocacy using the data collected from 634 customers in service industries. The study results found a strong causal relationship between two constructs.

Hypothesis 10: Affective commitment positively influences advocacy.

6. Moderating Role of Brand Consciousness

Brand consciousness refers the mental orientation to choose

brand-name products that are well known and highly advertised (Sproles & Kendall 1986). Consumers with high levels of brand consciousness tend to perceive brands as a symbols of status and prestige, thus are interested in buying well-known and expensive brand-name products (Sproles & Kendall 1986). For brand-conscious consumers, prestigious brand is a key criterion for product evaluation (Liao & Wang 2009). Consequently, they tend to evaluate prestigious brand favorably. In contrast, they evaluate non-prestigious products unfavorably. Following this logic, it can be hypothesized that brand consciousness plays a moderating role in the relationship between brand prestige and favorable inequity.

Furthermore, brand-conscious consumers might think that prestigious brand can enhance their quality of life. In contrast, consumers who are not brand-conscious might think that prestigious product do not have significant impact on their quality of life. Following this logic, it can be hypothesized that brand conscious plays a moderating role in the relationships between brand prestige level and well-being perception.

Hypothesis 11a: Brand consciousness plays a moderating role in the relationship between brand prestige and favorable inequity.

Hypothesis 11b: Brand consciousness plays a moderating

role in the relationship between brand prestige and well-being perception.

In summary, to investigate the consequences of brand prestige, thorough literature review has been conducted. Based on theoretical/empirical backgrounds, clear definitions of seven constructs derived and their causal relationships were developed. The next section of this study will test the hypothesized relationships with empirically collected data in the luxury restaurant.

7. Proposed Model and Hypotheses

Based on the existing theoretical backgrounds, this research proposed a conceptual model in the luxury restaurant industry (Fig. 1). Twelve hypotheses were developed.

Methodology

1. Sample and Data Collection

A self-administered questionnaire was distributed to 2,588 luxury restaurant patrons in United States by an online market research company in the fall of 2010. The 2,588 luxury patrons live in all over the United States, thus reflects who whole US population. Out of the 2,588 questionnaires distributed,

