DINING AT ETHNIC-THEMED RESTAURANTS: AN INVESTIGATION OF CONSUMERS’ ETHNIC EXPERIENCES, PREFERENCE FORMATION, AND PATRONAGE

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Dissertation Prepared for the Degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

UNIVERSITY OF NORTH TEXAS

August 2014

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Given unprecedented shifts in the U.S. demography marked by rapid growth in Hispanic, Asian and other ethnic market segments, marketing scholars and practitioners are confronting ways to cultivate ethnic consumers' brand preference formation, retail patronage and their ensuring consumption choices. Food is cited as a common signifier for consumers’ ethnic/cultural identity because food itself is a cultural symbol. However, little research has examined the influences of ethnic identities on consumers’ patronage behaviors of ethnic-themed restaurants. Thus, this dissertation critically explores the impact of ethnic identity and motivational factors to better understand consumers' choices of ethnic-themed restaurants with a mix-method approach.

The present research investigates how ethnic identity and consumers’ need for uniqueness interplay with perceived authenticity in consumers’ patronage intention of ethnic-themed restaurants. The findings advocate the interplay among ethnic identity, consumers’ need for uniqueness, and perceived authenticity of general consumers in decision making choices of patronizing ethnic-themed restaurants. The findings have important implications for market segmentation guiding the owners of ethnic-themed restaurant the choice of environmental cues to encourage patronage intentions among general consumers. Furthermore, this study provides additional insights about motivating factors affecting decision making of patronizing ethnic-themed restaurants and contributes to the stream of research by enhancing understanding of marketing ethnic-themed restaurant in a multi-cultural society.
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by

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The past three years have been the most adventurous and excited experience to me. Without the vast support, encouragement and endless love I have received from a good number of great people, I would have not been able to make this stage successfully.

First and foremost, I would like to express my sincere and heartfelt appreciation for the patience, guidance, support and tolerance provided by my major professor, Dr. Lou E. Pelton. Dr. Pelton has been a mentor, colleague, and a family friend. Dr. Pelton brought me into this program three years ago and has made the past three years a thoughtful and rewarding journey under his guidance.

I would like to express my deep gratitude to my dissertation committee members, Dr. Audhesh Paswan, Dr. Jhinuk Chowdhury, and Dr. Iftekhar Ahmed, for their precious insights and guidance throughout this endeavor.

I would also like to thank all the other faculty members in the Department of Marketing and Logistics and the College of Business for their mentorship and stewardship in the past three years at the University of North Texas.

Last, but not least, I would like to thank my parents, my lovely daughter, Claire, and my dearest husband, Chunhao Xu, for their unconditional love and support. They were always there cheering me up and stood by me during good and bad times.
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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Background

The U.S. Hispanic population grew to more than 53 million, which is a 50% increase since 2000 and increased nearly six times the population in 1970 (U.S. Census Bureau 2013). Being the largest minority segment, the Hispanic population is the biggest contributor to U.S demographic shifts, and it is a fundamental component of America’s ethnic plurality (Nielson®, 2013). Ethnic plurality in markets creates both opportunities and challenges to businesses that operate within such a dynamic market environment (Chattaraman, Rudd & Lennon, 2009).

Hispanics demonstrate significant influences on youth culture, the entertainment industry, the workforce, consumerism, politics and American national identity. At nearly 17% of the total U.S. population, Hispanic consumers have also become a rapidly growing customer base for marketers of restaurants and food services. As Hispanic buying power climbs by 50% to $1.5 trillion in 2015, this group will have a larger economic impact at restaurants and other foodservice locations (Nielsen®, 2013).

Restaurant operators and suppliers that understand their unique preferences will be well-positioned to capture more business from the growing Hispanic segment the prominent player in all aspects of American life (Nielsen®, 2012; Technomic Inc®, 2013).

According to data from global market research firm Mintel® (2012), four in every five Americans who ate out in March 2012 dined at an ethnic restaurant. More than half of them dined at one of the nation’s three largest ethnic restaurant types: Chinese, Mexican, and Italian. Today, all types of restaurants have at least one Mexican item, like tacos or burritos, on the
menu. Many restaurants employ tortillas for sandwich wraps and chili peppers for flavor (Technomic Inc®, 2012). Popularity of ethnic foods is also shaping restaurant industry in the Year 2014 and beyond. The population shifts have impacted the diversity on menus. For example, the influence of the growing U.S. Hispanic population triggers the increased popularity of fruits, juice drinks and more flavorful spices and seasonings, and the growing Asian population carries its influence on menus with noodles, rice, specialty sauces, and other foods and flavors (NPD Group®, 2013).

Mexican and Hispanic foods have become an integral part of the U.S culture, generating fusion cuisines such as Tex-Mex, influenced by northern Mexican cooking with dishes like chili con carne, nachos, and fajitas, and Cal-Mex, based on central Mexico and Sonora tastes with tacos, burritos, and carne asada. Mexican restaurants are found across the U.S. ranging from small family eateries and food trucks to the 22 multiunit operations in Technomic’s list of top 500 chains. Many are increasingly focused on making their ingredients and dishes more authentic.

Responding to the increasing ethnic diversity in the U.S, marketing researchers and practitioners alike are confronting ways to attract and develop enduring marketing relationships with Hispanic segments, identifying and deploying ethnic marketing tactics to foster brand preference formation and retail patronage. Language, atmospherics, design and other symbolic cues are among the managerial mechanisms used to cultivate ethnic consumers' brand preferences (e.g., Hernandez & Kaufman, 1991), understand retail patronage intentions (e.g., Donthu & Cherian, 1994), and influence consumption choices with ethnic images and spokesperson (e.g., Deshpande & Stayman, 1994; Lenoir, Puntoni, Reed II, & Verlegh, 2013).
However, most marketing research to date still focuses on reinforcing the importance of target marketing that embraces the idiosyncratic ethnic experiences of these market segments through recruiting participants with ethnic-minority backgrounds (Donthu & Cherian, 1992; Reilly & Wallendorf, 1987).

Two major research streams that look at the factors that drive diners to ethnic-themed restaurants are ethnic identity among minority consumers (e.g., Parker, Jaytko, & Hermans, 2011) and perceived authenticity (e.g., Ebster & Guist, 2004) separately. However no published studies have taken both factors into consideration concurrently. Therefore, this study is interested in finding out how these two factors function together in driving consumers to ethnic-themed restaurants.

Grounded in the self-concept theoretical framework, this research stream critically explores the impact of self-identity and social identity theories as foundations for better understanding consumers' decision choices and behaviors towards ethnic-themed retailing outlets. Marketers' increased attention afforded to these growing market segments has spawned marketers' efforts to foster retail patronage among the growing Latino and Asian consumers. Both foreign-owned and U.S.-based ethnic-themed fashion retailers, restaurants and retail shopping complexes are proliferating. In the past, researchers have asserted that the prevalence of global media, travel, and entertainment have resulted in a culturally-homogenized global consumer, implying that standardization in market offerings was an appropriate marketing strategy. Yet, current social science research provides increasing support for highly differentiated market strategies that specifically address the unique characteristics across ethnic micro-segments.
Previous research has found that ethnic identity among various cultural factors representing national identity and food is cited as a common signifier for consumers’ ethnic/cultural identity because food itself can be a cultural symbol. Thus, U.S companies have started marketing activities to accommodate the tastes of the minorities, like McDonald’s glocalized menus, retail atmospherics and positioning strategies that coincide with a surge in ethnic-themed restaurants. However, little research has examined the influences of ethnic identities on consumers’ patronage behaviors relative to ethnic-themed restaurants.

Therefore, this dissertation aims to empirically assess this extant research gap and answer the following research questions:

1. What are general factors that motivate American consumers to dine in ethnic-themed restaurants?

2. How do consumers’ ethnic identities and experiences affect their restaurant patronage behaviors across ethnic-themed restaurants in the U.S.?

3. How do consumers’ attitudes toward restaurant atmospherics, menu options, and perceived authenticity influence consumers’ restaurant patronage intentions in ethnic-themed restaurants in the U.S.?

4. How does perceived authenticity influence the patronage intention of ethnic-themed restaurants?

5. How does consumers’ need for uniqueness influence retail patronage intentions towards ethnic-themed restaurants?

To this end, this research explores the role of ethnic-identity, consumers’ need for uniqueness, perceived authenticity, and their relationships with patronage intention in the context of ethnic-themed restaurants.

Research Goals

In order to address the identified gaps in the literature, this dissertation builds upon and
extends previous literature on self-concept theory (ethnic identity) and consumers’ need for uniqueness to achieve three main objectives. The first goal is to outline motivating factors that drive consumers to dine in ethnic-themed restaurant. Thus, the focus of the first objective is to identify the relevant factors and reasons that motivate consumers to dine at ethnic-themed restaurants. Accordingly, this dissertation extends the boundary of current target marketing of ethnic-themed restaurants from current ethnic-background customers to general American customers. The second goal is to investigate the degree of ethnic-identity of general customers and its relationship to dining in ethnic-themed restaurants. The last goal of this dissertation is to examine how consumers’ need for uniqueness interplay with ethnic-identity as well as perceived authenticity to influence the patronage intention of ethnic-themed restaurants.

Managerial and Academic Contributions

The present research investigates how ethnic identity and consumers’ need for uniqueness interplay with perceived authenticity to affect consumers’ patronage intention of ethnic-themed restaurants. The findings contributes to the research advocating the interplay among ethnic identity, consumers’ need for uniqueness, and perceived authenticity of general consumers in decision making choices of patronizing ethnic-themed restaurants. The findings have important implications for market segmentation guiding the owners of ethnic-themed restaurants who make conscious managerial decisions regarding the choice of environmental cues to encourage patronage intentions among general consumers.

Furthermore, this study provides additional insights about motivating factors affecting decision making of patronizing ethnic-themed restaurants and contributes to the stream of
research by enhancing the understanding of marketing ethnic-themed retail outlets in a multi-cultural society.

Overview of the Research Design

Given the nature of the exploratory research questions, the present research follow the mixed method approach that employs qualitative methods initially to help confirm and develop quantitative concepts, measures and scales (Harrison & Reilly, 2011; Steckler, McLeroy, Goodman, Bird, & McCormick, 1992).

To this end, the present stage is conducted under three stages. In the qualitative research stage, the purpose is to answer the first research question to discover factors that drive general consumers to ethnic-themed restaurants, and these are identified through the ethnographic storytelling approach. In the quantitative stage, firstly, self-administered on-line research instrument is deployed, inclusive of the principal theses gained from the qualitative research stage. In this way, it reinforces the face validity of the measures employed. These themes included scales for ethnic experiences, consumers’ need for uniqueness, perceived authenticity, patronage intention as well as more specific demographic information that extend beyond the U.S. Census Bureau’s (2011) delineation of the self-identified Hispanic ethnic category. Using the extant scales that have demonstrated both internal consistency and statistically validity, the pilot study was distributed to largely Generation Y-aged consumers who represented different ethnic identities and were enrolled as undergraduate students in a large, diverse southwestern U.S. university. After instrument revision, the main study was then distributed using a consumer penal, which afforded a more generalizable sampling
methodology consistent with the U.S. population. The panel is consisted of consumers across demographic categories that were not only representative of the national population of interest, but respondents who had been pre-tested to be familiar with participation in an on-line consumer survey. The consumer panel also afforded other measures of veracity relative to self-identification as assured by a third-party research company.

Taken together, the results show that ethnic experiences and perceived authenticity are both significant factors that motivate consumers to dine in ethnic-themed restaurants. Such a relationship is also moderated by the consumers’ need for uniqueness. Gender is also found to be a crucial factor that influences consumers’ patronage intentions.
CHAPTER 2
LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

Overview

This chapter provides a review of the theoretical background and relevant literature that lead to the development of research hypotheses. The literature review includes four parts. First, a brief review of the ethnic cuisine industry and research on factors influencing consumers’ choice of ethnic restaurants are presented. The second section comprises a review of the theoretical basic of the present research on social identity theory and ethnic identity in ethnic service encounters. The third section reviews relevant factors that influence ethnic restaurant patronage intention: consumers’ need for uniqueness, role of gender, and the perception of authenticity. The last section summarizes the hypotheses this dissertation tested.

Ethnic Cuisine and U.S. Migration: A Critical Association

The restaurant industry markets to a wide diversity of consumers and so do ethnic-themed restaurants. The National Restaurant Association’s (NRA) industry projects restaurant sales to reach $660.5 billion in 2013, which is a 43% increase since 2000 and occupies an overall 4% of economic impact on the U.S. gross domestic product of (National Restaurant Association, 2013). NRA (2013) also reports that Americans spend about 47% of their food dollar in restaurants. Studies (Buzalka, 2001; Martell, 2004) show that ethnic cuisine is one of the hottest restaurant trends is predicted to increase continuously.

Historically, the ethnic restaurant industry is closely tied to the history of immigration (Cui, 1997; Lee, Hwang, & Mustapha, 2014). The history of the introduction of ethnic cuisine
varies by types and is closely tied to the history of immigration. Gabaccia (1998) records the immigration trends and the development of the ethnic restaurant industry. Between 1815 and 1890, more than fifteen million immigrants entered the United States from England, Ireland, Germany, and Scandinavia and the northwestern Europe. Another 15,000,000 immigrants from central, eastern, and southern Europe came to the United States between 1890 and 1914. Since early 20th century, Chinese, Japanese, Italians, and Mexicans already affected American’s eating patterns. In the 1920s and 1930s popular ethnic foods included chow mein, spaghetti, pastrami, and tamales.

At the very beginning, Mexican food was popular mainly among the lower working class in early 1930s. Italian cuisine expanded due to the strong network between Italian immigrants and other communities. The spread of Chinese food started with Chinese migration in 1848 and the first Chinese restaurant was opened in San Francisco in 1849. The first Chinese style cuisines were Americanized-Cantonese fusion cuisines that used local ingredients to emulate many of the dishes from South China. Different from Chinese food, few Japanese restaurants were established in the United States until post World War II (Lee et al., 2014).

Despite storied history of U.S. migration and the introduction of ethnically-inspired foods, ethnic cuisine didn’t see its popularity and positive perception until the late 1980s. The popularity and acceptance of ethnic cuisine among American consumers were challenged by prevailing regional American dishes that were identified with specific regions of the U.S. A. relative to the proximate agricultural drops, cultural norms and developing economic class structures. Previous studies have confirmed various factors on the increasing ethnic foods. For example, extrinsic factors such as immigration, tourism and international trade have changed
the demographic components in the United States dramatically and an increase in the demand for ethnic cuisine has also been observed (Lee et al., 2014). Such diversified population demands ethnic cuisine in the United States In the first decade of 21st century (2000-2010), two major groups contribute to ethnic growth in the U.S.; the Asian population increased by 43% (4.4 million) and the Hispanic population also grew by 43% (15.2 million). By 2012, the Hispanic population has grown to 53 million, a 50% increase since 2000 and is nearly six times the population in 1970 (Pew Research Center®, 2014).

Intense coverage of media programs on international travel and food exploration also increased exposure of international cuisines, restaurants and chefs add value to unique foreign cuisines (King, 2004). Media coverage illuminated changes in lifestyle and values in the American society, especially relative to cooking, dining out and the integration of cultural activities across American lifestyles (i.e., the celebration of Cinco de Mayo is essentially an American-derived holiday with little or no relevance to Latin American culture or history). The perceptions of and pursuit to attain healthier foods, adopt healthier diets, explore flavorful and "unique" ingredients and venture into new food experiences also fostered the psychological acceptance of ethnic cuisines (Lee et al., 2014). In addition, the increase of international travel by Americans also brought greater interest in ethnic cuisines.

In the last 20 years, the number of ethnic restaurants has increased significantly in the U.S. restaurant industry, from 1980s’ 10% of all restaurants in the USA (Gabaccia 1998), to 33% in 1997. Mintel® (2012) predicts that the ethnic food market will continue to grow with $3.9 billion in sales.
Factors Affecting Consumers’ Choice of Ethnic Restaurants

The increase in ethnic cuisine consumption also calls attention for increased research attention because there remains a paucity of empirical support for ubiquitous factors that predict consumers’ quest for ethnic cuisines. Most research to date is largely descriptive. For example, Mintel’s “Ethnic Restaurant 2012” reports that such a diverse U.S population strongly encourages the growth of the ethnic restaurant industry (Mintel®, 2012). Since understanding consumers’ decision making regarding what to eat when dining at restaurants is essential to the success of any food service operation, studies that investigate factors that drive consumers to ethnic restaurants are gaining increased attention in the literature, though much of the extant research has been limited to the hospitality services industry.

Koo, Tao and Yeung (1999) use conjoint analysis technique to reveal consumers’ preference for choice of restaurants and develop a list of restaurant attributes (i.e. location, price, service, food quality, food variety) that are important. The results also indicate that segmentation of a restaurant can be based on the different purposes of a meal, (i.e. family meal, business mean and tourist meal) or employee groups who work in other service industries such as retail stores close by.

Studies show that factors such as health and wellness, value for the money, social needs, and food quality and flavor experimentation affect consumers’ decisions when eating out (Datamonitor®, 2005; Reynolds, 2004). Similarly, Shepherd (1990) illustrates the choice of food from nutritional and sensory beliefs of the consumers. The study argues that some factors are related to food, some related to advertising stimuli, and others related to external economic and social context. Age differences explain a flavor preference (Tomlinson, 1998),
while the national concern in the United Kingdom for food choice is the choice among healthy eating options (Maudsley, 1989). Maddock, Leek, and Foxall (1999) discuss the importance of social factors such as income, religious beliefs (i.e., halal, kosher), and even ethical concerns in food choice (i.e., avoidance of slaughtered animals). Factors like gender and word-of-mouth, are also indicative to motivations that impact consumers’ restaurant choices (Kim, Ng, & Kim, 2009; Soriano, 2002).

Official reports also show that food quality and safety issues are among the germane indicators that affect restaurant decisions (U.S. Department of Agriculture, Economic Research Service [USDA-ERS], 2003). Consumers are seeking healthy alternatives, new flavors, efficiency and convenience. The same report suggests that restaurant patrons tend to favor menu options with multiple considerations such as the portfolio of food value, great taste, and menu variety (Cannon, 2007). Findings show that ethnic food offers consumers a myriad of menu portfolios that meet these decision choice factors; it has the ability to influence consumer decisions by providing various attributes such as uniqueness, convenience, nutrition, and social environment (Datamonitor®, 2005; Reynolds, 2004).

