

# Determining Factors for Staple Food Products Prices in Indonesia Traditional Markets

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## Abstract

Traditional markets in Indonesia were created so that people from all walks of life can fulfill their needs, especially staple food products, without having to spend a lot of money. However, the prices of food products in different markets vary depending on the consumers of the particular market. The aims of this article were to compare the price difference of staple food products in several traditional markets and to find out the factors that cause the price difference. The data were collected by carrying out a survey to five traditional markets around Jakarta regarding the prices of ten staple food products. The data were analyzed quantitatively using statistical calculation ANOVA from SPSS version 22, and also qualitatively to discuss several factors underlying the price differences. Results revealed that price differences of staple food products were not only caused by market location, but other factors such as pricing strategy and consumer specification. This research implied that traditional markets were still chosen by Indonesian consumers to fulfill their needs because of the competitive price.

**Keywords:** consumer behavior, staple food product, market segment, price differences, traditional markets.

## I. INTRODUCTION

A market or marketplace is a location where people regularly gather for the purchase and sale of provisions, livestock and other goods. A market is recognized all around the world. In Arabic, it is called a *souk*, in Persian or Turkish, it is known as *bazaar*, in Spanish it is *Mercado*, *tianquisin* Mexico and *palengkein* the Philippines. In Indonesia, the market is known as *pasar*.

Stanton [1] defines a market as a group of people who want to attain satisfaction by using their money to buy something and have the willingness to spend that money. Conversely, Kotler & Armstrong [2] state that a market is place where there are potential and actual buyers of a product or service. Thus, based on those definitions, a market can be referred to people who perform the buying and selling activity or to the place where that activity occurs.

Meanwhile, based on the type of transaction, a market can be categorized into two kinds: modern market and traditional market. In modern market, the products bought and sold have fixed price and the consumers serve themselves. On the contrary, in the traditional market, the sellers and buyers can determine the price of the products being sold by bargaining. Therefore, the product price in a traditional market is not constant, depending on the agreement between the seller and the buyer and the transaction will be closed through a bargaining process.

The possibility of bargaining the price might attract a certain kind of consumers to purchase their daily necessities in the traditional market. These consumers believe that the price in the traditional market is still lower than the price in the modern market. In general, the consumers of traditional markets are middle to lower income class people who are very sensitive towards price. They will buy a cheaper product even though the price difference is relatively small. A rational consumer usually compares prices before taking consumption decision [3].

Price difference, therefore, becomes an important determinant for a customer to buy a particular food product. For example, if a seller sells sugar IDR 20.000 (~1.42 USD) per kilogram and another seller sells it for IDR 19.500 (~1.39 USD) per kilogram, the buyer will buy from the seller who gives lower price. Similarly, if the buyer can find cheaper price in one market, they will probably continue shopping in that particular market and they will not go to other markets.

Hence, the pricing of food products has become an important decision for the sellers in traditional markets to attract a certain segment of consumers who usually shop at traditional markets. In other words, sellers should consider the buying power of their potential consumers before determining the price for their products.

In this article, we discuss the price differences of ten food products that occur in five traditional markets in Jakarta. The products chosen are basic commodities which are included as Indonesian staple food such as rice, eggs and sugar. Moreover, we also discuss several factors that account for the price differences of those products.

The results of this study are expected to give some light on the actual price condition of Indonesian staple food products especially those which are sold in traditional markets. Besides, by knowing the pricing strategy employed by these markets, we can also infer the characteristics of consumers of the traditional markets in Indonesia.

## II. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

### 2.1. Market Segmentation

Market segmentation is the process of dividing markets into groups whose members have similar characteristics [3]. Market segmentation is also defined as a system of dividing markets into segments of potential consumers with similar characteristics and behaviors [4]. In the same vein, Kotler & Armstrong [5] assert that market segmentation is a division of a market into several groups of different buyers. Lambs in Goyat [6] says, "Market segmentation is to divide a market into smaller groups of buyers with distinct needs, characteristics, or behaviors who might require separate products or marketing mixes." The purpose of market segmentation is the concentration of marketing energy and force on subdividing to gain a competitive advantage within the segment [7].

The first step in segmenting a market is selecting a suitable base. In this step, marketers are looking for a means of achieving internal homogeneity (similarity within the segments) and external heterogeneity (differences between the segments) [8]. In other words, the differences between members of a segment should be minimized and the differences between each segment should be maximized.

