

## **Institutional Adaptation of Fruit and Vegetables Market toward the Growing Middle Class Income in Indonesia**

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### **Abstract**

The fast-growing middle class in the global south encourages the market to adapt to changes in shopping behaviour. In Western countries, modern markets are growing rapidly since they provide quality goods which are the main concerns of the middle class. This study investigated the transformation of the fruit and vegetables market in large Indonesian cities through a phenomenological approach. We found that all kind of markets develop unique strategies to anticipate middle-class behaviour changing. The modern fruit and vegetables market adapted by taking advantage of the consumers' impulse to get consumer loyalties. The traditional market used operational time management to adapt to the work cycle of the middle class. Street vendors also did a grading for improving the quality of fruit and vegetables to maintain the demands of the middle class. This research found that the institutional changes in the fruit and vegetables market were not towards market modernization or increases in the use of supermarkets but it continue to grow side by side because they are able to adapt to the changes of the middle class's shopping patterns. Further research is needed to determine which market is best able to attract consumer loyalty amid the dynamic consumption patterns of the middle class income.

**Keywords:** *social practices, strategies, middle class, market, vegetables, consumer behaviour*

### **1. Introduction**

Research on middle class income consumption behaviour related to supermarket developments has been quite intensive in the last three decades, especially in Asia (Reardon et al., 2012). Some of research were focusing on the participation of smallholder farmers in this new supply chain is examined for both positive and negative impacts, as most food producers in Asia are small farmers (Davidson, 2015; Maspaitella et al., 2017; Rao & Qaim, 2011). In terms of demand, research is also conducted to examine consumer behaviour in consuming supermarket products including vegetables and fruit, as well as factors influencing the consumption of vegetables and fruit including income, ethnicity, social class, culture, age differences, place of origin-like rural and urban areas and even gender differences (Al Ani et al., 2016; Andreea, 2015; Rieth et al., 2012; Zenk et al., 2005). At the same time, research on how the other market adjusting middle class income consumption behaviour are still rarely.

Some researcher also focus on the relationship between ethnic identity and shopping behaviours in which age, gender, and socioeconomic status interacts with ethnic identities to produce variations in shopping patterns has also been studied (Hamlett et al., 2008; Papaoikonomou et al., 2016). Other research also explain consumer preferences on local, organic, and healthy foods (Iqbal, 2015; Nasir & Karakaya, 2014; Penney & Prior, 2014). The effect of social media on supermarket consumer behaviour is also studied in depth, including the effect of the internet (Gonzalez-Lafaysse & Lapassouse-Madrid, 2016). When it comes to price variables, location, proximity and food miles, it has been found that consumers' choices to shop at a local supermarket or stall is not caused by price or location, but rather by the quality of goods and practicality (Caspi et al., 2017). These researchers still have little concern for how the market certainly fruit and vegetables markets develop strategies to deal with changing behaviour of the middle class income. Therefore, this paper will specifically describe how market actors namely supermarket, street vendors, and traditional market create strategies in order to adjust the shopping patterns of the middle class from a sociological perspective; this study is expected to fill these gap.

## **2. Significance of the Study**

Changes in customer behaviour on the one hand can cause a decline in some markets if they cannot adapt to these changes, on the other hand it can strengthen markets, especially those that are able to adjust (Beckert, 2012; Beckert Jens, 2009; Purnomo et al., 2018). For example, although the number of supermarkets continues to grow along with the increase in the number of middle class families, it turns out the growth of vegetable and fruit marketing in modern markets and supermarkets has not increased significantly. This is in contrast to the customs of advanced countries, where middle-class growth is identical with increased sales of vegetables and fruits in supermarkets. In the case of Africa, there is a similar trend where the modernization of the value chain of fresh food products, including vegetables and fruit, is not accompanied by supermarket developments (Tschirley et al., 2010). This finding is different with the trend in the west, where families with higher per capita income were more likely to shop at supermarkets than at other grocers as these sellers are considered to assure higher quality, more diversity of goods to buy, and more accessibility (Zenk et al., 2005). Meanwhile, traditional vegetable markets still get middle class customers even though theoretically they should prefer to go to modern markets because modern markets are perceived as places for the middle class to shop (das Nair, 2018; Traill, 2006). At the same time in Indonesia, the middle class also continues to shop at street vendors, even though they are perceived as traders who only serve the lower class. Thus the growth of the middle class in Indonesia has different impacts on the existence of the market, both because of the different nature of the middle class itself and the ability of the market institutionally to adapt to the needs of the middle class.

