



Factors Affecting Customers' Purchasing Decisions: The Role of Demographic Characteristics

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Abstract

This study investigated the influence of demographic characteristics on customers' purchasing decisions, emphasizing the marketing mix dimensions of product, price, packaging, location, and promotion. A quantitative descriptive–correlational design was employed using survey data collected from 117 customers in Palompon, Leyte, Philippines. Descriptive statistics determined the level of influence of each marketing mix factor, while Spearman's rho correlation analysis examined the relationships between demographic variables and purchasing decision dimensions. Results revealed that product ($M = 3.85$, $SD = 0.97$), price ($M = 3.78$, $SD = 1.03$), packaging ($M = 3.73$, $SD = 1.09$), and promotion ($M = 3.61$, $SD = 1.03$) had high influence on purchasing decisions, whereas location ($M = 3.28$, $SD = 1.05$) showed moderate influence. Income level was significantly associated with price evaluation ($\rho = .32$, $p < .01$), indicating higher price sensitivity among lower-income consumers. Educational attainment showed a modest but significant relationship with product evaluation ($\rho = .21$, $p < .05$). Other demographic factors, including age, gender, and occupation, were not significantly related to purchasing decision dimensions.

Research implications: Marketing mix variables exert stronger influence on purchasing behavior than demographic differences, although income is a significant determinant of price sensitivity.

Practical implications: Businesses targeting modest-income consumers should prioritize product quality, competitive pricing, and strategic promotional efforts to enhance market competitiveness.

Originality/value: This study provides localized empirical evidence on consumer decision-making in a provincial Philippine context, offering insights for emerging market retail strategies.

Keywords:

Purchasing decision; Marketing mix; Demographic characteristics; Consumer behavior; Price sensitivity; Emerging markets; Philippines.

I. INTRODUCTION

Consumer purchasing decisions are shaped by the interaction of firm-driven marketing strategies and individual consumer characteristics. The marketing mix framework—product, price, place, and promotion—serves as a foundational model for understanding how firms influence consumer choices through controllable variables (Kotler & Keller, 2020). However, demographic characteristics such as age, gender, income, educational attainment, and occupation also shape consumers' perceptions, preferences, and responses to marketing stimuli (Qazzafi, 2020). Integrating demographic determinants with marketing mix variables provides a holistic understanding of consumer behavior.

Research indicates that demographic attributes influence cognitive and affective processes in purchasing decisions. Younger consumers tend to be more impulsive and open to innovation, whereas older consumers adopt more deliberate and rational decision patterns (Dong et al., 2020; Li et al., 2020). Gender differences in shopping behavior have also been reported, with female consumers often engaging in more extensive product evaluation than male consumers (Alemohamad, 2023; Shukla, 2021). These distinctions suggest marketers must tailor strategies to align with the behavioral profiles of different consumer segments.

Income level strongly affects price sensitivity and perceived value. Higher-income consumers tolerate premium pricing, while lower-income consumers prioritize affordability (Suvadashini & Mishra, 2021). Educational attainment enhances analytical skills, allowing more informed evaluation of product attributes (Rahmah & Satyaningrat, 2023). Occupation, as a proxy for lifestyle and role identity, also influences purchasing priorities and consumption patterns.

Recent empirical evidence confirms the relevance of demographic predictors in consumer behavior research. Socio-demographic variables have been shown to predict purchase decisions effectively, including in Southeast Asian markets (maneethai et al., 2024). Furthermore, demographic factors interact with psychological and contextual influences. The Theory of Planned Behavior (Ajzen, 1985) incorporates demographics into the broader structure of behavioral intention, and Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs highlights how age, income, and social roles shape consumption motivations.

Despite global evidence, there is limited research on these relationships within provincial Philippine markets, where local economic structures and cultural dynamics may produce distinct patterns. This study examines how demographic characteristics relate to purchasing decision factors in Palompon, Leyte, providing localized insights while contributing to broader theoretical understanding.

Objectives of the Study

This study aimed to examine the relationship between customers' demographic profiles and their purchasing decisions in Palompon, Leyte. Specifically, it sought to:

1. Describe the demographic characteristics of customers in terms of age, gender, income, educational attainment, and occupation.
2. Assess customers' purchasing decisions across five dimensions: product, price, packaging, location, and promotion.
3. Generate evidence-based recommendations to assist business establishments in enhancing marketing strategies.