Based on the consumers' characteristics, a consumer market can be divided into four groups [9] or five groups [10]. They are:

- a. **Geographic segmentation:** divides markets based on geographic criteria. In practice markets can be segmented as broadly as continents and as narrowly as neighborhood or postal code. For example, markets in Jakarta can be divided into five areas such as North Jakarta, West Jakarta, South Jakarta, East Jakarta and Central Jakarta.
- b. **Demographic segmentation:** divides markets based on age, gender, income, household size and education. Sometimes, demographic factor is also combined with socio economic factor, which differentiate consumers based on economical factor and social classes [11]. For example, markets designed for women or men only or based on the education level: elementary school students or college students. So far, demographic segmentation is one of the most widely used ways of dividing consumers into segments [12],[13],[14].
- c. **Psychographic segmentation:** divides markets by life style variables such as values, attitudes, personality characteristics, altruism and environmental concerns [15]. Psychographics have also been called lifestyle or activity and attitude research. For example, markets for extroverts or introverts or for those who appreciate high class products.
- d. **Benefit segmentation:** divides markets by determining the benefits of products. For example, markets created based on hobby, facility, purchase power, luxury, safety and social status.
- e. **Volume segmentation:** divides markets based on volume of usage. For example, the number of users and loyalty status.

### 2.2. Consumers of Traditional Markets

A traditional market in Indonesia refers to a market which is built and managed by the government, local government (municipality), State owned enterprise and regional owned enterprise, as well as private enterprise. The sellers in a traditional market should be small or medium scale traders or cooperatives with small scale businesses and small capital. Moreover, the process of buying and selling merchandise is done through bargaining.

Because of those characteristics, traditional markets usually attract certain kinds of consumers. In general, the consumers of traditional markets are middle to lower income class people who like to bargain to get the cheapest price

possible. Based on demographic segmentation, consumers with similar demographic profiles, in particular, similar socio economic status or income will exhibit similar purchasing patterns, motivations, interests and lifestyles (Baker 2003).

Despite being in the specific market segment, consumers of traditional markets in Indonesia also show common consumer behaviors. Consumers engage in shopping with certain fundamental decision making or styles, including rational shopping and consciousness regarding price and quality [16]. Thus, before buying a product, consumers always consider carefully the price and the quality of the product being sold. For example, before buying a kilo of cauliflower, a shopper will go to several sellers to compare the prices offered by the sellers and choose the cheapest and the freshest cauliflower. Indonesian shoppers are mostly price-conscious and regard highly the value for money for the things they buy. These qualities (price consciousness and value for money) were not found in shoppers from other countries such as Greece and India [17].

In short, consumers follow certain process before making purchasing decision. First, they try to find what commodities they would like to consume, then they select only those commodities that promise greater utility and then estimate the available money they can spend. After that they analyze the prevailing prices and finally take decision of which commodities they want to consume [18].

### **2.3. Product Pricing Decision**

Since consumers follow a rigorous process before buying something, sellers must also consider carefully before determining the price for their product. Pricing decision can be influenced by internal and external factors [19]. The internal factors include: cost of production, channels of distribution and company objective, while external factors include: market demand, market competition, macroeconomic trends, market segment and consumer perceptions. Similarly, Hilton [20] observed that price decision was affected by the market forces of demand and supply, the cost of production, economic situations, level of competitions and availability of close substitute.

Thus, how should sellers in traditional markets price their products? First of all, we have to look back at the definition of price. A price is the quantity of payment or compensation given by one party to another in return for one unit of goods or services [21]. Meanwhile, a price is also defined as an amount of money or value assigned toward a product or a service that should be paid by the consumers to get benefits from that product or service [22].

In economic activity, there are four kinds of price: subjective price, objective price, basic price and selling price [23]. A subjective price is the price determined by a person's estimate or opinion, thus a seller and a buyer have different price estimates of a product. An objective price (or market price) is the price agreed by the seller and the buyer. A basic price is the real value of a product or the amount spent for producing the product. A selling price is a basic price plus the amount of profit expected by the seller. In general, the selling price will be different, but it still relates to the market price.

However, whichever price a seller uses, they should always put forward consumers' needs and demands. Consumers will decide where (which product) to buy based on prices and availability of products at the time of purchase and a customer goes away immediately if her demand is not fulfilled [24],[25].

## **III. METHODS**

### **3.1. Data Instrument and locations**

The data for this research were the selling prices of ten food products (commodities), namely rice, sugar, egg, cooking oil, chicken, corn, garlic, onion, red pepper, and tempeh (soya bean cake). These products were chosen because they are the most common food products consumed by Indonesian people.

