



Original Article

How Convenience, Price, Store Layout and Technology Influence Buying Behavior of Different Millennial Groups in the Convenience Stores in Vietnam

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Abstract: It is undeniable that convenience stores have expanded rapidly in the Vietnam retail market in recent years [1]. Convenience store chains such as Circle K, 7-Eleven, VinMart and B's Mart have been popular grocery shopping destinations for shoppers in Vietnam because of the busy modern life and the restricted time for shopping. Noticeably, Millennials with tremendous spending power have become an important shopper group of the convenience store. This research analyses the buying behavior of Millennials and the influential levels of factors including convenience, store layout, price and technology on different Millennial groups in this market.

Keywords: Convenience stores, millennials, buying behavior, convenience, store layout, price, technology, Vietnam.

1. Introduction

In the Vietnamese grocery market, the convenience store segment has witnessed the fastest growth compared to other modern retailing formats; and Vietnam's convenience store market is also expected to be Asia's fastest-growing convenience market reaching 37.4% by 2021 [1, 2]. Numerous convenience stores have been opened by foreign retailers, such as Family Mart (Japan), B'smart

(Thailand), Ministop, Circle K and 7-Eleven (US), competing against local operators, such as VinMart, and Co.op Food, thus creating a huge network with over 3000 convenience stores in the whole country [3]. Local players such as VinMart+ have established an enormous convenience store network with over 1,500 stores in 2019 [3], and Saigon Co.op, a leading state-owned retailer, also launched its convenience banner Co.op Smile and planned to add 200-300 outlets in 2018 [4]. The objective reasoning for this incredible growth is the domination of a young urban population and the increasing pace of life in urban cities fuelling demand for a convenient shopping

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style, especially in the big cities such as Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh City [5].

In fact, according to the Vietnam General Statistics Office (2018), Vietnam is currently experiencing a “golden population structure” with nearly 40% of the population from 18-35 years old. This group, named Millennials, is characterized by individuals who are Internet-savvier, information seekers and recreational quality seekers, and strongly consumption-oriented [6]. As a main labour force of a society, Millennials also have a fair disposable income level for shopping expenditure and the convenience store has become a favourite shopping destination for Millennials thanks to well-designed seating areas, in-store free Wi-Fi and high-quality products [7]. Therefore, Millennials are “the future” of 21st century retailing as well as an important customer group of convenience stores in particular. Thus, retailers in this sector need to understand the factors encouraging Millennial’s purchasing decisions during their shopping journey in convenience stores in Vietnam.

Many studies have proven factors such as convenience, price, store layout and digital technology as directly or indirectly influencing customers' purchasing behavior in grocery retailing. However, most previous researches have been conducted in customer behavior in the Asian convenience store, focusing on Taiwan [8-10], China [11, 12] and Japan [13], while the growing Vietnamese convenience store market has not been sufficiently explored. For the Vietnamese grocery market, previous researches have mainly focused on the buying behavior of Vietnamese consumers in other grocery retailers such as supermarkets and traditional markets [14, 15]. Only limited researches have examined convenience stores and customer behavior in the convenience store in Vietnam, but have not focused on Millennial groups. There is a scarcity of studies investigating the impact of convenience, price, store layout and technology on Millennials' shopping behavior in the convenience store. Especially, no previous researches have examined whether these factors leave a different

impact on different Millennial groups' buying decisions in the Vietnamese convenience store market. Thus, this paper was designed to explore how convenience, store layout, price and digital technology can create differences in the buying behavior of different Millennial groups in the convenience store in Vietnam.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Theories of Consumer Behavior

2.1.1. The buying decision-making process

The buying decision process is a decision-making process executed by customers corresponding to a potential market transaction, before, during and after the purchase of products and services [16]. In particular, this process is how buyers collect and assess information and then make a selection of products and services after comparing all alternatives. Engel et al. (2006) proposed a five-stage decision-making process that consumers go through in any purchases, encompassing need recognition and problem awareness, information search, alternatives evaluation, purchase decision and post-purchase behavior (Figure 1) [17].

