



# Understanding Shoppers' Decision-Making Process in Traditional Markets in Indonesia

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**Abstract.** Every country has its own traditional place for trading fresh food known as the “marketplace.” In Indonesia, people refer to the marketplace as “traditional market.” Traditional markets encompass a variety of activities, such as buying and selling as well as social interactions and cultural features in rural and urban areas. Traditional markets are important for providing fresh produce to the local community and are mostly located close to residential areas. However, Indonesian traditional markets have experienced a decline due to the growth of modern markets, prompting the government to focus on attracting tourists to the traditional markets. Unfortunately, there are limited studies to determine if tourists represent an appropriate target market. The goal of this research was to enhance the understanding of traditional markets' functions and factors that impact shoppers' decisions to shop at traditional markets in Indonesia. Data from 506 respondents was collected through an online survey and a quantitative analysis was conducted. The results showed that regular customers are attracted to traditional markets by low prices and that they do not prioritize cleanliness, as these individuals are primarily interested in buying fresh produce. The study further suggests that customers in Indonesian traditional markets tend to display utilitarian behavior. As a result, stakeholders should consider traditional markets' primary function as a place to purchase essential food items. While traditional markets can attract tourists, it is crucial to prioritize the preferences of the local community.

**Keywords.** traditional markets, shopper behavior, tourists behavior, utilitarian, shopping decision

## Introduction

Studies frequently explore public markets as places of exchange because they influence both the economic and the social aspects of life (Tangires, 2008). In Indonesia, we refer to public markets as “traditional markets,” which is also the term this paper will use. Often located within a large structure, the typical Indonesian traditional market features numerous rows of small stalls and narrow passageways. The stalls sell fresh produce, including both wet products, such as vegetables, fruits, meat, fish, and poultry, as well as dry products, such as rice, dried spices, cooking ware, oil, fabric, fashion, daily house appliances, and so on (Grant, 2021; BPS RI, 2019). Because of the fresh produce, the floors of traditional markets are frequently dirty and wet, giving them a negative image among customers. The traditional market's function as a venue for buying and selling, which has existed for hundreds of years, began to shift with changes in the trading business. In Western countries, the emergence of modern markets, such as hypermarkets, supermarkets, and mini markets, had a negative influence on traditional markets, leading to a

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decrease in customers (Reardon and Hopkins, 2006; Traill, 2006). While various studies in Indonesia suggest that the presence of modern markets is not the sole factor affecting traditional markets, it is undeniable that the presence of minimarkets and supermarkets has contributed to a decline in traditional market customers (Suryadarma et al., 2010, 2007). The decline of traditional markets in some countries gave rise to the idea to shift traditional marketplaces into tourist destinations. The Indonesian government's Ministry of Tourism and Creative Economy argues that shifting traditional markets to become tourist destinations can change the unfavorable perception of these areas, attract customers back, and highlight their distinctive qualities (Vinta, 2024). This aligns with research findings that indicate that the government is increasingly giving more importance to traditional markets compared to tourist destinations, recognizing their ability to stimulate growth in the tourism industry (Yeon, 2017). Many cities worldwide have extended their traditional markets in order to attract tourists, and some markets—like Rotterdam's Markthal, Sydney's Fish Market, and Tokyo's Tsukiji Fish Market—have become popular attractions. However, no research has been done to ascertain the viability of introducing tourism markets into the existing traditional markets, particularly in Indonesia. Only a few studies have explored what shoppers do at Indonesian traditional markets; whether they come to purchase products or engage in recreational activities such as dining, socializing, or just strolling. This study aimed to get a better understanding of the role of traditional markets in Indonesia by investigating the demographics of the customers who frequent traditional markets, the motivations behind their choice to shop there, and the key activities that take place within these traditional markets. By identifying the characteristics of the shoppers, stakeholders can better determine the future development of traditional markets, including considerations related to the surrounding environment, optimal locations for traditional markets, and the influence of the shift of traditional markets to tourist markets.