Meanwhile, the survey was carried out during the month of October, 2018 in five traditional markets around Jakarta. The market locations are:

1. Santa Market, located at Jl. Cisanggiri II, Petogogan, KbyBaru, South Jakarta, Jakarta Greater Area, 12170.
2. Mampang Market, located at Jl. Mampang Prpt. No.58, RT.5/RW.1, Mampang Prpt., South Jakarta, Jakarta Greater Area, 12190.

3. Kebayoran Lama Market, located at Jl. Sultan IskandarMuda, Kby. Lama Utara, Kby. Lama, South Jakarta, Jakarta Greater Area, 12240.
4. BendunganHilir, located at JalanBendunganHilir Blok A, No. 1 RT 14/Rw 1, BendunganHilir, Tanah Abang, Central Jakarta, Jakarta Greater Area, 10210.
5. Gondangdia Market, located at Jl. Srikaya Raya Rt 016/RW 6 Kb. Sirih, Menteng, South Jakarta, Jakarta Greater Area, 10340.

The market location was chosen as one of the factors in this research because it can be used to estimate the consumer’s behavior and the product pricing in that particular market.

**3.2. Data Analysis**

The data obtained were in the form of product prices. The data were calculated using descriptive statistic to elucidate the actual condition (fact) of the research samples. The descriptions of data include mean, mode, median, variance and standard deviation. Mean is the central value of a discrete set of numbers, specifically, the sum of the values divided by the number of values. Meanwhile, the standard deviation is a measure that is used to quantify the amount of variation or dispersion of a set of data values.

Besides, this research also employed another data analysis tool, i.e. Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) from SPSS ver. 22. ANOVA is a statistical analysis which is used to analyze the differences among group means in a sample. ANOVA provides a statistical test of whether the populations’ means of several groups are equal. ANOVA is useful for comparing three or more group means for statistical significance. A one way ANOVA is used to compare two means from two independent (unrelated) groups using the F-distribution. The null hypothesis for the test is that the two means are equal. Therefore, a significant result means that the two means are unequal.

**IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

**4.1. Price Differences of Food Products**

From the survey in five traditional markets, we gathered the prices of ten food products, which are presented in the following table 1.

**Table 1. Descriptive statistic of food product prices\***

Products	Santa	Ben hil	Kb Lama	Mampa ng	Gonda ngdia	Mean	Min	Max	SD
Rice	11	12	10.25	13	14	12.05	10.25	14.00	1.504
Shallot	30	25	28	24	22	25.8	22.00	20.00	3.193
Cooking oil	13	14	13.5	13.5	13.5	13.5	13.00	14.00	0.353
Red pepper	22	22	23	20	23	22	21.00	23.00	1.225
Egg	23	23	21	24	22	22.6	20.00	24.00	1.140
Garlic	32	25	29	26	28	28	25.00	32.00	2.738
Sugar	14	12	13	13	13	13	12.00	14.00	0.707
Tempeh	8	8	12	5	12	9	5.00	12.00	3.000
Chicken	34	30	38	25	30	31.4	25.00	38.00	4.878
Corn	4	4	3	3	5	3.8	3.00	5.00	0.836
Average	19.1	17.5	19.07	16.65	18.25	18.11	3.00	32.00	8.957

\*Note: The prices stated in this table are in thousands of Indonesian Rupiah

All prices were submitted to one way ANOVA. The results are presented in table 2 below.

**Table 2. ANOVA of Product Price Differences**

Price

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	3703.601	9	411.511	72.338	.000
Within Groups	227.550	40	5.689		
Total	3931.151	49			

Table 2 above shows that there was a statistically significant difference between the group means as determined by one-way ANOVA ( $F(9,40) = 72.338$ ,  $p = 0.000$ , which is below 0.05, and therefore there was a statistically significant difference in the prices of food products in each market. This result indicated that the price of each food product was not equal to each other.

