FACTORS INFLUENCING CONSUMER CHOICES IN RETAIL PURCHASES AMONG RURAL COMMUNITIES

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ABSTRACT
The retail industry in Malaysia is one of the rapidly growing industries. In addition to contributing to the country's economic growth, this industry also provides wider job opportunities and promotes entrepreneurship development. However, this phenomenon has triggered intense competition and pressure on local businesses. This study is a research on the factors influencing consumer choices in retail purchases among rural communities for daily needs. The study aims to examine the relationship between place, price, and product factors with consumer tendencies in making retail purchase choices. The research focuses on the rural community in Kampung Bukit Badong, Bestari Jaya, who have shopped at local retail stores within the village. The sampling method used in this study is the quota sampling

method, and 217 respondents answered the distributed questionnaire. Data were collected, and SPSS software was used to analyze the data using correlation analysis methods. The results of the study found that all factors had a significant positive relationship with consumer tendencies in making retail purchase choices, with the price factor showing the strongest relationship compared to place and product.

Keywords: *Price, Place, Product, Consumer choices in retail purchases.*

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Purchasing is an action undertaken to acquire something in exchange for a set price. The objective of purchasing is to organize the supply of materials, spare parts, services, or semi-finished goods that are needed by an organization to produce the desired product from various external agencies or sources. Retailing involves the sale of goods from a point of purchase directly to consumers who intend to use the product (Barbara, 2020). The retail supply chain comprises manufacturers, wholesalers, retailers, and consumers (end users). Wholesalers directly connect with manufacturers, while retailers are linked to wholesalers. Retailing focuses on attracting consumers through product displays and marketing. It is significantly influenced by consumer behavior, seasonality, economic conditions, geography, and various other factors. Retailers need to understand their market segments to attract consumers and sell goods effectively.

The roles of the key players in the retail chain are as follows: first, the manufacturer, who produces goods using machinery, raw materials, and labor. Second, wholesalers purchase finished goods from manufacturers and sell them in bulk to retailers. Third, retailers sell goods in small quantities to end consumers at higher prices, theoretically at the retail price suggested by the manufacturer. Finally, consumers buy goods from retailers for personal use (Barbara, 2020). Retail goods reach consumers through several intermediaries, including wholesalers and distributors. This supply chain often adds to the basic cost of retail goods, but it benefits consumers by allowing them to choose from various brands based on shopping parameters like cost, quality, and style.

Purchasing goods through retail stores or directly from producers offers both advantages and potential disadvantages to consumers. The pros and cons largely depend on the type of goods being sought. The retail shopping experience allows consumers to analyze and compare products side-by-side before making a purchase decision. Buying goods from retailers also eliminates shipping costs and provides consumers with the option to easily return their purchases if they are not satisfied. The purchasing tendencies of Malay consumers are influenced by several important factors as a basis for their retail spending patterns, such as purchasing wet goods, dry goods, and services, including gas delivery and smartphone top-up services (Nurhafiza, 2017). Retail purchases usually occur among rural communities, such as in villages and residential areas.

Rural communities are those located far from urban centers. According to the Ministry of Rural Development (2020), rural development is established to ensure that development programs are aligned across all rural areas through implementation at three levels: central, state, and district. Another characteristic of rural communities is weak infrastructure. Unlike urban areas, rural communities tend to have dirt roads and lack public lighting, internet coverage services, and other benefits typical of modern life. The rural community population is small. This study focuses on the rural community in Kampung Bukit Badong, Bestari Jaya, Selangor, and their retail purchasing choices.Kampung Bukit Badong is located between the Ijok sub-district and the Bestari Jaya sub-district. The researcher chose this location because it is a rural community with limited facilities and low monthly income. Thus, the researcher decided to conduct the study in this village.