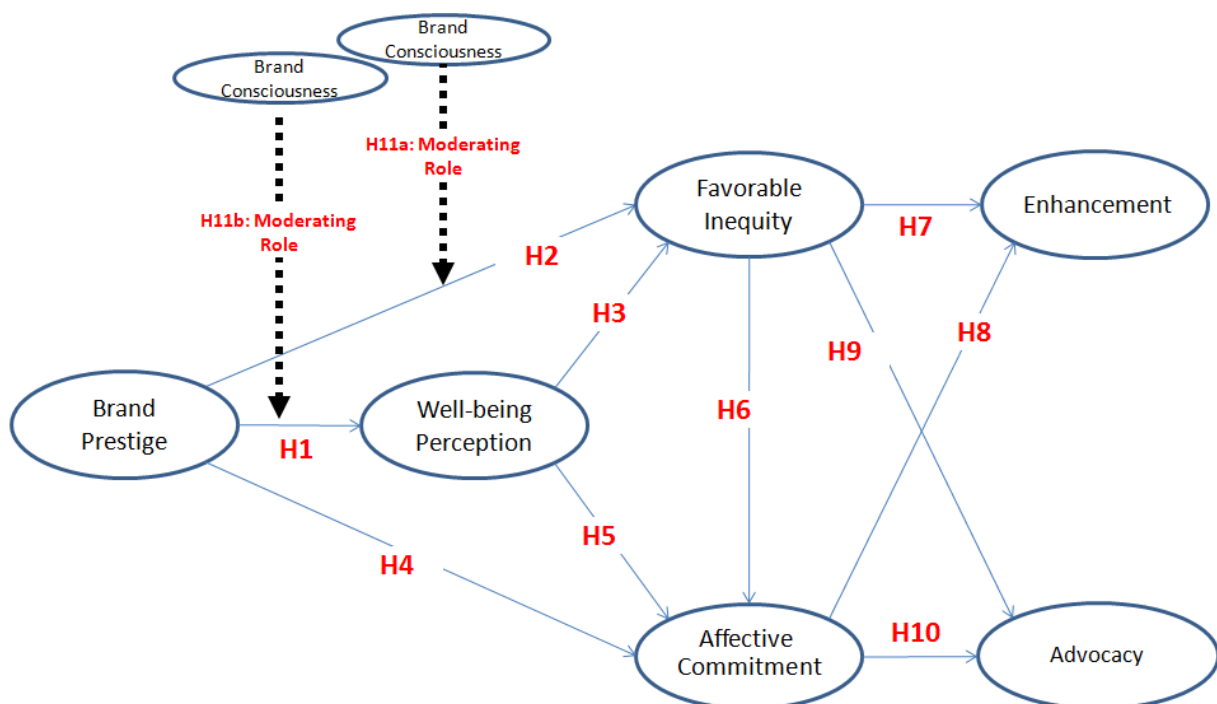


Fig. 1. The proposed conceptual model.

527 usable responses were returned, for a usable response rate of 20.36%. Table 1 describes the sample's demographic profile.

Among the respondents, 48.0 percent were female and 52.0 percent were male. In terms of age, the respondents were fairly evenly distributed from 23 to 88 years old; the mean age was 51.5 years. The majority of respondents were Caucasian (87.3%), and more than half of the sample possessed bachelors or graduate degrees (40.8% for the former and 36.4% for the latter). About income, the respondents generally

Table 1. Sociodemographic profile of respondents

Variables	Frequency (N=527)	Percent (%)
Sex		
Female	274	52.0
Male	253	48.0
Annual income		
Under US\$25,000	7	1.3
US\$25,500~39,999	5	0.9
US\$40,000~54,999	9	1.7
US\$55,000~69,999	11	2.1
US\$70,000~84,999	23	4.4
US\$85,500~99,999	33	6.3
US\$100,000~149,999	280	53.1
US\$150,000 and over	159	30.2
Race		
Caucasian/White	460	87.3
African-American	13	2.5
Asian	38	7.2
Hispanic	11	2.1
Other	5	0.9
Education level		
Less than high school degree	0	0
High school degree	15	2.8
Some college, but no degree	73	13.9
Associate's degree	32	6.1
Bachelor's degree	215	40.8
Graduate degree	192	36.4
Mean age=51.5		

has higher level of income. more than 80% of respondents reported that their annual income is higher than \$100,000.

2. Measures

To measure the theoretical concepts in the our proposed model, validated scales from the literature were adapted to the restaurant operation setting as follows:

- Brand prestige was measured with three items adapted from Baek *et al* (2010);
- Well-being perception was measured with 4 items adapted from Grzeskowiak & Sirgy (2007);
- Favorable Inequity was measured with two items drawn from Kim & Ok (2009) and Oliver & Swan (1989);
- Affective Commitment was measured with two items developed by Bansal *et al* (2004), Kim & Ok (2009);
- Enhancement was measured with two items adapted from Macintosh G (2002);
- Advocacy was assessed with two items adapted from Fullerton G (2005), Kim *et al* (2010);

All the questions were asked based on five-point Likert-type scales ranging from 1 ('strongly disagree') to 5 ('strongly agree').

3. Measurement Refinement and Pilot Survey

Measurement items were drawn from the existing literature, but they were developed general marketing area, so some of them are not relevant in the restaurant industry. For this reason, scale purification approaches were conducted. To double-check content validity of questionnaire, the prepared questionnaire was carefully reviewed by three professional groups: (1) professors familiar with the restaurant marketing area, (2) graduate students who possessed industry experience, and (3) current restaurant managers. The questionnaire was revised based on the feedback from the professionals, and a pilot survey was conducted to 80 luxury restaurant patrons in order to check whether the instrument could be clearly understood by restaurant patrons. Cronbach's alpha was then used to check the reliability of the measurement variables. All the concepts' Cronbach's alpha was higher than 0.7, which confirms reliability of the scales. After these item purification processes, the finalized survey questionnaire was prepared, then distributed to 2,599 luxury restaurant patrons.

Findings

1. Confirmatory Factor Analysis

To double-check the uni-dimensionality of the measurement scales utilized in the proposed model, a confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was conducted. Before testing the whole measurement model, the uni-dimensionality of each concept was investigated one by one (Sethi & King 1994), and unacceptable items were deleted. Table 2 shows the remained items.