Some studies of ethnic food consumption behavior focus on seeking, buying, and using products and services based on consumers’ socioeconomic and demographic characteristics. It is found that the complex role of consumption, such as ethnic restaurant consumption, help particular social groups to manifest their social distinction (Warde, Martens, & Olsen, 1999). Other studies investigate consumers’ perceptions of ethnic cuisines, and how these factors may appeal to ethnic restaurant consumers (Halvorsen, 1999). Recent studies (e.g., Liu & Jang, 2009) show that consumers prefer an excellent overall dining experience rather than simply
experiencing good taste or affordable price. Such findings indicate that food choice, especially consumers’ choice of ethnic restaurants is a complex phenomenon (Roseman, Kim, & Zhang, 2013).

Researchers also examine the phenomenon with many factors through theoretical and practical investigations in order to understand consumers’ eating behaviors (e.g., Liu & Jang, 2009) because the results can potentially enhance both researchers' and practitioners' understanding of consumer behaviors, provide insights for restaurant operators and foodservice to more effectively deploy marketing resources to better address consumers' preferences.

Roseman et al. (2013) adapt the theory of reasoned action (TRA) to the context of the restaurant sector to explain consumers’ intention to purchase ethnic food when eating at restaurants. They explore psychological and sociological influences related to consumers’ intention to purchase ethnic food in restaurants and confirm with the previous study that consumers’ choice of ethnic food in restaurants are more culturally-derived than restaurant-oriented. Such ethnic “dine-out” experiences satisfy various psychological needs, such as adventure-seeking and healthy seeking, as well as socio-cultural needs for different culture experiences (Rubin, 2004; Sukalakamala & Boyce, 2007; Thorn, 2011). Positive attitudes toward ethnic food also increase purchase intentions of ethnic foods in restaurants. However, this study mainly confirms the previous findings in consumers’ choice of ethnic foods.

Tsai and Lu (2012) show that consumers now tend to go beyond factors that satisfy their psychological or healthy needs and expect a cultural experience that offer quality food and great service, and (perhaps even more important) some authenticity when dining at ethnic
restaurants. The results find a positive relationship between authentic dining experiences and customer repurchase intentions. Therefore, in order to attract more customers, ethnic-themed restaurants should improve service, settings, as well as food for an authentic cultural experience. Tsai and Lu (2012) expand the scope of authenticity beyond food and environment (Ebster & Guist, 2004).

Ethnic Identity and Choice of Ethnic-Themed Restaurants

Market Segmentation and Ethnic Identity

Due to the changing demographic proportion of ethnic group members in the U.S., the U.S. is motiving toward a multi-cultural society, indicating the importance of ethnic consumers in the market place (Cui, 1997). As early as the second half of the 20th-century, Hauser and Duncan (1959) pointed out that ethnic consumers constitute an important force in the market, and marketers would have to face challenges in nativity and “race” groups of American population. In the 1970s, the marketing field was focusing on segmentation and line extensions to address an increasingly diverse consumer population, leading to the unprecedented diversity that extended to the ensuing decade. This diversity helped to develop new research focus on niche marketing.

Market segmentation offers strategies for companies to break a large heterogeneous market into small homogeneous segments so that these separate and more well-defined segments can be better aligned with specific market tactics that better facilitate the needs and wants of each segment (Venkatesh, 2011). Market segmentation has been characterized by grouping consumers based on various standards such as demography, socio-economics,
geographics, and psychographics, engendering marketers' increased awareness of greater heterogeneity in values, attitudes and lifestyles across micro-segments of the American population.

As American society has become more multi-cultural, ethnicity is undoubtedly an increasingly important consumer characteristic for market segmentation (Burton 2000). Ethnic marketing then emerges as one of the effective strategies to keep and attract more customers. Previous studies have shown that ethnicity can affect a wide range of consumer behaviors such as “styles of dress, tastes in music and leisure time pursuits,” and even the food/beverage consumption (Bocock, 1993).

In the marketing literature, ethnic marketing is referred to as “the deliberate effort by marketers to reach a group of consumers presumably due to their unique ethnic characteristics” (Cui, 2001, p. 23). Previous research has investigated consumer behaviors of major racial minority groups in the United States, i.e. African American, Hispanics, Asian Americans, and Native Americans as well as studies that involve comparison with these ethnic minority groups (Cui, 2001).

Cui (1997) reviews practices of marketing toward ethnic minorities and reveals four perspectives: traditional marketing, separated marketing, integrated marketing, and multicultural marketing. He proposes a framework of four strategies for marketers that marketers should select and implement one or a combination of strategies when positioning their company and their products. Any company whoever wants to market to ethnic consumers should consider the influence of product preference, ethnic identification, acculturation and advertising response in ethnic marketing (Cui, 1997). The restaurant industry has largely
adopted these four factors. Based on Haley’s benefit segmentation framework (1968), Bahn and Granzin (1985) suggest that restaurant marketers must identify their target segments they seek to serve, and then the marketers should determine the requirements of the identified patrons and shape their market offerings to meet the needs of target segments.

Ethnic Identity, a Concept

Phinney and Ong (2007) concede that ethnic identity has many facets. Most of studies on ethnic identity have been grounded in the group identity theory within social psychology (Tajfel & Turner, 1986). Tajfel (1981) considers ethnic identity as an aspect of social identity and define it as “part of an individuals’ self-concept which derives from [his] knowledge of [his] membership of a social group (or groups) together with the value and emotional significance attached to that membership” (p. 255). Such a definition suggests the multi-dimensionality of the construct. Firstly, Laroche, Joy, Hui, and Kim (1991) distinguish two levels of measures of ethnic identity: the subjective measures deal with personal belief and reflect an individuals’ psychological identity about their cultural attributes; whereas, the objective measures ref to the socio-cultural features (i.e., religion, language, and cultural tradition). Desponde, Hoyer, and Donthu (1986) add that ethnic identity should also measure the intensity of attachment within the ethnic groups. Donthu and Cherian (1994) further show that the strength of ethnic identification moderates Hispanic consumers’ purchase decisions.

Another reason of the complexity of the construct is that ethnic identity has been explained from various theoretical frameworks. Tajfel (1978) regards ethnic identity as part of social identity theory. Berry, Trimbel and Olmedo (1986) treat the ethnic identity as a synonym
of acculturation. Phinney (1990) reviews two distinct models in studying ethnic identity: the linear model conceptualizes ethnic identity as a continuum with two ends, strong/weak levels of ties to ethnic groups/acculturation to the mainstream culture. The two-dimension model emphasizes that acculturation is a two-dimensional process indicating that ethnic identity could be independent from the acculturation process.

Both social identity and acculturation frameworks acknowledge that ethnic identity is “dynamic, changing over time and context” (Phinney, 1990, p. 502). Phinney (1990) bases her discussion in the developmental framework of ego identity formation (Erikson, 1968). She further suggests that the formation of ethnic identity undergoes three stages. In this model, early adolescents and adults start from an unexamined ethnic identity and preference for the dominant culture in the first stage. During the second stage, ethnic members explore their own ethnicity and become more aware of their ethnicity through intense immersion in their own cultures or rejection of the dominant culture. In the last stage, people come to a profound understanding and appreciation of their ethnicity. Some people might develop an ethnic identity achievement (Phinney, Lochner, & Murphy, 1990).

Phinney (1990) also reviews the components of ethnic identity: self-identification as a “group member, a sense of belonging to the group, attitudes about one’s group membership and ethnic involvement to social participation, cultural practices and attitudes” (p. 503-504). At the same time, researchers need to aware that (1) ethnic identity is a relative construct in relation to the mainstream culture; (2) ethnic identity changes with the generations of immigration; (3) male and female members of ethnic members might demonstrate different ethnic identity; and (4) ethnic identity is context/situation-bounded. Therefore, there is no
single answer to one’s ethnic identity. For example, Bush, Hair, and Solomon (1979) compare African American and Caucasians in their attitudes and responses to the portrayal of black models in advertisings. They find that because of the societal and belief change, little difference was found between ethnic groups in their attitudes toward the portrayal of black models.

Given unprecedented increased in the internationalization of marketers and markets coupled with the technology-enabled globalization of ethnic peoples, places and perspectives, researchers have realized that ethnic identity formation is not only limited to any particular ethnic group within a multi-cultural society but an evolving process that any member in the society undergoes (Chan, Berger, & Van Boven, 2012; Phinney & Ong, 2007). However, researchers should increasingly be aware that previous studies on ethnicity as a segmenting strategy offer practical implications to traditional marketers not ethnic owners of companies. One goal of this dissertation is to provide valuable implications for managers of ethnic service encounters, the owners of ethnic-themed restaurants.

*Ethnic Identity and Choice of Ethnic-Themed Service Outlets*

As marketers realize the growing importance of ethnic consumer segments due to the size and purchasing power, marketers have tried to exploit opportunities to attract ethnic consumers (Huang, Oppewal, & Mavondo, 2013). Mainstream retailers and other service providers try to appeal to ethnic consumers by hiring staff that speak the language or by supporting causes of ethnic minority. For example there is at least one cashier speaks Spanish in every Walmart center. Bank of America offers four languages on ATM machines. Mainstream
business attempts to compete with business owned by ethnic minority entrepreneurs (Wang, 2004).

At the same time, ethnic minority entrepreneurs also attempt to hire staff of other ethnic cultures to attract consumers of other ethnic groups. Take H-Mart, a south-Korea based franchised supermarket, for example, they hire cashiers and customer service staff who speak Korean, Chinese, Spanish and English in all their Texas locations and publish flyers in English, Korean, and Chinese in local Chinese newspapers. Such marketing behaviors attract consumers of various ethnic groups to their retailing locations and manifest the strategy of benefit segmentation (Bahn & Granzin, 1985). However, little research has examined the effectiveness of ethnic business owners’ marketing attempts or offer guidelines for them. This dissertation is hoping to go beyond the boundary of current research and provide insights for ethnic business owners as well. First, let’s review how ethnic identity is studied in the context of restaurant business.

Williams and Qualls (1989) report the decrease in ethnic identity as African Americans move up the socio-economic ladder to middle-class statues and further influence their retail shopping behaviors. Consumers who have moved up the ladder may have similar responses to their Anglo counterparts.

Donthu and Cherian (1992) classify Hispanic consumers based on the strength of ethnic identification, which measures the “strength to which a person feels tied to the culture of origin” (p.501). The study examines Hispanic consumers and finds that weak Hispanic identifiers are different from strong Hispanic identifiers especially in coupon usage. Weak Hispanic identifiers act more like consumers of dominant culture.
Further, Donthu and Cherian (1994) argue that strength of ethnic identity is the underlying moderator that affects ethnic consumers’ retail shopping behavior. The results show that strongly identified Hispanics are more likely to seek Hispanic vendors than weakly identified Hispanics in the context of service outlets. On the product level, strongly identified Hispanics are more loyal to brands used by family and friends, are more influenced by targeted media message, and are less concerned about economic value than the weakly identified Hispanics.

Kara and Kara (2011) examine the effects of subcultural component and the degree of acculturation on consumer choice behavior. The basic assumption of this study is that consumers of different ethnic background may be different. Previous consumer behavior studies have shown that ethnic background affect consumer behavior via the impact on consumer values, which are known to influence consumption motives, and individual choice criteria (Bozinoff & Cohen, 1982; Valencia, 1985). Faber, O’Guinn and Meyer (1987) point out the more acculturated the individual, the greater the progression toward the attitudes and values of the host society. In other words, ethnic factor tends to have lower impact on highly acculturated ethnic group member in consumption choices. Kara and Kara (2011) confirm that the relationship between ethnic groups and consumption relevant factors (Hirschman, 1981; Valencia, 1985). The study finds that Hispanics who are highly acculturated demonstrate similar choices as Anglos but different from the Hispanics who are less acculturated to the main culture.

Huang et al. (2013) refer to both institutional theory and self-congruity theory and examine two sets of service outlet attributes, ethnic-related and performative attributes to the
attractiveness of an outlet. The study finds that ethnic-related attributes significantly influence Chinese consumers’ choice of service outlets and contribute positively to the perceived attractiveness. Store atmosphere is found to be effective on both performative and ethnic-related attribute.

Consumers’ Need for Uniqueness and Choice of Ethnic-Themed Restaurants

In section that discusses the potential factors that affect consumers’ choice of ethnic cuisine/restaurants, studies find that ethnic restaurant consumptions dining choices help consumers manifest their social distinctions (Ward et al., 1999). Social distinction, in sociology, was marked by tastes, which were formed as part of class habitus and were mutually recognizable between individuals and groups in society (Bourdieu, 1984). Dining out at ethnic restaurant could be a manifestation of social distinction, a difference from other social groups (Warde et al., 1999).

Simonson and Nowelis (2000) propose that need for uniqueness (Snyder & Fromkin, 1977) is one reason that could justify consumers’ abnormal/distinct options. In particular, making unconventional decisions is not only due to taste differences, but these decisions may often reflect a meta-preference for being unique and manifesting a choice for variety (Simonson & Nowelis, 2000). Thus, the need for uniqueness could be a potential factor that could explain consumers’ choice of ethnic-themed restaurants, especially consumers who don’t share the same origin as the ethnicity of that restaurant. The following section provides a review of literature on the need for uniqueness in the context of marketing.
Need for Uniqueness

When discussing the effect of social interaction on behavior, sociological literature has identified two competing forces on decision making: conformity and dissension (Bourdieu, 1984; Snyder & Fromkin, 1977). Conformity explains the tendencies that people possess to conform to social norms, please others, get approvals, and avoid rejection and at the same time, social interaction might also encourage dissension and deviation from norms which could promote positive self and public image (Simonson & Nowlis, 2000).

In explaining the abnormality, Snyder and Fromkin (1977) argue that abnormality could be conceptualized as a term, uniqueness, which conveys “positive striving for differentness relative to other people (p. 518).” Pepinsky (1961) points out that the two-thirds subjects in Asch’s (1951) conformity studies did not conform or moved away from the consensus were trying to manifest strong need to maintain their uniqueness relative to conform need. Researchers (Fromkin, 1970, 1972) find out that when deprived of being unique, subjects tend to generate unique uses for a common object, act out more negative affect, exhibit greater passion for experiencing distinct options, or be less conformed to peer judgments. Such uniqueness is based on the assumption that people attempt to be different from peers even though they conform sometimes within a situation that allows positive striving for abnormality.

Further, Snyder and Fromkin (1977) developed and validated a need for uniqueness (NFU) scale that allows later studies to examine differences between high and low NFU individuals in social situations. Snyder (1992) adds that high NFU individuals are more sensitive and are more likely to demonstrate behaviors that cultivate a sense of specialness. If we consider “dining out” among a conformity situation in the U.S., the choice of ethnic restaurants
will allow high NFU individuals to establish sense of uniqueness and specialness while experiencing ethnic environment (Reynolds, 2004).

As recognized in Snyder and Fromkin (1977), individuals could exhibit various degrees of motivation for uniqueness through possession displays (Belk, 1988), style of interpersonal interaction (Maslach, Stapp, & Santee, 1985), the expertise knowledge of a domain (Holt, 1995), or explanation of unconventional choices (Simonson & Nowlis, 2000). Consumers’ need for uniqueness is an extension from uniqueness theory that reflects individual differences in consumer dissension motivation and is discussed in the following section.

Consumers’ Need for Uniqueness

Grounded in Snyder and Fromkin’s (1977) uniqueness theory, consumers’ need for uniqueness (CNFU) is defined as “the trait of pursuing differentness relative to others through the acquisition, utilization, and disposition of consumer goods for the purpose of developing and enhancing one’s self-image and social image” (Tian, Bearden, & Hunter, 2001, p. 52). It reflects consumer dissention motivation – “a motivation for differentiating the self via consumer goods and the visual display of these goods that involves the volitional or willful pursuit of differentness relative to others as an end goal” (p.52).

Consumers’ need for uniqueness is conceptualized within three types of consumer dimensions: creative choice counter-conformity; unpopular choice counter-conformity; and avoidance of similarity.

The first behavior dimension of CNFU is creative choice counter-conformity. Similar to Belk’s (1988) discussion of the relationship between the self and the possession, individuals
manifest their personal styles and tastes either through pursuit for original, novel or unique consumer goods or through presentation of one’s collections. Consumers who prefer unconventional choices fall into this category because making unconventional choices might lead to being highly evaluated by peers (Simonson & Nowlis, 2000). Another example could be consumers’ desire for customized products (Lynn & Harris, 1997). In this study, Lynn and Harris identify several antecedents and consequences of consumers’ desire for unique choice by investigating the relationship between personality trait and choice of artistic theater versus second-run theater.

The second dimension of CNFU accounts for consumers who establish their uniqueness by use/selection of products that deviate from group norms and risks for social unacceptance (Tian et al., 2001). Some consumers care less about social disapproval from others and tend to choose bizarre products/brands (Simonson & Nowlis, 2000) while some consumers only purchase products that conform to peer judgment (Rose, Bearden, & Teel, 1992) that could enhance their self-image. Fashion leaders or innovators make initial unpopular consumer choices which may gain fame and social acceptance later (Heckert, 1989).

The last dimension of CNFU describes consumer behaviors for a purpose of avoidance of being similar with the mainstream population (Tian et al., 2001). Simonson and Nowlis (2000) show that consumers who select discontinued styles, frequent in antique stores or wear apparels in unusual combinations is one way to show their uniqueness. Therefore high CNFU consumers adopt new products/brands more quickly than low-CNFU consumers (Amaldoss & Jain, 2005).
Irmak, Vallen, and Sen (2010) find that in the context of consumers’ product preferences in two social comparisons: projection and introjection. High CNFU consumers are less likely to rely on estimates of others’ opinion to gauge their own preference. The study also points out that consumers’ motivation to counterconform their preferences is more than merely to avoid similarity to others (Irmak et al., 2010).

Similarly, Chan et al. (2012) conduct four experimental studies to demonstrate that consumers’ choice of purchase fulfill both assimilation and differentiation goals and communicate their social identity at the same time (Snyder & Fromkin, 1977; Tian et al., 2001). In the purchase of identity-relevant consumer categories, clothing for example, high-CNFU pushes consumers to differentiate within groups with less popular selections relevant to with their group. The study also illustrates that multiple identity motives could jointly influence consumers’ choice.

**CNFU and Choice of Ethnic Restaurant**

Although uniqueness has been studied in various contexts of consumers’ decision making in marketing literature, few studies have looked at the relationship between CNFU and the choice of ethnic-themed restaurants. Lee and Hwang (2011) examine four psychological characteristics (materialism, uniqueness, hedonism, and perfectionism) on attitudes toward luxury restaurants. The results show that consumers who desire uniqueness demonstrate unfavorable attitudes toward luxury restaurants. In addition, consumers who seek uniqueness weakly associate luxury restaurants with overall good service quality (Lee & Hwang, 2011). Despite the reports (Cannon, 2007; Datamonitor®, 2005; USDA-ERS, 2003) of consumers’
preference for unique flavor is one factor that influences the choice of ethnic restaurant, there remains a lack of empirical studies that could confirm such prediction. The current dissertation attempts to address this research gap, empirically testing the relationship between CNFU, this psychological trait, and patronage intention of ethnic-themed restaurants.

