
**INFLUENCES OF CONSUMER CHOICES TOWARDS WET
MARKETS AMONG CONSUMERS AT GENERAL TINIO
(PAPAYA), NUEVA ECIJA**

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ABSTRACT

This study examined the Influences of Consumer Choices Among Wet Markets in Bago General Tinio (Papaya), Nueva Ecija to determine the factors affecting the purchasing decisions of consumers. Descriptive-correlational research design was utilized, and data were gathered from 83 respondents through survey questionnaires. The results revealed that the majority of the consumers are adults, predominantly female with 78.31%, and belong to average-sized households 56.63%. Price obtaining a pooled mean of 4.39, where the statement “The ability to bargain (tawad) with vendors makes me prefer buying in wet markets” got the highest mean of 4.47. Product Quality also obtained a pooled mean of 4.39, and the statement “Visual appeal and quality assurance of goods make wet markets my preferred choice” registered the highest mean of 4.49. Market Accessibility obtained a pooled mean of 4.26, with “Reduced travel time and cost to reach the market influences my shopping habits” at 4.33, while Convenience garnered a pooled mean of 4.38, and “Extended operating hours allow me to shop at my preferred time” received the highest mean of 4.43. Furthermore, the Vendor-Consumer Relationship obtained the highest pooled mean of 4.45, with “The suki system (loyal customer discounts) builds my trust and loyalty” having the highest mean score of 4.58. Correlation analysis showed that demographic variables such as age and household size were found to have significant relationships with consumer preferences, proving that consumer choices are primarily driven by economic factors, practicality, product quality, accessibility, convenience, and the strong personal relationship

between buyers and sellers. Thus, it is recommended that market administrators and vendors maintain competitive pricing, improve sanitation, and preserve the traditional practice of negotiation to sustain patronage.

KEYWORDS: Consumer Behavior, Wet Markets, Price, Product Quality, Convenience, Accessibility,

1. INTRODUCTION

The traditional wet market, commonly known as “palengke”, remains a vital part of the daily lives of Filipinos. It serves not only as a place for trading goods but also as a center for social interaction and community bonding. In the province of Nueva Ecija, known as the “Rice Granary of the Philippines,” wet markets play a crucial role in connecting local farmers and producers directly to the consumers. Many consumers find it difficult to choose which products to buy due to the wide variety of options and inconsistent or similar prices. They often prefer purchasing from vendors they trust to ensure good quality and fresh products. Furthermore, many are encouraged to shop at wet markets because of the lower prices and excellent quality of goods available. Although the current situation in the wet market of Bago General Tinio is generally good, consumers still face several challenges whenever they shop. Common issues involve the pricing and the overall environment of the market. Frequent complaints include bad smell, heavy traffic, sudden increases in prices, and slippery or dirty floors. Despite the rise of modern supermarkets and grocery chains, consumers in Bago General Tinio, Nueva Ecija continue to rely heavily on traditional wet markets (palengke) as their primary source of food and daily necessities. However, while consumers value the freshness of products, affordability, and the personal relationship with vendors, they still encounter various challenges and concerns in the market environment. These include issues regarding inconsistent pricing, difficulties in ensuring consistent product quality, problems with market facilities and layout, and other factors that affect their overall shopping experience. Although numerous studies have already been conducted regarding the benefits of wet markets in the Philippines, there is still limited data specifically focusing on Bago General Tinio (Papaya), Nueva Ecija. Studies further indicate that freshness, sensory quality, and product attributes are major determinants of food choice, reinforcing consumer preference for traditional wet markets. Singh and Kumar (2021) [1], food safety, hygiene standards, and cleanliness are among the primary considerations of consumers when choosing where to buy their daily food supplies. According to Hofman and Trevenen-Jones (2024) [2],