Retailers' decisions to offer goods and services that match the location and population are influenced by changes in community lifestyles. Retailers who understand consumer wants and needs will be able to compete in business. In a previous study by Nurhafiza (2017), the

researcher surveyed and interviewed consumers about shopping in retail stores. Indirectly, there were complaints from consumers about difficulties obtaining daily necessities according to their tastes and difficulties making choices due to the limited quantity of each product offered. Because the area is located in a rural setting, the range of brands available in retail stores is limited and does not meet the preferences of consumers. Consumers are forced to buy the available goods in retail stores, even if they are not satisfied with the brands or the products themselves, due to a lack of variety.

Apart from the issue of limited choices, rural residents who purchase goods through retail also face the problem of unjustified price increases by retailers. According to Sinar Harian on June 17, 2022, Varatharajoo K. Murugan, President of the Malaysian Consumer Advisory Association (PPPPM), stated that high demand for essential goods is one of the reasons for price increases in remote, residential, and rural areas. The association has also received complaints from consumers facing pressure due to the rising prices of retail goods and vegetables in rural areas.

There is also an issue where retailers impose conditional purchasing on rural communities. Retailers require consumers to buy other goods before they are allowed to purchase controlled items such as subsidized cooking oil. This has also caused pressure on rural communities in Malaysia. Azman Adam, Director of Enforcement at the Ministry of Domestic Trade and Consumer Affairs (KPDNHEP), stated that although conditional purchasing is not widespread, cases have been detected in Kelantan and Selangor (Harian Metro, February 2, 2022).

According to an article published by Utusan Malaysia on September 7, 2021, consumers feel the impact of rising prices more acutely because they are forced to face much higher prices in retail stores compared to supermarkets, even though retail stores are closer to their homes and safer. Many consumers complain that the prices of goods sold in retail stores are higher than those in supermarkets, with the cost of daily necessities reaching up to RM50 per day. The prices of wet goods, such as chicken, fish, and fresh vegetables, often sold in retail stores are rising, causing residents to think twice before purchasing these items for their daily survival.

The problems occurring in rural areas need to be taken seriously and resolved, considering that the majority of rural residents belong to the B40 group, who do not have high incomes. Issues such as the lack of variety in product choices, the higher prices of goods in retail stores compared to supermarkets, and retailers imposing conditions on purchases should not be taken lightly. Therefore, these problems will affect spending and exert pressure on rural residents.

The objectives to be achieved through this study are: i) To determine the relationship between place factors and retail purchasing choices. ii) To determine the relationship between price factors and retail purchasing choices. iii) To determine the relationship between product factors and retail purchasing choices.

2.0   LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1   Retail Purchase

Access to retail stores significantly impacts purchase decisions, with sustainable store attractiveness and purchase intention mediating this relationship (Sulehri et al., 2021). According to Zafir (2017), retailing refers to activities involving the sale of goods or services (marketing activities) directly to end consumers for personal use and not for resale. Simple retail purchase activities become part of a certain lifestyle that can be carried out in three ways: shopping experience, ownership experience, and usage experience. In addition, consumers are also more conscious of branded and high-quality goods (Shamsudin & Selamat, 2005).

Retailing is based on the interdependence between retailers and consumers. Retailing functions to provide utilities to consumers, such as place, time, form, and ownership, as well

as providing warehousing facilities, market information, after-sales services, and promotions (Zafir, 2017). Consumers depend on retailers to supply goods at the right time, in the right place, at reasonable prices, and in the required quantity. Retailers, on the other hand, depend on customers to purchase their goods and thereby generate profit. Additionally, customer loyalty is also the primary goal of every business. Loyal customers are more likely to return to the store and spend money on goods or services (Gournaris & Stathakopoulos, 2004). Understanding these aspects of consumer behavior and purchase dependencies can help retailers improve inventory management, enhance customer satisfaction, and increase patronage in urban retail settings (Bala ; Sulehri et al., 2021). Customer loyalty is essentially a result of a merchant's ongoing efforts to provide satisfaction to customers. Overall, retail purchases are often the choice of rural communities who are end users. Factors such as reasonable prices, diverse products, and places to obtain goods are important considerations for consumers in rural areas.