This paper has five sections. The first section is the introduction. The second section is dedicated to the literature review focusing on the characteristics of Indonesian traditional markets, shopping behavior, the reasons people shop at traditional markets, and the factors that influence decision-making when choosing a traditional market. The third section explains the research methodology and data collection technique. The subsequent section scrutinizes the results, followed by a discussion of the data analysis outcomes. The final section's conclusions concentrate on the lessons that traditional market stakeholders can learn and apply. In this study, the terms 'shoppers' and 'customers' are used interchangeably to refer to individuals who visit traditional markets to make purchases.

## Literature Review

### *The Role of Traditional Markets*

Traditional markets exist in cities worldwide, playing a significant role as a fresh food distribution system. It is important to note that each nation has its own distinct nomenclature for these markets. They are referred to as "traditional fresh market" in Vietnam, as "wet market" in Hong Kong and Malaysia, as "free market" or "open-air market" in China, as "market" in Europe, as "farmer's market" in the United States, and as "traditional market" (or *pasar tradisional* in Bahasa) in Indonesia. Although there are different names for traditional markets in almost every country, traditional markets play an important role as food suppliers in many Asian countries, including the Philippines, Vietnam, Malaysia, China, Taiwan, Hong Kong, Singapore, and Indonesia (Grant, 2021; Huang, Tsai, and Chen, 2015; Lui, 2008; Ho, 2005). Generally, traditional markets are well-known for the freshness of their items, since they are where vendors or farmers offer fresh produce (Grant, 2021; Tangires, 2008; Ho, 2005; Goldman, Krider, and Ramaswami, 1999).

Traditional markets are often associated with low pricing, because it is where farmers sell their harvests directly to customers. The ability to serve fresh produce influences the flexibility of traditional markets' operational times. Traditional markets in Indonesia typically operate on a daily basis, starting in the early morning and ending in the afternoon.

In some countries, the proximity of traditional markets to residential areas is important, because people may visit the market several times a day to prepare their meals, given their capacity to offer a wide variety of fresh goods at reasonable prices, ensuring a wide choice of food options (Grant, 2021). Traditional markets play a major role in meeting the needs of urban inhabitants in terms of geographic positioning, especially in urban settings. The proximity of these traditional marketplaces may influence the pricing dynamics of the housing market (Cai and Gao, 2022). The existence of traditional markets often leads to the growth and advancement of surrounding areas. Settlements located near marketplaces have a tendency to expand and create new opportunities for business (Suganda, Atmodiwirjo, and Yatmo, 2009).

#### *Traditional Markets and Tourism*

In tourism, traditional markets are frequently the subject of discussion. Specifically, travelers experience unique encounters when engaging with local individuals and the environment during their exploration of traditional marketplaces (Park and Widyanta, 2022; Wu, Wall, and Pearce, 2014). An interesting experience in a lively, genuine local ambiance with social interactions and cultural characteristics distinguishes these encounters (Park and Widyanta, 2022; Rahmini and Rizali, 2020; Soebiyanto, Saragih, and Wondoamiseno, 2020; Wu, Wall, and Pearce, 2014). Attractions found in traditional markets that serve tourism are among others shopping for specific local products and food experiences, including the exploration of local ingredients (Sangkaew and Zhu, 2022; Park, and Widyanta, 2022; Noble and Sastrawan, 2021). Nevertheless, tourists have different shopping behaviors in traditional markets (Thompson, 2020; Dodds and Holmes, 2017). When visiting traditional markets, tourists are more likely to purchase pre-packaged and consumable foods rather than fresh produce (Dodds and Holmes, 2017).

Furthermore, traditional markets can serve as tourist attractions due to their valuable aspects, such as distinctive selling ways or surroundings, as demonstrated by places such as the floating market located in Kalimantan, Indonesia, known for selling products from boats on the river (Rahmini and Rizali, 2020) and the Granville Island public market in Canada, known for its picturesque location (Newman, 2015). In terms of geographic positioning, studies on farmers' markets have shown that tourism markets can have a spillover effect on surrounding businesses from their visitors (Garner and Ayala, 2019). In the worst-case scenario, tourism could create a disconnect between local communities and their neighborhoods because tourists do not share the same behaviors as locals (Cocola-Gant, Gago, and Jover, 2020).