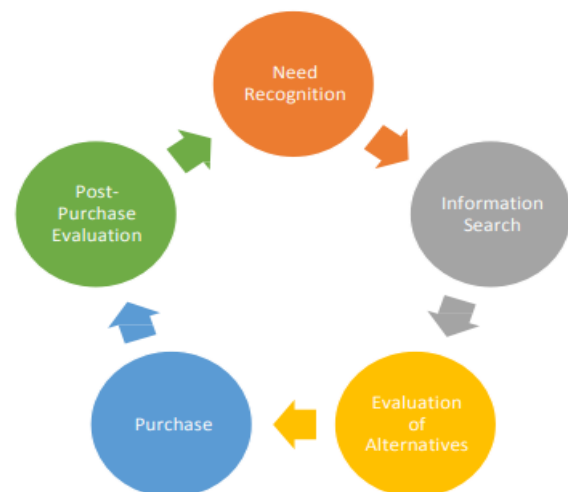


Figure 1. Five-stage decision-making progress.
Source: Engel et al. (2006) [17].

Engel et al. (2006) contend that thanks to focusing on motivational factors, the five-stage model supports the user to more easily find out customers' motives underlying all stages of the

purchasing decision process [17]. That is the reason why this five-stage model is more precise and suitable for researchers to investigate customer buying decision-making.

Table 1. Descriptions of the five-stage decision-making process

Stages of progress	Descriptions	
Need recognition	Consumers' searching for changes in current states when they realize dissatisfaction.	
Information search	Internal search	Consumer's personal experiences, culture and beliefs.
	External search	The media, advertising and feedback from reference groups. Or, classified as a personal source, business source, public source and experience source.
Alternatives evaluation	Consumers' evaluation of different products available from the perspectives of functional and psychological benefits.	
Purchase	Is final purchase action based on the results of the alternative evaluation, environment factors, and the choice of stores?	
Post-purchase Evaluation	Examining and comparing product features such as price, quality and service.	

Source: Adapted from Engel et al. (2006) [17].

2.1.2. Theory of buyer behavior

While many theories of consumer behavior have been proposed in the last 50 years, the Theory of Buyer Behavior of Howard and Sheth (1969) is one of the few models to have been commonly used and tested in-depth [18]. This theory demonstrates "a sophisticated integration of the various social, psychological and marketing influences" on consumers' buying decisions. As an integrative model that incorporates many of the aspects of consumer behavior, the Theory of Buyer Behavior supports researchers to create hypotheses and further investigate consumer behavior.

In this theory, the influence factors of a consumer's purchasing behavior are divided into four major types, including stimulation (input factors), external factors (exogenous variables), internal factors (hypothetical constructs), and reflection (output factors). Stimulation variables are elements that directly influence the information-searching process, which are the environmental stimuli that the consumer is subjected to, and is communicated from a variety of sources [18]. The model holds that input factors arouse the motivation, which further influences the consumer's psychological activities (internal factors). By experiencing

buying action, consumers create a range of reactions of buying tendency and attitude toward a brand/store (response variables). Associating with other factors, buying behavior is established, which will play an important contribution to the next purchase [16].

In general, the Theory of Buyer Behavior determines elements of the buyer decision process, makes an observation of the changes occurring in them over time on account of their repetitious nature, and exhibits how the decision element combination influences the search processes and the information consolidation from the consumer's commercial and social environment (Figure 2) [18].

2.2. Shopping Behavior of the Millennial Generation

Considering the selected age structure of this research, 18 to 35, it is possible to assign some characteristics of the so-called Millennials: the generation of people born between the early 1980s and the early 2000s [19]. As constituting more than 25% of the world population, this generation plays a role as an important group and target customer for retailers and grocery companies thanks to their

enormous number and the significance of both their current and future spending power [20]. In terms of Millennials' shopping styles, Millennials consider shopping not as the simple

act of purchase, but as a form of leisure [21]. Millennials see themselves as functional shoppers, and pursue purchasing experiences containing entertainment.