2.2   Place

Before starting a business, location is an element that needs to be thoroughly researched before developing a business. A strategic location is ideal for developing a business, but it depends on the local community's preferences to facilitate rural residents' access to daily necessities. Therefore, this study was conducted among rural communities to understand the tendency to make choices in retail purchases. The choice of location should be made carefully because it involves high costs and long-term planning. Research on retail purchase and place highlights the importance of location and product placement in consumer behavior. Studies in Polish cities reveal preferences for specific grocery retail chains, with variations based on gender and age (Bogdan Sojkin & Magdalena Ankiel, 2019). Product quality, price, and place are identified as key factors influencing purchase decisions (Prihartono, 2021). Findings from Nurhafiza (2017) indicate that place factors show a positive and highest level that influences customer tendencies to shop at retail stores. The effects of this study show that customers prioritize place factors that are close to their homes as the main alternative for making spending decisions at the premises.

To optimize product placement and improve retailer revenue, generalized high-utility itemset mining has been proposed as an effective approach. This method utilizes customer purchase data and product taxonomies to gain insights into consumer behavior and inform product placement strategies (Bapna et al., 2020). These studies collectively emphasize the significance of retail location, product attributes, and strategic placement in shaping consumer purchasing patterns and retailer success. Findings from a study by Zainal Abidin (1998) show that 70% of consumers tend to buy food items at retail stores located within 10 minutes of their homes, while 90% of consumers shop for items like clothing, electrical goods, and others outside their residential areas, which take more than 20 minutes of travel. This suggests that rural community consumers are more inclined to make retail purchases close to their homes to save time and costs.

Findings from Nurhafiza (2017) in the selection of retail premises show that respondents chose Tesco as the preferred premises offering raw goods for daily needs at reasonable prices. Moreover, psychological and demographic factors also play a role, where customers are inclined to shop at premises within a short distance from their homes, i.e., less than 500 meters, with a frequency of visiting the premises 1 or 2 times a day. Additionally, many retail stores have been expanded in rural areas to facilitate residents' access to daily necessities without having to travel to supermarkets located far from rural areas. Urban communities typically make their daily necessities purchases in large supermarkets like Lotus, Econsave, etc. In conclusion, place factors have a significant influence on business profits and market success and on customer tendencies when choosing retail premises. Additionally, place factors can also cause consumer satisfaction in purchasing daily necessities at retail premises, making it easier for consumers, especially in rural areas, to visit retail stores.

2.3 Price

A pleasant store atmosphere and affordable prices can increase purchasing decisions, with an estimated 87% impact when combined (Kasmad, 2022). During the COVID-19 pandemic, factors such as huge price rises and delayed online services significantly influenced consumer purchase behavior in the retail sector, particularly among male respondents aged 25-35 with monthly incomes up to 30,000 (Debnath, 2020). These findings provide valuable insights for retailers and marketers to develop effective pricing and promotional strategies. According to Shakila (2016), the price is the amount of money paid by the buyer to the seller for purchasing goods or services in a business transaction. Price is one of the most flexible elements of a marketing plan because price is the only element in the marketing plan that generates revenue for the company, while all other elements represent the cost of the business (Kotler & Armstrong, 2016). Factors affecting the prices of goods in rural communities include the retailer's pricing strategy. When setting the price of goods, the retailer will compare the price with that of its competitors. Additionally, prices can also fluctuate due to the need for price adjustments in line with the current economy. Therefore, retailers must be careful when determining the selling price of goods and avoid selling at prices that burden consumers (Nurhafiza, 2017).

According to an article by Utusan Malaysia (September 9, 2021), the Ministry of Domestic Trade and Consumer Affairs (KPDNHEP) stated that among the price issues raised by consumers is that the price of goods in retail stores in rural areas is higher than in supermarkets in urban areas, thus burdening rural residents. KPDNHEP stated that the increased cost of goods is influenced by higher transportation costs for suppliers to deliver goods to rural areas. The study of price factors shows that the results of an analysis of price factors indicate that the factor is at the highest level that affects customer satisfaction in terms of expenditure decisions for retail goods. Findings from Nurhafiza (2017) show that price factors can cause dissatisfaction among consumers due to increasing prices of goods and services. Additionally, price increases due to current trends also impact the income level of the community. As a result, people are more likely to purchase from retailers that offer better prices compared to other retail stores.