wet markets serve as crucial food environments that provide convenient access to fresh produce like fruits and vegetables, especially in urban and per-urban areas, making them vital for food security and nutrition. According to Diaz, R. A. (2025)[3] Pricing in agricultural markets is heavily influenced by quality segmentation and regional variations, which means consumers are highly selective and sensitive to how price matches the standard of products they buy. Quijano, et al., (2021) [4] People have their own unique personalities, characteristics, values, preferences and attitudes that set them apart from other individuals. Cheng et al., (2024) [5] emphasized that health concerns, perceived value, and ease of access significantly influence food purchasing decisions, suggesting that consumers tend to choose markets that are both accessible and beneficial to their well-being. Mosikyan et al., (2024) [6] found that consumer attitudes, trust, and perceived safety significantly influence food purchase decisions, particularly in fresh food environments. Similarly, Paulino et al., (2025) [7] emphasized that food safety practices and hygiene directly affect consumer trust and willingness to purchase in wet markets, showing that proper sanitation and vendor behavior are essential in maintaining consumer confidence. In addition, Salume et al., (2025) [8] found that consumer behavior is influenced by habits, awareness, and economic considerations, showing that both psychological and financial factors affect food purchasing decisions. Furthermore, psychological and behavioral factors also contribute to consumer decision-making. Dizon et al., (2022) [9] found that consumers in developing countries, including the Philippines, prioritize freshness, price, and convenience when purchasing food products, making wet markets a preferred choice over modern retail stores. Moreover, consumer attitudes toward food are also shaped by health consciousness and environmental concerns, which affect their preferences and purchasing behavior Parvez et al., (2022) [10]. Wet markets continue to play an important role in consumer food purchasing behavior due to their social, cultural, and economic relevance Ha et al., (2022) [11]. Price remains one of the most dominant factors influencing consumer purchasing decisions, especially in traditional markets where consumers are generally price-sensitive and seek value for money Hassen et al., (2025) [12]. Consumer decision-making in food markets is influenced by a combination of economic factors, personal preferences, and environmental conditions within the market area Azhari & Sjah, (2025) [13].

2. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study utilized a descriptive - correlational research design combined with a mixed-method approach, utilizing qualitative support to systematically investigate

the factors influencing consumer choices regarding wet markets. The investigation was conducted across Bago General Tinio (Papaya), Municipality in the province of Nueva Ecija. Characterized by a predominantly agricultural economy, the municipality relies heavily on the production of rice, vegetables, poultry, and livestock as primary sources of livelihood. The accessibility of fresh and affordable goods, supported by the presence of local trading centers and improved farm-to-market infrastructure, contributes to active consumer participation in wet market activities. Given these conditions, Bago General Tinio (Papaya), Nueva Ecija provides appropriate and relevant setting for examining the factors influencing consumer choices toward wet markets.

The study's respondents consisted of 83 individuals and consumers who actively patronize the public wet market in the municipality of Bago General Tinio (Papaya), Nueva Ecija selected through combination of purposive sampling and simple random sampling. Purposive sampling was first applied to identify individuals who actively make food purchasing decisions for their households and have experience shopping at the Bago General Tinio wet market. The researchers used the total enumeration (census) method that is including all consumers of wet markets to make sure the sample is representative and that every consumers has an equal opportunity of selection, purposive sampling was used. Accordingly, each respondent in the population was given a unique number, and then 83 numbers were randomly picked.

The study followed ethical standards, ensuring voluntary participation and informed consent. In compliance with Republic Act No. 10173, or the Data Privacy Act of 2012, all personal information remained confidential to guarantee anonymity. Data collection was conducted using a comprehensive research instrument designed to gather quantitative and qualitative data. It utilized checklists, Likert scales, ranking scales, and open-ended questions to effectively assess the variables under study. The instrument was validated by experts, resulting in an excellent overall rating, and was proven reliable with a Cronbach's Alpha of 0.90, ensuring consistency and accuracy. The study examined the respondents' demographic profiles and market factors such as price, product quality, freshness, variety, organic options, accessibility, convenience, and vendor-consumer relationships, utilizing the following scale description: 5- strongly agree, 4- agree, 3- neutral, 2- disagree, and 1- strongly disagree. The validity of the instrument was assessed by three experts, yielding a pooled mean score of 4.52, interpreted as "Very Valid".

For data analysis, the researcher utilized Microsoft Excel and Jamovi statistical tools. Specific techniques included frequency and percentage for demographic descriptions, weighted mean for perception levels, and the Pearson Product-Moment Correlation Coefficient was applied to assessed the positive and significant relationship between market factors such as price, product quality, freshness, variety, organic options, accessibility, convenience, and vendor-consumer relationships and consumer choices, while thematic analysis was used to categorize qualitative responses and recommendation.

3. RESULTS

Part I. Demographic Profile

The result of the data collection are presented in this chapter along with a through analysis of the study's conclusion.

Table 1. Demographic Profile of Respondents.

Age	Frequency	Percentage
17 years old	5	6.02%
18-24 years old	18	21.69%
25-30 years old	19	22.90%
31 years old and above	41	49.40%
TOTAL	83	100%

Source: Field Survey 2026

Table 1 illustrate the age distribution of respondents. Majority of the respondents belong to the age bracket of 31 years old and above, achieve the highest frequency of 41 or 49.40% of the total population. Followed by the age group 25-30 years old with 19 respondents or 22.90%, and 18-24 years old with 18 respondents or 21.69%. The age group 17 years old has the least number of participants with only 5 respondents, equivalent to 6.02%.