## **3. Review of Related Studies**

In the beginning, social scientists assumed the main consideration consumers had in buying commodities was use-value or utilitarianism, where the more complete the information of certain goods, the more interested people were to buy it, of course, if other factors such as the financial ability to purchase the goods were met (Jonsson, 2011; Witt, 2016). Apparently, this is not entirely correct because each commodity has two aspects at once, i.e. situated and embodied, where the commodities are not only defined by their use, but also by what they signify (Eelen et al., 2013).

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Consumers are not machines—they actively construct meanings based on unique and shared cultural experiences, and thus there can be no single unified world-view. It implies that commodities always have something to do with the entire system of commodities and signs built from social situations where individuals are socialized (Pachauri, 2002). Post modernism theorists, such as Jean Baudrillard (1998), argue that a true analysis of the social logic of consumption would focus not on the individual appropriation of the use-value of goods and services, but rather on the production and manipulation of social signifiers (Baudrillard, 1998).

On the cultural side of consumption, McDonalization, globalization, creolization, and domestication, as well as glocalization have become significant concepts to illustrate how the culture of public consumption is directed by an impression of goods and culture inherent (Robertson, 1995; Turner, 2003; Thompson & Arsel, 2004, Ritzer, 2007, 2011, 2017). Beyond the definition of consumption as an assertion of identity and use-value, the approach emphasizes on the more complex social processes involving not only individual preferences but also cultural aspects as well as elements of power or politics in consumption including ethnicity. There are, however, also different trends in consumption culture, not just creole, or globalizing, or glocalization, but it also resists to the entry of new cultures (Grinshpun, 2014). Consumers, in addition to considering the usefulness of the goods or services they consume, also take into account the values embedded in the goods such as tax payer compliance, child labour or enslavement, gender sensitivity, and other ethical issues (Buchholz, 1998; Thompson & Arsel, 2004; Davies & Gutsche, 2016). In the next phase, commodity fetishism, adopted from Karl Mark also has gotten its place in the analysis because new commodities are symbolized as to have high values seemingly unreal through the development of media image (Shumway, 2000; Seo & Buchanan-Oliver, 2017). Issues concerning conspicuous leisure and consumption, cultural values, aestheticization, alienation, differentiation, and speed also burst with the increase of public awareness in consumption (Patsiaouras & Fitchett, 2012).

Furthermore, the choice of consumption has undergone a considerable transformation from aggregating the rational choices of individuals into a virtually undiluted good through which individuals not only choose because of needs and wants or “revealing preferences”, but also for social reasons including ethics as a result of a complex process of interaction such as preference for organic, fair trade, tradable food, environmentally friendly production, as well as other predicates attached to the product (Busch, 2016; Shinet al., 2018). Furthermore, consumption is a form of affirmation of the identity of both individuals and groups in which people will consume an item that reflects their identity as the traditional Veblen’s view reporting that people used luxury products as “badges” to reflect their status.

As social identity and position become an important aspect of consumption study, consumer behaviour also changes when needs become more specific, such as bars, cafes, coffee shops, and other forms, leading to consumption as a form of recreation and leisure. In addition, consumer connoisseurs also evolve along with consumer enthusiasm for certain goods or services such as coffee lovers, bus lovers, or train lovers, and others which can no longer be approached with the perspective of utilitarianism (Strong, 2011; Quintão et al., 2017). At the same time, (self-employment has become a trend) and offices are no longer the only place of work due to the development of information technology and the internet; thus, the consumption of goods and services becomes even more complex because it includes not only social identity or class but also routine (Warde, 2014,

2015). Therefore, Social Practice Theory (SPT) is an alternative means of understanding the complex dynamics between the elements that constitute the practice of buying vegetables and fruit by the Indonesian middle class.

To illustrate routine and repetitive activities such as the middle-class expenditure pattern of developing countries, a practical theory is more appropriate to use where regularity and repetition are central concepts to explain how habit, routine, and convention occur in social interaction (Jaeger-Erben & Offenberger, 2014). Routines are a part of social order socially shared where one consumes accordingly as a repetitive activity following generally accepted values (Vrettos, 2009). To elaborate, this theory provides space for daily activities, routines, and various other practical activities to be used as a benchmark of public consumption patterns (Warde, 2014). Routine and habit as the main components of the practice theory should consider the temporalities of consumption to avoid generalization of one's daily consumption activities (Southerton, 2013). Activities carried out by the middle class income such as vegetable shopping, recruiting household assistants, and planning the family menu (although they are not cooking themselves) bring such recursive effects in placing people in social space, for they express cultural capital and serve as assets in marriage and job markets.