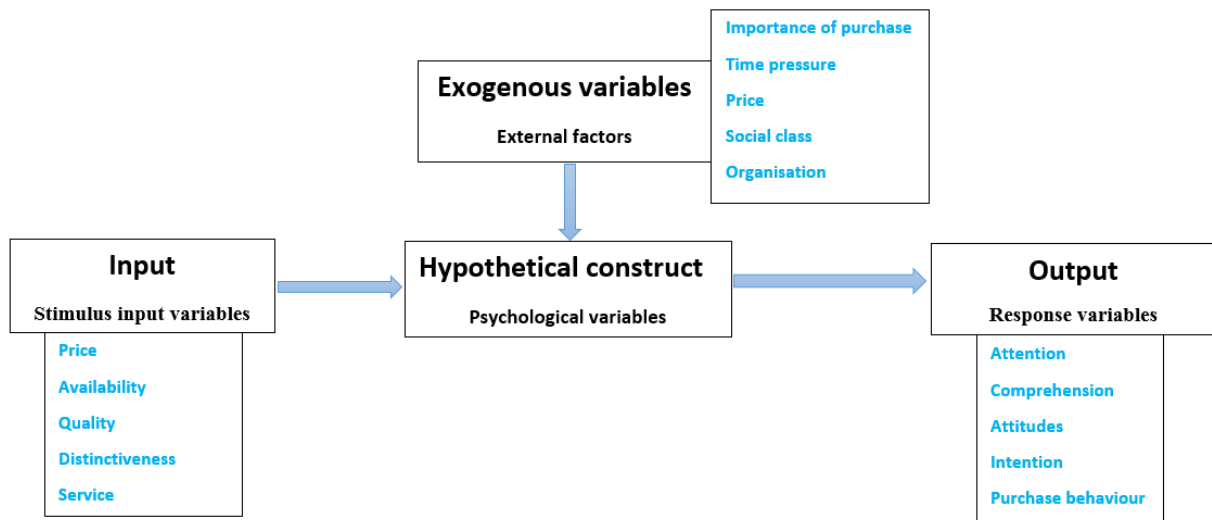


Figure 2. Major components of the theory of buyer behavior.
Source: Howard and Sheth (1969) [18].

Besides, Millennials are eager to seek a combination of the best quality and the best price. However, Bakewell and Mitchell (2003) contend that younger generations are more likely to associate higher prices with higher quality, and they are more motivated to “trade up” price-quality compared with the older generation [22]. As a consumer group, Millennials have been raised in a consumption-driven society and represents tremendous spending power [23]. Millennials play a main role in their families in decision-making compared to other generations. In particular, they are the most consumption-oriented generational cohort of all groups. Typically, Millennials are considered highly sociable, Internet-savvy and techno-literate and more importantly, they grew up with technology [24]. As stated by Palmer (2009), Millennials are the first generation of digital natives [25]. Being born and living in the information era with the nonstop influence of the Internet as well as new

technological devices such as computers, laptops, digital cameras, mobile phones and other digital tools, these external conditions, directly and indirectly, affect Millennials' shopping habits and the buying decision-making process [26].

2.3. Factors Impacting Consumer Behavior in the Convenience Store

2.3.1. Convenience

The term “convenience” refers to time-saving and effort-saving in the purchasing process, which is the customers' priority [27, 28]. Critical elements leading consumers to shop in a convenience store include extended operating hours [29, 30], easy access [28], parking availability and impulse purchases [26, 31]. In terms of trading hours, several studies show that due to permitted hours of opening in the UK, Spain, Germany, Austria and the Netherlands, the supermarket sector in these

countries has been facing increasing competition from local stores, which offer convenience by opening early and closing late. IGD retail analysis in 2018 [1] reported that more than 90% of new convenience stores operate 24 hours per day and seven days a week to meet customer demand, especially early morning and late-night shopping. Early morning and late-night consumers depend on stores providing them with essential items which are not available in other stores.

There have been several studies investigating convenience stores' location, which have identified that the right location can help increase store sales [28, 32]. Critically, the proximity location presents an intensely important determinant for convenience stores, which attracts customers to come and shop in these stores [33]. Fitrianto and Daud (2017) contend that an ideal store should be located in a place that is very easy to reach so that consumers have ease of access, parking lots, and security [34]. As reported by *Retail News Asia* in 2016 [5], 75% of citizens showed they want to shop in a convenience store located in or near their neighborhood. Taking into account the restricted time buyers spend on shopping activities, convenience stores within walking distance from their accommodation could create a strong incentive for consumers to visit [33].