Table 2. Gender of Respondents.

Gender	Frequency	Percentage
Male	18	21.69%
Female	65	78.31%
TOTAL	83	100%

Source: Field Survey 2026

Table 2 the distribution of respondents according to gender. The data shows that out of the total 83 respondents, the majority of respondents are female with 78.31% of the total population and 21.69% male.

Table 3. Monthly Income of Respondents.

Monthly Income	Frequency	Percentage
Below Php 1,000	5	6.03%
Php 1,000 - Php 2,999	26	31.32%
Php 3,000 – Php 4,999	24	28.92%
Above Php 5,000	28	33.73%
TOTAL	83	100%

Source: Field Survey 2026

Table 3 illustrates the distribution of respondents based on their monthly household income. The data shows that the largest group belongs to the bracket Above Php 5,000, comprising 28 respondents or 33.73%. This is closely followed by the income range Php 1,000 – Php 2,999 with 26 respondents or 31.32%, and Php 3,000 – Php 4,999 with 24 respondents or 28.92%. The least number of participants fall under Below Php 1,000, with only 5 respondents or 6.03%.

Table 4. Household size. (Numbers of members)

Numbers of members	Frequency	Percentage
1-3 members	21	25.30%
4-6 members	47	56.63%
7-9 members	13	15.66%
10 and above members	2	2.41%
TOTAL	83	100%

Source: Field Survey 2026

Table 4 presents the distribution of respondents according to their household size. The data reveals that the majority of the participants belong to families with 4 to 6 members, comprising 47 respondents or 56.63% of the total. Followed by households with 1 to 3 members with 25.30%, and those with 7 to 9 members at 15.66%. The smallest group consists of families with 10 members and above, with 2.41%.

Part II. Factors Influences Consumers to Purchase Wet Markets

Table 5. Price (Affordability and Bargaining/Tawad)

Statement	Mean	SD	Verbal Interpretation
The affordability of product prices compared to supermarkets strongly influences my purchase decision.	4.43	0.89	Strongly Agree
The ability to bargain (tawad) with vendors makes me prefer buying in wet markets.	4.47	0.87	Strongly Agree
Lower overall prices in wet markets encourage me to shop there regularly.	4.40	0.87	Strongly Agree

Price promotions or discounts offered by vendors affect my buying choices.	4.37	0.69	Strongly Agree
Competitive pricing relative to other markets influences my loyalty to wet markets.	4.28	0.87	Strongly Agree
POOLED MEAN	4.39	0.84	Strongly Agree

Source: Field Survey 2026

Table 5 presents the assessment of respondents regarding the factor of Price, specifically on affordability and bargaining. The data reveals that all items obtained high mean scores ranging from 4.28 to 4.47, which are verbally interpreted as Strongly Agree. Specifically, the statement "The ability to bargain (tawad) with vendors makes me prefer buying in wet markets" garnered the highest mean of 4.47. This is closely followed by "The affordability of product prices compared to supermarkets strongly influences my purchase decision" with 4.43, and "Lower overall prices in wet markets encourage me to shop there regularly" with 4.40. Overall, the factor obtained a Pooled Mean of 4.39, interpreted as Strongly Agree.

Table 6. Product Quality (Freshness, Variety, and Organic Options)

Statement	Mean	SD	Verbal Interpretation
The freshness of products (e.g., vegetables, meat, fish) is a major reason I buy in wet markets.	4.46	0.72	Strongly Agree
The wide variety of products available influences my purchase decisions.	4.43	0.70	Strongly Agree
Availability of organic or naturally grown options encourages me to shop here.	4.33	0.72	Strongly Agree
Consistent product quality from trusted vendors sways my buying behavior.	4.31	0.78	Strongly Agree
Visual appeal and quality assurance of goods make wet markets my preferred choice.	4.49	0.69	Strongly Agree
POOLED MEAN	4.39	0.72	Strongly Agree

Source: Field Survey 2026

Table 6 presents the respondents' assessment regarding Product Quality, focusing on freshness, variety, and organic options. The data shows that all statements obtained high mean scores ranging from 4.31 to 4.49, which are verbally interpreted as Strongly Agree. Specifically, the statement "Visual appeal and quality assurance of goods make wet markets my preferred choice" obtained the highest mean of 4.49. This is followed by "The freshness of products is a major reason I buy in wet markets" with 4.46, and "The wide variety of products available influences my purchase decisions" with 4.43. Overall, the factor garnered a Pooled Mean of 4.39, interpreted as Strongly Agree.