#### *Shopping Behavior*

For years, researchers have recognized two distinct types of shopper orientations: utilitarian and hedonic. Regarding their buying behavior, utilitarian shoppers are those who shop with the intention of fulfilling tasks or shopping lists, often making rational decisions based on functional considerations (Sarkar, 2011; Arnold and Reynolds, 2003; Babin, Darden, and Griffin, 1994). According to one study, shoppers with a strong utilitarian shopping orientation are more aware of lower prices and as a consequence are more likely to compare prices and to buy things that are cheaper and consider more choices while making purchases (Boedeker, 1995). According to utilitarian shoppers' logic, utilitarian shoppers often make purchases based on functional considerations, therefore the way they spend time while shopping is efficient (Teller, Reutterer, and Schnedlitz, 2008). As a result, utilitarian shoppers see shopping as a short-lasting activity

(Scarpi, 2020). In a study of Jakarta shopping malls, utilitarian shoppers were discovered to be those who shop for everyday necessities or groceries (Widiyani, 2018). Utilitarian shoppers in malls visit fewer stores than hedonic shoppers and spend less time when shopping in a market. This suggests that customers of daily necessities maintain a utilitarian orientation.

Hedonic shoppers are those who shop to satisfy their desires (Wakefield and Baker, 1998; Babin, Darden, and Griffin, 1994), buying not only what they need but also what is not on their shopping list. Hedonic shoppers are more likely to visit locations (stores) that may not be on their itinerary and make impulsive purchases just because they like the products (Jarboe and McDaniel, 1987). This is because according to Chebat, G  linas-Chebat, and Therrien (2005) shoppers with hedonic motives like browsing and their intention is to fulfill their desire for enjoyment and not to purchase products they need (Arnold and Reynolds, 2003; Wakefield and Baker, 1998; Babin, Darden, and Griffin 1994). Responding to hedonic shoppers who want an experience while shopping, shopping centers tend to create a pleasant environment (Calvo-Porr  l and L  vy-Mangin, 2021; B  ckstr  m 2011). According to some studies, tourists tend to exhibit hedonic characteristics, where visiting traditional markets fulfills their leisure and enjoyment needs (Som, Mohammad, and Ibrahim, 2010). Tourists who visit marketplaces less frequently tend to tolerate high prices and prefer to pay attention to setting quality, including cleanliness (Albayrak, Caber, and    men, 2016).

### *Factors Influencing the Decision to Visit a Traditional Market*

People frequent traditional markets for a variety of reasons, including the motivation to shop driven by internal desires and requirements (Babin, Darden, and Griffin, 1994). Numerous studies have found that utilitarian or hedonic shoppers may influence the stores they visit (Cervellon, Sylvie, and Ngobo, 2015). When individuals consider a traditional market, they often take into account several factors, such as the range of products available, pricing, convenience, the overall setting environment, and how it can provide social fulfillment. These factors have an impact on shopping behavior and motivation within traditional markets.

#### 1. Products

Product quality is the primary reason for choosing a traditional market. Customers often cite two factors—freshness and product diversity—as reasons for patronizing traditional markets. Customers from a variety of countries agree that traditional markets provide them with fresh items (Grant, 2021; Anku and Ahorbo, 2017; Najib and Sosianika, 2017; Maruyama and Wu, 2014; Suryadarma et al., 2010, 2007; Goldman, 2000; Goldman, Krider, and Ramaswami, 1999). Studies have revealed that people may choose traditional markets over supermarkets due to the quality and freshness of their products (Zhong, Crang, and Zeng, 2020; Najib and Sosianika, 2017; Maruyama and Wu, 2014). Other studies have shown that the variety of products, including primary items like vegetables and rice, also contributes to the popularity of traditional markets (Ustriyana, Rantau, and Dewi, 2016; Maruyama and Wu, 2014; Suryadarma et al., 2010, 2007). Some traditional markets offer traditional cooked products (Sangkaew and Zhu, 2022) or local handicraft products (Noble and Sastrawan, 2021). Remarkably, in traditional marketplaces, ready-to-eat products are only complimentary in some way (Dodds and Holmes, 2017). In addition, traditional markets typically also sell electronics and daily home appliances, as well as fashion items and miscellaneous items like flowers and stationery (Sangkaew and Zhu, 2022; BPS RI, 2019). According to our observations, the electronics, daily home appliances, and fashion items on offer are of low quality.