CFA results revealed a satisfactory model fit. The CFA Chi-Square was 325.019 (χ^2/df ratio=3.652). CFI=0.972, IFI=0.972,

TLI=0.962, NFI=0.962, GFI=0.928 and a root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA)=0.070

The convergent validity of the scales was examined by the results of the confirmatory factor analysis (Anderson & Gerbing 1988). All factor loadings were equal to or higher than 0.705 and significant at $p < 0.001$ (with the t -values, not shown, ranging from 7.514 to 12.825). As shown in Table 3, all constructs' average variance extracted (AVE) values were higher than the 0.50 threshold value (Bagozzi & Yi 1988). Based on high factor loadings and AVE estimates, it was decided that convergent validity for the measurement-scale items was con-

Table 2. Confirmatory factor analysis: Items and loadings

Construct and scale item	Standardized loading
Brand prestige	
The luxury restaurant is very prestigious.	0.923
The luxury restaurant brand has high status.	0.938
The luxury restaurant is very upscale.	0.865
Well-being perception	
The luxury restaurant meets my overall well-being needs.	0.705
The luxury restaurant plays a very important role in my social well-being.	0.852
The luxury restaurant plays an important role in my dining well-being.	0.880
This luxury restaurant plays an important role in enhancing my quality of life.	0.890
Favorable inequity	
Overall, I have been treated more than fairly by this luxury restaurant.	0.852
Overall, the food and service I received from this restaurant have been worth more than my expense, time, and effort.	0.907
Affective commitment	
I feel emotionally attached to this restaurant.	0.957
I feel a strong sense of belonging to this restaurant.	0.964
Enhancement	
Thinking of my relationship with the luxury restaurant, if it was suggested, I would willing to order a menu item that I have never tried before.	0.936
Thinking of my relationship with the restaurant, if it was suggested, I would be willing to order a menu item that this restaurant has newly introduced.	0.949
Advocacy	
Thinking of my relationship with the restaurant, I would say positive things about restaurant to other people.	0.940
Thinking of my relationship with the restaurant, I would recommend this restaurant to someone who seeks my advice.	0.959
Thinking of my relationship with the restaurant, I would defend this restaurant from others' critiques.	0.901

Note: All factors loadings are significant at $p < 0.001$.

Table 3. Descriptive statistics and pairwise correlations

	No. of items	Mean	S.D.	CR	AVE	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
(1) Brand prestige	3	3.91	0.82	0.949	0.83	1.000					
(2) Well-being perception	4	3.27	0.97	0.895	0.75	0.314 (0.099)	1.00				
(3) Favorable inequity	2	3.90	0.88	0.889	0.77	0.322 (0.104)	0.311 (0.097)	1.00			
(4) Affective commitment	2	3.55	1.15	0.945	0.92	0.409 (0.167)	0.471 (0.222)	0.584 (0.341)	1.00		
(5) Enhancement	2	3.93	0.82	0.957	0.89	0.247 (0.061)	0.213 (0.045)	0.343 (0.118)	0.487 (0.237)	1.00	
(6) Advocacy	3	4.09	0.86	0.961	0.87	0.317 (0.100)	0.275 (0.076)	0.460 (0.212)	0.654 (0.428)	0.394 (0.155)	1.00

Note: All correlations are significant at $p < 0.001$; values in the blanks are squared correlations. S.D.=standard deviation; CR=composite reliability; AVE=average variance extracted estimate.

firmed (Fornell & Larcker 1981).

In order to verify discriminant validity, the squared correlation (R^2) between a pair of constructs should be smaller than the AVE for each concepts (Fornell & Larcker 1981). As described in the Table 3, all of the squared correlations (R^2) between a pair of concepts were lower than the AVE for each concepts. So, all of the concepts' discriminant validities were adequately confirmed by the SEM data analysis.

Lastly, internal consistency of the scales was checked with composite reliabilities. All composite reliabilities in the Table 3 were greater than 0.7, which is threshold value (Hair *et al* 1998).

In summary, convergent validity, discriminant validity, and composite reliability were achieved, thus indicating our measurement scale is trustworthy.