Authenticity and Ethnic Restaurant Patronage Intention

Theming is a widely used strategy in the service industry and thus service providers hope to distinguish themselves from other competitors by providing their customers with unique experiences (Gilmore & Pine, 2002). Therefore theming is very popular in the hospitality industry and at retailing encounters such as Walt Disney theme parks restaurants with adventurous these (e.g., Rainforest Café) and apparel retailers like California beach themed Abercrombie & Fitch (A&F). A&F promotes that their products offer “Authentic American Clothing since 1892” (Abercrombie & Fitch®, 2014). However, not all “themed” places are successful. For example, “American Dream” restaurant in Paris has been ranked the worst American restaurants in Europe (CNN, 2013).

Bearsworth and Bryman (1999) identify four types of theming: reliquary theming (setting created upon use of precious artifacts), parodic theming (employing fake artifacts in decoration), reflexive theming (utilizing corporations’ brand images, logos, and designs) and ethnic theming. Ethnic theming depicts a particular culture through decoration and foods/cuisine (Beardsworth & Bryman, 1999). However, a restaurant could establish their own style with a combination of the above four types.
Role of Authenticity in Ethnic-Themed Restaurants

Edles (2004) states that food functions as an important cultural symbol and represents national identity. Food culture of a country also appeals to tourists as a unique and exotic feature. Such uniqueness has been referred to as “authenticity” (Jang, Ha, & Park, 2012; Wang & Mattila, 2013). This authenticity feature is also a crucial component of ethnic cuisine different from local cuisine (Peabody, 1985). Restaurant industry has realized the importance of authentic and the current trend is to move toward “authentic” ethnic cuisine and offers both authentic food of a specific culture and authentic dining experience and environment, such as background music and decorations (Lego, Wood, McFee, & Solomon, 2002; NRA®, 2013). Researchers have investigated the role of authenticity in various fields (Bell, Meiselman, Pierson, & Reeve, 1994; Ebster & Guist, 2004; Lu & Fine, 1995).

Lego et al. (2002) believe that “authenticity” is not only a socially desirable concept related to both environment and food, but also an approach for differentiation from other competitors. However, authenticity seems to be hard to define because it seems to be held in the eye of the beholders. It is more of a process negotiating between the host culture and the ethnic culture and it is only “an illusion of authenticity” (Lu & Fine, 1995).

Similarly, Ebster and Guist (2004) examine the role of authenticity in ethnic theme restaurants by showing restaurant patrons video clips of Italian restaurants, themed or authentic. They find that patrons with higher degree of familiarity with a culture could tell the difference between the two types. Interestingly, the same study also finds that compared to customers with less knowledge of the culture, patrons with more knowledge believe that authenticity is not that important for a themed restaurant (Ebster & Guist, 2004). The findings
thus explain the confusing phenomenon that on the one hand, consumers claim that they prefer authentic to Americanized Chinese food; but in reality, consumers tend to select Americanized Chinese food whenever they order. Obviously, most of the consumers were not very certain of the degree of authenticity of the food that was actually served (Lego et al., 2002).

Chinese restaurants, one type of ethnic cuisine in the U.S., have been widely studied. For example, Liu and Jang (2009) investigate the factors that influence perceptions of American consumers towards Chinese restaurants. The study finds that food quality, service reliability, environmental cleanliness, atmospherics, price and authenticity are vital attributes that affect American consumers’ satisfaction and behavioral intentions. The same study suggests that Chinese restaurants adjust food authenticity based on their primary customer composition such as offering different menus to meet customers’ distinct requirements (Liu & Jang, 2009) because food authenticity may be very important for culture-seeking American customers (George, 2001).

Another study (Ha & Jang, 2010) empirically examines the relationship between perceived food quality and satisfaction/loyalty as well as the moderating effects of perceived atmospherics in Korean themed restaurants. Tsai and Lu (2012) study the effects of perceived authenticity in Thai restaurants and suggest that food authenticity is more important than the perceived authenticity of the environment because the importance of authentic food matters more than the environmental settings provided at ethnic restaurants (Ebster & Guist, 2004; Roseman, 2006). However, authenticity plays a significant role in appealing to the target customers of ethnic restaurants.
Definition of Authenticity

Taylor (1991) defines authenticity as “that which is believed or accepted to be genuine or real” (p. 17). As discussed above, authenticity confuses both researchers and consumers (Lu & Fine, 1995) because it can be understood from different points of view: objective and subjective (Cohen, 1988; Trilling, 1972; Wang, 1999). Trilling (1972) believes that an expert can judge the objective authenticity to see whether it is a genuine or real object. Lu and Fine (1995) suggest that food at ethnic restaurants be considered objectively authentic if it is prepared by natives following conventions. Ebster and Guist (2004) also indicate that an ethnic-themed restaurant could be objectively authentic if the dining environment is decorated with authentic/real objects from a specific culture. Thus, natives of the culture could suggest the degree of the objective authenticity of ethnic food or environment.

However, from the constructivist perspective, authenticity is a relative concept and is context dependent rather than objectively determined (Cohen, 1988). This suggests that ethnic restaurant patrons seek to experience a symbolic authenticity when they choose to dine in an ethnic restaurant. Thus, authenticity is a belief constructed from social existence (Cohen, 1988; Wang 1999). Usually, the target market of ethnic restaurants focuses on local customers of the host culture rather than customers from home culture of the ethnic restaurant (Lego et al. 2002). Thus, the goal of the constructed “authenticity” is to appeal the authenticity-seeking needs of local patrons. Such “authenticity” is constructed from the images formed by past experiences, knowledge of the culture from an “outsiders” perspective, or exposure in the media broadcasted in the host country (Lee et al., 2014). This type of authenticity is referred to
as subjective authenticity (Lego et al., 2002) or perceived authenticity (Sukalakamala & Boyce, 2007).

Perceived Authenticity

Jang et al. (2012) considers perceived authenticity as “a customer’s perceptions of service outputs reflecting authenticity” (p. 993). This definition may put an ongoing difficult search in the foodservice industry for a number of years (Cohen, 1988; Lego et al., 2002; Lu & Fine, 1995; Wang, 1999). As an attractive descriptor, the practice of authenticity by restaurant owners has become efforts that meet consumers’ expectations more than present an accurate cultural portrayal (Munoz & Wood, 2009; Wood & Munoz, 2007). As discussed in the previous section, authenticity of ethnic restaurants should be both objectively authentic that represent home culture and subjectively authentic that reflect targeted consumers’ perceive authenticity available in the host culture (Lego et al., 2002; Ebster & Guist, 2004).

The literature on the authenticity of ethnic restaurants has discussed two dimensions of authenticity: perceived food authenticity (Ha & Jang, 2010) and perceived atmospheric authenticity (Jang et al., 2012; Liu & Jang, 2009). Ethnic food is recognized as a marker for ethnicity (Lu & Fine, 1995) and a representation of traditional culture (Verbeke & López, 2005).

Lu and Fine (1995) examine authenticity and Americanization as contrasting marketing strategies in order to build a valid market niche. Restaurant owners make efforts to make their customers believe that they experience “exotic encounter” (Chace, 1992). However, Alba (1990) points out that the ethnic purity of the food has been diluted because of the process of Americanization. This is especially true with Chinese restaurants. Due to limited exposure of
“authentic” Chinese cuisine and complexity of Chinese food types, most of American consumers refer Americanized Chinese food as authentic Chinese food (Ebster & Guist, 2004; Wang, 1999). Such problem is not a specific one to Chinese restaurants, so do “authentic Italian food” (e.g. Olive Garden®) or “authentic Mexican food” (e.g., Abuelo’s®). These misperceptions also confirm that the concept of authenticity is a “perceived” concept held by the consumers (Lego et al., 2002).

In Sukalakamala and Boyce’s (2007) investigation of American customers’ perceptions of an authentic dining experience in Thai restaurants, to experience authentic ethnic cuisine and to seek for new tastes are the two major reasons for consumers to dine in ethnic restaurants. In other words, the intention of visiting ethnic restaurants is because of an expectation for unique cuisine, cultural aspects and exotic tastes from the ethnic food itself. Accordingly, food authenticity is an important aspect ethnic restaurant operators need to consider. This has also been reinforced in the empirical studies conducted by Liu and Jang’s (2009) relative to Chinese restaurants.

However, food authenticity is not the only factor that affects patrons’ choice of ethnic restaurants. Physical surroundings that build cultural experience are also important (Beardsworth & Bryman, 1999; Ebster & Guist, 2004), which explains why ethnic restaurant operators make efforts in creating distinctive dining environments by emphasizing authentic atmospherics for meaningful dining and entertainment experiences, such as interior design, decorations, or music (Lego et al., 2002).
Previous studies have focused on the influence of restaurant atmospherics on consumers’ satisfaction, loyalty, and behavior intentions (e.g., Bitner, 1992; Heung & Gu, 2012; Kotler, 1973; Turley & Milliman, 2000). As early as 1970s, Kotler (1973) advocates atmospherics as a marketing tool emphasizing the role of design of settings to trigger specific emotional cues to increase buyers' purchasing propensity. Atmospherics involves stimuli that target at all five human senses: sight, sound, scent, touch, and taste. Later, Bitner (1992) identified three dimensions of atmospherics, literally ambient conditions, spatial layout and functionality, and signs, symbols, and artifacts. Ambient conditions include features of background environment, namely temperature, lighting, noise, music, and scent. Spatial layout refers to the settings and arrangements of utilities and furniture which could indicate the ability of those items to facilitate performance and the accomplishment of goals. Signs, symbols, and artifacts offer explicit and implicit messages that communicate the service with consumers (Bitner, 1992).

It should also be noted that atmospherics also include the exterior environment of the retail service outlets. Researchers (Berman & Evans, 1995) identify four categories of atmospherics: the exterior design, the interior design, layout and decorative variables. Previous studies also point out that in addition to the above four categories, atmospherics assessment is subject to the influence of human variables such as characteristics of consumers, variables related to employees’ personality, and availability of privacy protection (Turley & Milliman, 2000).

Heung and Gu (2012) empirically examine the influence of restaurant atmospherics on diners’ satisfaction and patrons’ behavioral intention and further identify five dimensions of
restaurant atmospherics, namely, facility aesthetics, ambience, spatial layout, employee factors, and the view of the window. The study findings suggest significant effects of atmospherics on customers’ dining satisfaction and behavioral intentions, especially in terms of re-patronage intention and positive word-of-mouth communications.

Given the importance of atmospherics in building ethnic experiences, researchers (e.g., Jang et al., 2012; Jang, Liu, & Namkung, 2011; Ryu & Jang, 2007; Tsai & Lu, 2012; Wood & Munoz, 2006) have examined the role of atmospherics across the ethnic-themed restaurants. Based on the notion that the environment is a critical component of authenticity in ethnic-themed restaurants, Wood and Munoz (2006) examined how the dining environment affects consumers’ perceptions as ambassadors of authentic Australian culture in an ethnic restaurant setting when looking at Outback Steakhouse® in the United States. One study on Chinese ethnic restaurants uncovers the influential effect of environmental authenticity of interior design, decorations and music (George, 2001).

Another study on Chinese restaurants in the United States (Jang et al., 2011) shows that authentic atmospherics also affects consumers’ emotions and behavioral intentions. Both positive and negative emotions triggered by authentic atmospherics mediate the relationship between authentic atmospherics and behavior intentions.

However, the empirical findings of studies on authentic atmospherics are very complex. For example, despite the overall importance of authentic atmospherics, customers prefer authentic decorations to music and employee uniforms customers still consider authenticity of food the key element of their dining experience (George, 2001; Jang et al., 2012; Suklakamala & Boyce, 2007).
George (2001) compares consumer subgroups of Chinese restaurants to determine patrons’ perceptions and expectation concerning dining at Chinese restaurants. The results show that there are no significant differences among the patron subgroups and all subgroups considering food authenticity as the most important factor despite of the levels of knowledge in Chinese cooking. Among the eight participating Chinese restaurants, customers care more about the authenticity of the decorations over Chinese music and employees’ uniforms.

Similarly, Suklakamala and Boyce (2007) access the consumers’ authenticity expectations when dining at Thai restaurants. The results indicate that study subjects are more concerned with the authenticity of food, especially flavor, than the overall atmospheric authenticity even though others factors (i.e., convenience, service, price, employees and authentic design) are still components that attract customers.

Jang et al. (2012) examine how the authenticity of food and atmospherics influence customers’ behavior intentions toward Korean restaurants in the United States. The results show that authentic environments are more important for up-scale Korean restaurants than casual-dining Korean restaurants, whereas, food authenticity is more relevant and critical for casual-dining Korean restaurants than up-scale Korean restaurants. This study illustrates the effect of type of restaurant segment. Therefore, this dissertation will also consider the role of restaurant types on consumers’ patronage intention.

In summary, previous empirical studies show that perceived authenticity is a bi-dimension construct: perceived food authenticity and perceived atmospheric authenticity (Jang et al., 2012; Wang & Mattila, 2013). Accordingly, this dissertation considers that both
authenticity of food and atmospherics may influence customers’ cognitive responses and behavioral intentions as well as the effect of restaurant types.

Gender Differences and Restaurant Patronage Intention

In addition to ethnic identity, gender is another crucial factor affecting decision making in the information process (Iacobucci & Ostrom, 1993). The gender identity literature consistently describes women as communal while men as agentic (Meyers-Levy, 1989). In order words, when related to one’s environment, men act as agent of an action and tend to be more instrumental, task- or goal- oriented; women, on the other hand, orient toward social relationships (Carlson, 1971). The information processing literature demonstrates that the distinction between agentic and communal is manifested in differential selection of information when making decisions, such as greater assimilation of details by females or greater focus on heuristics and confirmation by males (e.g., Iacobucci & Ostrom, 1993; Meyers-Levy & Maheswaran, 1991).

Further, in the advertising literature, gender is treated as the social and cultural meanings associated with the maleness and femaleness imposed and expected by society (Alvesson & Billing, 1997). It is a critical factor in developing marketing strategy via advertising messages emphasizing information targeting at male or female consumers and appealing to changing needs of consumers as well as dynamic market contexts. Wolin (2003) synthesizes three decades of gender-related advertising research. Even though the findings indicate decreasing advertising stereotyping, improved realism, and gendered advertising, there still
exist differences between males and females in processing advertisements and responses to
different information cues (Gould, 1987; LaTour, 1990).

For example, gender differences explain better in the perception of leisure than
biological sex alone (Fontenelle & Zinkhan, 1993). “Dining out” is one type of leisure that
contributes to life satisfaction because it allows consumers to pursue both subjective and
emotional satisfaction (Havlena & Holbrook, 1986; Hirschman, 1984). Studies on patronage of
ethnic-themed restaurant also demonstrate that gender differences in attitudinal perceptions
and behavioral intentions (e.g., Kim, Lee & Yoon, 2012), especially in the perception of
authenticity (Ebster & Guist, 2004; Tsai & Lu, 2012). Studies on minorities also confirm gender
differences in store patronage behavior between Hispanic and non-Hispanic consumers
(Eckman, Kosiopulos & Bickle, 1997).

Given the “dine out’ culture in the U.S. (UPI®, 2011), Americans eat out about 5 times a
week. Among family decision making encounters, gender differences play an important role in
making service decisions, such as restaurant choice and patronage (Roberts, 1984; Szybillo &
Sosanie, 1977). Gender differences literature also found substantive issues underlying the
decision making of personal consumptions. Both married and engaged females tend to live a
higher-standard living and make more consumption in dining out. (Taylor-Gooby, 1985).
Therefore, in this dissertation, the role of gender was also investigated as a moderator.

**Behavioral Intentions**

Behavioral intention can be defined as the degree to which a person has formulated
conscious plans to perform or not perform some specified future behavior (Ajzen & Fishbein,
According to the theory of reasoned action (Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975), behavioral intention is the motivational component of a volitional behavior and is highly correlated with the behavior itself (Jang & Feng, 2007). Although there are still arguments about the level of correlation between behavioral intentions and actual actions, it seems to be generally agreed that behavioral intention is a reasonable variable for predicting future behavior (Ouelette & Wood, 1998). Thus, a good understanding of the determinants of favorable post-dining behavioral intentions such as saying positive things about the restaurant, recommending the restaurant to others, and repeat purchasing can provide practical guidance for restaurant practitioners.

Theoretical Model and Hypotheses Development

As described in previous sections, the theoretical framework for the present dissertation is ethnic identity theory, consumers’ need for uniqueness and perception of authenticity as related to motives for behavior intention. Based on the literature, one can propose that factors that motivate consumers to dine out can also predict consumers’ choice of ethnic-themed restaurants. Thus, in this dissertation, such relationship is hypothesized that

H1: Restaurant patronage motives influence patronage intentions.

Usually, different restaurant segments, local or franchised, target at different consumer markets. Therefore, this dissertation aims to find the differences between the two types of restaurant segments and the relationships are hypothesized that:

H2a: The restaurant segments influences the patronage intentions.

H2b: The restaurant segments moderates the relationship between perceived authenticity of food and patronage intentions.
H2c: The restaurant segments moderates the relationship between perceived authenticity of atmospherics and patronage intentions.

H2d: The restaurant segments influences the perceived attitudes toward the restaurants.

H2e: The restaurant segments moderates the relationship between perceived authenticity of food and perceived attitudes toward the restaurants.

H2f: The restaurant segments moderates the relationship between perceived authenticity of atmospherics and attitudes toward the restaurants.

In previous studies, the strength of ethnic identity has been found to be a crucial factor that influences minority consumers’ decision making as a motive on the group level. Thus, the influences of the strength of ethnic identity are hypothesized in the following statements.

H3a: The strength of ethnic identity influences the patronage intentions.

H3b: The strength of ethnic identity influences the attitudes toward the restaurants.

H3c: The strength of ethnic identity moderates the relationship between perceived authenticity and patronage intentions.

H3d: The strength of ethnic identity moderates the relationship between perceived authenticity and attitudes toward the restaurants.

Similarly, the impacts of consumers’ need for uniqueness, a major motive on the individual level, are hypothesized in the following statements that will be tested in this dissertation.

H4a: Consumers’ need for uniqueness influences the patronage intentions.

H4b: Consumers’ need for uniqueness influences the attitudes toward the restaurants.

H4c: Consumers’ need for uniqueness moderates the relationship perceived authenticity and patronage intentions.