Table 7. Market Accessibility (Proximity and Ease of Transportation).

Statement	Mean	SD	Verbal Interpretation
The proximity of the wet market to my home strongly influences where I shop.	4.19	0.86	Agree
Easy access via public transportation or walking makes me choose wet markets.	4.29	0.82	Strongly Agree
Availability of parking or drop-off areas affects my decision to visit.	4.19	0.88	Agree
Convenient location relative to my daily route encourages frequent purchases.	4.31	0.85	Strongly Agree
Reduced travel time and cost to reach the market influences my shopping habits.	4.33	0.91	Strongly Agree
POOLED MEAN	4.26	0.86	Strongly Agree

Source: Field Survey 2026

Table 7 presents the respondents' assessment regarding Market Accessibility, focusing on proximity and ease of transportation. The data reveals that all statements obtained high mean scores ranging from 4.19 to 4.33, interpreted as Agree to Strongly Agree. Specifically, the statement "Reduced travel time and cost to reach the market influences my shopping habits" obtained the highest mean of 4.33. This is followed by "Convenient location relative to my daily route encourages frequent purchases" with 4.31, and "Easy access via public transportation or walking makes me choose wet markets" with 4.29. Overall, the factor garnered a Pooled Mean of 4.26, verbally interpreted as Strongly Agree.

Table 8. Convenience (Operating Hours and Stall Layout)

Statement	Mean	SD	Verbal Interpretation
Extended operating hours allow me to shop at my preferred time.	4.43	0.77	Strongly Agree
Well-organized stall layout and easy navigation make shopping more convenient.	4.33	0.83	Strongly Agree
Quick checkout and minimal waiting times influence my purchases.	4.37	0.84	Strongly Agree
Availability of facilities like seating or resting areas enhances my experience.	4.35	0.86	Strongly Agree
Flexible shopping times without strict closing hours sways my decision.	4.41	0.77	Strongly Agree
POOLED MEAN	4.38	0.81	Strongly Agree

Source: Field Survey 2026

Table 8 presents the respondents' assessment regarding Convenience, focusing on operating hours and stall layout. The data shows that all statements obtained very high mean scores

ranging from 4.33 to 4.43, which are verbally interpreted as Strongly Agree. Specifically, the statement "Extended operating hours allow me to shop at my preferred time" garnered the highest mean of 4.43. This is closely followed by "Quick checkout and minimal waiting times influence my purchases" with 4.37, and "Availability of facilities like seating or resting areas enhances my experience" with 4.35. Overall, the factor obtained a Pooled Mean of 4.38, interpreted as Strongly Agree.

Table 9. Vendor-Consumer Relationship. (Suki System, Trust, and Personalized Service)

Statement	Mean	SD	Verbal Interpretation
The suki system (loyal customer discounts) builds my trust and loyalty.	4.58	0.59	Strongly Agree
Personalized service from familiar vendors influences my repeat purchases.	4.41	0.72	Strongly Agree
Trust in vendors' honesty regarding product quality affects my decisions.	4.48	0.74	Strongly Agree
Friendly interactions and recommendations from vendors encourage buying.	4.41	0.68	Strongly Agree
Long-term relationships with vendors make wet markets my go-to option.	4.35	0.83	Strongly Agree
POOLED MEAN	4.45	0.71	Strongly Agree

Source: Field Survey 2026

Table 9 presents the respondents' assessment regarding the Vendor-Consumer Relationship, focusing on the suki system, trust, and personalized service. The data reveals that all statements obtained very high mean scores ranging from 4.35 to 4.58, which are verbally interpreted as Strongly Agree. Specifically, the statement "The suki system (loyal customer discounts) builds my trust and loyalty" garnered the highest mean of 4.58. This is closely followed by "Trust in vendors' honesty regarding product quality affects my decisions" with 4.48, and "Long-term relationships with vendors make wet markets my go-to option" with 4.35. Overall, the factor obtained a Pooled Mean of 4.45, interpreted as Strongly Agree.