2. Hypotheses Testing

Fig. 2 describes standardized path coefficient and t -values of each paths. A structural model revealed an satisfactory fit. Chi-Square was 366.821 with 94 degrees of freedom ($p < 0.001$). CFI=0.967, IFI=0.967, TLI=0.958, NFI=0.957, GFI=0.916 and RMSEA=0.070.

H1, which proposed that brand prestige positively influences favorable inequity, was supported by a positive standardized coefficient of 0.257 ($t=5.209$, $p < 0.001$). H2, which proposed a positive relationship between brand prestige and well-being perception, was supported by a positive standardized coefficient

of 0.574 ($t=11.977$, $p < 0.001$). H3, which predicts a positive relationship between well-being perception and favorable inequity, was supported by a positive standardized coefficient of 0.464 ($t=8.471$, $p < 0.001$). H4, which suggested that brand prestige directly influences affective commitment, was not supported ($t=0.112$, $p=0.911$).

H5 suggested a direct path between well-being perception and affective commitment. This path was supported by a positive standardized coefficient of 0.351 ($t=6.844$, $p < 0.001$). H6, which proposed a positive relationship between favorable inequity and affective commitment, was supported by positive standardized coefficient of 0.472 ($t=9.439$, $p < 0.001$). H7 suggested a direct path between favorable inequity and enhancement. This path was supported by a positive standardized coefficient of 0.397 ($t=6.829$, $p < 0.001$). H8 proposed positive relationship between affective commitment and enhancement. This path was supported by positive standardized coefficient of 0.284 ($t=5.137$, $p < 0.001$). H9, which hypothesized that favorable inequity has a positive impact on advocacy, was supported (0.497, $p < 0.001$). Lastly, H10, which proposed that affective commitment positively influences advocacy, was supported by a positive standardized coefficient of 0.394 ($t=9.090$, $p < 0.001$).

3. Testing the Moderating Effect of Brand Consciousness

To check the moderating role of brand consciousness, mul-

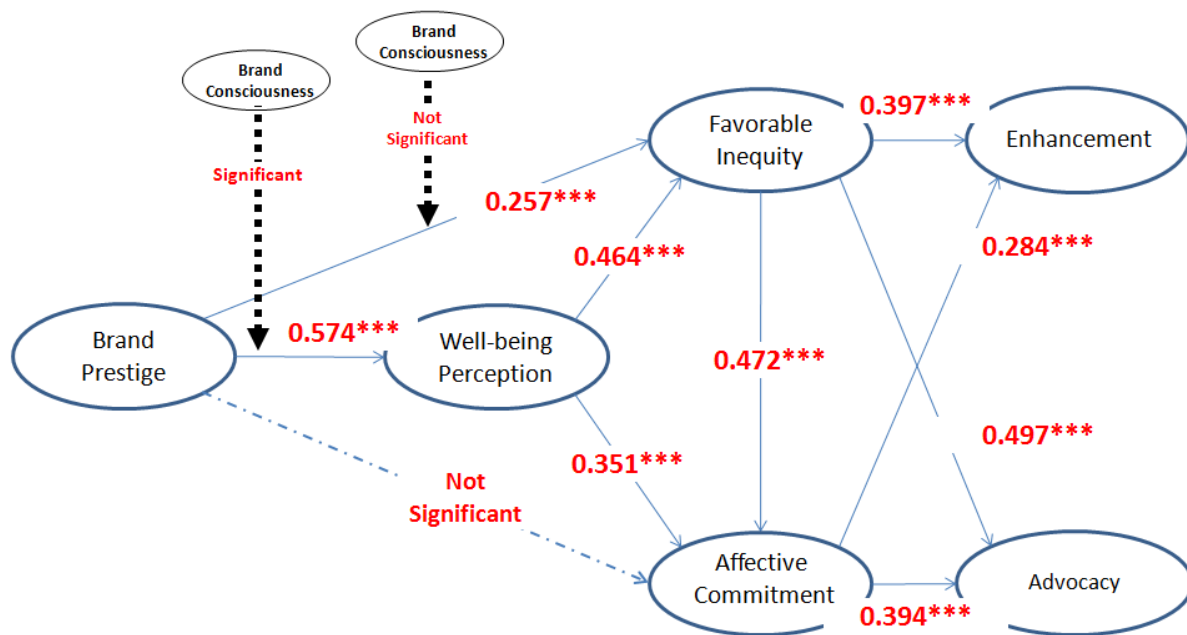


Fig. 2. Standardized theoretical path coefficients.