H4d: Consumers’ need for uniqueness moderates the relationship between perceived authenticity and attitudes toward the restaurants.
The literature not only identifies the differences between the food authenticity and atmospheric authenticity, but also points out that perceived authenticity influences consumers’ attitudes toward the restaurants and further influences their patronage intentions. These impacts will be tested based on the following hypothesized relationships.

**H5a:** The perceived food authenticity influences patronage intentions.

**H5b:** The perceived food authenticity influences perceived attitudes toward the restaurants.

**H5c:** The perceived food authenticity mediates the relationship between attitudes and patronage intentions.

**H6a:** The perceived atmospheric authenticity influences patronage intentions.

**H6b:** The perceived atmospheric authenticity influences perceived attitudes toward the restaurants.

**H6c:** The perceived atmospheric authenticity mediates the relationship between attitudes and patronage intentions.

Being a major factor identified in the literature, gender will be examined carefully in this dissertation, especially the moderating effects among the other variables.

**H7:** Gender moderates the interplay of the relationships among other factors.

The hypothesized relationships and theoretical foundations for this dissertation are illustrated in Fig. 1.

*Figure 1.* Theoretical framework model.
CHAPTER 3
METHODS and MEASUREMENT

Overview

This chapter articulates the research design, sample, construct measurement, scale
development, data collection and data analysis used in this study to answer the research
questions posed in Chapter 1.

Harrison and Reilly (2011) examined the use of mixed method research designs
published in major marketing journals and pointed out that a mixed-method designed research
has the priority in providing more credibility for the field of marketing. Creswell et al. (2003)
argued that mixed-method research is most often driven by the research questions, rather than
limited by paradigmatic assumptions (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004).

The design of this dissertation follows Morse’s (2003) definition of mixed method
research that involves the mixing of both qualitative and quantitative types of data, (Morse,
2003). Given Johnson et al.’s (2007) suggestion that a mixed methods research integrates
ingredients of qualitative and quantitative research approaches to strengthen the breadth and
depth of understanding a phenomenon. Therefore, this dissertation consists of two stages:
qualitative exploration stage and quantitative justification stage.

Qualitative Stage

As Hunt (1994) pointed out, research using qualitative methods could usefully
complement quantitative analyses. Therefore, an exploratory qualitative stage can add a
comprehensive account to the quantitative evidence and answers different research questions
In this study, the qualitative exploration of consumers’ dining experiences and factors that influence the patronage intention answers the first research question of “What factors do consumers care when considering going to an ethnic-themed restaurant?”

As suggested by Roseman et al. (2013), literature on consumers’ motivation to patron ethnic-themed restaurant lacks evidence gathered from qualitative studies. Therefore, this study gathers ethnographic stories from consumers in order to lay a solid foundation for quantitative section (Cayla & Arnould, 2013; Day, 2011). Marketers learn about marketing environment mostly through “formal, mathematical system of description and explanation” (Bruner, 1986, p.12). Such paradigmatic approach facilitates broad generalizations about markets for years (Cayla & Arnould, 2013). However, previous studies have suggested that one specific approach of knowing is very ineffective in reflecting the complexity of consumer behavior, especially in dealing with human emotions and motivations (Maxwell, 2013; Polkinghorne, 1988).

Researchers have suggested market-oriented ethnography for illuminating the subjective and cultural meaning of consumer experience (Arnould & Price, 2006; Arnould & Wallendorf, 1994). Grounding in Ricoeur’s (1983) work on narratives, Cayla and Arnould (2013) define “ethnographic story-telling” as “re-descriptions of people’s worlds sequenced into plots, suffused with emotion and the granularity of human experience” (p. 2). The same study shows that ethnography in marketing is not a “fly-on-the-wall” technique (Mariampolsk, 2006) but a “collaborative sense making process” that helps marketers understand consumer experience in stories and its enormous explanatory power allows marketers turn complex evidence into
actions (Cayla & Arnould, 2013, p. 2). Zaltman (2003) has reported that leading companies such as Procter & Gamble recognize the important role of ethnographic storytelling and use it as a consumer research instrument to understand consumers’ market experiences (Fournier, 1998).

In order to outline a possible set of factors that could be tested in the quantitative stage, a case analysis was distributed among undergraduate students enrolled in a southwestern university (Appendix A). A total number of seven analyses came back and the researcher conducted content analysis, the observational technique that allows for a systematic evaluation of recorded communications (Kolbe & Burnett 1991). Common themes were coded into three categories: general factors to dine out; relation to self-concept; and perception of authenticity. Chapter 4 will have a detailed description of the results and findings. The results of this stage help the selection of existing scales to test in the quantitative stage.

Quantitative Stage

Measurement

Scales for the independent variables included in this dissertation were adapted from extant studies in the psychology and social science literature. The details of the sources as well as their reliability (Cronbach’s alphas, α, Cronbach 1951) or factor loadings in previous applications are shown in Appendix B. As can be seen from Appendix B, all the measures have demonstrated acceptable reliability values (≥.70) in previous studies. This is consistent with the heuristic provided by Nunnally (1978) (≥.60 according to Robinson, Shaver, & Wrightsman, 1991). In order to maintain consistency, all the scale items have been converted into a six-point format. The 6-point format ensured better reliability of the scales (Oaster, 1989) as well as
forced the respondents to choose the direction of their response rather than remain neutral. The questions pertaining to demographic characteristics as well as dependent variables have been formulated to obtain information needed specifically for this study. The details of the scales used in this study are given below.

*Ethnic Experiences*

This study uses the scale of ethnic experience (SEE) developed by Malcarne, Chavira, Fernandex and Liu (2006). This instrument was selected over others because of two major reasons. Firstly, this scale has a better reliability than other scales for the construct of ethnic identity/experience. Secondly, the SEE was developed based on separate factor analyses of data from four ethnic groups African Americans, Caucasian Americans, Filipino Americans, and Mexican Americans. Four factors were consistent across the ethnic groups: Ethnic Identity, Perceived Discrimination, Mainstream Comfort, and Social Affiliation. Four items were selected based on the total factor loading across the four ethnic groups within each dimension. The average factor loading of each chosen items was also listed in Appendix B. The fact that the reliability and internal consistency have been cross-validated in a culturally diverse sample and thus this multidimensional measure of ethnic experiences can be used across American ethnic groups, which fits the design of this study. The study is not focusing on only one ethnic groups but consumers from the general American population.

*Consumers’ Need for Uniqueness*

This study employs the short-form consumers’ need for uniqueness (CNFU) scale. The
scale was developed on the basis of the original 32-item CNFU scale (Tian, Bearden, & Hunter, 2001) by Ruvio, Shoham and Brenčič (2008). The short-form CNFU was chosen because of two reasons. First, this 12-item scale meets the dual challenge of item parsimony and maintenance of the original conceptualization of the CNFU construct (Steenkamp & Baumgartner, 1995). Second, the reliability and validity of the short-form CNFU scale survived the test in countries of different background. This current study examined this cognitive construct in both first- and second-generations of immigrants. Therefore, the reliability and validity across cultures are very important. This short-form CNFU meets the needs of the design. This short-form scale maintains the three dimension of the original 32-item CNFU scale (Tian et al., 2001): creative choice (CC), unpopular choice (UC), and avoidance of similarity (AS). All 12 items have been modified to fit the context of restaurant selection.

*Retail Patronage Motives*

Retail patronage motives in this study measured four major aspects of factors as suggested by previous studies (Bellenger, Robertson, & Greenberg, 1977; Ganesh, Reynolds, & Luckett, 2007): importance of convenience, importance of quality, importance of advertising and promotion, and importance of merchandise variety (menu variety).

*Restaurant Atmospherics Scale*

To measure atmospherics this study used several environmental factors suggested in past studies, such as design factors and ambient factors (Bitner, 1992; Ryu & Jang, 2007). The
scale measured the perceived interior design, exterior design, table setting, decorations, lightening, color used, facility layout, and cleanness of the restaurant on a 6-point Likert scale.

Restaurant Authenticity

The scale of authenticity was adapted to the context of the current study from Jang, Ha, and Park (2012). Following Ebster and Guist’s (2004) suggestion that the authenticity of an ethnic restaurant can be extended to environmental factors including the exterior and interior of a restaurant, the restaurant authenticity was measured in terms of food authenticity and atmospherics authenticity (Jang et al., 2012) on a 6-point Likert scale. The atmospherics authenticity includes exterior and interior design and decoration of the restaurant. Thus, the current study measures the ethnic-themed authenticity with four items: “According to the dishes, I perceived this restaurant offers authentic Mexican food” (food authenticity); “I perceived the interior design of the restaurant as authentically Mexican,” “I perceived the exterior appearance of this restaurant as authentically Mexican,” and “I perceived the decorations in the restaurant as authentically Mexican” (atmospherics authenticity). The current study didn’t include the items that only fit the context of Korean restaurants Jang et al. (2012).

Restaurant Patronage Intentions

Three items were used in this study to measure respondents’ behavioral intentions in terms of patronage intention, sharing and WOM recommendations on a 6-point Likert scale. Each behavioral intention was measured using one item on a 6-point Likert scale (from 1 =
strongly disagree to 6 = strongly agree): “I would like to dine out at this Mexican restaurant” (patronage intention); “I would like to share positive things about this Mexican restaurant to others” (sharing); and “I would like to recommend this Mexican restaurant to others: (WOM recommendation). These three items were adapted from the behavior intention items used in Heung and Gu’s (2012) study.

Demographic Measures

Because of the design of this research, 18 demographic characteristics were collected to describe the samples. In addition to the gender, age, education level, employment status, marital status, and household income, information that help to decide the first/second generation of immigrants were also collected. These items include the country of birth/residence/passport of the respondents, their father, and their mother.

Behavioral Questions

The study also collects information about participants’ dining behaviors with three items: “How often do you dine out?” (dine-out frequency); “What type of cuisine do you prefer?” (ethnic-themed restaurant preference); and “Is your favorite restaurant (for dine in or takeout) part of a…” (Franchised restaurant or a local restaurant).

Pilot Study

Pilot study (pre-test) of the instrument was conducted using a convenience sample of 160 undergraduate students enrolled in various courses in a major Southwestern university.
The use of student sample is considered to be acceptable for pre-test purposes as they can give fairly accurate indications about the internal consistency of the scales (DeVellis, 2003; Nunnally, 1978, p.279). During the measure purification process, reliability was checked using Cronbach’s alpha for each of the multi-item scales. Appendix B summarizes the scales used in this study, including (1) the number of items in the source scale and the present scale, to show the item deletion activity using the pre-test data (2) the reliabilities (Cronbach’s alpha) reported for the original scale and that for the scale using the pre-test data.

Even though some scales, such as scales of ethnic experiences (SEE), ethnic identity, perceived discrimination, mainstream comfort and social affiliation, did not have adequate reliability in each of its sub-dimensions, the decision was taken to retain at least 3 items respectively in the scale (the original scale contained 3, 4, 3, 4 items respectively) measuring each component of ethnic experiences. Decision to delete an item was based on two decision rules: (1) whether the deletion resulted in an improvement of Cronbach’s alpha, and (2) on the subjective assessment of the importance of the item in capturing the domain represented by the construct. This is in accordance with the tenets of Churchill and Gilbert’s (1979) refinement method. Appendix C shows the questionnaire used in this dissertation.

Main Study Sampling and Data Collection

The population of interest for this study is general U.S. consumers. The reason for the choice is specified in chapters 1 and 2 of this dissertation. A random sample from various ethnic backgrounds was drawn from a consumer panel provided by Greenfield, a market research organization.
Consumer panel data has been of use in many studies to conduct segmentation research to understand consumption behavior (e.g., Frank & Strain, 1972; Parfitt & Collins, 1968). Intention to use consumer panels is because that they can provide (1) access to a well-defined population of interest, (2) a more accurate representation of the population than at-large sampling, and (3) a more accurate picture of the actual consumption behaviors.

Consumer panel data can also facilitate study of both longitudinal and cross-sectional consumer attitudes and behaviors (e.g., Frank & Strain, 1972). This dissertation relies on consumer panel for (1) attaining a representative sample from the population and (2) ensuring the integrity of generational groupings. The consumer panel data should also facilitate a timely and identifiable sampling window. This will give the panel results generalizability similar to a random sample as every registered panel member has equal chance of getting selected into the sample as opposed to the convenient student sample enrolled in a region-limited university.

The data collection was done using an electronic questionnaire developed using an online-survey platform (Qualtrics.com) and a link mailed to the consumer panel members by Greenfield Research Services™. The electronic questionnaire was used to facilitate a more generalizable respondent profile.
CHAPTER 4

ANALYSES AND RESULTS

Overview

This chapter reports provides a logical development of the research methodology employed, ranging from the data collection to data analytics, and then reports on the empirical assessment of the hypotheses proposed in the preceding chapter. Given the nature of the methodology, mix-method approach, this chapter presents the results in three sections: description of the qualitative findings of ethnographic narrative data; measurement assessment in the pilot test with convenient sample; the empirical analyses of the hypothesized relations proposed in the study model.

Qualitative Ethnographic Stories

As stated in Chapter 3, the purpose of the qualitative exploration is to garner a richer inventory of possible factors that underlie consumers’ values, attitudes and actual dining decisions relative to decision choices to patronize in ethnic-themed restaurants. This qualitative research, a series of in-depth narratives, addresses the first research question: “What factors do consumers consider when deciding if and where to go to an ethnic-themed restaurant?” The study follows the approach of previous marketing research that employs qualitative methods in understanding consumers’ motivations in the form of writing (Creswell et al., 2003; Dahl & Moreau, 2007; Scott & Vargas, 2007).
Description of the Participants

Seven undergraduates from the University of North Texas participated in the qualitative phase. Participants received extra credit for voluntary participation in the course in which they enrolled. However, the extra credit required complete and extensive participation in an extended set of discussion platforms, thereby fortifying the likelihood of higher levels of cognitive engagement in the articulation of their consumer attitudes and behaviors. A case was distributed to these participants asking for narrative descriptions of their previous experiences with ethnic-themed restaurants. The case contained five parts. First, the definition of “ethnic-themed restaurant” was provided to ensure a uniform frame-of-reference for all participants and to frame the context for their narrative reports. Then, participants were asked to describe their previous experiences at any ethnic-themed restaurant. The next three sections contained queries related to their general motivational factors to dine in an ethnic-themed restaurant and their own perception of “authenticity” in relation to the choice of the ethnic-themed restaurants.

Such a case was inspired by the observational technique that allows for a systematic evaluation of recorded communications (Kolbe & Burnett, 1991). Among the seven participants, there were three males and four females. Their narratives describe their previous experiences at ethnic-themed restaurants such as three major types of ethnic-themed restaurants in the United States: Mexican, Chinese and Cajun/French (Ebster & Guist, 2004; Lee et al., 2014). Interestingly, one male participant, Peter, records his experiences in an American-themed restaurant in New York. Four participants choose Mexican restaurants which are predictable because the participants were all self-identified as Texans, and there exist a disproportionate
number of Mexican and Tex-Mex restaurants in North Texas, proximate to both the main campus and within a 50-mile radius of the campus.

The following section is divided into four parts presenting the results from the ethnographic narratives: general motivation factors, relation with self-identity, perception of authenticity, and other findings.

Table 1

*Gender and Ethnic Restaurants Reviewed in Ethnographic Narratives*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Type of Ethnic-Themed Restaurants</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mexican</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Motives for Choices of Ethnic Restaurants

When asked for general motivational factors that influence their patronage intention, participants provide a rather complete list of the factors such as convenience, safety, brand loyalty (Han & Ryu, 2009), developed expectations, sense of belongingness, deal availability, menu variety (Baek et al., 2006), service quality (Czepiel, 1990; Kim & Moon, 2009), food quality (Nankung & Jang, 2008), physical surroundings (Baker 1986), event celebration (Fishbach & Dhar, 2005) as well as word of mouth (Babin et al., 2005) and ads/flyers. The analysis of this part of data starts with definition of “Motives,” comparing the findings of this study with previous studies, and then proposing a list of motives that motivate American consumers dine at ethnic-themed restaurants.
Motive is defined as “the driving forces within the individuals that impel them to action” (Schiffman & Kunuk, 2004, p. 87). It provides reasons behind consumers’ behaviors such as restaurant patronage (McClelland, 1985). Ponnam and Balaji (2014) summarize five categories of visitation motives for casual dining. The basic category includes the motives that satisfy the basic survival need, “fill their stomach” (p.51). The second category refers to motives that meet the need for relaxation such as graduation celebrations (Park, 2004). A third type of motives consists of those compelling activities or engagements that fulfil the need for entertainment such as hanging out with friends (Sit et al., 2003). Another category of motives satisfy convenience needs such as minimizing distance to a location or minimizing "hassle factors" in service encounters. The last category is the need for developing intimate bonds with partners (Frost et al., 2008).

This dissertation extends outside the context of casual dining, but it integrates the motives with factors of restaurant attributes because both goal-oriented motives and restaurant attributes/features affect consumers’ evaluation of decision choices and attitude formation (Chen & Hu, 2010; Clark & Wood, 1998) and the needs for self-identity, especially for ethnic-themed restaurants (Jang et al., 2012).

Convenience

Need for convenience satisfies consumers’ basic survival needs. Dining at a convenient restaurant is mentioned across the seven narratives in describing factors that drive them to dine out. Living in Texas, Mexican restaurants are comparatively easy to access for potential customers. Tiffany, Lindy, Erica, Peter, Brian, and Franky express that they dine in ethnic
restaurants because of its convenient location as well as the affordable prices. Lindy explains this factor in detail that she goes to one Mexican restaurant only on certain days with special deals in addition to its close location to her part-time job. Lindy emphasizes that “offering discount foods and drinks make her continue to eat at this restaurant.” These rationales have pre-conditioned her so that she looks for discounted food and special deals on the menu of ethnic restaurants.

To satisfy the need for hunger (Ponnam & Balaji, 2014) is also considered a primary factor that drives the seven informants to ethnic-themed restaurants. Brian believes hunger is “(a) pretty basic (reason) because when someone is hungry the obvious solution is to eat some appetizing food.” Franky also chooses ethnic restaurants to meet his survival need for food. The selection of ethnic -- as opposed to other more traditional choices - suggests a conscious "connection" between basic need and choice in restaurant choice.

A relevant factor is the frequent exposure to ads and flyers of ethnic-themed restaurants. For example, Brian states that “If I see a commercial for a Chinese restaurant with some awesome looking orange chicken, then, there is a high chance I will do what I can in order to find out where the closest location is to me. And if it is within reasonable distance, I will pay a visit.” Frankie says that “a flyer of appetizing Mexican food always calls my attention” and “very possible,” that such a flyer will “lead me to that ethnic themed restaurant”.