2.3.2. Store layout

Store layout, referring to the store's merchandise presentation, is a crucial factor in store image creation [35]. This includes "doors, merchandise placement, shelf orientation, music, check-out counters, interior decorating, staff attitude, lighting and location of the loading facilities". Placing significant influence on in-store traffic, store atmosphere, shopping behavior and operating efficiency, a well-designed layout is a critical element in building store success [31, 35]. Many studies have been undertaken into specific elements of store layout and their roles in enticing customers to a shop; including color, atmosphere, music and light, merchandise and in-store convenience [31]. Acknowledging the significance of product presentation in a store, marketing

experts can easily allure consumers to drop in and shop [36]. Besides traditional grocery retailing, the format of convenience stores, combining both shopping and dining (called "hybrid convenience stores"), contributes to increasing store patronage and customer preference for convenience stores [37, 38].

Tlapana (2009) demonstrated an overall overview of a store's layout characteristics and how important merchandise display in a convenience store is in enticing consumers to browse through the store and derive buying action [31]. Proper merchandising, at the same time, supports impulse buying in a convenience store. The mere basic product consisting of candy, gum, mints, chips or small packs of tissues displayed at the checkout aisles can induce consumers to buy with no conscious planning or prior thought. Hence, merchandise layout could contribute significantly to a store's sale, thanks to its momentous influence on customer buying behavior; especially, for this research's target consumer - the Millennials who are seeking a recreational shopping style [16, 20].

2.3.3. Price

As Millennials have a strong consideration of the competitive price or "good deal" as well as exposing a compelling bargaining power, price is a crucial factor influencing their shopping decisions toward a store. However, price has been described as both a sacrifice needs indicator as well as a quality level indicator by many authors [39]. Diallo introduced a paradoxical situation in which a good with a more competitive price could be more appealing to the customer than its substitutes because of its cheaper price and less appealing because customers suppose it to be an inferior quality product [39].

In terms of an indicator of sacrifice of needed amount, Diallo [39] states that a more expensive price presents an expenditure amount that needs to be sacrificed to obtain an item, leading to a reduced willingness to buy. Price is one of the important significates [11], in the conceptualization of variables and shapes consumer choices and affects impulse. The more the product cost increases, the less the

product consumption will be [40]. Besides, some researches contended that there is a difference in the shopping behavior of males and females under the impact of the price factor [20, 41], particularly; female shoppers are more price-sensitive than male shoppers.

However, price problemsatically influences a customer's perception of a product's quality level [42]. Theoretical rationales emphasize an expected positive price-quality relationship based on the market expectation that high-quality commodities often require a larger production cost than low-quality commodities. Hence, higher priced items mean higher perceived quality, which, as a consequence, creates a greater willingness to buy [42, 43].

2.3.4. Technology

Millennials are described as very Internet-savvy [7, 23], are information seekers through multiple channels and have grown up with technology [24]. Millennials are highly influenced by the social media, with more than 50% indicating they have been influenced by social media for purchases [44]. Social media is known as the wide range of “online word-of-mouth forums and information-sharing formats including blogs, microblogging sites, company-sponsored discussion boards, chat rooms, customer-to-customer emails, consumer product or service rating emails and creativity work-sharing and social networking sites” [45]. Ozer (2012) and Lenhart (2018) studied how social communication tools and search engines can be influential in the purchase decision-making process by generating and sharing product-related opinions [46, 47]. Digital technology strongly supports the process of transferring product information and brands' symbolic stimuli also encourage social stimuli by supporting communication between consumers and their reference group [11].

Hershatter and Epstein (2010) contend that Millennials regularly use blogs, reviews, and social networks to openly express their interests and feelings [48]. Besides, technology application

in business also promotes the buying decision-making process and then increases customer satisfaction towards that retailer [45]. In particular, an informative website allows Millennials to do information searches more easily, which helps them as consumers to make buying decisions more quickly and leverage the purchase volume [7]. In other words, technology contains both direct and indirect impulse factors impacting on consumers' decision-making as it encourages the communication process among social stimuli elements.

3. Methodology

3.1. Data Collection and Questionnaire Design

Quantitative data is important because it supports researchers to measure and compare data of a significant population. However, it is important to have some open-ended questions to ensure that all participants' views can be fully understood, which contributes to in-depth analysis in the following part. Thus, this questionnaire survey contains three main parts plus two filter questions. The filter questions about age and current country of residence were crucial to guarantee the validity of the survey participants as Millennials living in Vietnam since this group is the targeted subject of this study. The first part comprised three open-ended questions relating to Millennials' attitude towards and opinion of the convenience store. This helped the author to understand consumer insights more deeply, which contributes to in-depth analysis in the following chapter. The second part was designed to ask participants about convenience (8 items), store layout (6 items), price (5 items) and technology usage (6 items). The five-point Likert scale was applied, ascending from 1 to 5 according to the level of agreement [49]. The third part focused on collecting demographic information such as age, gender, income, marital status, and occupation. The demographic information may

say something about participant buying behavior and fulfil the customer persona [49].