Retail prices fluctuate due to multiple factors. The types of goods, the length of the supply chain, and external factors like inflation and recession all affect price fluctuations. This will force retailers to raise prices to sustain their profit margins. In addition, the lack of supply of goods also affects prices in rural areas. For example, in Kampung Bukit Badong, basic necessities like cooking oil, rice, and sugar can be scarce in the local shops due to transportation costs and delivery schedule delays, thus leading to higher prices in retail stores. Consequently, customers in rural areas often feel the brunt of these changes.

Findings from the Utusan Malaysia article also show that the cost of living in rural areas is significantly impacted by price differences. It is challenging to predict how prices will change over time due to factors such as local economic conditions, seasonal demand, supply constraints, and changes in government policies or regulations. Therefore, rural communities continue to grapple with inconsistent pricing issues.

2.4 Product

Product factors are also significant in influencing purchasing choices among rural communities. Products refer to goods or services that satisfy consumer needs. Quality, brand, and availability are critical factors considered by consumers before making a purchase. Products available in rural stores often come in limited quantities and fewer brands, resulting in fewer choices for consumers.

Research on retail purchasing decisions highlights several key factors influencing consumer behavior. Product quality and price significantly impact purchase decisions for retail products (Cut Edwina Safia Oebit & Septiani Juniarti, 2023). According to Nurhafiza (2017), rural communities tend to choose products based on their quality and brand reputation. Brands perceived as offering good quality products at reasonable prices are preferred among

rural communities. Quality and variety in the products offered influence the purchasing choices of consumers. However, in rural settings, limited access to diverse brands and product types often restricts consumer choices. This can lead to dissatisfaction among consumers who feel limited in their ability to choose products that meet their preferences and needs.

In conclusion, retail purchasing choices among rural communities are influenced by various factors, including place, price, and product availability. Retailers must understand these factors and adapt their strategies accordingly to meet the needs of rural consumers better. By understanding the preferences and needs of rural communities, retailers can better position themselves to succeed in this market.

3.0   METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research Design

Determining the type of research is crucial for selecting the appropriate methodology to aid the analysis process and achieve study results. This study will use quantitative research to meet objectives and resolve research issues. Quantitative data can be measured through measurement processes and requires measurement tools such as questionnaires and tests.Quantitative research typically involves a larger number of respondents, generally exceeding 10 samples compared to qualitative research, to measure specific research variables (Chua, 2006). According to Al Mansor (2015), the accuracy of statistical tests in quantitative research has improved with advancements in computer technology and software. Questionnaires will be distributed to collect data from rural communities around Kampung Bukit Badong, Bestari Jaya, Selangor. Additionally, secondary data will be used to reference and prepare the relevant questionnaire.

This study employs correlation analysis to examine the relationship between dependent and independent variables. The study aims to explore the relationship between factors such as place, price, and product with rural community preferences in retail purchases. Descriptive analysis will also be used to examine other demographic factors in measuring the relationship between dependent and independent variables.The research instrument is a tool used by researchers to conduct their research. The instrument used in this study is a questionnaire, which will be distributed to the respondents. A questionnaire is a set of systematically arranged questions designed to record respondents' answers (Al Mansor, 2015). The questionnaire consists of three sections to address the research problem and achieve the study objectives.Each criterion will be assessed using a Likert scale, which measures opinions on a phenomenon. Rensis Likert (1932) suggested that indices should be constructed by adding relevant items to a concept. He developed the Likert scale, which is widely used in research, particularly in social science and educational studies.