Therefore, convenience of location, discounted menu, and ads and flyers are three other factors that influence consumers’ decision to patron ethnic-themed restaurants and thus need to be investigated in the quantitative stage.
Ethnic Identity

Franky points out in his narrative that his patronage of ethnic-themed restaurant is one way to manifest his Mexican heritage and a way to show pride of this ethnic identity. Going to Mexican restaurants reminds of his mothers’ cooking and also “falls under my need for reinforcement of my Hispanic origin.” Dining at Mexican restaurants cures his home sickness and gives him sense of belongingness. This finding illustrates the crucial role of ethnic identity on Hispanic consumption behaviors that consumers of strong affiliation to Hispanic origin (sense of belongings) tend to seek Hispanic vendors and are more loyal to brands of Hispanic origins (Donthu & Cherian, 1994). Franky’s behavior also confirms the findings of Wallendorf and Reilly (1983) that food consumption behavior patterns of Mexican-American is not a simple median between that of the Mexicans and that of the Anglos but a unique pattern that sticks to their Mexican origin and moves very slowly in assimilation to the main-stream food consumption pattern. In other words, ethnic identity functions as a moderator on Hispanic shopping behavior (Kara & Kara, 2011).

However, ethnic identity is not limited to Hispanic consumers. Peter, an Anglo origin, describes his experience at the Gramercy Tavern as the “best contemporary American cuisine” restaurant. His “sense of belonging to American culture” echoes with the setting of the American-themed restaurant, which is the reason he finds “Gramercy Tavern so impressive” in representing “true American cuisine” and offering a feeling of home. Peter describes himself as “ethnically-diverse-on-a-budget” meaning that while maintaining his own identity, he like to try ethnic cuisine. Such awareness of one’s ethnic identity among both ethnic groups and Anglo Americans sets the foundation for prosperity of ethnic-themed restaurants in the United States.
Like Lindy mentions in her narrative that despite of being an Anglo American, she likes to dine out at ethnic themed restaurants because she doesn’t know how to cook foods of other ethnic cultures.

At the same time, family traditions also drive Anglo Americans to dine in ethnic themed restaurants. More than one informant mentions that their families have the tradition to dine in ethnic-themed restaurants. For example, since childhood, Lindy’s family would go to “On the Border, a franchised Mexican themed restaurant every Friday and thus consuming Mexican food becomes one component of her self-identity and dining at Mexican restaurants “gives me a sense of familiarity.”

Lindy further points out that dining at ethnic-themed restaurants “has become a part of who I am” and forms her “extended self”, like owning a possession (Belk, 1988). This also illustrates the fact that “ethnic-themed restaurants have become part of American society” (Ebster & Guist, 2004; Lee et al., 2014). It also explains why non-ethnic-themed restaurants offer “drinks like margaritas, a Mexican style drink or limoncellos, Italian style drink” (Lindy, 2013). For instance, McDonald’s “think global, act local” marketing mix strategy is one effect way to accommodate to the needs and wants of non-American consumers (Vignali, 2001).

Such a phenomenon is called marketer acculturation (Penaloza & Gilly, 1999). Marketer acculturation refers to the “general process of movement and adaptation by marketers of one cultural market system to consumers of another cultural market system” (Penaloza & Gilly, 1999, p. 84). Penaloza and Gilly (1999) suggest individual marketer adapt to consumers from another culture through adaption to the cultural characteristics and needs of consumers from other cultural background. Together with such adaptive tactics, marketers and consumers form
a complex dialectical relationship that constitutes a highly sophisticated consumption culture in the contemporary marketplace.

Another informant points out that “Closeness of culture also influences the Patronage intention. “Instead of an authentic Chinese restaurant, I prefer to go to a Chinese buffet. Although this is not authentic, it makes me feel more comfortable because I don’t know the culture well enough to understand the service-scope of an authentic Chinese restaurant.” This study, however, wants to examine the phenomena from the consumers’ perspective that whether the general consumers have adapted to the ethnic-themed restaurants.

Consumers’ Need for Uniqueness (CNFU)

CNFU has been examined from three dimensions: creative choice, unpopular choice and avoidance of similarity (Tian et al., 2001). Tiffany, one female informant, relates her choice for ethnic restaurant to her “sporadic” consumption style. She prefers ethnic restaurants that offer “unique” food and experience that “provides (her) with changes to the normally busy, and boring life.” Such pursuit for unique choices also allows her “show-off” of her lifestyle.

Authenticity

Two dimensions of authenticity have been examined in previous studies: food authenticity and atmospherics authenticity. All seven informants talk about the important role of authenticity in their choice for ethnic restaurants because dining in ethnic restaurants offer opportunity to “experience not only the cuisine of a given ethnicity but the culture as well” (Erica).
Some informants believe that “Food (of ethnic restaurants) plays a major role in impressing consumers (Peter and Lindy). Franky cares about “how good the food tastes”. In addition to acknowledging the importance of food authenticity, informants also care for the authenticity of “physical and social surroundings” (Franky) and believe that “internal ambiance also has impacts on enjoying ethnic experiences (Brian). Franky also admits that he prefers that the décor to be bright and inviting with art and pictures displayed all over the walls, which is usually close to authenticity of the Mexican culture”. Erica adds that store atmospherics is the most “critical” factor for consumers while evaluating the authenticity of an ethnic restaurant. Atmospherics are composed of “color, aromas, music and crowding” (Erica).

Another evidence that illustrate the connection between perception of authenticity and consumers’ need for uniqueness in choosing ethnic restaurants is that because “authentic arrangement might be against western society’s norms”, such difference attract consumers to dine in ethnic restaurants. Tiffany mentions her preference for table setting and views of the kitchen at a Mexican restaurant.

However, the ethnographic narratives also show that consumers are also intimidated by “truly authentic restaurants” (Tiffany). Tiffany explains that such intimidation is the reason that she prefers Chinese Buffet “although this is not authentic, the distance from Chinese culture is a barrier between American consumers and understanding of “the servicescope of an authentic Chinese restaurant.” Some authentic food such as Indian and Chinese foods are way “too spicy and hot”.
Gender Differences

Informants also discuss the differences between male and female customers. “Females seem to be more sensitive and more influenced by perceived authenticity” (Lindy); and “since most women (in the U.S) under 40 do not cook now, women tend to dine out more” (Erica).

Gender differences also exist in preferences for food authenticity to atmospheric authenticity.

Interestingly, all male informants emphasize the importance of both food authenticity and atmospheric authenticity. However, female informants demonstrate more preference in atmospherics and physical setting over food (3 vs.1).

Discussions of Qualitative Findings

Table 2 summarizes number of occurrences of factors that influence consumers’ choice of ethnic restaurants in Chapter 2. The results show that all motivational factors that influence consumers’ decision of dining service outlets could also be applied to understanding of the decision making for ethnic restaurants. The findings from the qualitative stage provide sufficient evidence for Research Question 1 that “What are general factors that motivate American consumers to dine in Ethnic-themed restaurants?”

First of all, motives mentioned in previous studies were all mentioned in the ethnographic narratives from the seven informants such as restaurant attributes of location, price, service, food quality and food variety (Koo et al., 1999); promotion message availability (Shepherd, 1990; and the effects of word of mouth (Kim et al., 2009). Physical settings, interior/exterior decorations are also mentioned in the narratives of all informants which echo the reports published by USDA-ERS (2003; Cannon, 2007). The closeness of relationship
between ethnic identity and the choice of ethnic restaurants has been confirmed in the qualitative results (Franky).

Table 2

Summary of Factors that Influence Choice of Ethnic Restaurants of Ethnographic Narratives

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Factors</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Male</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Erica</td>
<td>Jen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Convenience</td>
<td>√</td>
<td>√</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Service</td>
<td>√</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical Surrounding/Exterior</td>
<td>√</td>
<td>√</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Decoration/Interior</td>
<td>√</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ambience</td>
<td>√</td>
<td>√</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lightening</td>
<td>√</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table Layout</td>
<td>√</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perceived Authenticity of Food</td>
<td></td>
<td>√</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perceived Authenticity of Atmospheres</td>
<td>√</td>
<td>√</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Surroundings</td>
<td>√</td>
<td>√</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fellow Customers</td>
<td>√</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Menu</td>
<td></td>
<td>√</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Food Quality</td>
<td></td>
<td>√</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cultural Resemblance</td>
<td>√</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-Congruity</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Need for Uniqueness</td>
<td>√</td>
<td>√</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family Influence</td>
<td>√</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethnic Identity/Origin</td>
<td>√</td>
<td>√</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Life-style</td>
<td></td>
<td>√</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Variety/Adventure Seeking</td>
<td>√</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ads/Promotion/Word of Mouth</td>
<td></td>
<td>√</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender Difference</td>
<td>√</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In addition, the results call for attention on gender differences in the qualitative data. In addition to self-identified difference by female informants, Table 2 also illustrates that male and female informants are different in perceiving the impact of authenticity. Female informants prefer physical/ atmospheric authenticity to food authenticity while male informants tend to take both sub-dimensions (food and atmospheric authenticities) into consideration.
Managerially, the findings show that consumers tend to dine at non-authentic ethnic restaurants (e.g. Chinese Buffet) could ease the intimidation towards the ethnic culture. Such findings provide guidance for owners and operators of ethnic restaurants that promotion of ethnic culture on major media not only increases the awareness of ethnic food, but also shortens the distance between the ethnic culture and mainstream American culture. Thus consumers of other ethnic backgrounds could consider going to ethnic restaurants.

However, the findings from the ethnographic narratives are limited in its power of generalization because of the small number of the informants and also the subjective interpretation of qualitative data interpreter. Therefore, it is necessary to conduct quantitative research for more empirical evidence that illustrates the potential relationships among various factors that influence consumers’ choice of ethnic restaurants.

Quantitative Pilot Study Results

This section presents major findings from the Pilot Study conducted among Generation Y-aged consumers from a major university in the southwestern U.S. The following section first describes the student sample in detail. Next, the measurement assessments of the student instruments are presented.

Descriptions of the Sample

In the pilot study stage of this dissertation, an online survey was distributed to 140 college students enrolled at the College of Business, the University of North Texas. Demographic information was collected from the student sample, including gender, age groups,
annual income, and their ethnic origins.

Gender

In this study, gender is predicted to a potential variable that might moderate the hypothesized relationships among other factors. An equal distribution of male and female respondents is expected to illuminate possible bias. The information is presented in Table 3.

Table 3

*Gender Information of Student Sample*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>52.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>47.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Age Groups

In this study, age is not considered as a potential variable. Thus age information is expected to represent students sample enrolled at the University of North Texas. Table 4 presents the results.

Table 4

*Age Groups of Student Sample*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age Group</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>18-20</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>40.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21-23</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>42.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24-26</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>9.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27-29</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30 or over</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>5.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>140</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Ethnicity Origin

In this study, ethnicity information is collected by investigating the ethnic origin of the student sample. The result is summarized in Table 5. Overall, 140 students reported the ethnic origin of themselves as well as their parents’.

Table 5

*Ethnicity Group of Student Sample*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Origin</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>American</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>62.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latino</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>13.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>23.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>140</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The student sample is appropriate for pilot study is because National Restaurants Association reports that college students frequently dine in ethnic-themed restaurants (NRA 2013). Moreover, employing maximally homogeneous respondents such as student sample reduces the likelihood of a Type II error and offer better accuracy in measurement testing (Calder, Philips & Tybout, 1981).

*Measure Assessment*

In order to assess the psychometric properties of the measures used in this dissertation and test the hypothesized relationships, acknowledged procedures from the extant literature were followed. First, reliability and validity were established for all measurement scales (Churchill & Gilbert, 1979; Gerbing & Anderson, 1988) with exploratory factor analysis (EFA), confirmatory factor analysis (CFA), and calculation of Cronbach’s alpha as well as composite
reliability (CR). Next hypothesized relationships were examined via multivariate analysis of covariance and mediation analysis.

The first step in analyzing the pilot study data was to establish reliability and validity for the measurement scales following the two-step process suggested by Anderson and Gerbing (1988). An exploratory factor analysis with principal component extraction and Varimax rotation was conducted on each scale followed by Cronbach’s Alpha calculation to assess the reliability.

Scale of Ethnic Experiences

Table 6 shows the results of EFA and reliability of Scale of Ethnic of the student sample. Four factors were extracted as predicted in the original study. Further, the overall reliability and average loading of each factor are even higher than the original study. One reason could be that the student sample share similar background. Among the four factors, mainstream comfort has the highest loading because 62.9% of the respondents are Americans. And they are receiving the same level of education, college education, which is different from the general population of the U.S. that differentiates in educational levels. Such problem lowers the generalizability of this sample. Therefore, it is necessary to collect data from a more diversified sample and the use of consumer panel could ease the problem. Differences between the two studies are also discussed in the discussion section.
### Table 6

*Ethnic Experiences’ EFA and Reliability of Student Sample*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Items</th>
<th>Social Affiliation</th>
<th>Perceived Discrimination</th>
<th>Mainstream Comfort</th>
<th>Ethnic Identity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I feel most comfortable talking about personal things with people from my own ethnic group.</td>
<td>.898</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I find it easiest to trust people from my own ethnic group.</td>
<td></td>
<td>.877</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I prefer my close friends to be from my own ethnic group.</td>
<td></td>
<td>.867</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I think that friendships work best when people are from the same ethnic group.</td>
<td></td>
<td>.802</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My ethnic group has been treated well in American society.</td>
<td></td>
<td>.853</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Generally speaking, my ethnic group is respected in America.</td>
<td></td>
<td>.820</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discrimination against my ethnic group is not a problem in America.</td>
<td></td>
<td>.777</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My ethnic group is often criticized in this country.</td>
<td>.673</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I think of myself as a typical American.</td>
<td></td>
<td>.917</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I’m what most people think of as a typical American.</td>
<td></td>
<td>.891</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I feel like I belong to mainstream American culture.</td>
<td></td>
<td>.845</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I believe that it is important to take part in holidays that celebrate my ethnic group.</td>
<td></td>
<td>.806</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My parents gave me a strong sense of cultural values.</td>
<td></td>
<td>.729</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Being a member of my ethnic group is an important part of who I am.</td>
<td></td>
<td>.728</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I do not feel it necessary to learn about the history of my ethnic group.</td>
<td></td>
<td>.536</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Cronbach’s Alpha by sub-dimensions: .892, .736, .877, .708

Overall Cronbach’s Alpha: .812

Consumers’ Need for Uniqueness

Although 11 items loaded on three factors, which confirms with the original study that the construct, Need for Uniqueness has three sub-dimensions: Avoidance of similarity, Creative
Choice, and Unpopular Choice. However, in the current student sample, third item of unpopular choice and forth item of creative choice loaded differently from the original study. One reason is that the items were modified to the context of restaurant and second reason is because of the limitation of student sample.

Table 7

Consumers’ Need for Uniqueness’ EFA and Reliability of Student Sample

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Avoidance of Similarity</th>
<th>Creative Choice</th>
<th>Unpopular Choice</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>When a restaurant becomes popular among the general population, I begin to go there less frequently</td>
<td>.851</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>As I rule, I dislike restaurants that are customarily frequented by everyone</td>
<td>.833</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I often try to avoid restaurants or brands that I know are bought by the general population</td>
<td>.804</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The more commonplace a restaurant is among the general population, the less interested I am in going...</td>
<td>.768</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I actively seek to develop my personal uniqueness by frequenting special places to eat</td>
<td>.845</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I try to find a more interesting version of run-of-the-mill restaurants because I enjoy being origin...</td>
<td>.790</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Having an eye for restaurants that are interesting and unusual assists me in establishing a distinct...</td>
<td>.766</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>When it comes to the franchise that I chose for eating, I have broken customs and rules.</td>
<td>.912</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I have often violated the understood rules of my social group regarding where to eat or go</td>
<td>.811</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I often combine possessions in such a way that I create a personal image that cannot be duplicated.</td>
<td>.546</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cronbach's Alpha by sub-dimensions</td>
<td>.847</td>
<td>.744</td>
<td>.705</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall Cronbach's Alpha</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>.813</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Restaurant Patronage Motives

Analysis of patronage motives resulted in five working sub-dimensions: Environment, Quality, Menu, Convenience, and Ads. Although only two items of advertising/promotion out of three items load on the factor, for the sake of reliability, the third item is not deleted in the
main study but is treated with care.

Table 8

*Restaurant Patronage Motives’ EFA and Reliability of Student Sample*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Items</th>
<th>Env.</th>
<th>Quality</th>
<th>Menu</th>
<th>Conv.</th>
<th>Ad</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>It is important that the interior design of a restaurant is visually appealing</td>
<td>0.826</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The decor and ambience is important to me</td>
<td>0.804</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It is important that the exterior design of a restaurant is visually appealing</td>
<td>0.784</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The safety and security of the area around the restaurant is important to me</td>
<td>0.531</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The availability of parking at the restaurant is important to me</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The overall service quality of a restaurant is important to me</td>
<td>0.779</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The friendliness of the wait staff is important in choosing where I eat</td>
<td>0.747</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The cleanliness and maintenance of a restaurant is important to me</td>
<td>0.716</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I prefer restaurants that offer daily specials</td>
<td>0.729</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I prefer a restaurant that serves a large variety of dishes (choices)</td>
<td>0.67</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The restaurant(s) that I frequent rank highly on menu diversity.</td>
<td>0.616</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If a restaurant is very accessible from my home, work or university, that is important to me</td>
<td>0.885</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>When selecting a restaurant, the distance from my home, work or university is important to me</td>
<td>0.787</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The operating hours of a restaurant is important to me</td>
<td>0.544</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If I like an advertisement for a restaurant, I am more likely to go there</td>
<td>0.783</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If an advertisement for the restaurant looks interesting, I will be more likely to try it</td>
<td>0.769</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The pleasantness of a restaurant’s advertising is important to me</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall Cronbach’s Alpha (α)</td>
<td>.768</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Restaurant Atmospherics Scale**

The study employs the 7-item scale that measures the restaurant atmospheric factors
(Ryu & Jang, 2007). EFA results confirm that all 7 items load on one factor and Table 9 presents the EFA and Cronbach’s alpha (α) based on the student sample.

Table 9

**Restaurant Atmospherics’ EFA and Reliability of Student Sample**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Items</th>
<th>Restaurant Atmospherics</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The decorations in this restaurant were visually appealing</td>
<td>.920</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The interior design of this restaurant was visually appealing</td>
<td>.905</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The lighting created a comfortable atmosphere.</td>
<td>.887</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The table setting in this restaurant was pleasing</td>
<td>.882</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The colors used in the restaurant created a welcome atmosphere</td>
<td>.860</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The restaurant was clean</td>
<td>.857</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The facility layout was easy to move around</td>
<td>.696</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cronbach’s Alpha</td>
<td>.941</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Restaurant Authenticity

Four items of restaurant authenticity scales loaded on two factors: atmospherics authenticity and food authenticity. Table 10 illustrates such results. The results confirm the literature that atmospheric authenticity is different from food authenticity.

