

Abstract

Asian supermarkets in the United States are businesses with high potential, but with a more niche customer base, as compared to supermarkets like Wegmans, which sell a basic variety of foods and groceries that the average person can use. In a recent study by LoyaltyOne in Canada, it was found that 63% of minority shoppers “feel their big-box grocery store doesn’t stock a sufficient selection of ethnic food” (Kashty). To help Asian supermarkets reach their smaller customer base, I hope to introduce transparency into where Asian-Americans live in the States by county, as well as to identify the ethnic breakdowns, as to not only help with placing stores, but also stocking specific cultural foods.

Design

To many Asians with diasporic experiences, Asian-specific supermarkets are often a comfort to us, especially since the ties between culture, food, and nostalgia are so strong. Michelle Zauner, the Korean-American singer-songwriter of Japanese Breakfast, writes in her piece “Crying in H Mart” in *The New Yorker*: “H Mart is where parachute kids go to get the exact brand of instant noodles that reminds them of home... H Mart is freedom from the single-aisle ‘ethnic’ section in regular grocery stores” (Zauner), which often casts Asian-Americans as “the other” despite whatever deep history they may have in this country. Personally, many of my friends who are Asian diasporans also feel a deep connection to food and make trips out to these Asian-specific supermarkets quite often, myself included. There is a lot of potential for Asian supermarkets going forward in the United States, so I want to get my foot in the door of one before it becomes popular by advising the business on the demographics of possible store locations. When opening up a new business, such as a supermarket chain, one of the first things/problems to think about is who and where is the customer base. Transparency into Asian demographics by county has two impacts for the business. One, the business goes into the process of opening up a new store with more information about where they can place their store strategically, as well as know how to stock their stores with certain cultures’ foods such that they can make the most money out of customer demand based on ethnicity breakdowns in the county.

Data

Primary data came from the AAPI Data organization, which separated Asian-American populations by county, state, and also by ethnicities. Additional data about university international populations was found from CollegeFactual. Distance from Multnomah county was found from Google Maps. Data at this point in time does not include Pacific Islanders. Ethnicities in the ethnicity breakdown dataset include Bangladeshi, Bhutanese, Burmese, Cambodian, Chinese, Filipino, Hmong, Indonesian, Japanese, Korean, Laotian, Malaysian, Mongolian, Nepalese, Okinawan, Pakistani, Sri Lankan, Taiwanese, Thai, and Vietnamese.

Algorithms

After data cleaning and exploratory data analysis in Google Sheets were completed, I focused in on the state of Oregon to give an example of a map we can show the client (Asian supermarket).

Tools

Google Sheets was used to analyze data, and Tableau was used for user-friendly and easily interpretable data visualizations.

Communication

<https://public.tableau.com/app/profile/amelia.lui/viz/Korean-AmericansbyCounty/Dashboard1>

<https://public.tableau.com/app/profile/amelia.lui/viz/Asian-AmericanPopulationDensitybyCounties/Sheet1>

<https://public.tableau.com/app/profile/amelia.lui/viz/Asian-AmericanPopulationinOregon/Dashboard1>

<https://public.tableau.com/app/profile/amelia.lui/viz/OregonUniversitiesbyChineseInternationalStudents/Dashboard1#1>

Links

<https://www.newyorker.com/culture/culture-desk/crying-in-h-mart>

<https://canadiangrocer.com/finding-product-mix-modern-canadians>

<https://aapidata.com/repository/>

<http://aapidata.com/stats/state-data/>

<https://collegefactual.com>