



Consumers' Perceptions about Special Day Markets: A Case Study in Islamabad, Pakistan

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Abstract

This study is intended to provide information on consumers' perceptions about special day markets. In Islamabad (capital and metropolitan city of Pakistan) these markets are most famous markets to buy fruits and vegetables and other products at cheaper rates than the local markets. The main objective of this research was to study the quality and price structure of the items sold in special day markets. Special emphasis has been given to examine the special day markets are effective in terms of offering subsidized products to people with low income. With the help of interview schedules data have been collected from 160 households. Descriptive statistics involving the use of measure of central tendency such as frequency, percentage and charts have been used to analyze socio-economic analysis of special day markets. The main findings of this research reveal that good quality of products are sold in the special day markets at cheaper rates than normal prices in the other commercial markets. But prices are not stable in these markets too. However, availability of all products at one place has strong effect on the popularity of these markets. So, special day markets are blessings for those households who are busy whole week but they can purchase fresh fruits and vegetables at every weekend from one place at lower prices. It is recommended for the Capital Development Authority (CDA) administration to control the prices of fruits and vegetables and improve markets structure.

Introduction

Periodic and daily markets play an important role in commerce and organized gathering of buyers and sellers enhances the economic activity of an economy. A special day market is a public market at which farmers and often other vendors

sell products directly to consumers. These markets are organized and regulated by the local development authorities and it is these authorities who usually decide where and when markets are to be held. These markets are given different names respective to day on which

they held, as Sunday markets, Saturday markets and Friday markets etc. Farmers' market is another type of special day market famous in Europe and America held on Sunday.

Special day markets accommodate every class of the society. Poor as well as rich citizens of any city do not hesitate to buy articles or commodities from special days markets. Special day markets in developing countries started to act an affordable source for middle, lower middle and lower classes (Bromley *et al.*, 1975). These markets are rarely spontaneous, uncontrolled trade gatherings corresponding to the economist's perfect markets; which are atomistic, open, free and rational (Katzin, 1960; Norvell and Thompson, 1968). The rural dwellers visit to a market center on market day not only involve buying and selling in the market place, but also a wide range of other activities such as social interactions with friends and relatives; religious observances such as attending mass or offering a candle to the saint and legal activities such as petitioning the authorities and consulting layers (Lockwood, 1965).

In Latin America, periodic or special day markets occurring once, twice or three times a week are particularly important in small to medium central places serving the population of their surrounding rural areas (McBryde and Beals, 1967). Periodic markets are also found in regional centres and in many large cities (Pyle, 1968).

In Pakistan local and other commercial markets like Metro, Hyperstar, Makro, Cosmo etc. are much expensive to buy fruits, vegetables, meat, poultry, eggs and other households' essential goods i.e. crockery, grocery and cloths etc. Low and middle income people cannot afford to purchase their basic necessities of life from commercial super stores and cash & carries, especially in large cities i.e. Karachi, Lahore,

Faisalabad, Islamabad, Multan, Quetta and Peshawar. Local fruits and vegetable markets locally called *Sabzi Mandies* are also expensive and badly crowded because government has not much control on these markets.

Islamabad is a metropolitan capital city of Pakistan. Local superstores and cash & carries are located in far off places and are much expensive. Capital development authority (CDA) has been established different special day markets since 1990 in Islamabad, Pakistan. These markets are named as *Ithar Bazaar*, *Jumrah Bazaar*, *Budh Bazaar* and *Mangal Bazaar* respective to day on which they held; Sunday, Friday, Wednesday and Tuesday respectively. Due to low prices of commodities than open market, these markets are very much famous among people of Islamabad. It is also a great source for the high and elite classes especially in case of fresh meat, fruits and vegetables.

In view of the importance of special day markets, a survey was conducted to analyze and identify the problems being faced by buyers and sellers of these markets. These markets consist of every commodity from clothes to fruits, vegetables, grocery, plastic wares and daily use articles etc. Mostly customers buy fruits and vegetables from these markets because of good quality and low prices of fruits and vegetables than the normal markets. Consumer perceptions of price, quality and value are considered pivotal determinants of shopping behavior and product choice (Doyle 1984; Schlechter 1984; Sawyer and Dickson 1984; Jacoby and Olson 1985).