3.2 Pilot Test

A pilot study is an initial small-scale study with various objectives. In this pilot study, the researcher aims to obtain preliminary information regarding the validity and reliability of the developed instrument and to determine if the questionnaire items have high reliability. The pilot study aims to evaluate the effectiveness of the framework and sampling techniques and to identify potential issues that may arise in the actual study.The researcher distributed 30 questionnaires to residents of Kuala Sungai Baru. This location is chosen because Kuala Sungai Baru represents a rural community with limited infrastructure and distance from urban areas. The study will be adjusted as needed based on feedback received. Results from the pilot study, conducted with 23 questions distributed to 30 respondents, indicate a Cronbach's Alpha value of 0.952, suggesting a very good level of reliability for the questionnaire.

3.3 Population & Sampling

In every study, the population is crucial. Mohd Najib (1999) defined the population as all members within the variable group being studied. According to Kamus Dewan Edisi Keempat (2010), population is defined as the total number of people inhabiting a place (country, state, district, etc.), or a group of individuals of a species (animals and plants) in a specific geographical area or habitat. To determine the number of respondents, this study refers to Krejcie and Morgan (1970). According to Chua (2014), sampling is the process of selecting a subset of subjects from a population to serve as research respondents. A sample is a portion of the population. Various methods exist to calculate sample size, including using censuses for small populations, replicating similar study samples, using published tables, and employing formulas. The sample size is determined according to Krejcie and Morgan's (1970) table, considering the population of Kampung Bukit Badong, Bestari Jaya. The study focuses on Bestari Jaya, Selangor, with a population of 510 residents. The sample size, according to Krejcie and Morgan, is 217 respondents.

The sampling method used in this study is quota sampling, categorized as a non-probability sampling method. According to Chua (2014), non-probability sampling is used when each subject in the population does not have an equal chance of being selected as a respondent. Non-probability sampling is suitable for exploratory, descriptive research, and studies aiming to provide a rough overview of phenomena within the study population. In quota sampling, units are selected based on predetermined characteristics to ensure the sample's distribution mirrors the assumed population characteristics. Researchers set quotas or percentages for the sample selection based on specific categories. This method is used to quickly gather information on public opinions about retail purchases.

3.4 Data Collection & Analysis

Data collection in this study uses primary data through questionnaires. A questionnaire is specifically designed to gather information for analysis and address research questions. The questionnaire creator must be knowledgeable to ensure the questions are relevant, reliable, and unbiased. According to Gillham (2000), questionnaires are preferred by many researchers due to their low cost and quick turnaround time. Researchers can obtain data from a larger number of respondents rapidly. The questionnaire is created using Google Forms and distributed via WhatsApp to residents of Kampung Bukit Badong and through Facebook pages for Bestari Jaya residents. Additionally, secondary data is collected from websites, student theses, and empirical journals. Once data from the questionnaires are collected, it will be entered into a computer for analysis. The data will be analyzed using Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) version 22. The analysis methods used in this study include correlation analysis and descriptive analysis.

Pearson correlation analysis is conducted to measure the strength of relationships between independent and dependent variables. Possible relationships between variables include positive correlation, negative correlation, or no correlation (Fah & Hoon, 2009). According to Kamus Dewan Edisi Keempat (2010), correlation is defined as the relationship or connection between variables, indicating how they relate to one another or connect with other issues.

4.0 RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 4.1 : Distribution of Respondents by Monthly Income

Profile	Frequencies	Percentage (%)
RM 1000 and below	23	10.6
RM 1000 – RM 2000	70	32.3
RM 2000 – RM 3000	81	37.3
RM 3000 and above	43	19.8
Total	217	100.0

Based on the Table 4.1 above, the percentage and number of respondents for monthly income are as follows. First, those earning RM 1,000 and below total 23 individuals, accounting for 10.6 percent. Next, those earning between RM 1,000 and RM 2,000 total 70 individuals, making up 32.3 percent. This is followed by respondents earning between RM 2,000 and RM 3,000, totaling 81 individuals or 37.7 percent. Lastly, 43 individuals, or 19.8 percent, are respondents with an income of RM 3,000 and above. This indicates that the majority of respondents in this study have a monthly income between RM 2,000 and RM 3,000.