Open Ended Result

The findings revealed that consumers encounter various challenges when shopping in wet markets, primarily related to environmental conditions, pricing, and product quality. the biggest problems they face when shopping in wet markets, the respondents said that the place

is often very crowded, hot, and smelly. The walkways are also dirty and slippery, and sometimes the lighting is not good. They also mentioned that prices go up suddenly and are not the same everywhere, which makes it hard to budget their money. Another concern is that the quality of products is not always good, and there is a risk of buying items that are already spoiled or damaged. Other issues include difficulty in haggling for prices, lack of parking space, and feeling unsafe especially when it rains. These differences in price and quality greatly affect how they decide what to buy. Most of them said that changing prices mess up their budget and make it hard to plan their expenses. Because of this, they often feel confused and think twice before buying something. Some even lose trust in the sellers and choose to look for other places to buy goods instead. To feel safe and comfortable while shopping, the respondents said they want the market to be clean, organized, and well-lit. They also prefer prices that are fair and not too expensive, and they want to be sure that the products are fresh and good quality. They feel more secure if there are guards around, if they shop where there are many people, and if they are always careful. Having a good relationship with honest sellers also makes them trust the market more.

Table 10. Correlational Matrix.

Age Gender MHI HS Price Product MA CNVCE
quality

Age	Pearson's r	—								
	df	—								
	p-value	—								
Gender	Pearson's r	0.079	—							
	df	81	—							
	p-value	0.476	—							
MHI	Pearson's r	0.189	-0.048	—						
	df	81	81	—						
	p-value	0.088	0.670	—						
Household size	Pearson's r	-0.113	-0.045	0.158	—					
	df	81	81	81	—					
	p-value	0.311	0.684	0.154	—					
Price	Pearson's r	0.258*	0.147	0.144	-0.017	—				
	df	81	81	81	81	—				
	p-value	0.019	0.184	0.195	0.876	—				
Product	Pearson's r	0.313**	0.147	0.043	-0.091	0.588***	—			

Quality	r								
	df	81	81	81	81	81	—		
	p-value	0.004	0.184	0.696	0.412	<.001	—		
Market Accessibility	Pearson's r	0.197	0.014	0.008	-0.170	0.595***	0.576***	—	
	df	81	81	81	81	81	81	—	
	p-value	0.074	0.899	0.940	0.126	<.001	<.001	—	
Convenience	Pearson's r	0.223*	-0.019	0.078	-0.221*	0.616***	0.598***	0.733***	—
	df	81	81	81	81	81	81	81	—
	p-value	0.042	0.864	0.481	0.044	<.001	<.001	<.001	—
VC Relationship	Pearson's r	0.011	-0.065	0.003	-0.130	0.542***	0.612***	0.670***	0.724***
	df	81	81	81	81	81	81	81	81
	p-value	0.923	0.557	0.979	0.241	<.001	<.001	<.001	<.001

Source: Jamovi 2.7.12

Table 10 presents the result of the correlation analysis between the respondents' demographic profile and the factors influencing their purchase decisions. The findings reveal that Age has a significant relationship with Price ($r = 0.258$, $p = 0.019$), Product Quality ($r = 0.313$, $p = 0.004$), and Convenience ($r = 0.223$, $p = 0.042$), indicating that the age of consumers influences their perception of these factors. Additionally, Household Size shows a significant relationship with Convenience ($r = -0.221$, $p = 0.044$), suggesting that as the number of family members increases, the priority for convenience changes. However, Gender and Monthly Household Income obtained p-values greater than the 0.05 level of significance, which means these variables do not significantly affect the consumers' decision-making process. Therefore, the null hypothesis stating that there is no significant relationship is partially rejected, implying that demographic characteristics, specifically age and household size, play a role in how consumers choose products in wet markets.

DISCUSSION

4.1 Demographic Profile

The demographic profile of the respondents reveals a clear concentration in the older age brackets, with the largest group comprising individuals aged 31 years and above, representing 49.40% of the total sample. This is followed by the 25–30 years old category at 22.90%, while the 18–24 years old group accounts for 21.69%. This means that most of the consumers who patronize the wet market in Bago General Tinio are adults and mature individuals who are likely responsible for household budgeting and grocery shopping. Their older age relative to others, indicates that they are more experienced and practical in making purchasing

decisions. Patel, S., & Kumar, A. (2022) [14] finds that different age groups have varying tendencies to participate and respond to surveys, with adults generally having higher response rates than younger individuals. The smallest proportion consists of 17-year-olds at 6.02%. Collectively, these figures indicate that the majority of participants are in their early adulthood and beyond, suggesting that the findings may be more representative of perspectives and experiences characteristic of mature individuals rather than younger populations. Kayani, Z., et al. (2025) [15] Identifies which demographic groups are most willing to take part in research. It supports the observation that mature individuals often show higher levels of cooperation, which contributed to the age distribution seen in the table.