Considering this research subject, for Millennials who are technology-savvy and access the Internet as well as social networks as daily needs. This self-administered questionnaire was the perfect tool applied in this research. The survey was designed and distributed on the website <https://www.onlinesurveys.ac.uk/> in English and Vietnamese and pretested on fifteen Vietnamese Millennials. Next, it was forwarded widely to respondents who are initial contacts' acquaintances living in Vietnam via social networks or email. The official number of valid observations in this study was 250.

3.2. Method of Analysis

The questionnaire contained one dependent variable (buying behavior), four independent variables (convenience, store layout, price and technology usage), and six control variables (gender, age, marital status, occupation, monthly income and level of education). Each of the dependent and independent variables was analyzed by a group of observed variables, which matched them to item sets of each construct in the questionnaire. All items were measured by 5-point Likert scales, which were 5 - strongly agree, 4 - agree, 3 - not sure, 2 - disagree and 1 - strongly disagree. Then, all collected data were analyzed by factor loading, Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) & Bartlett, Variance, Cronbach's Alpha, Mann-Whitney U Test and the Kruskal-Wallis Test.

In addition, the administered survey contained three open-ended questions which provide qualitative data to be handled. The author followed the standard technique of qualitative data analysis including data collection, data display, data immersion, data reduction, data analysis and drawing conclusions [50]. In-depth analysis of open-ended questions can contribute to detect valuable findings, raise discussion and draw conclusions.

4. Research Finding

4.1. Demographic Data

In this section, descriptive statistics were employed to examine the demographic information of the participants. Based on the analysis of demographic data, the most typical Millennial customer persona of the Vietnamese convenience store market is described as a single female working as an office worker with a monthly income under 10 million VND and with a bachelor degree as the highest level of education.

4.2. Factor Analysis

4.2.1. Rotated component matrix

All observed items describing similar concepts are classified in the same group which represents one variable. In this study, four different components are emerged on the basis of 20 observed items, which are considered as four independent variables; particularly, CON (including CON1 to CON5), LAY (including LAY1 to LAY5), PRI (including PRI1 to PRI5) and TEC (including TEC1 to TEC5). As a result of running factor loading, a clear structure was demonstrated without any cross-loading phenomenon. Based on the study of Hart et al. (2010), the cut-off value was set at 0.5, which guaranteed the statistical significance of each factor. Excepting for TEC1 and PRI5 failing to reach the cut-off level, all factors ranged from 0.888 to 0.547. Meanwhile, all observed items are good to ensure the data convergent validity.

4.2.2. Reliability and validity

In this research, the KMO value is 0.924 and the sig. value in Bartlett's Test is at an acceptable level (< 0.05). Cronbach's alpha of all variables all reach the requirements with the value from 0.814 to 0.894, which are good enough for investigation [51]. In particular, Store layout shows the highest figure; by contrast, the lowest position belongs to Technology.

Table 2. Demographic information of respondents (Number of responses: 250)

Variable	Level	Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	103	41.2
	Female	147	58.8
Age	Young Millennials (18-24 years old)	125	50
	Old Millennials (25-35 years old)	125	50
Occupation	Student	56	22.4
	Office workers	152	60.8
	Other	41	16.4
Individual monthly income	Under 10 million VND	120	48
	From 10 million to 20 million VND	90	36
	Over 20 million VND	30	12
Marital status	Single	212	84.8
	Married	38	15.2
Education level	High school study	26	10.4
	Bachelor degree	175	70
	Master degree	49	19.6

Source: Results of SPSS analysis.