Note: *** $p < 0.01$.

1. Numbers in parentheses are the t -values.
2. Numbers outside of parentheses are the standardized path coefficients.
3. Dotted arrows indicate nonsignificant paths ($p < 0.05$).

multiple-group analyses were adapted (Hyun *et al* 2011). Sample ($n=527$) was split into two sub-groups (a low brand consciousness group and a high brand consciousness group) based on a moderator score. The sum of the seven-items brand consciousness scale was used as the moderator score (brand consciousness score). Multiple-group analyses were pursued using a hierarchical approach in which two sub-groups were compared. These two sub-sample groups were chosen based on the mean split of the moderator (Chandrashekar & Grewal 2003). To examine the moderating effects of brand consciousness between high and low brand consciousness groups, the chi-square difference between constrained and unconstrained models was investigated regarding the difference in degrees of freedom (Anderson & Gerbing 1988).

The moderating function of brand consciousness in the relationship between brand prestige and favorable inequity was assessed (H11a). The coefficient for the path between brand prestige and favorable inequity was compared between high and low brand consciousness groups. The difference of chi-square value between the constrained model and the unconstrained model was not significant at 0.05 level ($\chi^2=0.145 < \chi^2_{0.5(1)}=3.84, df=1$). Thus, Hypothesis 11a was not supported.

This finding indicates that the effect of brand prestige on well-being perception was statistically not different across brand consciousness levels.

Next, the moderating function of brand consciousness in the relationship between brand prestige and well-being perception was assessed (H11b). The difference of chi-square value between the constrained model and the unconstrained model was significant at 0.05 level ($\chi^2=10.697 > \chi^2_{0.5(1)}=3.84, df=1$). Thus, hypothesis 11b was supported. With regard to the high brand consciousness group, the path coefficient between brand prestige and information costs saved was 0.710 ($p < 0.001$). In contrast, for the low brand-consciousness group, the path coefficient was 0.362 ($p < 0.001$). In summary, brand consciousness was found to be more effective in enhancing luxury restaurant patrons' well-being perception in the high brand consciousness group as compared to the low brand consciousness group.

Conclusion

The purpose of this research was investigating the impact of brand prestige on luxury marketing variables (patrons' well-being perception, favorable inequity, affective commitment,

and dedicational behaviors) in luxury restaurant industry. Based on thorough literature review, the theoretical definitions of seven concepts were proposed in this study were derived. Then, causal relationships between the constructs were suggested. Consequently, a theoretical model was proposed. The proposed model was tested using the data collected from 527 luxury restaurant patrons.

Data analysis indicates that brand prestige has a significant and positive impact on patrons' well-being perception (0.574, $p < 0.001$). It has been strongly believed that consuming luxury product can enhance consumers' quality of life (Dubios & Czellar 2002, Grzeskowiak & Sirgy 2007). This logic has been a key philosophy of luxury marketing. This study replicated and expanded the current consumer behavior literature by empirically testing the theoretical argument in luxury restaurant setting. Therefore, luxury restaurant owners/marketers need to create more luxurious image about their restaurant. More practically, it is critical to hire well-known chef, thus providing high-quality food with increasing price (Domingo RS 2002, Lo & Lam 2004). Providing unique events (e.g. birthday events, cocktail shows, marriage proposal events, hibachi shows) helps to create prestigious image for the restaurant (Hyun S 2010). Moreover, advertising via celebrity endorsers should be conducted to raise the image of the restaurant (Magnini *et al* 2010). These strategies will enhance the brand prestige of the luxury restaurant, thus stimulate patrons to dine out for increasing quality of life.