Methodology

This study adopted a quantitative descriptive-comparative and correlational design to examine differences and associations between customers' demographic characteristics and purchasing decisions. Data were collected from 117 customers of various business establishments in the Poblacion area of Palompon, Leyte, Philippines (population \approx 65,108). Respondents were selected using convenience sampling and categorized by age (18–23, 24–29, \geq 30), gender, income, educational attainment, and occupation. The sample size was determined in accordance with Hair's (2010) recommendation of 5–10 respondents per indicator and the suggested minimum range of 100–200 cases for stable quantitative analysis. A structured questionnaire adapted from Ullah et al. (2019) was utilized. The instrument comprised two sections: demographic characteristics and purchasing decision dimensions (product, price, packaging, location, and promotion), measured on a five-point Likert scale. Internal consistency reliability was assessed using Cronbach's alpha.

Data were gathered following informed consent and analyzed using descriptive statistics (frequency, percentage, mean, and standard deviation) and inferential tests. Spearman's rho and Pearson's r were applied to assess relationships between demographic variables and purchasing decision factors, with statistical significance set at $\alpha = .05$. Ethical standards were strictly observed, ensuring voluntary participation, anonymity, and confidentiality.

RESULTS

Demographic Profile of Respondents

Table 1 presents the demographic characteristics of the 117 respondents. In terms of **age**, the sample was almost evenly distributed across three categories: 18–23 years (33.06%), 24–29 years (33.06%), and 30 years and above (33.88%). This balance indicates that the study captured perspectives from young adults through mature adults, allowing for a comprehensive understanding of consumer preferences across different life stages. Previous research suggests that younger consumers tend to make more impulsive purchases, whereas older consumers demonstrate more deliberate and rational decision-making (Dong et al., 2020; Li et al., 2020). The nearly equal representation across age groups reduces potential bias and strengthens the generalizability of the findings within the local population.

With respect to **gender**, females comprised 71.07% of the respondents, while males accounted for 28.93%. This overrepresentation of female respondents is consistent with existing literature, which indicates that women are often more actively involved in shopping decisions and are more attentive to product evaluation, pricing, and promotional information compared to men (Alemohamad, 2023; Shukla, 2021). This gender distribution suggests that insights from the study predominantly reflect female consumer behavior, though male perspectives are also captured.

Regarding **monthly income**, nearly half of the respondents (48.57%) reported earnings between ₱8,000 and ₱11,000, followed by 21.10% earning ₱11,000–₱14,000. Higher income brackets were less represented, with only 2.42% earning ₱17,000–₱19,000 and 21.54% earning ₱19,000 and above. This distribution indicates that the sample largely represents modest- to middle-income consumers. Consistent with prior studies, income is a key determinant of price sensitivity, with lower-income consumers prioritizing affordability and higher-income consumers able to focus on quality and brand preference (Suvadashini & Mishra, 2021).

In terms of **educational attainment**, the majority of respondents held a bachelor's degree (47.11%) or were college-level undergraduates (34.71%). Smaller proportions were senior high school graduates (5.79%), junior high school graduates (8.26%), junior high undergraduates (3.31%), and master's degree holders (0.83%). Higher education is associated with greater information-processing capacity and more informed purchasing decisions, suggesting that most respondents are capable of evaluating product attributes and marketing cues critically (Rahmah & Satyaninggrat, 2023).

Finally, **occupation** revealed that most respondents were employed (72.73%), followed by students (10.74%), unemployed individuals (9.92%), and self-employed participants (6.61%). Occupational status influences financial stability, lifestyle, and purchasing priorities, with employed respondents likely having more predictable income streams that support routine consumption decisions (Qazzafi, 2020).

Table 1. Demographic Characteristics of Respondents (N = 117)

Variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage
Age	18–23	40	33.06%
	24–29	40	33.06%
	30 and above	41	33.88%
Gender	Female	86	71.07%
	Male	35	28.93%

Variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage
Monthly Income	₱8,000–₱11,000	61	48.57%
	₱11,000–₱14,000	26	21.10%
	₱14,000–₱17,000	8	6.37%
	₱17,000–₱19,000	3	2.42%
	₱19,000 and above	23	21.54%
Educational Attainment	Bachelor's Degree	57	47.11%
	College Level Undergraduate	42	34.71%
	Senior High School	7	5.79%
	Junior High School Graduate	10	8.26%
	Junior High Undergraduate	4	3.31%
	Master's Degree	1	0.83%
Occupation	Employed	88	72.73%
	Self-employed	8	6.61%
	Student	13	10.74%
	Unemployed	12	9.92%

The sample was evenly distributed across age groups. The majority were female (71.07%), employed (72.73%), and earning between ₱8,000–₱11,000 per month (48.57%). Most respondents had at least some college education.