#### 2. Price

It may be argued that almost everything offered in traditional markets is also offered in modern markets (supermarkets, hypermarkets, and so on) that are less expensive (D'Andrea et al., 2006). Studies in some countries have shown that shoppers prefer traditional markets due to lower prices

for products of similar quality (Najib and Sosianika, 2017; Ustriyana, Rantau, and Dewi, 2016; Wongleedee, 2015; Ho, 2005). Shoppers are drawn to traditional markets for a variety of reasons, including being able to compare products and the possibility of bargaining, particularly when buying in large numbers (Dhillon and Christin, 2017; Maruyama, Wu, and Huang, 2016; Maruyama and Wu, 2014).

### 3. Setting Environment

Traditional market research usually cites the setting's atmosphere as one of the reasons shoppers favor traditional markets or make a choice to purchase groceries over other market channels, such as sanitation, cleanliness, safety, and odors (Zhong, Crang, and Zeng, 2020; Suryadarma et al., 2010, 2007; Goldman et al., 1999). Although customers in Hong Kong frequently perceive traditional markets as being characterized by uncleanliness and disorganization (Goldman et al., 1999), those who frequent traditional markets prioritize hygiene and cleanliness less than those who frequent supermarkets (Goldman, Krider, and Ramaswami, 1999). This means that even though most traditional markets are not as pleasant as they might be, they may still be a good place to shop (Zhong, Crang, and Zeng, 2020; Goldman, Krider, and Ramaswami, 1999). However, if a traditional market can offer a pleasant environment, including cleanliness, it may be able to increase its capacity to attract people to shop there (Suryadarma et al., 2010, 2007). According to some studies, customers encounter improper challenges in traditional markets, such as bad smells, poor ventilation, overcrowding, the risk of pickpocketing, a lack of hygienic measures, difficulty in finding vendors, and a scarcity of amenities like parking facilities (Najib and Sosianika, 2018; 2017). Despite the chaotic atmosphere of traditional markets, Singaporeans tend to focus more on their experiences than on the products themselves (Mele, Ng, and Chim, 2014). This suggests that traditional markets offer unique and valuable experiences that are distinct from those provided by supermarkets or similar places that sell fresh products.

### 4. Socializing

Physical shopping primarily drives traditional markets, but socializing, an intangible factor, also influences customers' decisions. Some studies found that visiting traditional markets stems from having social connections between sellers and customers as well as a social space for different types of customers (Thompson, 2020; Mele, Ng, and Chim, 2014; Watson and Studdert, 2006). Traditional markets stand out from modern ones due to their ability to facilitate bargaining and service offerings by suppliers instead of relying solely on self-service. In traditional markets, various characteristics of social interaction impact customers, such as merchant friendliness while serving customers, the seller's attitude toward serving customers, or supporting customers with their purchases, such as telling them about new items (Kartikasari, Irham, and Mulyo, 2019; Wongleedee, 2015). Traditional markets can also function as public spaces, promoting community engagement and fostering social interaction to share information and gossip (Grant, 2021; Aliyah, Setioko, and Pradoto, 2017; Mele, Ng, and Chim, 2014). This indicates that more people would visit traditional markets if merchants could provide services that satisfy them (Wongleedee, 2015).

## Methodology

This study aimed to understand the function of traditional markets in Indonesia by investigating how Indonesian people make decisions when choosing to visit traditional markets and their activities in traditional markets. Due the study being conducted during the COVID-19 pandemic, the data were collected through an online survey. The study was carried out in September 2020, employing a non-probability sampling technique for the purpose of quantitative data gathering. Given that the number of patrons that visit traditional markets in Indonesia cannot be calculated, the sample size calculation was done for an infinite population (Lwanga and Lemeshow, 1991). This study aimed to estimate the population proportion in the data sample, with an expected value of 30%, a confidence level of 95%, and a desired margin of error of 4%.

$$n = \frac{Z^2 \times P^{\wedge} \times (1 - P)}{d^2} = \frac{(1.96)^2 \times 0.30 \times (1 - 0.30)}{(0.04)^2} = 504.3$$

where **n** is the required sample size and **Z** is the Z-score corresponding to the desired confidence level, which is 1.96 for a confidence level of 95%,  $P^{\wedge}$  is the anticipated population proportion, and **d** is the desired margin of error. As such, it was determined that a sample size of 504 would be sought.