Table 10

**Restaurant Authenticity Scale’s EFA and Reliability of Student Sample**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Items</th>
<th>Atmospherics</th>
<th>Food</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I perceived the decorations in the restaurant as authentically Mexican</td>
<td>.929</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I perceived the interior design of the restaurant as authentically Mexican</td>
<td>.906</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I perceived the exterior appearance of this restaurant as authentically Mexican</td>
<td>.851</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>According to the dishes, I perceived this restaurant offers authentic Mexican food.</td>
<td>.981</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cronbach’s Alpha</td>
<td>.938</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Restaurant Patronage Intention

This study borrows the three items of restaurant patronage intention from previous studies (Heung & Gu, 2012; Jang et al., 2012). Table 11 shows that the three items successfully load together and the overall reliability of the scale is .932.

Table 11

Restaurant Patronage Intention’s EFA and Reliability of Student Sample

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Items</th>
<th>Patronage Intention</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I would like to share positive things about this Mexican restaurant to others.</td>
<td>.958</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I would like to recommend this Mexican restaurant to others.</td>
<td>.932</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I would like to dine out at this Mexican restaurant.</td>
<td>.928</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cronbach’s Alpha</td>
<td>.932</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Discussion of Pilot Study Results

The goal of the pilot study was to verify and validate the measurements to be used in the mains study. Therefore, the demographic profile and measurement tests are presented in the dissertation.

Scale of Ethnic experiences is found to be a valid measurement for this scale. Consumers’ need for uniqueness has been confirmed as three sub-dimensions and the modifications made to accommodate the restaurant context function as predicted. Each item loads on the predicted factors. Avoidance of similarity seems to be the strongest factor than the other two, unpopular choice and creative choice. Two items were deleted due to either load loading or strong cross loading.
Restaurant patronage intention, Perceived authenticity, and attitudes toward the atmospherics are found to be valid and generate high reliability. All items were kept for main study.

Restaurant motive factors, however, turn out to be me the most troublesome. In student sample, five factors were extracted from Exploratory Factor Analysis. Using .4 as the cut-point in EFA, Advertising/Promotion availability only had two items left. Thus considering the differences between student sample and consumer panel sample of the main study, all items were kept and stricter EFA and confirmatory factor analysis would be necessary in examining this scales.

Quantitative Main Study Results

This section presents data analysis collected in the main study. The online survey was administered to a consumer panel with constrained demographic parameters predefined by the researcher and collected by the Greenfield Marketing Research®, as articulated in the approved Institutional Review Board application. Respondents were remunerated for participation, but the payment was quite minimal and likened to the mean payment of similar national consumer panels. This was funded through a competitive research grant to facilitate data collection.

Descriptions of the Sample

In the main study, the population of interest is American consumers. A consumer panel was formed representing the percentage of ethnic components (US Census, 2012). The respondents were drawn from a consumer panel provided by Greenfield, a market research
organization. Demographic information collected from the consumer panel sample includes gender, age groups, annual income, marital status, education level, and their ethnic origins.

Gender

In this study, gender is predicted to be a potential variable that might moderate the hypothesized relationships among other factors. An equal distribution of male and female respondents is expected to illuminate possible bias. The information is presented in the table below. Among 452 valid responses, there were 207 males (45.8%) and 245 females (54.2%). Such gender distribution reflects the current composition of U.S population that there are more females than males (51% vs. 49%, US Census, 2012).

Table 12

*Gender Information of Consumer Panel Sample*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Valid Percent</th>
<th>Cumulative Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>207</td>
<td>45.8</td>
<td>45.8</td>
<td>45.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>245</td>
<td>54.2</td>
<td>54.2</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>452</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Age Groups

In this study, age is not considered as a potential variable. Table records the age information of the consumer panel sample. Based on the US Census (2012), respondents reported their age in five groups: 73 came from the age group of 18-25 (16.2%), 97 from the
subgroup of 26-33 year old (21.5%), 96 from the group of 34-41 year old (21.2%), 88 from the
group of 42-49 year old (19.5%), and 98 from the group of “Above 49” (21.7%).

Table 13

Age Information of Consumer Panel Sample

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Valid Percent</th>
<th>Cumulative Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>18-25</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>16.2</td>
<td>16.2</td>
<td>16.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26-33</td>
<td>97</td>
<td>21.5</td>
<td>21.5</td>
<td>37.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>34-41</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>21.2</td>
<td>21.2</td>
<td>58.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>42-49</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>19.5</td>
<td>19.5</td>
<td>78.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Above 49</td>
<td>98</td>
<td>21.7</td>
<td>21.7</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>452</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Education Level

Different from the student sample, main study also collects the education level of
respondents in the consumer panel sample.

Table 14

Education Level of Consumer Panel Sample

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Education Level</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Valid Percent</th>
<th>Cumulative Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Less than High School</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>1.8</td>
<td>1.8</td>
<td>1.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High School / GED</td>
<td>110</td>
<td>24.3</td>
<td>24.3</td>
<td>26.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some College</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>20.4</td>
<td>20.4</td>
<td>46.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2-year College Degree</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>13.5</td>
<td>13.5</td>
<td>60.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4-year College Degree</td>
<td>121</td>
<td>26.8</td>
<td>26.8</td>
<td>86.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Master’s Degree</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>11.1</td>
<td>11.1</td>
<td>97.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doctoral Degree</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>.4</td>
<td>.4</td>
<td>98.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional Degree (JD, MD)</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>1.8</td>
<td>1.8</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>452</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Marital Status

Results of marital status show that 32.3% of respondents were single (never married),
67.7% have had marriage experiences or have lived with partner.

Table 15

Marital Status of Consumer Panel Sample

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Marital Status</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Valid Percent</th>
<th>Cumulative Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Single, never married</td>
<td>146</td>
<td>32.3</td>
<td>32.3</td>
<td>32.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Married without children</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>14.8</td>
<td>14.8</td>
<td>47.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Married with children</td>
<td>147</td>
<td>32.5</td>
<td>32.5</td>
<td>79.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Divorced</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>7.3</td>
<td>7.3</td>
<td>86.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Separated</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>88.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Widowed</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>90.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Living w/ partner</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>9.1</td>
<td>9.1</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>452</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Ethnicity Origin

In this study, ethnicity information is collected by investigating the ethnic origin of the student sample. The result is summarized in the following table. A participant’s ethnic origin is interpreted from the birth country of the respondent’s father. And the results show that 20.8% (95 out of 456) of respondents reports a Latino origin.

Table 16

Ethnicity Breakdown (Father’s Origin) of Consumer Panel Sample

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>General American</th>
<th>Latino</th>
<th>Others</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>316</td>
<td>95</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Measure Assessment

The section presents analysis results of consumer panel sample. The first section reports
the validity and reliability of the scales borrowed from previous research were examined. EFA was conducted to assess the factor structures of each measure and reliability was examined via Cronbach’s alphas (α) of each item and the overall scale (Anderson & Gerbing, 1988).

**Exploratory Factor Analysis**

First, exploratory factor analysis was conducted on all measurement scales. Some scale items were removed if they failed to meet the criteria set by Churchill and Gilbert (1979) and Nunnally (1978). Table 17 summarizes the findings. In addition, Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measure of sampling adequacy was .905 (p<0.001) and residuals are computed between observed and reproduced correlations. There are only 29 (2.0%) nonredundant residuals with absolute values greater than 0.05. Eleven factors as expected were extracted and could explain 68.8% of the variance. The results show that 11 items of CNFU loaded together as one factor, while the four dimensions of ethnic experiences loaded on four factors. Furthermore, the Avoidance of Similarity could be the strongest sub-dimension in the context of choice of ethnic restaurants. Thus after removing the items for unpopular choice and creative choice, the explanation power increased to 73.4% and only 5 (less than 0.0%) non-redundant residuals with absolute values greater than 0.05. EFA for each scale was also conducted to ensure the appropriateness of the scale.

**Ethnic Experiences**

This study borrows the Scale of Ethnic Experiences developed by Malcarne et al. (2006).
Table 17

_EFA of All Measurement Scale of Consumer Panel Sample_

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>AT</th>
<th>CNFU</th>
<th>QUAL</th>
<th>SA</th>
<th>EI</th>
<th>MC</th>
<th>PD</th>
<th>PI</th>
<th>ADS</th>
<th>DECO</th>
<th>AU</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AT3</td>
<td>0.995</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AT4</td>
<td>0.956</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>AT2</td>
<td>0.954</td>
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<td>AT5</td>
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<tr>
<td>AS3</td>
<td>0.844</td>
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<td>Qua3</td>
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<td>PD3</td>
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<td>Ads1</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ads2</td>
<td>0.869</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ads3</td>
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</tr>
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<td>Deco1</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deco2</td>
<td>0.758</td>
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<tr>
<td>Deco3</td>
<td>0.651</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>AU1</td>
<td>0.749</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td>AU2</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The original study identifies four factors cross culturally and the four factors are Social Affiliation, Ethnic Identity, Perceived Discrimination, and Mainstream Comfort. Table 18 presents the EFA and Reliability results from Consumer Panel Sample. Compared with the results of student sample (Table 6), both factor loadings and Cronbach’s Alphas (α) have improved indicating that the consumer panel sample might have a higher generalization power for hypotheses testing.

Consumers’ Need for Uniqueness (CNFU)  
Similar to student sample, the EFA of CNFU in consumer panel sample show that the items automatically load on the three dimensions recognized in Tian et al. (2001). However, higher Cronbach’s Alpha (α) of each sub-dimension and the overall scale indicate that consumer panel sample proves to be a more reliable sample than the convenient student sample (Table 19). In addition, the modification of each item to the context of restaurant selection is successful.

Restaurant Patronage Motive Scale  
As shown in Table 20, although some items didn’t load properly on the sub-factors, all items of this scale were kept in measuring the patronage motives of consumer panel in the main study. The EFA and reliability analysis of this scale shows great differences in factor loadings and reliabilities. Possible reasons that cause the difference will be discussed in Chapter 5. In consumer panel data, all 16 items also loaded on five factors but with stronger power for each factor. In factors of ads and menu, all three items were functional (all above .5).
Table 18

*Ethnic Experiences EFA and Reliability of Consumer Panel Sample*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Items</th>
<th>Social Affiliation</th>
<th>Ethnic Identity</th>
<th>Perceived Discrimination</th>
<th>Mainstream Comfort</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I prefer my close friends to be from my own ethnic group.</td>
<td>0.93</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I feel most comfortable talking about personal things with people from my own ethnic group.</td>
<td>0.903</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I find it easiest to trust people from my own ethnic group.</td>
<td>0.901</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I think that friendships work best when people are from the same ethnic group.</td>
<td>0.873</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Being a member of my ethnic group is an important part of who I am.</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.873</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I believe that it is important to take part in holidays that celebrate my ethnic group.</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.816</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My parents gave me a strong sense of cultural values.</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.814</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I do not feel it necessary to learn about the history of my ethnic group.</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.496</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My ethnic group has been treated well in American society.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>0.855</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Generally speaking, my ethnic group is respected in America.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>0.813</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discrimination against my ethnic group is not a problem in America.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>0.795</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My ethnic group is often criticized in this country.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>0.609</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I'm what most people think of as a typical American.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>0.902</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I think of myself as a typical American.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>0.9</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I feel like I belong to mainstream American culture.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>0.828</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cronbach's Alpha by sub-dimensions</td>
<td>.933</td>
<td>.749</td>
<td>.789</td>
<td>.883</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall Cronbach's Alpha</td>
<td>.834</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 19

**CNFU’s EFA and Reliability of Consumer Panel Sample**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Items</th>
<th>Avoidance of Similarity</th>
<th>Creative Choices</th>
<th>Unpopular Choice</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I often try to avoid restaurants or brands that I know are bought by the general population</td>
<td>.818</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>As I rule, I dislike restaurants that are customarily frequented by everyone</td>
<td>.806</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>When a restaurant becomes popular among the general population, I begin to go there less frequently</td>
<td>.793</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The more commonplace a restaurant is among the general population, the less interested I am in going.</td>
<td>.788</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Having an eye for restaurants that are interesting and unusual assists me in establishing a distinct...</td>
<td>.870</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I try to find a more interesting version of run-of-the-mill restaurants because I enjoy being original...</td>
<td>.822</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I actively seek to develop my personal uniqueness by frequenting special places to eat</td>
<td>.716</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I enjoy challenging the prevailing taste of people I know by going to a restaurant they would not se...</td>
<td>.569</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>When it comes to the franchise that I chose for eating, I have broken customs and rules.</td>
<td>.845</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I have often violated the understood rules of my social group regarding where to eat or go</td>
<td>.705</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I often combine possessions in such a way that I create a personal image that cannot be duplicated.</td>
<td>.580</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cronbach's Alpha by sub-dimensions</td>
<td>.883</td>
<td>.839</td>
<td>.722</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall Cronbach's Alpha</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>.896</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Table 20

*Restaurant Patronage Motives, EFA and Reliability of Consumer Panel Sample*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Quality</th>
<th>Deco</th>
<th>Ads</th>
<th>Conv</th>
<th>Menu</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The cleanliness and maintenance of a restaurant is important to me</td>
<td>.813</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The overall quality of service is an important factor in choosing where I eat</td>
<td>.793</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The overall service quality of a restaurant is important to me</td>
<td>.790</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The safety and security of the area around the restaurant is important to me</td>
<td>.517</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The decor and ambience is important to me</td>
<td>.814</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It is important that the interior design of a restaurant is visually appealing</td>
<td>.797</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It is important that the exterior design of a restaurant is visually appealing</td>
<td>.716</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If I like an advertisement for a restaurant, I am more likely to go there</td>
<td>.821</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If an advertisement for the restaurant looks interesting, I will be more likely to try it</td>
<td>.813</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The pleasantness of a restaurant’s advertising is important to me</td>
<td>.596</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>When selecting a restaurant, the distance from my home, work or university is important to me.</td>
<td>.865</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If a restaurant is very accessible from my home, work or university, that is important to me.</td>
<td>.773</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The operating hours of a restaurant is important to me</td>
<td>.513</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The restaurant(s) that I frequent rank highly on menu diversity.</td>
<td>.804</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I prefer a restaurant that serves a large variety of dishes (choices)</td>
<td>.704</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I prefer restaurants that offer daily specials</td>
<td>.639</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cronbach’s Alpha by Factors</td>
<td>.833</td>
<td>.846</td>
<td>.819</td>
<td>.718</td>
<td>.640</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall Cronbach’s Alpha</td>
<td>.894</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Restaurant Atmospherics Scale*

The study employs the 7-item scale that measures the restaurant atmospheric factors (Ryu & Jang, 2007). EFA results confirm that all 7 items load on one factor and Table 21 presents the EFA and Cronbach’s alpha based on the consumer panel sample.
Restaurant Authenticity Scale

Four items were borrowed from previous studies on perceived authenticity of ethnic-themed restaurants. All items have been modified to fit the context of this study. Table 22 shows the EFA and reliability analysis of this scale.

Table 21

Restaurant Atmospherics, EFA and Reliability of Consumer Panel Sample

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Items</th>
<th>Restaurant Atmospherics</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The decorations in this restaurant were visually appealing</td>
<td>.920</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The interior design of this restaurant was visually appealing</td>
<td>.905</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The lighting created a comfortable atmosphere.</td>
<td>.887</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The table setting in this restaurant was pleasing</td>
<td>.882</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The colors used in the restaurant created a welcome atmosphere</td>
<td>.860</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The restaurant was clean</td>
<td>.857</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The facility layout was easy to move around</td>
<td>.696</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cronbach’s Alpha</td>
<td>.941</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 22

Restaurant Authenticity’s EFA of Consumer Panel Sample

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Items</th>
<th>Atmospherics</th>
<th>Food Authenticity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I perceived the decorations in the restaurant as authentically Mexican</td>
<td>.929</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I perceived the interior design of the restaurant as authentically Mexican</td>
<td>.906</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I perceived the exterior appearance of this restaurant as authentically Mexican</td>
<td>.851</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>According to the dishes, I perceived this restaurant offers authentic Mexican food.</td>
<td>.981</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Restaurant Patronage Intentions

The same three-item scale of restaurant patronage intention from previous studies
(Heung & Gu, 2012; Jang et al., 2012) was employed to measure the patronage intention of consumer panel sample. Table 23 shows that the three items successfully load together and the overall reliability of the scale is .932.

Table 23

Restaurant Patronage Intention, EFA and Reliability of Consumer Panel Sample

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Items</th>
<th>Patronage Intention</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I would like to share positive things about this Mexican restaurant to others.</td>
<td>.958</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I would like to recommend this Mexican restaurant to others.</td>
<td>.932</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I would like to dine out at this Mexican restaurant.</td>
<td>.928</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cronbach’s Alpha</td>
<td>.932</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Behavioral Variables

The study also collected information about participants’ dining behaviors. To start, the descriptive results show that all respondents dine out at least once a week, which confirms the findings published in the annual report of National Restaurant Association (2013). Next, the results show that American and Mexican restaurants are the most popular ethnic restaurants. Italian styled restaurants is the third preferred style in this study. The last question asks about consumers’ preference for “Franchised restaurant or not” and the results show that most of American consumers prefer local-based restaurants over national and regional franchised restaurants (54% vs. 46%). The results are shown in Table 24.
Table 24

Descriptive Analysis of Behavioral Variables of Consumer Panel Sample

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>How often do you dine out?</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Cumulative Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Less than Once a Month</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>16.6</td>
<td>16.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Once a Month</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>15.9</td>
<td>32.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2-3 Times a Month</td>
<td>125</td>
<td>27.7</td>
<td>60.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Once a Week</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>22.1</td>
<td>82.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2-3 Times a Week</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>15.5</td>
<td>97.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Daily</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>2.2</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ethnic restaurant preference.</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Cumulative Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>American</td>
<td>147</td>
<td>32.5</td>
<td>32.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chinese</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>11.3</td>
<td>43.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Italian</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>17.7</td>
<td>61.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Japanese</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>65.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mexican</td>
<td>136</td>
<td>30.1</td>
<td>95.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mediterranean</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>4.6</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Preferences for restaurant franchised or not.</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Cumulative Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>National Restaurant Chain</td>
<td>148</td>
<td>32.7</td>
<td>32.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regional Restaurant Chain</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>13.3</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local Restaurant</td>
<td>244</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Confirmatory Factor Analysis

Using AMOS® 21, one structural equation modeling software, the confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) further tested the quality of the initial factor analysis. The overall fit of measurement models was examined by checking (1) selected fit indices representing different families of fit indices, and (2) selected fit indices that best represented the specified set of criteria. The following four indices were reported for this study.
Chi-square/degrees of freedom evaluate the overall model fit in covariance structure models and a ratio < 5 is expected for a good fit (Marsh & Hocevar, 1985). A result of 2.110 is considered a good fit. RMSEA (the root-mean-square error of approximation) indicates how well a model fits a population (Browne & Cudeck, 1993). The .049 (< 0.05) indicates a close fit.