Sunday market provides an opportunity for local community residents to sell and purchase a wide array of goods on Sunday afternoons (Miller *et al.*, 2014). Miller, in his survey on Sunday street market noted that 97 percent of customers feel that the street market provides a safe space to shop. Bhat *et al.* (2013)

reported that there are different responses from various sections of the society regarding the quality of products available in the Sunday market. His study determines that about 4/5th business respondents were of the opinion that the quality of products is good. Similarly 53 percent of respondents (farmers and labourers each) responded that the quality of products sold in the market is good.

Public markets and market places have social and political effects (Braudel, 1982; Smith, 1980). Special day markets also generate secondary employment opportunities in supporting business. Curry and Oland (1998) commented on the economic multiplier effect of farmers' markets; markets increase the number of jobs and build new businesses, markets strengthen and diversify regional agriculture and increase farm profitability and farmers' markets serve as business incubators. Hilchey *et al.* (1995) noted that farmers' markets help to circulate money within a local community which might otherwise be spent on

imported goods.

The main objective of this study was to analyze the perceptions and attitudes of consumers about special day markets in capital city of a developing country.

Methodology

Keeping in view the supreme importance of the study, it should have been conducted throughout the country but on account of short time and financial constraints, it was confined only to Islamabad. Islamabad is a capital and metropolitan city of Pakistan lies at latitudes 33° 49' north and longitudes 72° 24' east with altitudes ranging from 457 to 610 meters. Islamabad had estimated population of 2 million (GOP, 2014). City was divided into two segments namely Islamabad rural and Islamabad urban and from these segments four villages and twelve subsectors were selected randomly. The selected subsectors and villages were fairly representative of the whole city. Table 1 shows the selected sectors, subsectors and villages.

Table 1: Segments and randomly selected subsectors and villages

Name of Segment	Subsectors & Villages
Islamabad Urban	E-8, E-9, E-11, F-6, F-8, G-6, G-7, G-9, G-10, G-11, I-8 and I-11
Islamabad Rural	<i>Chak Shahzad, Malpur, Bara Kahu and Chatha Bakhtawar</i>

Any set of individuals or objects having some common observable characteristics constitute a population (Dixon and Massey, 1969). The present study was designed to specially focus on importance of special day markets and to analyze the perceptions and attitudes of consumers about special day markets. Special day or weekly markets are most famous in Islamabad than other big cities of Pakistan because mostly residents in the city are government or private employees and it is difficult for them to shop for

household items in regular working days.

With the help of interview schedules data have been collected from 160 households. Questionnaires has been used to collect required data though personal interview from each household. Each questionnaire was consisted of three sections; one was the demographic section, second consumer's habits, perceptions and attitudes and last section was consisted on market structure. Both open-ended and close-ended questions were included in the questionnaire. The questionnaire

was pretested in the special day markets to identify deficiencies in the proforma as well as to incorporate various concerns of the consumers to make the questions more clear. Descriptive statistics involving the use of measure of central tendency such as frequency, percentage and charts have been used to analyze socio-economic analysis of special day markets.

Results and Discussions

Socio-Economic Characteristics of Respondents

The socio-economic characteristics of the respondents, which include their educational level, occupation, household income and visiting frequency are presented in presented in Table 2.

Data showed that 13.75 percent of the respondents had less than high school education, 18.12 percent secondary school, 8.75 percent higher secondary school, 24.37 percent bachelor and 35 percent of respondents had post-graduation or Ph.D. level of education. It can be concluded that most of the people visiting the special day markets are well educated and well informed about these markets. This finding substantiated the findings of Lawal and Idega (2004) who observed that the level of education attended by the respondents to a large extent determine the strategies and it helps in shaping the right kind of lifestyle in the human beings. The table further reveals that 45 percent of respondents were government employees, 20 percent private employees, 10.62 percent businessman, 15 percent students, 6.25 percent labourers and 3.13 percent were farmers. This implies that most of the buyers are government or private employees who are busy whole week and free only on weekends for shopping.