Sociological consumption analysis should include the object of consumption or material aspects where routines and habits become the key. In addition, the assumption about sovereign actor is less relevant because the actor is basically the socially conditioned actor, a social self, embedded in normative and institutional contexts and considered a bearer of practices (Warde, 2015). The practice theory also emphasizes the materiality of everyday life, including the technology in which society today is very dependent on it. The diverse pattern of vegetable shopping practice(s), despite the enormous supermarket penetration, is not entirely unfirming the pattern of public spending (Wertheim-Heck & Spaargaren, 2016). This has led us to illustrate how middle-class spending behaviour and the social structure surrounding it has become the determining factor of stagnant growth of vegetable supermarkets by exploring the practice theory as an analytical tool.

Practice, furthermore, has three interrelated basic elements, i.e. material, meaning, and competence, where the consumer is an agent who actively makes choices, provides definitions of consumption routines, gives meaning to the goods they consume and makes sense of both the world and themselves (Warde, 2015). Materials concerning goods, objects, infrastructure, street vendors, consumers, as well as technology involved in the formation of performance, in which each component of the material will affect the routine and behaviour of consumers. The fact that consumers see vegetables and fruits sold by the street vendors as being fresher than the same product in the supermarket is one form of giving meaning to the goods that will determine the choice or performance. Meanwhile, competencies are the necessary knowledge and skills needed by the agent to be able to choose the right kind of vegetables, considering both the quality and the function, including the choice of which street vendors from whom they will buy fruits and vegetables.

## 4. Methods

### 4.1. Research Design

This research uses a qualitative approach with a phenomenological approach in order to reduce the individual experience of a phenomenon into a description that explains the universal essence of the phenomenon. What is the essence of the phenomenon of the Indonesian middle class vegetable and fruit shopping pattern that is different from the general patterns in western countries. With this approach, observed phenomena can be described systemically and conceptually so that they become scientific knowledge. To achieve those goals, four major cities, i.e. Jakarta, Jogjakarta, Malang, and Surabaya were chosen due to high growth of middle-class income in the last ten years. The study was conducted for seven month, from September 2019 until May 2020 before Covid 19 pandemic was declared by Indonesia government in March 14th, 2020. By choosing big cities as the concentration of middle class living and working, we can get a universal picture of the phenomenon of their vegetable and fruit shopping patterns accurately.

### 4.2. Participants

Our main informant are middle-class income family was 250 families who earn more than 10 million rupiah or (1000 \$) a month, residing in the elite housing area built in the aforementioned cities. We use the middle class income criteria based on criteria from the Indonesian Central Statistics Agency which divides family welfare into five criteria, namely (1) prosperous 1 who is still struggling to meet basic needs, (2) prosperous 2 which is more likely to meet psychological needs, (3) prosperous 3 who tend to fulfill their developmental needs, (4) prosperous 4 and prosperous 4+ who are more likely to fulfill self-esteem. We include prosperous families 3 and 4 in the category of middle class families because these groups access fruit and vegetable markets, both traditional markets, small fruit stalls, as well as mobile traders and supermarkets. Based on demand perspective, 20 Fruit and vegetables vendors (FVVs) were also interviewed to determine the growing demand for vegetables and fruits in supermarkets in the last ten years. The warehouse staff in teen supermarkets were also key informants of the research, as well as some of the local supermarket managers. As it was rather hard to interview the warehouse staff and the managers in their workplace, then we decided to meet them along with the vendors as to make interviews easier. Meanwhile, 10 street vendors and kiosks the IMCI frequents in each city were also interviewed to enrich the understanding of middle-class shopping behaviour. Detail number and characteristics of the respondent are stated in table 1.