The results show a NFI (the normed fit index) of .914, higher than the recommended .90 in Hair et al. (2010) and thus the model for this study is close to a perfect fit [0 (no fit) to 1.0 (perfect fit)]. The estimated value of CFI (comparative fit index) ranges between 0 (poor fit) to 1.0 (perfect fit) and a larger value demonstrates a higher level of goodness-of-fit. The result shows a CFI of .953 and thus another index for good model fit.

**Hypothesis Testing**

While taking the online survey, participants were evenly distributed to evaluate two sets of pictures. One set of pictures present a local family-owned Mexican restaurant while the other group of respondents examined pictures taken from one franchised Mexican restaurant. And thus respondents were divided into two groups based on the sets of pictures they examined in the survey: Local vs. Franchised restaurants. Table 25 shows the ethnic origin breakdown of each group of respondents.

Table 25

**Ethnicity Breakdown (Father’s Origin) of Restaurant Segments**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ethnic Origin</th>
<th>Local</th>
<th>Franchised</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>American</td>
<td>152</td>
<td>164</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latino</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Hypothesis 1: Restaurant patronage motives influence patronage intention. Given the nature of this hypothesis and tests in previous studies, linear regression analysis was used to test if the 16-item patronage motives significantly predict consumers’ patronage intention. The results of the regression indicated the restaurant patronage motives explained 38.9% of the variance ($R^2 = .389$, $F(1,450) = 80.103$, $p < .001$). It was found that patronage motives positively predicted patronage intention ($\beta = .389$, $p < .001$).

Hypothesis Set 2 examines the moderation effects of restaurant segments on the patronage intention, the relationship between perceived authenticity of food and patronage intention, the relationship between perceived authenticity of atmospherics and patronage intention and the relationship between the perceived attitudes and the patronage intention.

The moderating effects of type of restaurants were examined using ANOVA in SPSS. However, before testing the moderating effect, independent sample t-test was conducted to ensure the successful manipulation between the two groups of respondents. The two sets of pictures were chosen based on the perception of informants during pilot study stage. Therefore, the differences between groups were examined on factor of Perceived Authenticity. The results of t-test show that as predicted, the mean of perceived authenticity of Local Mexican restaurant ($M = 4.87$, $SD = .96$, $N = 228$) was higher than the mean of Franchised Mexican restaurant ($M = 3.84$, $SD = 1.17$, $N = 228$), $t(454) = 10.312$, $p < .001$, two-tailed.

Regression analysis was used to test if the types of restaurant segment (Local vs. Franchised) significantly predicted participants' patronage intention. The results of the regression indicated that types of restaurant segments negatively predicted the patronage intention ($\beta = -.197$, $p < .001$). Respondents demonstrated a higher patronage intention for local
Mexican restaurant ($M = 4.58, SD = 1.18, N = 228$) than the intention to dine in franchised Mexican restaurant ($M = 4.07, SD = 1.34, N = 228$).

A univariate analysis of variance was performed to test the moderating effect of gender on the relationship between types of restaurant segment and patronage intention. The results show that gender itself was not a significant predictor for patronage intention. However, gender interacted with types of restaurant segment and moderated the relationship. Figure 2 illustrates the moderating effect of gender in predicting consumers’ patronage intention that female customers show a stronger preference for local Mexican restaurant ($M = 4.68$ vs. $M = 4.46$) to franchised Mexican restaurant ($M = 3.94$ vs. $M = 4.23$).

![Estimated Marginal Means of Patronage Intention](image)

**Figure 2.** Moderating effect of gender on patronage intention and restaurant segments.

Hypotheses 2b and 2c predict the moderating effect of type of restaurant segment on
the relationship between perceived authenticity (atmospherics and food) and patronage intention. Regression analysis was first performed to examine whether patronage intention could be predicted by type of restaurant segment, perceived atmospheric authenticity and perceived food authenticity. The results show that even the model was significant \( F(3,452) = 83.153, p < .001 \), but only perceived atmospheric authenticity and food authenticity positively predict patronage intention while type of restaurant segment was not a significant predictor. However, after performing univariate analysis of variance, the moderating effect of types of restaurant segment was not present in the result \( p = .546 \) for H2b, \( p = .137 \) for H2c.

Hypothesis 2d predicts the relationship between the type of restaurant segment and perceived attitudes. The results show that significant difference was found between the two groups of respondents \( F(1,455) = 160.765, p < 0.001 \). Consumers show better attitude toward the franchised Mexican restaurant \( M = 4.76 \) than the local Mexican restaurant \( M = 3.59 \). Therefore, H2d is supported.

Hypotheses 3a through 3d investigate the impact of strength of ethnic identity in consumers’ choice of ethnic restaurant. Ethnic identity, in previous studies, has been examined as a categorical variable (e.g., Donthu & Cherian, 1992, 1994). Therefore, ethnic identity will also be treated as a categorical variable in this dissertation. Because this study uses 6-point Likert scale, respondents were divided into three groups based on the strength of ethnic identity \( M = 4.32, SD = 1.076 \): low strength of ethnic identity \( M < 3.77 \), moderate strength of ethnic identity \( 3.727 < M < 4.84 \), and high-strength of ethnic identity \( M > 4.84 \).

MANOVA was performed to test the relationships predicted in Hypotheses 3 and 4, with Patronage Intention, Attitudes towards the Local/Franchised Mexican Restaurants, Food
Authenticity, and Atmospheric Authenticity as dependent variable and Strength of ethnic identity (low, moderate, and high), restaurant segment (local and franchised), ethnic origin (American, Latino, and others) as fixed factors. Table 26 shows the results of MANOVA.

Table 26

MANOVA Results for Hypothesis 3

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>IV</th>
<th>DV</th>
<th>Type III Sum of Squares</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Mean Square</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strength of Ethnic Identity</td>
<td>Atmospheric Authenticity</td>
<td>6.876</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3.438</td>
<td>3.042</td>
<td>0.049</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Food_Authenticity</td>
<td>8.742</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4.371</td>
<td>3.815</td>
<td>0.023</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>PatronageIntention</td>
<td>11.283</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5.642</td>
<td>3.656</td>
<td>0.027</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Restaurant Segment</td>
<td>Attributes</td>
<td>68.815</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>68.815</td>
<td>73.645</td>
<td>0.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Atmospheric Authenticity</td>
<td>61.324</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>61.324</td>
<td>54.266</td>
<td>0.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Food_Authenticity</td>
<td>6.827</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6.827</td>
<td>5.959</td>
<td>0.015</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Restaurant * EthnicOrigin</td>
<td>PatronageIntention</td>
<td>11.938</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5.969</td>
<td>3.868</td>
<td>0.022</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EI_Strength * Restaurant * EthnicOrigin</td>
<td>Food_Authenticity</td>
<td>13.166</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3.292</td>
<td>2.873</td>
<td>0.023</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The results indicate that restaurant segment is a significant predictor for both attitudes toward the Mexican restaurants, perceived atmospheric authenticity and perceived food authenticity. Consumers’ strength of ethnic identity was found to significantly predict the patronage intention (supporting 3a) and also predicts perceived authenticity of the restaurants but not the attitudes (supporting 4a and 4b). However, one two-way interaction was found showing a moderating effect of ethnic origin on the relationship between type of restaurant segment and patronage intention. Another three-way interaction indicates that all three factors, ethnic origin, strength of ethnic identity and type of restaurant segments explain the perception of food-authenticity.

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Since gender has been found to be a moderator in previous testing, gender was added to the fixed model and Table 27 summarizes the results. The results show that gender is an important moderator that strengthens the relationship between all four dependent variables, especially the relationship between restaurant segment and attitudes. Therefore, Hypothesis 7 is supported. SEM was also performed to examine the moderating effect of gender and results show that gender is a significant moderator in every path on the model.

| Table 27 |

**Moderating Effects of Gender**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Dependent Variable</th>
<th>Type III Sum of Squares</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Mean Square</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Strength of Ethnic Identity</td>
<td>Attitudes</td>
<td>2.628</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1.314</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Atmospheric Authenticity</td>
<td>6.878</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3.439</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Food_Authenticity</td>
<td>9.077</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4.538</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>PatronageIntention</td>
<td>14.56</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>7.28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Restaurant</td>
<td>Attitudes</td>
<td>68.629</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>68.629</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Atmospheric Authenticity</td>
<td>62.905</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>62.905</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Food_Authenticity</td>
<td>3.999</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3.999</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>PatronageIntention</td>
<td>7.599</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7.599</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>EI_Strength * Gender</td>
<td>Attitudes</td>
<td>6.877</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3.439</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Atmospheric Authenticity</td>
<td>9.862</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4.931</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>PatronageIntention</td>
<td>30.101</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>15.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Restaurant * Gender</td>
<td>Attitudes</td>
<td>3.405</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3.405</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Atmospheric Authenticity</td>
<td>11.85</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2.962</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Food_Authenticity</td>
<td>12.369</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3.092</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>PatronageIntention</td>
<td>20.309</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5.077</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 28 and Table 29 illustrate the differences among strength of ethnic identity and the ethnic identity groups from Post Hoc analysis. The results show that the higher a consumers’ strength of ethnic identity, the more impact attitudes have in decision making.
Similar tendency is also observed in consumers’ evaluation of perceived atmospheric authenticity. However, as for the food authenticity, difference is only found between consumers with higher strength of ethnic identity and consumers with lower strength of ethnic identity. Interestingly as for the patronage intention, consumers with moderate strength of ethnic identity are only different from consumers with lower strength of ethnic identity but act similar to consumers with high strength of ethnic identity. As predicted, consumers with higher strength of ethnic identity are significantly different from lower ethnic identity.

Table 28

Multiple Comparisons of the Strength of Ethnic Identity

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dependent Variable</th>
<th>(I) EIStrength</th>
<th>(J) EIStrength</th>
<th>Mean Difference (I-J)</th>
<th>Std. Error</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Attitudes LSD</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td>-.2334*</td>
<td>0.10914</td>
<td>0.033</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>-.5831*</td>
<td>0.11176</td>
<td>0.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>.2334*</td>
<td>0.10914</td>
<td>0.033</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>-.3497*</td>
<td>0.11124</td>
<td>0.002</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>.5831*</td>
<td>0.11176</td>
<td>0.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td>.3497*</td>
<td>0.11124</td>
<td>0.002</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Atmospheric</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td>-.2528*</td>
<td>0.12009</td>
<td>0.036</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Authenticity LSD</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>-.5276*</td>
<td>0.12297</td>
<td>0.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>.2528*</td>
<td>0.12009</td>
<td>0.036</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>-.2748*</td>
<td>0.1224</td>
<td>0.025</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>.5276*</td>
<td>0.12297</td>
<td>0.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td>.2748*</td>
<td>0.1224</td>
<td>0.025</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Food Authenticity</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td>-.02361</td>
<td>0.12053</td>
<td>0.051</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LSD</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>-.4690*</td>
<td>0.12341</td>
<td>0.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>0.2361</td>
<td>0.12053</td>
<td>0.051</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>-0.2329</td>
<td>0.12284</td>
<td>0.059</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>.4690*</td>
<td>0.12341</td>
<td>0.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td>0.2329</td>
<td>0.12284</td>
<td>0.059</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Patronage Intention</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td>-.3412*</td>
<td>0.13853</td>
<td>0.014</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LSD</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>-.5549*</td>
<td>0.14185</td>
<td>0.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>.3412*</td>
<td>0.13853</td>
<td>0.014</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>-.2137</td>
<td>0.1412</td>
<td>0.131</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>.5549*</td>
<td>0.14185</td>
<td>0.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td>.2137</td>
<td>0.1412</td>
<td>0.131</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 29

Multiple Comparisons of the Ethnic-Origin Groups

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PatronageIntention</td>
<td>American Latino</td>
<td>-.2829**</td>
<td>0.14292</td>
<td>0.048</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Others Latino</td>
<td>0.0199</td>
<td>0.19854</td>
<td>0.92</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>American Others</td>
<td>.2829**</td>
<td>0.14292</td>
<td>0.048</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Others Others</td>
<td>0.3028</td>
<td>0.2245</td>
<td>0.178</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>American Latino</td>
<td>-0.0199</td>
<td>0.19854</td>
<td>0.92</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Latino Latinos</td>
<td>-0.3028</td>
<td>0.2245</td>
<td>0.178</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

When examining the differences between ethnic-origin groups (American, Latino and others) on each measured variables (attitudes, perceived atmospheric authenticity, food authenticity and patronage intention). Different from the strength of ethnic identity, differences between ethnic-origin groups were only observed on patronage intention between American and Latino customer. Latino consumers demonstrate significantly higher intention to dine in Mexican food than American consumers.

Consumers’ Need for Uniqueness (CNFU) and Patronage Intention

Given the practice of previous studies, Consumers’ need for uniqueness is transformed to categorical variable in analysis. Thus, similar procedure is followed as the ethnic identity ($M = .304, SD = 1.16$). Thus three groups of level of need for uniqueness are calculated for the purpose of testing Hypotheses 5a and 5b: high CNFU ($> 3.62$) moderate CNFU ($2.46 < CNFU < 3.62$), and low CNFU ($< 2.46$). Firstly, regression analysis was used to test Hypothesis 5a. The results show that CNFU is a significant predictor for patronage intention ($F = 10.504, p < 0.001$). Secondly, multiple comparisons were performed to evaluate the differences between groups. Interestingly, the results indicate that consumers of moderate level of CNFU are significantly
different from consumers of high level of CNFU in both restaurant segments. Thus 4a is partially supported.

In order to test the moderating effects of CNFU on the perceived authenticity and patronage intention/attitudes toward the restaurants, a moderating/interaction variable was created. Then MANOVA was performed to test the moderating effects in both restaurant segments. Results show that both H4c and H4d were supported (Table 30).

Table 30

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Restaurant Segments</th>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Dependent Variable</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Mean Square</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Local</td>
<td>Perceived Authenticity</td>
<td>Attitudes</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>3.575</td>
<td>10.712</td>
<td>0.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>CNFU</td>
<td>Patronage Intention</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>3.609</td>
<td>3.603</td>
<td>0.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Franchised</td>
<td>Perceived Authenticity</td>
<td>Attitudes</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>4.174</td>
<td>11.573</td>
<td>0.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>CNFU</td>
<td>Patronage Intention</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>3.549</td>
<td>2.612</td>
<td>0.000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Hypotheses 5 and 6 aim to examine the role of perceived authenticity in consumers’ attitudes towards the ethnic-themed restaurants and their patronage intention. MANOVA was conducted to test these two sets of hypotheses. Table 31 presents the results. Because there are two components of perceived authenticity, perceived food authenticity and perceived atmospheric authenticity were examined separately. The analysis finds that food authenticity is a significant predictor of patronage intention ($F = 4.657, p = 0.001$) in local Mexican restaurant segment. No significant relationship was found between food authenticity and attitudes in the local Mexican restaurant segment. Atmospheric authenticity, however, significantly predicts both attitudes and patronage intention. In addition, food authenticity and atmospheric authenticity interact together and influence both attitudes and patronage intention, indicating that instead of focusing on one aspect of authenticity, owners of ethnic-themed restaurants
should achieve both aspects of authenticity for better perception of attitudes toward the
restaurants and the behavioral intention.

Table 31

Hypotheses Testing Results of Perceived Authenticity

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Restaurant Segments</th>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Dependent Variable</th>
<th>Type III Sum of Squares</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Mean Square</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Food Authenticity</td>
<td>Attitudes</td>
<td>2.655</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0.531</td>
<td>1.658</td>
<td>0.147</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Patronage Intention</td>
<td>21.67</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4.334</td>
<td>4.657</td>
<td>0.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Attribpheric Authenticity</td>
<td>Attitudes</td>
<td>41.788</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>2.985</td>
<td>9.323</td>
<td>0.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Patronage Intention</td>
<td>43.417</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>3.101</td>
<td>3.332</td>
<td>0.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>FoodAuthenticity*</td>
<td>Attitudes</td>
<td>16.006</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>0.667</td>
<td>2.083</td>
<td>0.004</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Attribpheric_Authenticity</td>
<td>Patrons Intention</td>
<td>1.585</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0.317</td>
<td>0.899</td>
<td>0.483</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Patronage Intention</td>
<td>26.318</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5.264</td>
<td>4.178</td>
<td>0.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Attribpheric_Authenticity</td>
<td>Attitudes</td>
<td>126.801</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>8.453</td>
<td>23.95</td>
<td>0.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Patronage Intention</td>
<td>64.71</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>4.314</td>
<td>3.424</td>
<td>0.000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In the context of franchised Mexican restaurant segment, food authenticity and atmospheric
authenticity demonstrate the same effects as in the local Mexican restaurant segment.

However, no interaction was found between the two aspects. In summary, Hypotheses 5 and 6
are supported further mediation analysis (Baron & Kenny, 1986) also found that authenticity
mediates the relationships between attitudes and patronage intentions.