Table 4.2: Distribution of Respondents by Purchase Frequency

Profile	Frequencies	Percentage (%)
Once a week	62	28.6
2 times per week	90	41.5
3 times per week	26	12
4 times per week	20	9.2
More than 5 times	19	8.8
Total	217	100.0

Table 4.2 above indicates that respondents frequently visit grocery stores twice a week, with 90 respondents making up 41.5 percent. This is followed by those who visit grocery stores once a week, totaling 62 respondents or 28.6 percent. Next, 26 respondents visit grocery stores three times a week (12 percent), 20 respondents visit four times a week (9.2 percent), and 19 respondents visit more than five times a week (8.8 percent). Based on these percentages, the majority of grocery store visits occur twice a week.

Table 4.3 : Distribution of Respondents by Products Most Frequently Purchased

Profile	Frequencies	Percentage (%)
Fresh Products (Fish, Chicken)	95	43.8
Dry Products (Flour, Rice)	87	40.1
Personal Care Products	9	4.1
Household Items	3	1.4
Other Products	23	10.6
Total	217	100.0

Based on the Table 4.3 above, the types of products most frequently purchased by respondents are as follows: First, fresh products such as fish, chicken, and vegetables, with 95 respondents or 43.8 percent. Next, dry products like flour, rice, and sugar, with 87 respondents or 40.1 percent. Additionally, personal care products were chosen by 9

respondents (4.1 percent), followed by household items selected by 3 respondents (1.4 percent). Lastly, other products were chosen by 23 respondents, accounting for 10.6 percent. This indicates that respondents prefer fresh products over other types of products.

Table 4.4 : Correlation Analysis between variables and Retail Purchase

Variables		Place	Product	Price
Consumer Preferences in Retail Purchasing Choices	Coefficient Correlation	.385**	.415**	.642**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000
	N	217	217	217

__Correlation is significant on level 0.01 (2-tailed)__

The study results indicate a significant positive relationship between place and consumer preference (r = 0.385, p < 0.000). According to Davis (1971) classification of relationship strength, the correlation between place and consumer preference is moderate. This suggests that easily accessible locations close to home are crucial in influencing consumers' decisions to shop at grocery stores.

There is also a significant positive relationship between price and consumer preference in making retail purchasing choices, supported by a correlation coefficient (r = 0.642, p < 0.000). Based on Davis (1971) classification, the relationship between price and consumer preference is strong. The positive correlation indicates that the more affordable and reasonable the prices offered, the higher the likelihood that consumers will choose to make purchases at grocery stores.

Data analysis presented in Table 4.4 reveals that products have a significant positive relationship with consumer preference for retail purchasing choices (r = 0.415, p < 0.000). Based on Davis (1971) classification, the correlation between products and consumer preference is moderate. This suggests a positive correlation: the higher the quality of products offered, the greater the likelihood that consumers will choose to make retail purchases.

5.0   CONCLUSION

Based on the findings of the study, the researcher identified that the price factor has a significant positive relationship and a strong correlation with consumer preference in retail purchasing. Price is also the factor with the strongest relationship when compared to product and place factors. This suggests that lower-priced items, along with the bargaining process that occurs when shopping at grocery stores, make the community in Kampung Bukit Badong, Bestari Jaya, more inclined to make retail purchases. This finding is supported by Nurhafiza (2017), who stated that price is still an important factor in choosing where to buy goods. Therefore, affordable prices attract attention to grocery stores in the surrounding area.

According to the study's results, the product factor has a significant positive relationship with consumer preference in retail purchasing at a moderate strength level. Most shopkeepers in grocery stores offer products according to the demands and preferences of consumers in Kampung Bukit Badong. The products frequently sold at grocery stores are those used by residents for personal use, family, or neighbors. This finding is supported by Zafir (2017), who stated that a product is anything that can be offered to a market to satisfy customer needs or desires, including physical goods, services, expertise, events, people, places, property, organizations, information, and ideas.