Moreover, data analysis supports the moderating role of brand consciousness in the relationship between brand prestige and well-being perception ($\chi^2 = 10.697 > \chi^2_{0.5(1)} = 3.84$, $df = 1$). It can be thus interpreted that, regarding high brand conscious patrons, when they dine out at a luxury restaurants, their well-being perception could be maximized. So, practically, luxury restaurant managers need to make consumer database based on brand consciousness level. They can conduct exit-survey when patrons pay money, and collect data about brand conscious levels. Luxury restaurant managers need to use aggressive/direct marketing strategies to brand conscious patrons (for example, they can send out brochures including expensive menu item and luxury facilities in the restaurant).

Data analysis also indicates that brand prestige has a positive impact on patrons' perception of favorable inequity (0.257, $p < 0.001$). According to the proportional equity theory, when customers received better service considering the price they paid, they expressed favorable inequity (Andreassen TW 2000).

This theory also worked in the luxury restaurant settings. In other words, when luxury restaurant patrons perceived that they had luxury service/meal/experience in the luxury restaurant, they express favorable inequity, which is a key determinant of patrons' dedicational behaviors.

Another key finding of this research is the role of patrons' well-being perception in the restaurant industry. As data analysis revealed, patron's well-being perception has positive influences on favorable inequity (0.464, $p < 0.001$) and affective commitment (0.351, $p < 0.001$). For many years, researchers (e.g. Grzeskowiak & Sirgy 2007, Jones & Sasser 1995) postulated that consumer's perceived well-being reflects the consumer's positive experience with a product/service, and positively influences customer satisfaction, customer loyalty, and revision intentions. This study extended the existing well-being research by finding the positive causal relationships between (1) well-being perception and favorable inequity and (2) well-being perception and affective commitment. Therefore, for luxury restaurant marketers, it is critical to provide well-being related benefits to patrons. More specifically, providing well-being menu for patrons (Koo *et al* 1999, Law *et al* 2008), using organic ingredient for patrons (Tarkiainen & Sundqvist 2005), creating social well-being mood in the restaurant (Grzeskowiak & Sirgy 2007) could be a practical strategies. Such well-being related investments will enhance favorable inequity and affective commitment of patrons, thus inducing dedicational behaviors.

Lastly, it was revealed that favorable inequity and affective commitment are key antecedents of patrons' dedicational behaviors (enhancement and advocacy). Enhancement and advocacy play critical roles in maximizing restaurant revenue and marketing success of the firm (Verhoef PC 2001). So, enhancing brand prestige level should be a key strategy for the future of a luxury restaurant. Given that a proper understanding of brand prestige is critical for achieving luxury restaurants' marketing competency and brand prestige is directly related to patrons' dedicational behaviors, the model developed in this study may help restaurant firms to retain their customers over the long term and help to maximize revenue of the luxury restaurant.

Research Limitation/Future Research

Despite its theoretical/practical implications, one limitation of this research need to reported. The empirical data for this

study was collected from luxury restaurant patrons in United States. So, the conclusion can be cross-culturally generalizable is somewhat limited. Future research might need to test the proposed model with different data collected from other cultures.

국문초록

이 연구의 목적은 럭셔리 레스토랑의 브랜드 명품화가 고객의 웰빙 지각도, 호의적 평가, 감정적인 충성도, 그리고 헌신적인 행위에 미치는 영향을 고찰하는 것이다. 문헌 분석을 통하여, 제시된 마케팅 개념들간의 이론적 인과관계가 도출되었으며, 이를 바탕으로 11개의 가설들이 도출되었다. 또한 이 과정에서, 고객들의 브랜드 의식도가 조절 변수로 작용할 수 있다는 이론적 가설이 제시되었다. 도출된 이론적 가설들을 종합하여 구조 모델이 도출되었으며, 이 개념적 모델은 527명의 미국 럭셔리 레스토랑 고객을 대상으로 하여 수거된 데이터로 검증되었다. 데이터 분석에는 AMOS 6.0 버전이 사용되었으며, 데이터 분석 결과, 럭셔리 레스토랑의 브랜드 명품화는 고객의 웰빙 지각도와 호의적 평가에 긍정적으로 작용하여, 결국 두가지 헌신적 행위(enhancement와 advocacy)를 유도한다는 것이 밝혀졌다. 또한 이 과정에서 고객들의 브랜드 의식도는 조절 효과로 작용한다는 것이 검증되었다. 데이터 분석 결과를 바탕으로 하여 이론적 실무적 시사점들이 논의되었다.

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