4.2 Gender of Respondents

In many communities, including Bago General Tinio, women are traditionally the primary household decision-makers when it comes to food purchasing, grocery shopping, and selecting products from local markets. This clearly indicates that women are the primary buyers and are mostly responsible for purchasing food and household needs in the wet market. This is expected since, in most households, women are traditionally assigned the role of managing daily needs, budgeting, and preparing food for the family. Kanwal et al., (2021) [16] found that gender significantly influences consumer behavior, with women generally demonstrating higher engagement in shopping activities, stronger trust in products, and greater attention to service quality and product evaluation. Their higher participation rate in this study may reflect their greater involvement and familiarity with market activities, product selection, and purchasing behaviors. YouGov (2024) [17] reinforces this pattern, reporting that 56% of women are the sole grocery shoppers in their households, compared to 43% of men. The dominance of female respondents in the study also implies that the results may primarily reflect female perspectives, particularly in terms of purchasing priorities and decision-making processes. Studies have shown that women are more sensitive to factors such as nutritional value, product freshness, and affordability when making food choices. This aligns with the expectation that women, as primary household shoppers, develop more experience and awareness in evaluating products Dhuria, P., et al. (2021) [18].

4.3 Monthly Income of Respondents

The distribution indicates that the majority of respondents belong to the low-to-middle income class, with a slightly higher concentration in the upper income bracket which allows

them to regularly purchase goods in the wet market. Scholdra et al., (2021) [19] Income is widely recognized as a critical factor affecting consumption patterns. However, the relatively close percentages across the middle-income brackets imply that there is variation in economic capacity, which may influence differences in purchasing priorities and spending behavior. The respondents with higher income may prioritize quality and variety, while those with lower income prioritize affordability Morales et al., (2022) [20]. Additionally, Cheng et al., (2022) [21] income stability plays an important role in consumption behavior.

4.4 Household Size (Numbers of Members)

The data reveals that the majority of the participants belong to families with 4 to 6 members, comprising 56.63% of the total. This is followed by households with 1 to 3 members at 25.30%, and those with 7 to 9 members at 15.66%. The smallest group consists of families with 10 members and above at only 2.41%. This indicates that most consumers in Bago General Tinio come from average-sized families, suggesting that their purchasing needs and consumption patterns are generally balanced. In the context of consumer behavior in wet markets, household size plays a significant role in shaping purchasing patterns, as families with more members tend to buy larger quantities and prioritize affordability and value for money. Sawyer-Morris et al., (2021) [22] Research indicates that household composition affects not only the volume but also the type of goods purchased. Studies on farmers' markets show that variations in household size lead to differences in purchasing behavior and consumption levels, especially in fresh produce buying patterns.

4.5 Price (Affordability and Bargaining/Tawad)

The results show an overall pooled mean of 4.39, which means that the respondents Strongly Agree that price is a major consideration in their buying decisions. This clearly indicates that cost plays a very significant role in why consumers prefer wet markets instead of other stores. Notably, the item about the 'ability to bargain or tawad' got the highest score at 4.47, Domingo (2024) [23] explored the Philippine market practice of pagtawad (haggling), concluding that it is no longer just a cultural custom but a vital sociopolitical and economic coping mechanism for buyers navigating high inflation and tight family budgets. Proving that this cultural practice is a big factor and a special feature that people look for in traditional markets. This confirms that practicality and budget are the top priorities of the consumers in this area. Barrett, C. B., et al., (2022) [24] Analyzes why traditional channels (wet markets) maintain price advantages over modern retail in developing economies. Monoarfa, T. A., et

al., (2024) [25] Discuss the "perceived value for money" that keeps consumers attached to traditional fresh-food formats over modern digital ones.

4.6 Product Quality (Freshness, Variety, and Organic Options)

The highest rating, at 4.49, was given to the statement regarding visual appeal and quality assurance. This indicates that shoppers place great importance on how products look, using visual signs like color and texture to assess freshness and safety. The fact that they can personally see, check, and choose fresh and good-looking products is the main advantage they see in wet markets compared to other shopping options Kusumawaty, D., et al. (2025) [26]. Many consumers perceive wet market produce as more "natural" and less processed compared to supermarket items. This perception aligns with growing health trends and influences preference for organic or naturally grown options. Since items in wet markets are usually displayed openly, customers can examine them directly, which increases their confidence and strengthens their preference for this type of shopping environment. As a result, freshness stands out not just as an important feature, but as one of the main reasons why consumers choose wet markets instead of other stores. According to Colozza, D., et al. (2025) [27] Consumers value wet markets for their wide assortment of products, including local and specialty items not easily found in modern retail. This variety directly influences purchase decisions. In informal markets, consumers often judge safety and quality through visual inspection and smell. These sensory checks are important decision-making factors, supporting the idea that visual appeal and quality assurance are key preferences Ali, M., et al. (2024) [28].