Table 3. The result of factor loading

Items	Scales	Factor loading
<i>Convenience - CON (Cronbach' Alpha = 0.875)</i>		
CON3	Proximity to home or workplace	0.856
CON1	Acceptable traffic flow near the store area	0.849
CON4	Long opening hours	0.732
CON5	Convenient packaging products and sets	0.722
CON2	Convenient parking area	0.584
<i>Store layout - LAY (Cronbach' Alpha = 0.894)</i>		
LAY5	Nice dining area	0.801
LAY4	Clear notice/direction boards in store	0.711
LAY2	Pleasant store layout in general	0.691
LAY3	Pleasant store atmosphere	0.626
LAY1	Attractive visual display of products	0.564
<i>Price - PRI (Cronbach' Alpha = 0.868)</i>		
PRI2	Cheaper price compared to other grocery stores	0.888
PRI3	High quality with cheap price product	0.863
PRI1	Easy to get cheap products Nice dining area	0.803
PRI4	High-quality products with reasonable prices	0.547
PRI5	Good deal and promotion	
<i>Technology - TEC (Cronbach' Alpha = 0.814)</i>		
TEC4	A high rating in food review pages and website	0.774
TEC2	Reachable store information on social media	0.709
TEC3	Check-in online destination	0.683
TEC5	Online WOM recommendation	0.647
TEC1	Application of loyalty apps and loyalty scheme	

Source: Results of SPSS analysis.

Table 4. KMO and Bartlett's Test

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		0.924
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	2968.153
	Df	171
	Sig.	0.000

Source: Results of SPSS analysis.

In summary, factor analysis effectively made the mass of data cleaner, simpler and more manageable as well as eliminating the possibility of some invalid items. Significantly, the tests applied have found the data to be consistent and four interpretable factors have emerged to enable further analysis.

4.3. Shopping Behavior Comparison Between Groups

The research also examined whether there were any differences in the shopping behavior between different demographic groups including Gender, Age, Occupation, Income, Education and Marital status in terms of the four testing factors. The Mann-Whitney U test and Kruskal-Wallis test were applied.

4.3.1. Gender

The test results showed all p-values > 0.05, excepting for PRI (U = 6087, p = 0.018). Thus, only the Price factor can make a difference in shopping behavior between males and females in the convenience store. Moreover, the median of males (0.183) is larger than the median of females (-0.257). Males tend to shop in convenience stores due to price impact rather than females. To sum up, there are no significant differences between the genders in purchasing behavior in the convenience store respecting Convenience, Store layout and Technology. By contrast, males and females

express that the difference in purchasing behavior is because of price.

4.3.2. Age (Table 6)

The test results showed the significance levels of all observed variables were higher than 0.05, except for PRI (U = 6286, p = 0.022). Hence, there are no significant differences between young Millennials and old Millennials in purchasing behavior in the convenience store as regards Convenience, Store layout and Technology. By contrast, old Millennials tend to shop in convenience stores rather than young Millennials under the effect of Price.

4.3.3. Occupation (Table 7)

The test results demonstrated that no statistical significance was found among different occupation groups (p-value > 0.05) excluding CON (p = 0.021). Thus, regarding Layout, Price and Technology, there were no differences among the occupation groups of Millennials in the buying decision in the convenience store.

In terms of Convenience, a statistical significance among different occupation groups was found. The author continued to utilize the Mann-Whitney U test to examine the difference between each pair of student-officer, officer-other and student-other toward Convenience. The result showed no statistical differences between office workers and "other".

Table 5. Shopping behavior comparison between gender groups

	CON	LAY	PRI	TEC
Mann-Whitney U	6536.000	7390.000	6087.000	6659.000
Z	-1.554	-0.009	-2.366	-1.331
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	0.120	0.993	0.018	0.183

Source: Results of SPSS analysis.

Table 6. Shopping behavior comparison between young millennials (from 18-24 years old) and old millennials (from 25-35 years old)

	CON	LAY	PRI	TEC
Mann-Whitney U	7184.000	7290.000	6286.000	6706.000
Z	-0.674	-0.484	-2.284	-1.531
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	0.500	0.628	.022	0.126

Source: Results of SPSS analysis.

Table 7. Shopping behavior comparison among occupation groups (students, office workers and others)

Kruskal Wallis Test				
	CON	LAY	PRI	TEC
Chi-Square	7.757	0.044	1.345	2.794
df	2	2	2	2
Asymp. Sig.	0.021	0.978	0.510	0.247

Source: Results of SPSS analysis

However, there is a medium statistical difference between students and other groups. Students with a higher median (median = -0.066) are likely to shop in convenience stores because of Convenience rather than the “other” group (median = -0.223).