**Table 1.** Categories and Number of Respondents

Respondents	Number	Detail characteristics
Middle-class income families	250	100 respondents in Malang, 50 respondents in Jogjakarta, 50 respondents in Jakarta, and 50 respondents in Surabaya
Fruit and Vegetable Vendors (FVVs)	20	5 vendors in each city
Warehouse staff	10	4 warehouses in Malang and 2 people in the other three cities

Street vendors	10	4 street vendors in Malang and 2 people in the other three cities
Supermarket consumers	200	50 people in each city

### 4.3. Data Collection Instruments

Semi-structured interviews were done to 200 consumers buying fruit and vegetables in each of the four cities as to find out their motivation to shopping, their residence, jobs, and whether they have a household assistant. All interviews were conducted face-to-face with the eleven participants, using a semi-structured format (Wilson, 2014; Millar, et al., 2017). The incidental approach was used by interviewing everyone who left the supermarket after buying vegetables and fruit. This Interview aims to determine whether shopping for vegetables is the main goal or not. In addition, information on other destinations other than shopping such as recreation or merely hanging out is also determined. The interview results are based on four types of informants: supermarket visitors who buy vegetables, middle-class families, housemaids, street vendors, and vegetable and fruit stalls. A similar theme was grouped. The data in a theme were mapped for a relationship. The triangulation was conducted mainly to maintain informants' credibility. In addition, direct involvement in the research process maintain the credibility of the data because each data continues to be confirmed directly. The qualitative standards also apply to Dependability and Confirmability either through discussions with informants and with other researchers (Taylor, 2017).

### 4.4. Analysis of Data

We use the content analysis strategies to analyse the interview transcript, observation and deep interview data to find out what the main themes and categories are of concern to the development of the middle class. From the main themes and categories, the sub-themes can be detailed so that the relationships between social phenomena that occur can be mapped. The consumption behaviour of the middle class in supermarkets can be extracted from observations of officers in the marketing division as well as direct interviews with buyers. Their motivation to shop at the supermarket is classified and then related to their motivation in buying vegetables and fruit, as the main or additional choice. Likewise for traditional markets, middle class people who shop can be identified from which group and what their motivation is to keep shopping in traditional markets. Meanwhile, in order to get a complete picture of how the middle class vegetable and fruit shopping behaviour, we also observe whether this middle class also makes purchases of vegetables and fruit to street vendors who have been popping up recently. The conclusions are drawn based on research objectives. The following step is to map the relationships between themes in order to make a broader conclusion to question "why the middle class is not interested in shopping vegetables and fruit in the supermarket".

## 5. Findings

### 5.1. Street Vendor Strategies Dealing with Housemaid Behaviours

The middle class families who are already very busy tend to leave the kitchen entirely to the housemaids, including the grocery shopping, especially if the mother also works. In the meantime, most of the housemaids prefer shopping at grocers or stalls close to home rather than at the modern markets. It is not surprising that street vendors and vegetable stalls are now the main shopping spots

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of the middle class, even though they were once considered to be bad sellers. Due to the ever-increasing demand, stalls and street vendors are also continuously improving the quality of service and goods so customers become more satisfied. The survey we conducted in four elite housing development in the big cities of Malang, Surabaya, Jogjakarta, and Jakarta shows that 65% the middle class has a housemaids, and even 10% has more than one. Although it cannot be generalized, this data reinforces the thesis that the Asian middle class prefers to hire a housemaids for their kitchen affairs rather than cooking for themselves. This situation supported by Indonesian culture that some young families, although earning enough, still get some financial assistance from their parents until their financial condition is really stable. In fact, middle class families who live in an apartment with two or three rooms still have a housemaid, even if it is only for a certain time of the day or week with certain work to do like tidying up the room, cooking, and looking after children.

In addition to being practical and efficient, housemaids prefer street vendors as they can socialize with others—this is reasonable as housemaids do not have time off. They make shopping as the time to chat with their fellow housemaids. Usually, a street vendor stops at certain points around the housing complex where they gather and communication starts. Avoiding such circumstance will label them as bad housemaid. The 30-year-old Misnah said,

*“We can only meet with our neighbours when we do grocery shopping. We buy it from Mas Herman (street vendor). If we chat when our employers are at home, they may think that we are gossiping.”*

As we know, in big cities, many agencies or foundations specifically become intermediaries of household assistants. This makes it easier for the Indonesian middle class to access housemaids according to their desired qualifications. Because it is an official institution, these agencies also become the guarantor for the household assistants. The housemaids usually come from villages or suburbs, either on their own initiative or being persuaded by the agency. Not just distributing people, the agencies also provide housekeeping, cooking, and early childhood care courses, as well as the basics of hospitality so the housemaids have better skills. The survey we conducted in the middle class income shows that 60% of respondents get housemaids from these agencies, while 15% are recommended by relatives, and the remaining 25% are recommended by friends and neighbours.