The differences can be seen from the previous table 1. As we can see, the price range for **Rice** is IDR 10250 to IDR 14.000 per kilogram, with the average price of IDR 12050. The difference between minimum and maximum price reached 37 %. Next, for the **Shallot**, the price ranged from IDR 22000 to IDR 30000 per kilogram, with the average price of IDR 25800. The difference between minimum and maximum price attained 36 %. Meanwhile, for **Cooking oil**, the price ranged as IDR 13000 to IDR 14000 per liter, so the average price was IDR 13500 per liter. There is only 8 % difference between minimum and maximum price. After that, the price range for **Red pepper** was IDR 20000 to IDR 23000 per kilogram, with the average price of IDR 22000. The difference between minimum and maximum price was not so big, only 15%. Similarly, a 14 % difference occurred for the minimum and maximum price of **Egg**. Its price ranged from IDR 21000 to IDR 24000 per kilogram, with the average price of IDR 22600. A bigger range occurred for **Garlic**, which was IDR 25000 to IDR 32000 per kilogram, with the average price of IDR 28000. The difference between minimum and maximum price reached 28%. Meanwhile, the price range for **Sugar** was IDR 12000 to IDR 14000 per kilogram, with the average price of IDR 13000. The difference between minimum and maximum price was only 17%. Surprisingly, the price range for **Tempeh** was IDR 5000 to IDR 12000 per block, with the average price of IDR 9000. There was a huge difference between minimum and maximum price, as much as 140 %. Another big difference occurred for **Chicken**, which ranged from IDR 25000 to IDR 38.000 for a whole chicken, with the average price of IDR 31400. The difference between minimum and maximum price reaches 52 %. Finally, another big difference in price range occurred for **Corn**, which was 3.000 to IDR 5.000 per kilogram, with the average price of IDR 3800. The difference between minimum and maximum price reached 67 %.

Thus, in general, prices of each product differed from one market to another. The price difference ranged from 8 % to 140 % depending on the type of product.

#### 4.2. Factors contributing to price differences in traditional markets

There are several factors that can contribute to the price differences. We will examine some factors such as: geographic factor, consumer behavior, supply and demand, macroeconomic trend and market competition.

##### 4.2.1. Geographical factor

The markets being studied are located in different districts of Greater Jakarta Area, three markets are located in South Jakarta and two are located in Central Jakarta. Different areas of Jakarta are inhabited by people from different socio economic class. For example, residents of South Jakarta municipality are considered to have higher economic class compared to the other areas. However, even in one municipality, there are several districts which might also contain various classes of consumers.

To test whether the market locations determine the price variations, we did the ANOVA calculation, which provided the following results:

**Table 3. Descriptive statistic for average price based on market location**

Komoditas	N	Mean	StD	Std Error	Min	Max
Santa	10	19.100	10.59822	3.35145	4.00	34.00
Benhil	10	17.500	8.59263	2.71723	4.00	30.00
KbLama	10	19.075	10.59222	3.34955	3.00	38.00
Mampang	10	16.650	8.39990	2.65628	3.00	26.00
Gondangdia	10	18.250	7.93463	2.50915	5.00	30.00
Total	50	18.115	8.95698	1.26671	3.00	38.00

The average prices for all products in five markets ranged from IDR 16650 to IDR 19100. Although there was around 14.7 % difference from the lowest to the highest, this difference was not statistically significant as shown by the ANOVA table below.

**Table 4. ANOVA for price differences based on market location**

Price

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	44.345	4	11.086	.128	.971
Within Groups	3886.806	45	86.373		
Total	3931.151	49			

Table 4 above displays that there was not a statistically significant difference between the group means as determined by one-way ANOVA ( $F(4,45) = 0.128, p = 0.971$ , which is high above 0.05, and therefore the average price in five markets were basically similar to each other.

Both tables above implied that geographic location of the traditional markets did not really influence the pricing of food products in each particular market.

**4.2.2. Demographic factor : target consumer**

One of the considerations for pricing a product is by examining the demographic of the targeted consumers. The demographics include, among others the age, the location, the social economic class and the educational status of the consumers. Demographic factors like education, income and household size affect the consumers’ choice of products [26]. However, regarding the traditional markets’ consumers, social economic class might be the most important determining factor. In the society, there are three classes of people, the rich, the middle class and the low income earners. Thus, most of the traditional markets’ visitors are the middle class and the low income earners.

Therefore, sellers usually determine the prices based on their target consumers. Sellers in traditional markets have already known who their consumers are. Hence, the sellers of chicken will not sell a whole chicken for IDR 38.000 if they think that their consumers cannot afford to purchase it. A product targeted at the rich will surely command a higher



price than those targeted at the middle class. On the other hand, a product targeted at the low income class will not be priced too high. At the end, consumers will decide which product to buy based on prices that meet their demands.

The different prices set for the same products (for example, tempeh or corn) by sellers in different traditional markets illustrate the use of competitive dynamic pricing under customer choice behavior as has been claimed by [27] and [28]

### **4.2.3. Customer behavior and perception**

Price difference can be also be traced back to consumers' behavior and perception. Based on its location, consumers who live around and shop in each market might have different characteristics. Diverse consumer characteristics might also influence the selling price determined by the sellers. For example, the average price in Santa Market, which is located in KebayoranBaru district in South Jakarta was IDR 19.100. This is the highest price compared to the other market. KebayoranBaru is an elite area in South Jakarta in which the residents can be categorized as belonging to the middle to high income group. The market in this area, therefore, caters for the needs of high income consumers, such as providing organic food. This indication was supported by several studies that show that buyers of organic foods exhibit higher income levels when compared to non-buyers [29],[30]. Higher income consumers were more concerned about health and food risks rather than the price of the products. Thus, they will buy food products with higher price if they can get health benefits from the products.