The last factor involved in this study is the place factor. The place factor has a significant positive relationship and moderate strength with consumer preference in retail purchasing. The proximity of grocery stores to respondents' residences, the store layout that is easy to access, and the physical environment of the grocery store itself make the community in Kampung Bukit Badong more likely to make retail purchases. The short distance between homes and grocery stores allows customers to visit more easily, saving time, energy, and

transportation costs. This finding is supported by Nurhafiza (2017), who found that place is a positive factor influencing customers' tendency to shop at grocery stores. The impact of this study shows that customers prioritize the importance of place close to their homes as the main factor in deciding where to shop.

There are several suggestions that can be highlighted by various parties to ensure that those involved take the appropriate actions. The involvement of multiple parties plays a crucial role and is a good effort in ensuring the increase in profits for grocery store owners while helping low-income groups such as the B40.

One factor that needs attention is the price factor. The responsible authorities, such as the Ministry of Domestic Trade and Consumer Affairs (KPDNHEP), should take action in regulating prices to ensure that groups like the B40 are not exploited in the event of price manipulation by traders. Consumers should also be provided with an easy channel to report price fraud by traders to KPDNHEP, so that they can monitor and take appropriate action against dishonest traders.

Additionally, store owners can run promotions or offer lower prices in grocery stores to help rural communities, which predominantly consist of B40 individuals. Grocery store owners can conduct sales promotions, which are short-term incentives used to encourage the purchase of products or services. These can include coupons, contests, discounts, and so on. Such promotions attract more consumers, and according to the study conducted, respondents are more excited when traders offer deals like "buy one, get one free" for selected products.

Furthermore, practicing frugality and prioritizing essential goods when making purchases is a strategic step that consumers should adopt when shopping. This practice can help rural communities increase their savings as the amount spent will be focused only on necessary expenses. Frugality also helps avoid wasteful spending.

Next, the product factor plays an important role in determining the purchase of grocery items. Consumers feel that the products offered, including the quality and variety of goods, make grocery stores a preferred choice. Therefore, grocery store owners need to ensure that the products they offer are always of good quality and in excellent condition to ensure consumer satisfaction. Additionally, retailers and suppliers need to monitor and understand the daily needs of the community, especially in rural areas, to provide variety and make their products the preferred choice.

In the study, respondents preferred fresh products such as fish, chicken, and vegetables, as well as dry products like rice, eggs, flour, and so on, purchased at grocery stores rather than at large supermarkets. As such, grocery stores remain the primary choice for consumers when purchasing fresh and dry goods of good quality.

The final factor is the place factor, where consumers prioritize proximity to their homes as the main consideration when deciding where to shop. For them, grocery stores are quick and easy to visit for local residents. From a safety perspective, consumers also value the availability of a spacious parking area to ensure their safety and avoid traffic congestion around the store. Additionally, store owners need to prioritize cleanliness within the store, particularly in the fresh goods section, to encourage consumers to prefer grocery stores over larger supermarkets, which maintain overall cleanliness. A systematic product arrangement influences retail purchases by making it easier for consumers to access and select the items they need. For example, organizing products in the store according to categories allows consumers to view a variety of products and easily compare different brands of the same product.

In addition, it is recommended that future researchers further enhance marketing strategies that should be implemented by all retail traders and entrepreneurs to improve their businesses. Apart from studying the same scope, future research can also explore factors influencing purchase intentions, such as brand, quality, and promotional strategies. This is because these factors also have implications for consumer visits to retail stores.

AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS

Nurulhayah, M., Ai'nna Raihana, B., Nurul Liyana, H., Norhazanah, M., Maryam, M. E. & Norzaimah, Z.contributed to the design and implementation of the research, to the analysis of the results and to the writing of the manuscript.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The manuscript has not been published elsewhere and is not under consideration by other journals. All authors have approved the review, agree with its submission and declare no conflict of interest on the manuscript.

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