The small number of visitors at vegetable and fruit supermarkets is also caused by the increasing number of street vendors entering residential areas, even into the middle class settlements in big cities. In the beginning, these street vendors sold only vegetables such as spinach, water spinach, and mustard greens as well as basic spices such as shallots, garlic, and galangal. They usually walked around the village or lower-class housing around their residence—they couldn't go too far as they were walking. Currently, most of them ride a motorcycle and some even use a modified car, selling various types of vegetables as well as fresh fish, chicken, and beef. Street vendors are theoretically a transitional process towards the modernization of formal economic institutions.

Based on observations, the number of street vendors in middle class housing on average is three to five people for 500 to 1000 middle class families with fixed schedules, while those with non-fixed schedules can add to that total. Fixed-schedule vendors usually have been around for a long time and have many regular customers, while the other type of vendors are those selling in other housing

complexes and have some goods left that day so they go to another housing complex to finish selling their goods. Although there is a written rule prohibiting one vendor to enter other vendors' selling area, they usually keep this form of mutual respect. Similarly, consumers tend to be loyal to certain vendors as to maintain social relationships that have been established. In other words, customers are usually relatively loyal to one or two vendors because of the social capital built over time.

The increasing number of street greengrocers is not separated from the middle class shopping character that no longer makes the price the main consideration. Interviews with street vendors show that consumers never bargain for items sold, despite some price raises up to 50%, as long as the items have high quality. For specially ordered vegetables and fruits by consumers, vendors usually take more profit and consumers do not make any complaint because they know the vendors need extra time to look for the items ordered. Welcoming the tastes and needs of middle class consumers, the vegetable vendors are also grading the vegetables and fruits not only for price but also quality. Grading is done so that the quality of vegetables they sell can be accepted by middle class families. According to the vendors, the middle class does not pay attention to price but focuses more on quality. One of the research informants said,

*“These people (living in the elite housing complex) do not complain about price as they focus more on the quality. They will complain on withered vegetables or unfresh fish. I spend more time picking out good vegetables and fruits in the market and sorting again at home so as not to disappoint them.”*

Some of the street vendors say consumers usually order a particular vegetable and fruit for tomorrow's needs. This service is very practical for the household assistant because they do not have to go to the market or supermarket. The housemaidseven consider these street vendors to be better at choosing meat or vegetables at the market than they are themselves. In addition, many of the items they need are often not available in one market or supermarket so they have to take a relatively long time to get all the needed produce. The housemaidscan use social media to order what they need as some street vendors have the WhatsApp group for their respective customers.

## **5.2. Modern Market Strategies Dealing with Impulse Consumers**

Indonesian middle class income families have not made vegetable and fruit shopping as the main purpose of shopping in modern markets—it is simply an additional form of shopping. For these people, the mall is identical with shopping for clothing and packaged food; in addition, they see the mall as a place to hang out and eat with family members or friends and also as a place of recreation. The fact that malls also provide fresh vegetables and fruits has not become a major consideration for most of the middle class of Indonesia, or perhaps in third world countries. As a result, despite having reached the higher class and becoming the most aggressive buyers of manufactured goods, the Indonesian middle class continues to rely on traditional vegetable markets and street vendors for their daily needs. From a survey conducted on supermarket visitors shopping for vegetables and fruits, only 17.5% of those deliberately went to the supermarket to buy vegetables and fruit. The rest bought vegetables and fruit as they happened to see a certain vegetable while crossing the display shelf and then they become interested to buy it. Simple phrases like “Why would I have to go to the supermarket only for carrots?” show that vegetables are not the main shopping items for mall visitors



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as they perceive malls as a place to purchase manufactured goods. One of the supermarket buyer said that:

*“Actually, I didn’t intend to buy vegetables today, but when I saw some vegetables and fruit look fresh and green I have intention to buy”.*

The Indonesian middle class has a slightly different perception than most other middle classes in the world—the Indonesian believe that vegetables and fruits sold in supermarkets do not always have better quality than the ones found in the traditional markets, especially for easily damaged and withered vegetables. Traditional stalls and street vendors sell relatively fresher vegetables and fruit because of the relatively shorter supply chain. The distribution process is more streamlined so they reach consumers faster and pose smaller risk of damage. The traditional stalls and street vendors get the goods directly from the markets or the producers on the same day that they sell the items. Meanwhile, vegetables and fruit in supermarkets are obtained from suppliers and then being packed and distributed. Within one process, it usually takes a minimum of two days so the potential for damage is greater, even though they use the cooling technology; this has led consumers to have a rather bad perception towards the vegetable and fruit section in supermarkets.