Higher income consumers are usually more logical in their purchasing habit. Their behavior confirms Niles'h's [31] indication that consumers take decisions of which commodities they want to consume after they analyze the prevailing prices. Similarly, this also concedes with [32] de Mooij's claim that consumers' behavior can be predicted from their attitude towards product and service.

Meanwhile for lower income consumers, price would be their first priority. For example, if there are two sellers of tempeh who sell one similar block for IDR 5000 and IDR 6000, the consumers will take the cheaper one even though it is one day older (the freshness of tempeh is determined by the production date).

### **4.2.4. Supply and demand**

For some products supply and demand might explain the price differences of food products. The supply for certain commodities is affected by several factors such as seasons or imports. The supply of shallots and red peppers, for example, was determined by the seasons (rainy or dry) in Indonesia. In rainy seasons where the production is low, the price might be high. On the contrary, if the production is high, the price can be lower. The price for shallot in this study is IDR 22000 to IDR 38000 per kilogram which is quite high.

To overcome the low production rate, the government usually allows imports of certain commodities such as garlic. The difference of garlic price in this case might be caused by the origin of garlic. Imported garlic from China might be cheaper than local garlic.

### **4.2.5. Product specification**

Product specifications can also cause price differences in several markets. Product specifications include the type, size, weight or package. Rice, for example, can be of different kinds, such as Ramos, Pandanwangi and Cianjur, depending on the source of origin and quality. Each type is sold with different price per liter.

The size or measurement unit which is applied for product such as tempeh and cooking oil can also vary the selling price. For example, tempeh is sold in block unit. The block can be quite small (10x5x 2 cm) or bigger block (30x 10 x 2 cm). Each block was sold with different price. Therefore, the price varied from IDR 5000 to IDR 12000. To maintain the lower price, some sellers reduce the size or weight. Therefore a piece of tempeh with a price of IDR 5000 which previously weigh 600 grams, now only 500 grams.

The last one, packaging also determine the price of the product. For example for cooking oil, there are two versions: packaged or unpacked. The unpackaged one is sold 1000 cheaper than the packaged one.

### 4.2.6. Market competition

Competition means the rivalry between sellers selling similar products. In one traditional market, there are usually 2 to 5 sellers selling the same product such as tempeh. Within the same market, the price of similar product does not vary too much, because the consumers will go to another seller if the price is more expensive. Thus, competition between sellers in the same market does not happen because of the price of the same product.

On the contrary, competition between sellers in markets in different locations might occur. Here, they compete to gain the consumers by setting the price which is affordable for their targeted consumers. For some consumers, going to and shopping in markets which offer lower prices are commonly done.

## V. CONCLUSION

There are two main findings that can be concluded from this study. First, by doing the purchasing simulation in five traditional markets, the researchers found that the sellers in five traditional markets place different prices for the same products. The price difference ranges from 8% -140% for each product. However, in total, the average price for all products in one market did not show statistically significant difference with the average price in other markets. In other words, basically all traditional markets in Jakarta offer similar prices for the products sold in those markets. The tendency to keep the selling prices at the affordable level should be done by the sellers to maintain the basis of their customer segment. Traditional markets' consumers are thought to be price sensitive, meaning that they will try to find products sold with cheaper prices or went to markets that sold products with lower prices. Interestingly, geographic factor (in particular market locations) did not prove to cause price differences. Thus the assumption that markets located in premium location offer higher price are not verified by the statistical calculation.

The second finding explores other factors that might confirm the price differences. Among such factors are customer segment and behavior. Traditional markets' consumers are usually middle to lower class people who will bargain for a product to get the cheapest price possible. Supply and demand, product specifications and market competitions between sellers were also causing price differences. We may conclude that price differences are still possible as long as there is equilibrium between the sellers and the buyers. The selling price should not benefit one party but impair another party.

The results of this study are still tentative and subject to change since the determination of selling prices are dependent on many different variables. Moreover, the results cannot be generalized because of the limited number of samples (either products or market locations). In the future research, the number of samples (products or markets) can be extended, if necessary involve all over Indonesia. Another interesting thing to explore is the characteristics of traditional markets consumers compared to other market types.

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