

Chapter 4

Consumers' Purchasing Behaviour for Fresh Meat from Modern Retail Stores and Traditional Markets in Malaysia and Indonesia

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ABSTRACT

This chapter seeks to compare and contrast the purchase of fresh meat between modern retail stores and traditional markets in both Malaysia and Indonesia. In-depth focus group discussions with the main food shoppers in the household reveal that the halal status is the most influential criterion in store choice for fresh chicken meat. Other important criteria include freshness, quality, a competitive price, convenience, an on-going relationship with the retailer, the variety available, and a pleasant shopping environment.

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INTRODUCTION

After market deregulation and policy reform in the 1980s-1990s, modern retailers have rapidly expanded their market share in the developing countries. Today, in much of Asia, modern (hypermarket, supermarket and minimarket) and traditional food retailers (wet markets, independent grocers, roadside stores, small neighbourhood shops and street vendors) co-exist.

In such a competitive environment, knowing which attributes are of most importance to consumers in making their decision where to shop can help both modern and traditional food retailers to develop appropriate marketing strategies (Belwal, 2009; Baltas & Papastathopoulou, 2003; Reynolds et al., 2002). Within the marketing literature, it is widely accepted that there is a positive relationship between a consumer's perception of a retail store's attributes and retail store patronage (Yan & Eckman, 2009). This suggests that consumers will choose that retail store which best satisfies their requirements (Paswan et al., 2010).

Culture, values and food shopping habits have been shown to influence consumer behaviour (Veeck & Veeck, 2000). Keast (2009) suggests that food quality perceptions are determined from an analysis of the sensory attributes (taste, smell, texture and appearance) and non-sensory attributes which include: (1) price, (2) convenience, (3) brand, (4) method of processing (religious, ethical concerns, environmental considerations), (5) credence attributes (nutritional value, health benefits, production techniques), (6) cultural preferences and (7) food traditions, which, in turn, are subject to individual differences and situational factors.

Malaysia and Indonesia are Muslim majority countries with the Muslim population of 60% for Malaysia (indexmundi 2013) and 88% for Indonesia (pew forum 2010). For the Muslim majority, the concept of halal (lawful/permitted) is an absolute key to food consumption. The world fastest growing halal food market is related to the consumers' beliefs that it is cleaner, healthier and tastier (Alam & Sayuti, 2011).

Within this environment, this study seeks to undertake an empirical investigation of Muslim consumers' food purchasing behaviour to gain a greater insight into the most influential criteria in choosing a food retail store.

BACKGROUND

As living standards have increased, urban consumers have become more aware of the quality and health aspects of food. For these middle class consumers, modern supermarkets offer a much safer and more pleasant shopping environment than the traditional wet markets or street hawkers (Gray, 1996; White, 2009). Changing life styles may also impact on consumers' perception of value and the quality of food

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