Indonesian consumers also thought that the modern vegetable market did not provide a complete range of their kitchen needs, especially spices, which are a basic need. The traditional market not only sold fruit and vegetables but also provided the spices needed by Indonesian society. Several respondents stated that the traditional market was very practical because they could buy a complete range of kitchen necessities. In the traditional market, there were also services such as spice pounding or meat grinding and other services not provided by modern markets. It is not surprising that Indonesian consumers preferred to shop in traditional markets rather than modern markets because traditional markets provide all kitchen goods, but not all of these are available in modern markets.

### **5.3. Traditional Market Strategies Dealing with Working Women Behaviours**

Simultaneously, more vegetable stalls in the middle class housing complex open their business in the late afternoon, making it easier for career women to shop after work. This phenomenon has also spread all over Indonesia, for both permanent stalls and street vendors. These traders mainly target the densely populated areas as well as industrial areas. In Malang, for example, vegetable stalls emerge in densely populated areas, offering quality supermarket vegetables and spices with relatively cheap prices. This is very helpful for women who work during the day as they can get the ingredients to be cooked that night or in the following morning. Market mechanisms naturally encourage market participants to be more efficient by building social networks, including managing opening hours to fit consumer behaviour patterns.

The reason why fruit and vegetable stalls shifted their opening hours to the afternoon is that they wanted to make it easier for working mothers because working mothers often found it hard to shop during the day. This is consistent with the increase in the index of Indonesian women’s participation in employment from 37.6 in 2008 to 53% by 2016 (WEF, 2016). The urban areas in which this study was conducted certainly contributed a larger figure because the above figure was the national

average, encompassing also the rural areas where women's participation in the public sector was relatively low.

As we know, although working in the public sector, socially, women are still required to provide food for the family so fruits and vegetables are also their responsibility. Working mothers prefer to shop around their home for practicality as going to a supermarket requires additional time and expense for parking. Traffic jams are also a reason for them to shop on the way home from work as it does not take extra time. Vegetable and fruit stalls opening in the afternoon or evening, especially near their homes is one of the reasons why they do not shop in the supermarket.

*"I always provide fruit and vegetables for my family as much as I can certainly in the weekend. I buy it in the stall on the road when we go home after office".*

In the case of vegetable shopping, women working in the formal sector continue to take care of household affairs, although at the lowest level, as this shows their efforts to affirm their adherence to social norms as mothers. Although the family has had a household assistant, the purchase of vegetables and fruits, and the needs of the kitchen, reinforces the role of mothers socially. Their participation in the kitchen, although only providing ingredients, is sufficient as a form of social commitment of women in taking care of the household. Some informants stated that those who shop aim to control spending and maintain the quality of food, but most say the activity is a form of social responsibility as a mother where this condition has a strong root in Indonesia tradition.

## **6. Discussion**

Meanwhile, the meanings of vegetables in supermarkets are as social conventions, beliefs, and emotions because of the formation of symbols of goods sold over the years or the development of the image of these vegetables and fruits. In the context of the consumption of vegetables in supermarkets, this includes the social meanings of vegetables in supermarkets and their associated values as functional, symbolic, and experiential entities. Based on the interviews, it has been revealed that vegetables in the supermarket are perceived to be no better quality with vegetables sold by stalls or street vendors. This condition is in line with the findings of research in the USA that consumers believe that the farmer's market provides healthier vegetables and fruits so they make the farmer's market a shopping destination (Yuet al., 2017).

Our informants said the criteria for good quality vegetables were taste and cosmetic beauty, while other criteria such as safety, cleanliness, and lack of pesticide residue are not so important. This confirms that consumer perceptions of vegetables and fruit sold by stalls and street vendors are as good as the ones in the supermarkets, or even better. This is embedded within the performances of a practice where there is a connection between a psychological phenomenon and behavioural routines. If this meaning is built, i.e. there is no fundamental difference between vegetables sold at supermarkets and by street vendors or stalls, then it is reasonable if that the consumers do not make the supermarket the main shopping place. Thus, the convenience and quality offered by the vegetable and fruit supermarkets are not necessarily able to attract them for shopping (Yu et al., 2017).

