



Shopping drivers of generational cohorts: A comparison between night market and wet market formats for fresh fruit and vegetable purchase in Malaysia



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ABSTRACT

The objective of this study is to determine the shopping drivers that influence consumers to choose the night market or wet market for fresh fruit and vegetable (FFV) purchases. The study also investigates whether any differences in behavior among generational cohorts exist while purchasing fresh fruits and vegetables between two retail formats. The cluster sampling technique was applied to the entire population of Klang Valley area in Malaysia, and 700 respondents were randomly selected for this research. Perceived freshness, perceived quality and perceived safety of the fresh fruits and vegetables are the most important shopping drivers in a consumer's decision to purchase FFV in night market and wet market retail formats. The findings show that members of different generational cohorts have different perceptions about freshness, quality and safety of fresh fruits and vegetables purchased in night market and wet market retail formats.

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CHINESE ABSTRACT

这项研究的目的是确定哪些购物推动因素会影响购买新鲜水果和蔬菜 (FFV) 的消费者在夜市和农贸市场之间做出的选择。这项研究还调查了不同世代的群体在这两种零售形式下购买新鲜水果和蔬菜时的行为是否存在任何差异。我们把整群抽样技术应用到了马来西亚巴生谷地区的全部人口，并随机选取了700位受访者参与这项研究。当购买新鲜水果和蔬菜的消费者在夜市和农贸市场这两种零售形式之间做出决定时，影响该决定的最重要购物推动因素就是FFV的感官新鲜度、感官品质和感官安全性。研究结果表明，不同世代的群体对在夜市和农贸市场这两种零售形式下购买的新鲜水果和蔬菜的新鲜度、品质和安全性有着不同的看法。

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1. Introduction

Most previous studies are concerned with the general behavior of consumers toward food, grocery and apparel shopping, with only a few investigating a specific product line and a particular segment of consumers (Jackson et al., 2011; Zhang and Zhang, 2011). Understanding the behavior of a particular segment of consumers regarding a single product line might contribute to a deeper understanding of how and why consumers select and remain loyal to a particular retail format. Based on this assertion, our objectives are to determine shopping drivers that influence a consumer's preference for the night market or wet market for fresh fruit and vegetable (FFV) purchase and to investigate whether there are any differences in shopping behavior among generational cohorts between night market and wet market retail formats preference.

While food shopping, consumers show or express their wants, needs and desire for quality, low prices, value for money, safety and freshness, among others (Grunert, 2005; Grunert and Juhl, 1995; Worsley et al., 2010). Different studies have explored consumers' food shopping behavior (Giné and Yang, 2009; Hill and Harmon, 2007) and the shopping activities of different age groups such as baby boomers, generation X and generation Y (Hunter, 2007; Wang et al., 2000; Worsley et al., 2010). Some conclusions are that older people are more concerned about the aspects of food quality and cost (Dimech et al., 2011), and age is positively associated with quality seeking.

The night market is termed as "Pasar Malam" in local dialect and has become entrenched in the Malaysian shopping scene. The Malaysian night market is based on the concept of open-air shopping (Ishak et al., 2012), where street hawkers occupy a designated part of the streets or parking lots to set up their stalls. Like any traditional market, the night market allows customers to enjoy wide varieties and choices of fresh fruits and vegetables, freshly cooked food and even non-agricultural products at affordable prices. The

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night market generally operates once or twice a week from 3 pm until 10 pm at a particular location. The size of a night market depends on the number of the stalls. According to [Ishak et al. \(2012\)](#), large night markets have between 400 and 700 stall lots and medium night markets between 241 and 399 stall lots, while the small night markets could have fewer than 50 or up to 240 stall lots. In contrast, the wet market normally comprises stalls housed in fixed structures or a building providing lots. The house-like structure operates daily from 6:30 am to lunchtime. The retailers generally focus on fresh fish and seafood together with the local products, providing a full range of fresh produce.

2. Generational cohort

A generational cohort refers to a particular segment of consumers in a similar age group at a particular time period, having similar life experiences, lifestyle and other social and behavior characteristics during their formative years ([Hung et al., 2007](#)). A particular cohort is associated with certain values and priorities, which may persist throughout the lifetimes of its members. Because values, lifestyle, other social behavior and priorities of a particular generational cohort are unique relative to other cohorts, we expect different shopping behavior among cohort groups regarding retail format, based on the shopping drivers influencing the generational cohort.