The study also analyzes the impacts of behavioral variables, namely type of favorite
restaurants and dine out frequencies. Table 32 summarizes the results that consumers’ favorite
type of restaurants is a significant predictor for behavioral intention to dine in ethnic-themed
restaurants. Dine-out frequencies, however, only predict such behavior intention when it
interacts with favorite types of restaurants.
Table 32

Test of Between Subjects Effects of Patronage Intention

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Type III Sum of Squares</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Mean Square</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Favorite Type of Restaurant</td>
<td>13.022</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6.511</td>
<td>4.429</td>
<td>0.013</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Favorite Type of Restaurant * Dine-Out Frequency</td>
<td>22.442</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3.74</td>
<td>2.544</td>
<td>0.021</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The above sections record the hypothesis testing of the consumer panel data. Table 33 summarizes the results of each proposed hypotheses. The results show that firstly, consumers choose to dine in ethnic restaurants for similar reasons.
Table 33

Summary of Hypothesis Testing Results

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hypotheses</th>
<th>Result</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>H1</strong> Restaurant patronage motives influence patronage intention</td>
<td>Supported</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>H2a</strong> The restaurant segments influences the patronage intention</td>
<td>Supported</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>H2b</strong> The restaurant segments influences the perceived attitudes toward the restaurant.</td>
<td>Supported</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>H2c</strong> The restaurant segments moderates the relationship between perceived food authenticity and patronage intention</td>
<td>Supported</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>H2d</strong> The restaurant segments moderates the relationship between perceived atmospheric authenticity and patronage intention</td>
<td>Supported</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>H2e</strong> The restaurant segments moderates the relationship between perceived authenticity of food and perceived attitudes toward the restaurant.</td>
<td>Supported</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>H2f</strong> The restaurant segments moderates the relationship between perceived authenticity of atmospherics and attitudes toward the restaurant.</td>
<td>Supported</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>H3a</strong> The strength of ethnic identity influence the patronage intention</td>
<td>Supported</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>H3b</strong> The strength of ethnic identity influence the attitudes toward the restaurant</td>
<td>Not Supported</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>H3c</strong> The strength of ethnic identity influences the relationship between perceived authenticity and patronage intention.</td>
<td>Supported</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>H3d</strong> The strength of ethnic identity influences the relationship between perceived authenticity and attitudes toward the restaurant.</td>
<td>Supported</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>H4a</strong> Consumers’ Need for Uniqueness influences the patronage intention</td>
<td>Partially Supported</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>H4b</strong> Consumers’ Need for Uniqueness influences the attitudes toward the restaurant</td>
<td>Supported</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>H4c</strong> Consumers’ Need for Uniqueness moderates the relationship perceived authenticity and patronage intention</td>
<td>Supported</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>H4d</strong> Consumers’ Need for Uniqueness moderates the relationship between perceived authenticity and attitudes toward the restaurant</td>
<td>Supported</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>H5a</strong> The perceived authenticity of food influences patronage intention.</td>
<td>Supported</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>H5b</strong> The perceived authenticity of food influences perceived attitudes toward the restaurant.</td>
<td>Supported</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>H5c</strong> The perceived food authenticity mediates the relationship between attitudes and patronage intention</td>
<td>Supported</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>H6a</strong> The perceived authenticity of atmospherics influences patronage intention.</td>
<td>Supported</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>H6b</strong> The perceived authenticity of atmospherics influences perceived attitudes toward the restaurant.</td>
<td>Supported</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>H6c</strong> The perceived atmospheric authenticity mediates the relationship between attitudes and patronage intention</td>
<td>Supported</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>H7</strong> Gender moderates the relationships among other factors</td>
<td>Supported</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
This dissertation aims to address two research gaps identified in the extant research literature addressing the increasingly diverse U.S. consumer demography. The first principal focus is the prevailing paucity over the past half-century of the importance of diverse U.S. consumer segments relative to their values attitudes and lifestyles, and their ensuing development of brand preference and retail patronage behaviors in the services industry. Toward this overarching goal, this dissertation specifically investigates several cultural market segments to advance previous studies on consumers’ choice of ethnic restaurants, extending the focus beyond the "minority" designation that largely addressed African-American consumer segments rather than ethnic identity. The first goal was to investigate portentous motivating factors that drive consumers to dine in ethnic-themed restaurants, and to use ethnographic narratives to stimulate the development of a theory-drive conceptual framework for quantitative analysis. Thus, the focus of the first objective is to identify the relevant factors and reasons that motivate consumers to dine at ethnic-themed restaurants. In this way, the dissertation extends the boundary of current long-standing but outdated market segments in the market for ethnic-themed restaurants, especially embracing the unprecedented increase in Hispanic, Asian and other ethnic identities in the U.S. This multi-methods approach meets rigorous standards of both qualitative and quantitative evaluation, resulting in a participant-initiated battery of motivating factors from respondents’ ethnographic narrations of their previous experiences at ethnic themed restaurants. The qualitative results also found that
American–themed restaurants were also classified as ethnic-themed restaurants by U.S. consumers. The list not only covers the motives discovered in the literature, such as service quality, physical surroundings, convenience (e.g. Ebster & Guist, 2004; Lee et al., 2014), but it also recognizes that several factors that have been studied less in the context of ethnic-themed restaurants like promotional strategies, ethnic origin and social surroundings (refer to Table 2 for a comprehensive list of factors identified in this dissertation). In addition, the dissertation also offers quantitative evidence to the literature that patronage factors such as convenience, service quality, menu variety, and promotion availability, are all significant predictors for consumers’ choice of ethnic restaurants.

The second goal of this dissertation was to investigate the impact of respondents' ethnic identities within the at-large U.S. consumer population in lieu of the pre-determined limited minority consumer designation (articulated by the U.S. Census Bureau) and its relationship on preference formation and retail patronage intentions in the context of the ethnic-themed restaurant sector. In order to investigate the ethnic identity of U.S. consumers, this dissertation first conducted a pilot study among student sample to test the applicability of available scales in the literature and found that the Scale of Ethnic Experience (SEE) developed by Malcarne et al. (2006) was better than Phinney and Ong’s (2007). The results also show that ethnic identity is also a valid variable for non-minority consumers, which provides evidence for understanding consumers’ behaviors in ethnic service outlets and contributes to the current literature. The results of the main study confirm the moderating effect of ethnic identity on consumers’ attitudes toward the restaurant, perceived authenticity and patronage intention (Hypotheses 3a through 3d).
The third goal of this dissertation is to examine how consumers’ need for uniqueness interplays with ethnic-identity as well as perceived authenticity to influence the patronage intention of ethnic-themed restaurants. The literature has shown that many consumers dine in ethnic restaurants because they want to experience the unique culture offered at ethnic restaurants however, most of the research treats the perceived authenticity as a predictor but not a mediator that interplay with other factors (e.g. Ebster & Guist, 2004; Kim et al., 2012; Lee et al., 2014; Lego et al., 2002; Lu & Fine, 1995). The results of qualitative data in this dissertation advance knowledge about consumers’ choices to dine in ethnic restaurant not only for the experiencing different cultural aspects but also as a way to manifest their difference in tastes and choices.

This dissertation also presents statistically significant evidence that consumers’ perceived authenticity mediates the effects of consumers’ attitudes toward the restaurants on their patronage intention. Consumers’ strength of ethnic identity was found to significantly predict the patronage intention (supporting 3a) and also predicts perceived authenticity of the restaurants but not the attitudes (supporting 4a and 4b). However, one two-way interaction was found showing a moderating effect of ethnic origin on the relationship between type of restaurant segment and patronage intention. Another three-way interaction indicates that all three factors, ethnic origin, strength of ethnic identity and type of restaurant segments explain the perception of food-authenticity.

In addition to the three goals, the results also address other concerns in the literature. Firstly, the dissertation investigated how role of gender differences influence consumers’ choice of ethnic restaurants. In the qualitative stage, 2 female recognized their differences in the
choice of restaurants and their different perceptions of authenticity. The quantitative data results show that female consumers care more of the atmospheric authenticity to food authenticity compared to male consumers.

Lastly, the dissertation compares the consumers’ perception of two restaurant segments, local and franchised ethnic restaurants. Hypotheses 2a through 2f proposed the moderating effects of restaurant segments and the results show that restaurant segments moderates each single path in the model (Fig. 1). Furthermore, restaurant segments also interact with other factors and impact the patronage intention.

Theoretical Contributions

The findings contributes to the research advocating the interplay among ethnic identity, consumers’ need for uniqueness, and perceived authenticity of general consumers in decision making choices of patronizing ethnic-themed restaurants. The results expands the domain of ethnic identity theory from consumers of ethnic backgrounds in most of previous studies to general U.S. population including the non-Latino white and empirically measures their strength of ethnic identity with the Scale of Ethnic Experiences (Malcarte et al., 2006). A Chi-Square test was performed to see the differences among ethnic origin groups ($\chi^2 (4, N=456)=14.784, p=.005$), indicating that ethnic-identity is one important factor influencing consumers’ decision of restaurant choices. Results of further analysis of other dimensions of ethnic experiences, mainstream comfort, perceived discrimination, and social affiliation, find that ethnic groups are significantly different in mainstream comfort, and perceived discrimination. However, no significant difference was found on the dimension of social affiliation between ethnicity groups.
The difference is best illustrated with the ethnographic findings of this dissertation that general American consumers categorize American style restaurant as one type of ethnic-themed restaurants.

Moreover, this dissertation provides empirical supports for multidimensional view of consumer choice (Chan et al., 2013) and contributes to the literature in several ways. Firstly, this dissertation tests a sub-dimension of consumers’ social identity, the ethnic identity on the group level, and also examines the consumers’ need for uniqueness on the individual level. The results provide further empirical evidence in understanding the complex multiple motives that drive consumers’ consumption behavior.

Secondly, the results also show Latino-origin consumers’ choice of ethnic restaurants is more of a manifestation of their ethnic identity but non-Latino consumers are motivated more by the individual level motives, consumers’ need for uniqueness. Such findings indicate that future studies need to investigate the complex reasons in understanding consumers’ decision making.

Thirdly, the results also suggest that uniqueness motives functions differently between restaurant segments. It is found that CNFU interplay with strength of ethnic identity and ethnicity groups in motivating consumers’ to franchised Mexican restaurants however, no such difference was found in local Mexican restaurants.

Fourthly, theoretical implications of this dissertation extend beyond the consumer-choice literature to inform the social psychology of identity, especially the ethnic identity, given the multi-ethnic, multi-cultural nature of the United States. Joint motivating drives on both individual level and group/social level could also be examined in other filed, like consumers’
choice of politicians as well as other decision making situations (gift-giving), product categories (apparel industry), or service outlets (hospitality industry).

Practical Contributions

The present research investigates how ethnic identity and consumers’ need for uniqueness interplay with perceived authenticity to affect consumers’ patronage intention of ethnic-themed restaurants. The findings have important implications for market segmentation guiding the owners of ethnic-themed restaurant the choice of environmental cues to encourage patronage intentions among general consumers.

Furthermore, this study provides additional insights about motivating factors affecting decision making of patronizing ethnic-themed restaurants and contributes to the stream of research by enhancing understanding of marketing ethnic-themed restaurant in a multi-cultural society.

Limitations and Future Research

No research is perfect and so is this one. Although this study generates theoretical and practical contributions, the present study is inevitably subject to a number of limitations. First, a student sample was employed in testing the measurements, which encompasses caveats regarding the accuracy in the responses. Secondly, the constructs utilized in this study have sub-dimensions. For instance, in this study due to the factor loading, the consumers’ need for uniqueness was calculated with only one dimension, avoidance of similarity. Creative choice
and unpopular choice were not part of the analysis, although such operation is not rare in the CNFU literature.

Furthermore, analysis of ethnographic narrations also identifies other factors, such as family impacts and peer pressure. Due to the limited scope of this dissertation, these factors need to be further studied in future research in choice of ethnic restaurants and restaurants of other ethnic backgrounds, like Chinese, Korean, and Italian.

A forth potential limitation of this study is based on the sample and its representativeness of general population. One problem is that although the respondents of the main study were recruited through consumer panel, no geographical information was collected to avoid geographically concentration issue. Another problem is that in the analysis, the ethnic origin of respondents was decided by the origin of father, which ignores the influence from the mother side. The length of stay of respondents was also not collected. These defects inform future studies that consumers could be further segmented based on a more comprehensive demographic characteristics for better understanding of the target market.

Finally, even though this study responded to Chan et al’s (2013) suggestion that consumers’ choice decision is influenced by multiple identity motives, like ethnic identity and need for uniqueness in this study. Consumers’ emotional responses were not collected. Thus future studies are encouraged to consider the impacts of emotional responses on consumers’ choice decision.
APPENDIX A

ETHNOGRAPHIC NARRATION CASE
Ethnographic Narration Case

An ethnic-themed restaurant refers to a restaurant that features foods of different nationality, culture, or cuisines. Like Cajun food, Italian, Chinese, etc.

• Describe your previous experiences at an ethnic-themed restaurant. Please be specific and detail-oriented.

• Describe your understanding of “Authenticity” of an ethnic-themed restaurant and how does your perception of authenticity influence your choice of ethnic-themed restaurants?

• How would dining at ethnic-themed restaurant fit in your self-concept and your consumption pattern?

• And what are general motivational factors that drive you to such restaurants? Give some explanation to each factor
APPENDIX B

LIST OF MEASUREMENT SCALES
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Construct</th>
<th>Items</th>
<th>Source Scale Type and Format</th>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Factor Loading</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>I find it easiest to trust people from my own ethnic group.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>.81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>I prefer my close friends to be from my own ethnic group.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>.82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>I think that friendships work best when people are from the same ethnic group.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>.77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>My ethnic group has been treated well in American society. *</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>.77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Generally speaking, my ethnic group is respected in America. *</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>.74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Discrimination against my ethnic group is not a problem in America. *</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>.82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>My ethnic group is often criticized in this country.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>.88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>I think of myself as a typical American.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>.86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>I'm what most people think of as a typical American.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>.77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>I feel like I belong to mainstream American culture.</td>
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<td>.78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>I believe that it is important to take part in holidays that celebrate my ethnic group.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>.78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>My parents gave me a strong sense of cultural values.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>.70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Being a member of my ethnic group is an important part of who I am.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>.74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>I do not feel it necessary to learn about the history of my ethnic group. *</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>.71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Construct</td>
<td>Items</td>
<td>Source Scale Type and Format</td>
<td>Source</td>
<td>Cronbach’s Alpha in Source Study</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------------------</td>
<td>--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
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<td>-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>----------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consumers' Need for Uniqueness</td>
<td>When a restaurant becomes popular among the general population, I begin to go there less frequently</td>
<td>Likert, Six Point 1=Strongly Disagree to 6=Strongly Agree</td>
<td>Ayalla Ruvio, Aviv Shoham, Maja Makovec Brencic, (2008), &quot;Consumers' need for uniqueness: short-form scale development and cross-cultural validation&quot;, International Marketing Review, Vol. 25 (1) pp. 33 - 53</td>
<td>.772</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>As I rule, I dislike restaurants that are customarily frequented by everyone</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>.851</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>I often try to avoid restaurants or brands that I know are bought by the general population</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>.817</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The more commonplace a restaurant is among the general population, the less interested I am in going...</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>.870</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>I actively seek to develop my personal uniqueness by frequenting special places to eat</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>.750</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>I try to find a more interesting version of run-of-the-mill restaurants because I enjoy being origin...</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>.762</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Having an eye for restaurants that are interesting and unusual assists me in establishing a distinct...</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>.757</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>When it comes to the franchise that I chose for eating, I have broken customs and rules.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>.772</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>I have often violated the understood rules of my social group regarding where to eat or go</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>.750</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><em>I often combine possessions in such a way that I create a personal image that cannot be duplicated.</em></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>.731</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Construct</td>
<td>Items</td>
<td>Source Scale Type and Format</td>
<td>Source:</td>
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<td>-----------</td>
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<td>---------</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Motives to Dine in Restaurants</td>
<td>It is important that the interior design of a restaurant is visually appealing</td>
<td>Likert, Six Point 1=Strongly Disagree to 6=Strongly Agree</td>
<td>Bellenger, N. D., Robertson, D. H., &amp; Greenberg, B. A. (1977). Shopping center patronage motives. Journal of Retailing, 53(2), 29–38.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>It is important that the exterior design of a restaurant is visually appealing</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>The safety and security of the area around the restaurant is important to me</td>
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<td>The availability of parking at the restaurant is important to me</td>
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<td></td>
<td>The overall service quality of a restaurant is important to me</td>
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<td></td>
<td>The friendliness of the wait staff is important in choosing where I eat.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>The cleanliness and maintenance of a restaurant is important to me</td>
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<td></td>
<td>I prefer restaurants that offer daily specials</td>
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<td></td>
<td>I prefer a restaurant that serves a large variety of dishes (choices)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>The restaurant(s) that I frequent rank highly on menu diversity.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>If a restaurant is very accessible from my home, work or university, that is important to me.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>When selecting a restaurant, the distance from my home, work or university is important to me.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>The operating hours of a restaurant is important to me</td>
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<td></td>
<td>If I like an advertisement for a restaurant, I am more likely to go there</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>If an advertisement for the restaurant looks interesting, I will be more likely to try it</td>
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<td></td>
<td>The pleasantness of a restaurant's advertising is important to me</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Construct</td>
<td>Items</td>
<td>Source Scale Type and Format</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
| Attitudes Towards Restaurants' Atmosphere | The decorations in this restaurant were visually appealing  
The interior design of this restaurant was visually appealing  
The lighting created a comfortable atmosphere.  
The table setting in this restaurant was pleasing  
The colors used in the restaurant created a welcome atmosphere  
The restaurant was clean  
The facility layout was easy to move around | Likert, Six Point  
| Restaurant Patronage Intention | I would like to share positive things about this Mexican restaurant to others.  
I would like to recommend this Mexican restaurant to others.  
I would like to dine out at this Mexican restaurant. | Likert, Six Point  
| Restaurant Authenticity Scale | I perceived the decorations in the restaurant as authentically Mexican  
I perceived the interior design of the restaurant as authentically Mexican  
I perceived the exterior appearance of this restaurant as authentically Mexican  
According to the dishes, I perceived this restaurant offers authentic Mexican food. | Likert, Six Point  
APPENDIX C

PICTORIAL STIMULI OF RESTAURANT SEGMENTS
Local Mexican Restaurant

Inside/Outside View
Dishes/Menu

**Single Items**
- Taco de maíz Corn Taco: $1.39
- Taco de harina Flour Taco: $1.75
- Menudo: $6.99
- Consume: $6.99
- Gorditas: $2.50
- Sopes: $2.50
- Burrito: $5.99
- Quesadilla: $4.99
- Torta Cubana: $7.99

**Paquete #1**
- Paquete familiar: $16.99
  - 1 Lb Carne, 1 Pkg of tortillas, T salsa, 16 Oz arroz, 16 Oz frijoles, 2L refresco.
- Family Pack: $16.49
  - 1 Lb Beef, 1 Pkg of tortillas, 1 salsa, 16 Oz. rice, 16 Oz. beans, 2Lt soda.

**Paquete #2**
- Paquete Gran Familiar: $28.99
  - 2 Lb carne, 1 Pkg of tortillas, 1 salsa, 32 Oz. arroz, 32 Oz. frijoles, 2L refresco.

**Big Family Pack**
- $28.99
  - 2 Lb carne, 1 Pkg of tortillas, 1 salsa, 32 Oz. Beans, 32 Oz. Rice, 2Lt soda

**Tamales**
- $4.99

**Taco Tuesday**
- $4.99

**Taco maíz**
- $1.00 3 to 8 Pm
Franchised Restaurant Segment

Inside/Outside View
Dishes/Menu