Indonesian consumers intentionally came to the supermarket to buy vegetables and fruit, while the rest of them bought vegetables and fruit because of a sudden desire. The latter are the impulse

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consumers. Attractive displays and discounts are offered as the ultimate magnets for vegetable shopping, even though they are not on their shopping lists (Mohanet al., 2013). Therefore, most of the supermarket visitors are impulse consumers because the purchase is not planned, only because of sparked interest as they see displayed items—attitude objects may spontaneously cause affect and behaviour via automatic processes (Krishna & Strack, 2017). Since the middle class has the relative ability to purchase goods because of better income levels, it is their situational characteristics that support impulse buying (Changet al., 2013).

It cannot be separated with the view that supermarkets are a shopping place for manufactured goods and a place to hang out for leisure and recreation, instead of a place for produce shopping (Howard, 2007; Ariyanayagam & Ragel, 2014). Even in its journey, the mall or shopping centre provides an alternative place for the urban community, in the middle of the decreasing public spaces, to build social interaction and strengthen social bonds to some level because the organizers actively organize various events (Kusumowidagdoet al., 2015; Wu & Lo, 2018). This clearly confirms that the meaning of an object built as a social consensus will affect a person's behaviour to shop or not. A relatively similar thing happened in Fiji, where a sizable supermarket growth of the last ten years has been able to change consumer behaviour for groceries in supermarkets, yet for vegetables and fruits more than 90% of the population continued to buy in traditional networks (Johnset al., 2017).

The social or cultural context in which a person grows also greatly determines their consumption behaviour. Despite working in the public sector, and often being the backbone of the family, in most developing countries, women still have responsibilities for domestic affairs including preparing food (Wolf, 1991; Brenner, 1995) even though they have household assistants. For the case of middle-class shopping behaviour in Indonesia, it appears that the urge to shop for groceries is a symbol of their obedience to the norm, although in practice they delegate cooking to the household assistants. In the context of practical theory, this phenomenon indicates that the pattern of middle class vegetable and fruit shopping represents the effort of the mothers to fulfil their roles in society because they still bear the responsibility in domestic affairs, although no longer directly, but rather as a managers. This is in line with the findings of previous literature that the role and status of women in Java have not undergone many changes although modernization and industrialization continue to grow (Brenner, 1995; Wolf, 1991).

The Indonesian middle class, especially young families, have different habits from the Western families as they tend to hire a household assistant if they already have enough income (Nilan, 2008). The habit is even more intense in young families with small children, especially if they have financial concessions (Nilan, 2008). At the same time, the housemaidshave their own standards about the quality of vegetables and fruits, including determining where to shop. In this context, the aspect of competencies to select vegetables is not directly controlled by the housewives but by the housemaidsso further action is determined by the level of the household assistants' competency.

At the same time, street vendors and stalls have made some improvement, including changing the opening hours from early morning to afternoon, evening, or even night as to suit the needs of working mothers. The reality is however, in the case of developing countries, especially in Asia, street vendors have been institutionalized as part of a rational choice in business (Williams & Gurtoo, 2012). At the same time, the use of mobile phones is proven to reduce transaction costs of

informal business as well as micro trading activities, thus increasing efficiency (Boateng, 2011; Garcia-murillo & Velez-ospina, 2017). Muniesa et al (2007) found that technologies such as mobile phones, modes of transportation, grading, and vegetable packaging models become market divisions so that it can be a solution to overcome the weakness of easily withered and damaged vegetables (Muniesa et al., 2007). A social interaction is capable of overcoming natural constraints facilitated by market divides in which combinations of all social, natural, and material entities make market “agencement” occur (Le Velly & Dufeu, 2016).

## 7. Conclusion

Thus, the stagnancy of the growth of vegetable and fruit supermarkets in Indonesia is a combination of the material constraints, the formation of different meanings about supermarkets, the competency differences as shopping is handed over to the household assistants, as well as the inadequacies of the definition of quality vegetables in the Indonesian middle-class environment. Table 2 describes how each market developed their strategies by adjusting to the changing behaviour of middle-class customers.