The data illustrated that the respondents between the

household income 21000-50000 rupees per month have the highest percentage (45.63%) followed by those between 51000-100000 rupees (27.5%), less than 20000 rupees (21.25%) and above 100000 rupees per month (5.62%). Income of households has been given very important position in the present study because income has very important role in purchasing something from any market or shop. Table also shows that visiting frequency of about every week, after one week, after two weeks and after a month constituted about 59.37, 8.75, 16.25 and 15.62 percent of the total, respectively. Visiting frequency is important in determining the level of satisfaction and profitability of the special day markets.

Table 2: Socio-economic characteristics of respondents

Socio-economic Characteristics	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Education Level		
Less than high School	22	13.75
Matric	29	18.13
F.A	14	8.75
Bachelor	39	24.37
Master or Ph.D.	56	35.00
Total	160	100
Occupation		
Govt. employees	72	45.00
Private employees	32	20.00
Businessman	17	10.62
Students	24	15.00
Labourers	10	6.25
Farmers	5	3.13
Total	160	100
Income (Rupees per month)		
Less than 20000	34	21.25
21000 to 50000	73	45.63
51000 to 100000	44	27.5
Above 100000	9	5.62
Total	160	100
Visiting Frequency		
Every week	95	59.37
After one week	14	8.75
After two weeks	26	16.25
After one month	25	15.62
Total	160	100

Price Structure

To compare the prices of special day market with other conventional or local markets, besides our personal observations by visiting Itwar bazaars of Aabpara and

Peshawar Moor, information has been collected from households. Majority of them responded that the products in these markets are sold at cheaper rates than

local or normal markets. It is observed that prices in special day markets (SDMs) are almost 15 to 20 percent less than conventional markets. Overall mostly buyers were satisfied with the prices in special day markets but when price level in these markets is compared with the income level of the households, the results showed that the low income people are not

much satisfied. It can be concluded that special day markets (SDMs) have failed to provide subsidized commodities to the households with lower income. Overall all response regarding the prices satisfactions is presented in Table 3.

Table 3: SDMs have lower prices or not VS Monthly income of households

Income	SDMs have lower prices or not		
	Yes	No	Total
Less than 20000	14	20	34
21000-50000	63	10	73
51000-100000	36	8	44
Above 100000	9	0	9
Total	122	38	160

Table 3 shows that overall 122 respondents out of total are satisfied with prices and only 38 responded that there is no difference in prices of special day markets and conventional or other commercial markets.

Quality of Products

There were different responses from various sections of

the society regarding the quality of products available in special day markets. To observe the quality of fruits and vegetables, respondents were asked to specify the quality of products in special day markets. Separate questions were asked about the quality of fruits and vegetables because this study was specially focused on agricultural commodities. The responses of respondents are presented in Table 4 and 5.

Table 4: Quality of fruits

Quality	Frequency	Percent
Very High	10	6.3
High	57	35.6
Average	81	50.6
Low	12	7.5
Total	160	100

Table 4 shows that nearly 50 percent of households responded that quality of fruits is average and almost

42 percent households responded that the quality of fruits is high.

Table 5: Quality of vegetables

Quality	Frequency	Percent
Very High	8	5.00
High	70	43.8
Average	73	45.6
Low	9	5.6
Total	160	100

Table 5 shows that quality of vegetables is good according to most of respondents. Almost 1/2 of respondents are satisfied with quality of vegetables and they said quality of vegetables is high. Almost 46 percent households responded that quality of vegetables is average. Most of respondents explained that the quality of fruits and vegetables is good in morning but in the evening low quality of fruits and vegetables are sold.

Factors that attract the respondents to visit special day markets

The factors that influence the respondents to purchase fruits and vegetables from special day markets are described in Table 6. There are different factors like prices, quality, easiness, window shopping and to spend weekend; that attract respondents to visit special day markets.

Table 6: Factors that attract the respondents to buy fruits and vegetables

Factors	Frequency	Percent
Price	17	10.6
Quality	4	2.5
Easiness	23	14.4
Price & Quality	34	21.3
Price & Easiness	38	23.8
Quality & Easiness	15	9.4
Price, Quality & Easiness	29	18.1
Total	160	100

Table 6 shows that most of households visit special day market due to price and easiness. Low price of fruits and vegetables is most attractive factor to buy from these markets for respondents.