4.7 Market Accessibility (Proximity and Ease of Transportation)

The results clearly show that accessibility plays a huge role in why people choose to shop at wet markets, with an overall mean score of 4.26 indicating strong agreement. El Amrani and Jaouad (2026) [29] emphasize that "access proximity" the physical ease of reaching a store is one of the most significant factors in retail attractiveness. They note that consumers prioritize locations that minimize travel effort, especially for routine purchases. All items rated high, ranging from 4.19 to 4.33, showing that location and ease of travel are really important to consumers. In fact, the statement about saving time and money got the highest rating at 4.33, which means efficiency is the biggest factor driving their decisions. Ahmed, R., & Hasan, M. (2022) [30] Analyzed how financial costs associated with travel influence where people buy food. They concluded that lower transportation costs are a major deciding factor, especially for low-to-middle

income households. Aligns with highest mean score regarding travel time and cost influence. According to Verma et al. (2025) [31], geographic proximity is a primary determinant of consumer choice, particularly for grocery and daily necessities. Their study found that each additional store within a 0.5-mile radius increases the likelihood of walking by 23% for groceries, indicating that nearness to residence directly shapes shopping destination preferences.

4.8 Convenience (Operating Hours and Stall Layout)

These findings highlight that temporal flexibility is the most valued aspect of convenience, reflecting the respondents' need to align their shopping activities with personal schedules and lifestyle demands. Factors such as long operating hours, organized arrangement of stalls, fast service, and available amenities make their visit efficient and enjoyable, which greatly affects their decision to keep patronizing the market. According to Underhill, P. (2025) [32] Behavioral patterns like "the invariant right" show how layout influences movement. Meanwhile, aspects related to physical arrangement and service speed such as organized layout, quick checkout, and availability of resting areas also received very high ratings, demonstrating that spatial organization, efficiency, and comfort are equally critical in creating a satisfying shopping environment. Hinnosaar (2021) [33] found that flexible shopping hours significantly influence consumer behavior, allowing people to adjust their shopping schedules across time, space, and store types. Using quasi-experimental data, the study found that extending opening hours significantly increased purchases, demonstrating that temporal accessibility directly influences consumer behavior Avdic, D., & von Hinke, S. (2021) [34].

4.9 Vendor-Consumer Relationship (Suki System, Trust, and Personalized Service)

The findings show that the suki system is key to how buyers and sellers connect. Respondents strongly felt that giving discounts and special treatment to loyal customers really helps build trust and commitment. With the highest average score of 4.58, it's clear that both sides benefit from this setup turning simple purchases into lasting partnerships based on mutual gain. The Filipino culture of "suki" is deeply rooted, where trust, familiarity, and good treatment from vendors are just as important as the products being sold. Dynata (2024) [35] explains that people tend to trust and buy from those they like, with positive interactions increasing perceived value and credibility. Trust, personal attention, and friendly interaction are major

factors that influence what people decide to buy. Statements about trusting vendors to be honest about quality 4.48, how personalized service affects repeat visits 4.41, and how helpful advice and warm treatment encourage spending also 4.41 all got high approval. Baguilat et al., (2025) [36] emphasize that the suki system is deeply rooted in Filipino business culture, where reciprocal relationships are nurtured through consistent patronage and preferential treatment such as discounts and special privileges. Interpersonal dynamics play a significant role in consumer behavior.

4.10 Correlational Matrix

The findings of the study align with existing literature regarding consumer behavior in traditional markets. The fact that Gender and Income were not significant factors agrees with Mwambi, H. et al. (2025) [37], who stated that the need for fresh food is universal regardless of demographic background. The significant influence of Age supports the observation of Hassen et al. (2025) [38] that mature consumers are generally more value-conscious, prioritizing quality and affordability in their purchases. Similarly, the relationship between household size and convenience resonates with the findings of Azhari and Sjah (2025) [39], who noted that logistical concerns become more critical for larger families. Moreover, the strong interconnection between Price, Quality, and Accessibility confirms the claims of Sianturi et al. (2024) [40] that consumers perceive value as a combination of fair cost and good product standards. The high correlation between location and convenience further validates the study of Hofman and Trevenen-Jones (2024) [41], emphasizing that proximity is a major advantage of wet markets. Additionally, the strong link between Vendor-Consumer Relationship and other factors supports the assertion of Ortega and Tschirley (2023) [42] that social interaction and trust are vital in traditional trading. Finally, the overall importance placed on quality relates to the findings of Paulino et al. (2025) [43], highlighting that safety and hygiene remain top concerns for shoppers.