**Table 2.** Institutional Adaptation Strategies of Fruit and Vegetable Sellers

Strategies	Modern Market	Traditional Market	Street Vendor
How to adapt with middle-class behaviour	Rely on consumers' impulse	Change the opening time of the market to the afternoon	Managing time operation
How to build more value in service	Give an extra service and better qualities	Ease and range of choice	Fixed price and better qualities
How to maintain consumer loyalties	Promotion	Extra fruit and spices for consumer whose bought more	Close social relations with the housemaid

Purnomo (2019)

In general, the consumption behaviour of the Indonesian middle class income to everyday necessities remains the same, i.e. aggressive, especially for trendy or high quality goods sold in modern shopping centres including vegetables and fruit. Malls, in addition to (being a place for) shopping and recreation, are also a symbol of the social prestige for the middle class because management always builds such an image to attract consumers while increasing their loyalty. Indonesian consumers show the same symptoms with those in Western countries when it comes to manufactured goods, but there is a different pattern for vegetables and fruit as these people prefer shopping at stalls or street vendors rather than at supermarkets. The above conditions confirm the findings of Suryadarma et al. (2010) that supermarkets are not the cause of the slowdown of traditional Indonesian markets. To deal with these conditions, supermarkets make use potential of impulse consumers through sell an attractive vegetables such as kale, spinach, and mustard greens under normal price. Meanwhile, in general, their knowledge of vegetable and fruit quality is relatively inadequate so the quality offered by supermarkets is not able to attract them as consumer impulse is more dominant.

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The ability of street vendors to meet middle class income preferences in which they are deliver vegetables and fruit to the house, while small stalls, present along the road to their homes keep their businesses open until midnight. This finding is also in line with the theory by Thornton et al., (2017), whose say that the younger the customers are, distance becomes less of consideration-they choose to go shopping near their work locations rather than near their houses, and they will prefer the weekend to go shopping than the workday (Thornton et al., 2017). It is clear that street vendors and small vegetable stalls use services and time opening management as an adaptive strategies dealing with the changing middle class income shopping pattern. Consumers more consider choosing the more practical way rather than quality of vegetables or symbol of social identity.

The other strategies of street vendors and small vegetables stall dealing with the behaviour of household assistance is to improve the quality of vegetables through grading activities. At the same time, sociologically, the habit of recruiting housemaids is also a social factor that stops the middle class consumers from shopping for vegetables and fruit in supermarkets because socially, these housemaids are more likely to buy from street vendors than supermarkets. The services provided by the street vendors, i.e. consumers can order certain items simply through social media, as well as the grading process that they do to improve the quality of the goods, have been proven effective in creating these housemaidsto be loyal customers. Simultaneously, the shift in the opening hours of the stalls and street vendors from morning to afternoon until night has helped working mothers find a more convenient shopping time. The combination of social context with the material component, the meaning of the goods and the supermarket, as well as the competence of the actors, naturally add even longer distance for the middle class from the supermarkets, especially when shopping for fruit and vegetables.

These findings show that the market players in the fruit and vegetable markets in large cities have a unique way of attracting middle-class customers. In Indonesia, supermarkets are attractive in promoting their fruit and vegetables product such as discount to maintain consumer loyalties. Meanwhile, vegetable sellers have shifted their opening times from early morning to late afternoon to serve buyers who have just left work. Street vendors grade their produce to improve the quality of their vegetables in response to the demands of the middle class. This research was limited to a qualitative understanding of the strategies of fruit and vegetable market players, so their share of the market could not be described in detail. Further research is needed to calculate which market is best able to attract consumer loyalty amid the dynamic consumption patterns of the middle class income.

### **8. Recommendations**

Reflecting on the above findings, investors who will establish a modern supermarket that sells fruit and vegetables must consider the spending patterns of the middle class in developing countries such as Indonesia, which has a different pattern from western countries. The strategies of competitors such as mobile traders and fruit and vegetable stalls along residential areas must also be considered because they do not only improve the quality of goods, facilitate access for buyers, but also establish good social relations with middle-class housemaids. So, in addition to the convenience of buyers in accessing goods, based on the theoretical social practices approach, the main sociological considerations of investors in opening a vegetable and fruit business are to build an image of

vegetables in supermarkets that are of better quality than elsewhere, consider pricing strategies, and build closer social relations with its customers.

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