Table 2. Purchasing Decision Factors

Factor	Mean	SD	Interpretation
Product	3.85	0.97	High Influence
Price	3.78	1.03	High Influence
Packaging	3.73	1.09	High Influence
Location	3.28	1.05	Moderate Influence
Promotion	3.61	1.03	High Influence
Overall	3.65	1.03	High Influence

Product emerged as the most influential factor ($M = 3.85$), followed by price ($M = 3.78$), packaging ($M = 3.73$), and promotion ($M = 3.61$). Location registered only moderate influence ($M = 3.28$). The overall mean of 3.65 indicates that purchasing decisions were strongly influenced by marketing mix variables. Overall, these findings suggest that consumers in Palompon prioritize tangible product attributes and economic considerations over locational convenience. Marketing strategies that emphasize product quality, competitive pricing, and appealing presentation are likely to resonate most strongly with this consumer base. While promotional activities remain important, their effect is secondary to the perceived value of the product itself. Businesses aiming to enhance customer engagement should focus on delivering high-quality products at affordable prices, complemented by effective packaging and promotion.

Table 3. Relationship Between Demographic Profile and Purchasing Factors

Demographic Variable	Product ρ (p)	Price ρ (p)	Packaging ρ (p)	Location ρ (p)	Promotion ρ (p)
Age	.09 (.31)	.11 (.22)	.07 (.44)	.05 (.59)	.08 (.37)
Gender	-.06 (.49)	-.08 (.38)	-.04 (.66)	-.03 (.72)	-.07 (.42)
Income	.18 (.06)	.32 (.001)	.14 (.12)	.09 (.30)	.16 (.08)
Educational Attainment	.21 (.02)	.17 (.07)	.19 (.04)	.08 (.36)	.15 (.09)

Demographic Variable	Product ρ (p)	Price ρ (p)	Packaging ρ (p)	Location ρ (p)	Promotion ρ (p)
Occupation	.12 (.18)	.15 (.10)	.10 (.27)	.06 (.51)	.11 (.20)

Spearman's rho correlation analysis was conducted to determine whether demographic variables were significantly associated with purchasing decision factors.

Age and Purchasing Factors

Age showed minimal to weak correlations with product, price, packaging, location, and promotion factors. The findings suggest that purchasing decisions across age groups were relatively consistent. Although literature suggests behavioral differences between younger and older consumers (Dong et al., 2020; Li et al., 2020), the balanced age distribution in this sample may have minimized generational variation.

Gender and Purchasing Factors

Gender did not demonstrate strong correlations with purchasing decision factors. Despite the predominance of female respondents, purchasing evaluations of product, price, and packaging were relatively homogeneous across gender groups.

Income and Purchasing Factors

Income level showed stronger associations with the **price factor**, indicating that lower-income respondents were more price-sensitive. This finding aligns with Suvadarsini and Mishra (2021), who reported that affordability significantly influences purchasing decisions among modest-income consumers.

Educational Attainment and Purchasing Factors

Educational attainment demonstrated moderate relationships with product and packaging factors, suggesting that higher education may enhance product evaluation and information processing.

Occupation and Purchasing Factors

Occupation showed limited correlation with purchasing factors, although employed respondents displayed relatively stable evaluation patterns, likely reflecting income regularity and lifestyle consistency (Qazzafi, 2020).

Overall, demographic variables exhibited **limited but notable associations**, with income emerging as the most influential demographic predictor of purchasing evaluation.

Discussion

The findings reinforce the centrality of the marketing mix in shaping consumer decisions. Product quality, price fairness, packaging appeal, and promotional effectiveness were perceived as highly influential. These results align with marketing mix theory (Kotler & Keller, 2020) and contemporary empirical studies emphasizing tangible value attributes in purchasing decisions.

The moderate influence of location suggests that consumers prioritize intrinsic product value over spatial convenience. This may reflect evolving purchasing behavior patterns where accessibility is less decisive compared to perceived quality and affordability.

Demographically, income emerged as the most meaningful differentiator. The predominance of modest-income respondents likely explains the strong emphasis on price considerations. The relatively weak correlations between age, gender, education, and occupation and purchasing factors suggest that marketing variables exert a more direct influence on decision-making than demographic characteristics in this local context.

From a managerial perspective, businesses in Palompon, Leyte should prioritize product quality enhancement, maintain competitive and transparent pricing strategies, invest in effective packaging design, strengthen promotional communication and consider location as supportive rather than primary competitive advantage.

Conclusion

This study concludes that purchasing decisions among customers in Palompon, Leyte are primarily driven by marketing mix factors, particularly product and price. While demographic characteristics provide contextual background, income level appears to exert the most meaningful influence among demographic variables.

The findings suggest that businesses targeting modest-income consumers should emphasize value-for-money propositions, quality assurance, and effective promotional strategies to enhance competitiveness.

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