4.3.4. Income, education and marital status

The author continued to test the differences between income (Kruskal-Wallis test), education levels (Kruskal-Wallis test) and marital status (Mann-Whitney U test) on importance of purchasing behavior, but no significant differences were found.

To sum up, there is a significant difference in purchasing behavior in convenience stores between Gender and Age in terms of Price. The differences in purchasing behavior among different occupation groups are statistically significant regarding Convenience. While no significant differences were found between Income, Education levels and Marital status on the importance of purchasing behavior.

4.4. Key Finding of Qualitative Data: Expected Convenient Services in the Convenience Store

In fact, convenience is the main reason that consumers come and shop in convenience stores; so, if retailers can create more “convenience” in their stores, they will have the

chance to attract more consumers. Quantitative data proved that the convenience factor can make differences in the shopping behavior of different occupation groups of Millennials. Qualitative data suggested some ideas of value-added convenient services raised among survey participants, who had a chance to experience convenience stores in Korea and Japan. In particular, services such as photocopying services, photo printing, a parcel delivery service and a click-and-collect service should be added in convenience stores. By providing a parcel delivery service, the convenience store acts as a 24/7 post office (24 hours a day, 7 days a week), which is suitable for a busy modern life. The office worker group has the biggest consideration toward the convenience store because of its convenience characteristics according to the primary test result. The working time of a typical office worker in Vietnam is from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., from Monday to Friday or even extra on Saturday mornings [5]. Office workers have trouble finding a little free time to go to a post office during its operating time. A delivery service provided by a convenience store opening 24/7 could become their first and only choice.

Regarding a Click-and-collect service, this is a very popular service in convenience stores in Japan and Korea, which allows consumers to

shop online, then collect their purchases at the nearest convenience store. In Korea and Japan, convenience stores coordinate with other retailers providing the Click-and-Collect service. If the customer suddenly needs a white shirt, then he can quickly order one in UNIQLO or any fashion brand and collect it in the nearest convenience store. Challengingly, this Click-and-Collect service can only run properly based on good cooperation between the convenience store chain and its partners who wish to develop an online shopping format such as for fashion brands, cosmetic brands and home utensil brands. If this is applied successfully, the retail market will be more unified and it is suitable with the modern retailing trend of “easy shopping” as indicated in the literature chapter.

These services can help to increase store patronage as well as strengthen its “convenience” characteristic - the most outstanding feature of the convenience store in Millennials’ mindset, which could be added in convenience stores in Vietnam in the near future.

5. Conclusion and Implication

This study could be considered as the first research exploring how convenience, store layout, price and digital technology can create differences in the buying behavior of different Millennial groups in the convenience store in Vietnam. This study contributes to enrich knowledge and understanding about the consumer behavior field in convenience store retailing. In fact, there is a large number of researchers who have investigated factors impacting on consumer behavior in this market sector. However, very few scholars focused on Millennials, who demonstrate a tremendous purchasing power, especially in Vietnam. Thus, this paper is the first research testing whether these factors leave different impacts on different millennial groups' buying decisions in the Vietnam convenience store market.

By conducting an online survey with 250 valid respondents living in Vietnam, the quantitative data collection was analyzed by

SPSS software while the qualitative data from three open-ended questions were also displayed, immersed, coded and analyzed. Finally, some key findings were highlighted and discussed. This study critically confirms the previous studies about factors influencing consumer decisions to shop; including convenience, store layout, price and technology. Also, this paper found the difference in the shopping behavior between males and females as well as young Millennials and old Millennials under the impact of price. Convenience was found to be the only factor that can make a difference in the shopping behavior among different occupation groups of Millennials.

This study raises some ideas of adding more convenient products and services in the convenience store in Vietnam in order to develop further convenience characteristics and strengthen its comparative advantage compared to other grocery formats. By finding out the most significant affecting level of Convenience factors on consumer buying decision, retailers should pay more attention to develop the “convenience features” of their stores, such as advanced payment methods, self-service point-of-sales, nice seating areas as well as convenient products and services. Business strategies relating to product development, marketing and store location planning could be built based on the preference of the office worker group, which is currently confirmed as the target customer of Vietnamese convenience stores in this research; particularly, developing a varied ready-to-eat food menu or store location planning in office buildings and industrial zones.

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