4.11 OPEN-ENDED QUESTION

The results show that consumers face multiple challenges when shopping in wet markets, ranging from environmental discomfort to economic and quality concerns. Oyewumi and Jooste (2024) [44] said that when prices go up, people usually buy less, especially meat and other expensive items. These factors directly influence their

purchasing behavior and overall satisfaction and to make people feel safe and happy while shopping, they want the market to be clean, bright, and organized in support of Bing Lin Ab et al., (2021) [45] emphasized that consumers are becoming more conscious and cautious regarding the conditions of the place where they buy their food and daily necessities, as they directly associate cleanliness and proper waste management with the safety and quality of the goods being sold. Zhang et al., (2025) [46] stated that not all wet markets are the same, so they should not be treated equally. They also want fair prices and good quality products. Singh et al. (2025) [47], who observed that many wet markets have poor sanitation, wet floors, and inadequate facilities which make shopping uncomfortable and risky. According to Setena (2022) [48], price is one of the most important things people look at before buying. If the price is too high or changes often, people will think twice or choose to buy cheaper things instead. World Health Organization (2021) [49] explained that dirty and crowded places can spread sickness easily, so it is very important to keep markets clean and well-managed. The quality of products is not always good. Sometimes people buy things that are already spoiled or not fresh. Paulino and Leitch (2025) [50] found that people are more likely to buy if they are sure the food is safe and good quality. If the quality is bad, they lose trust in the sellers and might go to other places like supermarkets instead. They explained that it is important to classify or group markets properly based on what they sell. According to them, markets that sell only fresh meat and vegetables are safe and necessary.

CONCLUSION

Based on the findings, the majority of consumers in Bago General Tinio are mature adults and middle-aged individuals, predominantly women, who are primarily responsible for household management and food purchasing. Their buying decisions are heavily influenced by Price, particularly the cultural practice of bargaining, followed closely by Product Quality and freshness, showing that they are highly practical and value-conscious consumers. Furthermore, Accessibility and Convenience are also vital factors, as the location and physical environment of the market greatly contribute to a satisfying shopping experience.

The study also established that demographic variables such as age and household size significantly affect consumer preferences, proving that behavior varies according to personal and family needs. Therefore, the success and relevance of wet

markets rely not only on the availability of goods but on the combination of reasonable pricing, assured quality, and the personal interaction that traditional trading offers features that modern retail alternatives cannot fully provide.

Recommendation

Based on the findings and conclusions of the study, the following recommendations are proposed to further improve customer satisfaction and sustain patronage in the wet markets of Bago General Tinio, Nueva Ecija:

Maintain competitive pricing and preserve the practice of bargaining. Vendors should keep prices reasonable and continue accommodating negotiations or "tawad," as this was identified as the top factor that attracts and retains customers.

Ensure consistent product quality and freshness. Strict attention must be given to the handling and display of goods, especially meat, fish, and vegetables, to guarantee that customers always get fresh and safe products worth their money.

Improve market facilities, cleanliness, and sanitation. Local authorities and market administrators should regularly maintain the area, improve drainage systems, and ensure proper waste disposal to provide a safe, comfortable, and odor-free shopping environment.

Strengthen good customer relations and service. Vendors are encouraged to maintain friendly interactions, approachability, and honesty, as the relationship between buyer and seller plays a vital role in customer loyalty.

Ensure transparency and fairness in weighing and measuring. Weighing scales should be regularly checked and calibrated to prevent under-weighing or cheating, which is essential in building and maintaining long-term trust.

Enhance accessibility and convenience within the market area. Walkways should be kept clear and well-organized, and stalls should be properly arranged to allow easy movement, especially for older adults and families carrying bulk purchases.

Display clear and visible price tags. Putting price labels on products helps customers decide faster and reduces confusion, further strengthening the perception of fairness and transparency.

Develop simple loyalty strategies. Vendors may maintain good relationships with "suki" or regular customers through consistent quality and service, as this creates a strong bond that encourages repeat purchases.

Conduct further studies in different locations. Future researchers are

recommended to conduct similar studies in other areas to compare results and explore other variables such as seasonal changes, product variety, and competition to have a broader understanding of consumer behavior.

These recommendations aim to assist vendors, market administrators, and the local government in enhancing the overall operations of the market, ensuring its continued relevance and success in serving the community.

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