Four major generational cohorts have been documented and exist in the United States as explained by many researchers in different literature. Builders are those who were born between 1920 and 1945, Baby Boomers between 1946 and 1964, Generation X members between 1965 and 1980 and Generation Y between 1981 and 1995 ([Parker and Chusmir, 1990](#)). Baby Boomers have been described as individualistic, competitive free agents with a strong interest in self-fulfillment through personal growth ([Parker and Chusmir, 1990](#)). This group has demonstrated a strong work ethic and high job involvement, which has led to economic security and career success. Generation X is one of the most highly educated generations ([Jackson et al., 2011](#)). Factors that drive Generation X are their early disenchantment with cultural icons, ongoing anxiety with the internet, and their seemingly unlimited ability to simplify, streamline and enrich the activities and relationships of

their daily lives. Generation Y is often typified as being highly spending-oriented and complicated in terms of tastes and shopping preferences ([Holtshausen and Styrdom, 2006](#); [Wolburg and Pokrywczynski, 2001](#)). This group has a profound impact on retail businesses because Generation Y members love to shop ([Crosby et al., 1981](#)).

3. Shopping drivers

Product freshness is one of the shopping drivers attracting consumers to purchase FFV from traditional retail outlets ([Chamhuri and Batt, 2013](#)). [Zinkhan et al. \(1999\)](#) report the same situation at the Sao Paulo street market in Brazil, that there are deep-seated impressions about the perceived freshness of the produce offered at traditional markets. According to another study on the wet market in Hong Kong, respondents considered food products purchased at wet markets as “fresher and cheaper” ([Goldman et al., 1999](#)). Freshness was perceived by nearly all respondents as a major advantage of wet markets over modern retail formats. Hong Kong consumers, for example, considered that wet markets offered better quality products for FFV. Their reason was based on the services offered by the retailers, who constantly trimmed, sprayed with water, cleaned and sorted the fruits and vegetables. Focus group interviews in Malaysia indicated that consumers viewed fruits and vegetables in traditional markets, especially night markets and farmers markets, as “fresher” because the produce was delivered directly from farms or wholesale markets ([Chamhuri and Batt, 2009](#)). In general, a retail outlet is chosen based on the consumer’s confidence that the retailer can provide high-quality produce at competitive prices and good services to consumers. We assume that consumers choose to shop in retail formats expected to deliver superior products. The overall evaluation of a particular product, i.e., fruits or vegetables, is explained in terms of its perceived characteristics and the evaluation of those characteristics. Multi-attribute models have been used in many studies on consumer behavior in the field of marketing, but studies on the possible relationships between shopping drivers have been limited. The conceptual framework of the current research is developed, as depicted in [Fig. 1](#).

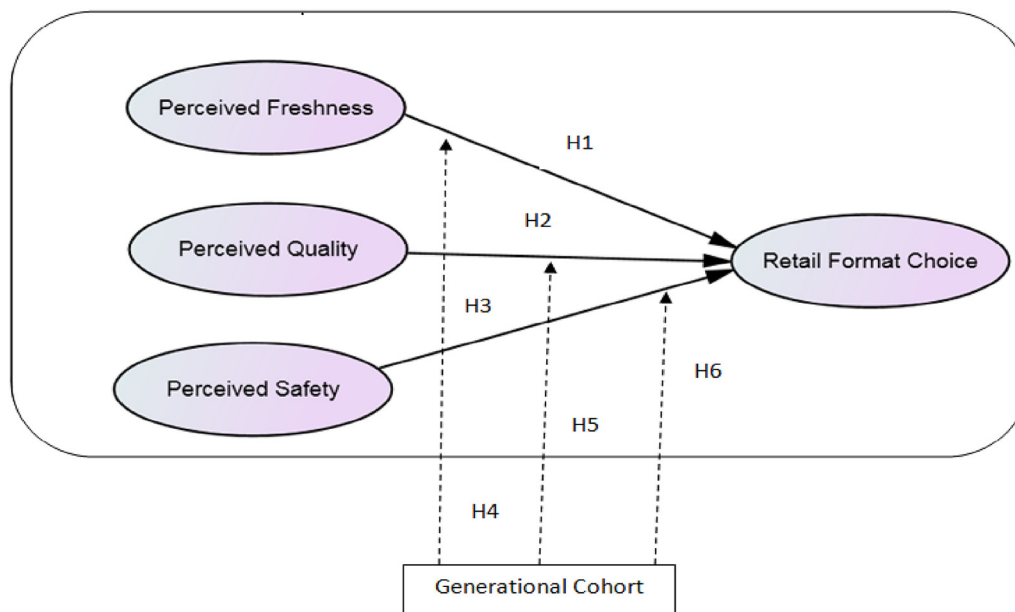


Fig. 1. Conceptual framework.

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