Market Structure

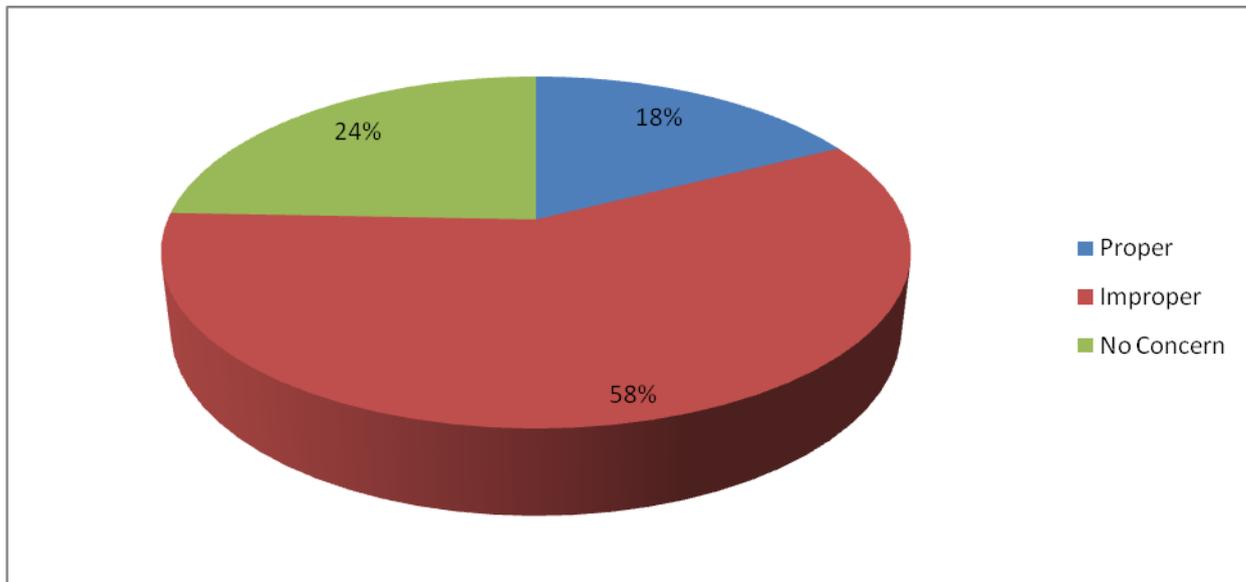
Close ended questions were asked about parking place,

parking fee, sanitation, electricity and overall environment from each respondent to know their opinion about structure of special day markets. Most of people in Islamabad use their own conveyances for travelling in the city so parking is very much necessary for these shoppers. Some people use local transport so they have no concern with parking. Data illustrated that parking place is improper according to almost 58

percent respondents, 17.5 percent said parking place is proper and 24.4 percent has no concern with parking. There is need to arrange proper parking place and sanitation facilities in these markets. The responses of

respondents are presented in Figure 1.

Figure 1: Opinion of respondents about parking place



Conclusion

Special day markets are most famous imperfect competitive markets in Islamabad, Pakistan. They are very economical and accommodate every class of the society. Poor as well as rich citizens of any city don't hesitate to buy products from these types of markets. Thus, from the above analysis it is concluded that special day markets are most favorable markets to buy fruits and vegetables and other products at cheaper rates than the local or normal markets. These markets are blessings for those households who are busy whole week but they can purchase fresh fruits and vegetables at every weekend from one place at lower prices. Although prices are lower than the local or normal markets but this difference is reducing with passage of time. So, Government is needed to control the prices to provide subsidized products particularly for low to

middle income classes. Beside this, these special day markets also provide employment and livelihood to a large number of people.

Recommendations

To improve special day markets, a few suggestions are listed below.

1. Government should assist the marketers by providing subsidies and reducing taxes imposed on them so that they can sell goods at lower prices.
2. Proper supply chain of fresh fruits and vegetables must be managed and there must be strict supervision by the local government to improve the quality of these products. For this purpose government should provide vans to

the marketers for the transportation of fresh fruits and vegetables in good time.

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