As for the aspects that require investigation: 1) factors that influence individuals' decisions to shop at traditional markets; 2) activities performed at traditional markets; and 3) visiting patterns, including average monthly visits and duration of shopping time. We intentionally left some of the questions open-ended, including the activities people engaged in while shopping at traditional markets and the reasons behind their visits. Respondents had to fill out a self-identifying demographic questionnaire.

The survey yielded 528 responses, of which we verified 506 for potential use in the research. This study aimed to explore the decision-making process of shoppers rather than predict it. As a result, most of the questions were open-ended, primarily leading to categorical data without inherent numerical values or rankings. We analyzed all responses using descriptive analysis. Specifically, we employed cross-tabulation and chi-square tests to investigate significant associations or differences between categorical groups, particularly focusing on visit frequency categories at traditional markets. The authors distributed the questionnaire through links on their social media channels, ensuring its accessibility primarily to individuals who possess internet connectivity. We limited respondents to a single questionnaire completion, authenticating their responses with the confirmation of their email and phone number.

## Results

### *Demographics Data Sample*

The findings of the demographics study are shown below. Men made up 56.1% of the respondents, while women made up the rest. There was a modest variation in response rates between respondents over 45 years old (37.0%) and those between 25 and 45 years old (36.8%). These two age groups accounted for the majority of our responses. Meanwhile, 26.3% of those who responded were under the age of 25 (see Table 1).

**Table 1.** Respondents' Socio-Demography (N = 506)

Variable	Category	%
Gender	Male	56.1%
	Female	43.9%
Age	Under 25 years old	26.28%
	Between 25 and 45 years old	36.76%
	Over 45 years old	36.96%
Location	Bali and East Timor	72.4%
	Java	22.6%
	Others	5.0%

The majority of male respondents in this research is an unusual finding compared to typical patterns in similar studies. The male percentage is considerably higher in comparison to Lu and Carter's study in Michigan (2024), which indicated that over 76.7% of online respondents were female. Similar findings were reported in the study by Smith and Millar (2011).

The respondents' locations of residence are relevant to our sample, with 72.4% originating from Bali and Nusa Tenggara, while 27.6% came from Java or other islands in Indonesia. According to Segara's research (2019), the patriarchal society is still ingrained in Bali, therefore males are house determinants. Our sample revealed that 73.72% of the respondents were above the age of 25, which is noteworthy because this age group is typically tasked with shopping for fresh food.

#### *Visiting Patterns at Traditional Markets*

In the survey we asked people about their visiting patterns at traditional markets, including frequency of visits per month and time spent while at traditional markets. According to the findings, 39.2% of respondents visited the traditional market between 2 and 4 times a month. The percentages of respondents who said they went one time a month and more than four times a month were similar, at 31.3% and 29.5%, respectively (see Table 2). According to a survey conducted in the Sunter-Jakarta traditional market, people went to the market 3 to 4 times per month to shop (Dhillon and Christin, 2017). This was assumed to be due to the fact that the freshness of vegetables and fruit lasts on average one week and most shoppers in urban areas shop for groceries on weekends (Widiyani, 2018).

Regarding duration spent at traditional markets, 53.5% of respondents spent between 30 minutes and 1 hour, while 39.8% of respondents spent less than 30 minutes. The results showed only 6.7% of respondents who spent more than an hour. Although some studies claimed that shoppers' experiences are related to the amount of time they spend when shopping, the findings were difficult to interpret, because none of the studies identified the exact time when categorizing shoppers' experiences. As a result, only the frequency of visits to traditional markets was used in the following analysis.

**Table 2.** Visiting Patterns at Traditional Markets (N = 506)

Items		Frequency
Frequency of visits to traditional markets per month	less than 2x	31.3%
	between 2x and 4x	39.2%
	more than 4x	29.5%
Duration spent at a traditional market	<30 minutes	39.8%
	between 30 minutes and 1 hour	53.5%
	>1 hour	6.7%

#### *Factors to Choose a Traditional Market*

Table 3 showed that price is one of the factors that influenced respondents' decisions to shop in traditional markets for over 42.6% of respondents. Similar studies found that price plays a role in how Indonesian shoppers choose between traditional markets (Najib and Sosianika, 2017; Ustriyana, Rantau, and Dewi, 2016). Traditional markets are preferred by 24.6% because of the diversity of products and 19.8% due to the freshness of the products. The factors sellers' service and cleanliness each have a low percentage of 3.9% and 1.6%, respectively. Over 7.5% of respondents choose a traditional market due to its setting environment, particularly one close to their house.

**Table 3.** Factors to Choose a Traditional Market (N = 506)

Factors	Frequency (%)
Low prices	42.6%
Variety of products	24.6%
Freshness of products	19.8%

Setting Environment	7.5%
Service	3.9%
Cleanliness	1.6%

It can be seen that when choosing a traditional market, price and product (variety and freshness) were taken into account, but service and ambient characteristics (in this case, cleanliness) were not. This demonstrates that the enjoyment of hospitality or atmosphere was not a factor in the decision to shop at traditional markets that provide cheap price.

#### *Activities at Traditional Markets*

Table 4 shows that 65.4% of respondents shopped for fresh food at traditional markets. The findings confirm the function of traditional markets, which serve people who require fresh products (Grant, 2021; Anku and Ahorbo, 2017; Najib and Sosianika, 2017; Maruyama and Wu, 2014; Suryadarma et al., 2010, 2007; Goldman, 2000; Goldman, Krider, and Ramaswami, 1999). In addition, respondents in traditional markets purchased monthly products as another activity (12%). Several activities had less than 10% of respondents participating in traditional markets, such as dining (6.8%), walking (4.4%), meeting friends or having social interaction (1.6%), and other activities not mentioned above (7.6%). Based on many surveys, it appears that our respondents were primarily from a local community, as they are more inclined than tourists to buy fresh goods (Dodds and Holmes, 2017).

**Table 4.** Activities at Traditional Markets (N =506)

Type of activities	Frequency (%)
Buying fresh products	72.7%
Buying monthly groceries	13.4%
Eating	7.5%
Sightseeing	4.9%
Socializing	1.6%

The majority of the respondents in this study were over 45 years old (36.96%). However, it can be seen from Table 4 that the respondents preferred to shop for products over activities that can be classified as recreational activities (eating, sightseeing, or social interaction). This finding contradicts several other studies, such as those by Wijayanti, Budihardjo, and Pandelaki (2012), who claim that traditional markets play a significant role in facilitating social interactions among parents and the elderly. Although it is somewhat challenging to explain, this is likely related to the survey methodology. Given that the survey was conducted online, most of the respondents were probably city dwellers with better internet access. The individualism prevalent in urban areas may have also influenced the results. Consequently, this study indicates that social interaction activities are low in traditional markets despite the majority of respondents being over 45 years old.

#### *Link between Frequency of Visits and Factors to Choose a Traditional Market*

Cross-tabulation and chi-square tests were used to examine the associations between frequency of visits categories and factors influencing the choice of a traditional market, including low prices, variety of products, freshness of products, kindly service, and cleanliness. As demonstrated in Table 5 the chi-square test revealed that factors such as low prices and cleanliness were significantly associated with how often respondents visit a traditional market ( $p$ -value  $\leq 0.05$ ). Among the entire sample, 46.1% indicated that those who had higher frequency of visits at traditional markets were more likely to consider low prices as a factor in choosing a traditional market ( $X^2 = 7.156$ ;  $P = 0.028$ ). On the other hand, while cleanliness did show a significant



association with frequency of visits, the response rate was notably low, at just 1.8%. In fact, over 96.6% of respondents regarded cleanliness as unimportant when considering their monthly frequency of visits (10.034;  $p = 0.007$ ).

**Table 5.** Frequency of Visits related to Factors to Choose a Traditional Market Crosstabulation (N = 506)

Factors to Choose a Traditional Market			<2 times per month	2 - 4 times per month	>4 times per month	Total of whole sample %	Pearson Chi-Square and Sig.
Low prices	No	% within frequency of visits per-month	33.8%	29.4%	20.3%	46.1%	7.156 $p = 0.028^{**}$
	Yes		66.2%	70.6%	79.7%		
Variety of products	No	% within frequency of visits per-month	63.7%	55.3%	56.8%	26.6%	2.739 $p = 0.254$
	Yes		36.3%	44.7%	43.2%		
Freshness of products	No	% within frequency of visits per-month	73.2%	63.5%	63.5%	21.4%	4.626 $p = 0.099$
	Yes		26.8%	36.5%	36.5%		
Kindly service	No	% within frequency of visits per-month	97.5%	93.9%	88.5%	4.2%	0.269 $p = 0.874$
	Yes		2.5%	6.1%	11.5%		
Cleanliness	No	% within frequency of visits per-month	97.5%	97.5%	96.6%	1.8%	10.034 $p = 0.007^{**}$
	Yes		2.5%	2.5%	3.4%		

\* $p$ -value  $\leq 0.05$ , \*\*

#### *Link between Frequency of Visits and Activities at Traditional Markets*

This study applied cross-tabulation and chi-square tests to explore the significant associations between frequency of visits categories and various activities at traditional markets, including buying fresh products, buying monthly groceries, eating, sightseeing, and socializing. Table 6 shows that two activities at traditional markets, namely buying fresh food and sightseeing, were significantly associated with how often respondents visit the traditional markets ( $p$ -value  $\leq 0.05$ ). About 72.7% of the entire sample showed that respondents who visited traditional markets more frequently per month were more likely to buy fresh food ( $X^2 = 8.039$ ;  $P = 0.018$ ). This suggests that a higher frequency of visits at traditional markets is associated with an increased likelihood

of buying fresh products. In contrast, although representing only 4.9% of the total sample, the chi-square test revealed a significant association between the frequency of visits to traditional markets and the activity of sightseeing ( $X^2 = 7.550$ ;  $P = 0.023$ ). Over 9.6% of respondents who visited traditional markets less than 2 times per month were more inclined to participate in sightseeing. This implies that as the frequency of visits to traditional markets increased, the likelihood of engaging in sightseeing decreased. Furthermore, respondents who visited traditional markets less than twice per month showed a stronger association with sightseeing compared to those who visited more often.

**Table 6.** Frequency of Visits related to Activities at Traditional Markets Crosstabulation (N = 506)

Activities at Traditional markets			<2 times per month	2 - 4 times per month	>4 times per month	Total of whole sample %	Pearson Chi-Square and Sig.
Buying fresh products	No	% within frequency of visits per-month	13.4%	10.2%	4.1%	72.7%	8.039 $p = 0.018^*$
	Yes		86.6%	89.8%	95.9%		
Buying monthly groceries	No	% within frequency of visits per-month	84.1%	84.3%	81.1%	13.4%	0.722 $p = 0.697$
	Yes		15.9%	15.7%	18.9%		
Eating	No	% within frequency of visits per-month	91.7%	92.9%	87.2%	7.5%	3.549 $p = 0.170$
	Yes		8.3%	7.1%	12.8%		
Sightseeing	No	% within frequency of visits per-month	90.4%	93.4%	98.0%	4.9%	7.550 $p = 0.023^*$
	Yes		9.6%	6.6%	2.0%		
Socializing	No	% within frequency of visits per-month	97.5%	98.5%	98.0%	1.6%	0.471 $p = 0.790$
	Yes		2.5%	1.5%	2.0%		

\* $p$ -value  $\leq 0.05$

## Discussion

This study revealed that male respondents made up the majority of participants. According to findings from Lu and Carter (2024), which focused on Michigan, USA, female respondents ranked freshness as the most important factor when purchasing food, followed by price. These results indicate that gender may influence preferences regarding the reasons for choosing a traditional market.

The investigation began by looking at the rationale behind the categories of customers who frequent traditional markets in Indonesia. The data suggest that the frequency of visits is significantly associated with price over other factors when selecting a traditional market. Furthermore, the more frequently shoppers visited traditional markets, the more likely they were to consider low prices as a significant factor. Although this finding is consistent with research on Asian customers who prioritize price (Huang, Tsai, and Chen, 2015; Ackerman and Tellis, 2001) and are inclined towards low-priced products, including special offers and discount rates (Huang, Tsai, and Chen, 2015). The results indicate that the more frequently shoppers visit markets, the smaller their attention to cleanliness. This is in line with the study by Huang, Tsai, and Chen (2015), in which long-term frequent Taiwanese customers paid less attention to the effects of ambience. It is also in line with research on Asian traditional market shoppers, who placed less important on the physical environment (Huang, Tsai, and Chen, 2015; Maruyama and Wu, 2014). The outcome validates research that found traditional market customers to be more practical and concentrate only on the essential services (Dodds and Holmes, 2017).

The results indicated a positive association between the frequency of shoppers' visits to traditional markets and their likelihood of purchasing fresh produce. The results showed that shoppers who often visited traditional markets tended to engage with the local community rather than behaving like tourists. This discovery aligns with the main function of traditional markets, which is to provide the local community with fresh produce (Thompson, 2020; Dodds and Holmes, 2017). Meanwhile, a minority of respondents frequent traditional marketplaces for sightseeing purposes; individuals who visit these markets are less often more inclined to engage in this activity. In other words, individuals who frequently visit traditional markets are less inclined to engage in sightseeing activities. Consequently, tourists who mostly have a lower frequency of visits to traditional markets may demonstrate a similar likelihood. Thompson's (2020) study revealed that tourists visit traditional markets rarely but nevertheless find pleasure in the experience.

## **Conclusion**

For Indonesian customers who frequent traditional markets more than four times per month, factors such as low prices and a disregard for cleanliness influence their decision to visit. Indonesian customers who frequent traditional markets regularly—more than four times per month—are associated with buying fresh products as their activity. The results identified a limited number of customers who visited traditional markets less than twice a month and casually engaged in sightseeing at the markets. The findings suggest that the characteristics of customers who frequently visit traditional markets in Indonesia tend to be utilitarian shoppers. Therefore, when designing a traditional market, stakeholders such as policymakers, architects, and planners should take into account the primary function of traditional markets as a place to purchase and sell fresh or basic food items that are essential for daily consumption. This implies that while traditional markets may offer valuable traditional aspects that draw tourists, it is crucial to consider the utilitarian preferences of those who frequent them. Local customers who frequent farmers' markets in Canada are individuals who live nearby (Dodds and Holmes, 2017); therefore, the location of farmers' markets should take into account proximity and daily life patterns (Spilková, Fendrychová, and Syrovátková, 2013). As the existence of traditional markets contributes to rapid site development, this suggests that repositioning traditional markets to focus on tourism could drastically affect the site's environment (Suganda, Atmodiwirjo, and Yatmo, 2009). Furthermore, the willingness of traditional markets to cater to tourists implies that local community behavior should still be considered in the operation. According to Thompson (2020) and Dodds and Holmes (2017), the primary role of traditional markets that cater to tourists is still to serve the local community. Finally, this study suggests the strategic placement of traditional

markets in close proximity to residential areas aligning with the policies on urban planning and development.

### Limitations

This study had a relatively high number of male respondents, which was due to the region where the data was collected, which may have led to more pronounced differences in preferences related to gender. Future studies should strive for a more balanced geographic and gender distribution to better capture the diversity of perspectives across Indonesia. The reliance on an online approach may result in weaker findings due to the inherent limitations of online data collection. Respondents were restricted to individuals with internet access, most likely those within the author's social circle, who primarily reside in urban areas. Furthermore, this study may exhibit bias, especially given that questions primarily focus on the respondents' memories of their shopping experiences. The findings are more general than their operations in traditional markets. To minimize bias, it is preferable to simultaneously distribute an offline approach such as questionnaires or interviews after the people finish shopping at a market. Additionally, including information about the distance from their living location to traditional markets could further enhance the understanding of the role of traditional markets in urban settings.

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