



Proximity, Accessibility, and Visibility: An Analysis of Minimarket Location Strategies in Bandung City

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Abstract

The rapid expansion of minimarkets in urban areas necessitates well-designed location selection strategies to ensure business sustainability amid intense competition in modern retailing. This study aims to analyze minimarket location selection in Bandung City from a consumer perspective by applying the retail location framework proposed by Berman and Evans. A descriptive qualitative approach was employed, with data collected through a literature review, semi-structured interviews with minimarket consumers, and field observations. Data were analyzed descriptively, and source triangulation was applied to enhance the credibility of the findings. The results indicate that minimarket location selection is a staged and interrelated process encompassing the evaluation of trading area characteristics, determination of location type, selection of specific sites, and assessment of alternative locations. Minimarkets tend to be located in areas with high population density, strong accessibility, and intense traffic flows. The dominant location format is the isolated store, reflecting the adoption of a convenience-oriented strategy that prioritizes ease of access, extended operating hours, and shopping comfort. Store visibility, accessibility, and the availability of parking facilities are identified as key determinants in final location decisions. This study concludes that the success of minimarket locations is shaped by the integration of spatial characteristics, consumer preferences, and the dynamics of retail competition.

Keywords: Consumer behavior, Location selection, Minimarket, Modern retail, Trading area.

1. Introduction

Retail business constitutes an economic activity directly associated with the sale of goods or services to final consumers. Over the past decades, this sector has undergone significant transformation driven by shifts in consumption patterns, rapid urbanization, and advances in distribution technologies. In Indonesia, particularly in West Java, the growth of modern retail has outpaced that of traditional retail formats. Evidence indicates that modern retail has expanded by approximately 66 percent, whereas traditional markets have grown by only around 5 percent (Rusham, 2016). This trend suggests that the expansion of modern retail has far-reaching economic implications, affecting not only market structures but also national revenue contributions and competitive dynamics.

Modern retail encompasses a wide range of business formats, including supermarkets, minimarkets, modern grocery stores, department stores, and e-commerce-based retailing. These formats primarily aim to meet consumers' daily needs by offering products that are easily accessible, time-efficient, and convenient. Recent studies indicate that urban consumers increasingly prefer modern retail outlets due to superior accessibility, time efficiency, and enhanced shopping convenience compared with traditional retail channels (Dholakia et al., 2018; Fahlutvy & Dirgantara, 2021). Minimarkets represent one of the most dominant and widely encountered forms of modern retail in urban areas. Beyond their role in supplying everyday consumer goods, minimarkets contribute to the national economy through job creation, intensified distribution activities, and the strengthening of local retail networks. However, the high intensity of competition among minimarkets with similar formats and market segments compels retailers to adopt effective strategies to ensure long-term survival and sustainability. One of the most critical strategies in this regard is the selection of an appropriate business location (Roslin & Rosnan, 2012).

Location selection is a strategic decision applicable across all types of businesses, including modern retail. Location plays a pivotal role in determining business viability and performance, as it directly influences consumer accessibility, market potential, and competitive intensity. Such decisions are inherently long-term, whether the location is owned or leased, and errors in location choice may result in adverse consequences that are difficult to reverse. Furthermore, locations situated in economically dynamic areas tend to offer stronger growth prospects and greater opportunities for business expansion (Elg & Welinder, 2022; Lamb et al., 2010).

In the context of modern retail—particularly minimarkets—location should not be viewed merely as a geographic position, but as an integral component of competitive strategy aimed at effectively reaching target consumers. Recent empirical studies emphasize that location-related factors, including proximity to residential areas, population density, transportation accessibility, and store visibility, exert a significant influence on consumer preferences and retail sales performance (Sirilertsuwan et al., 2020; Ukamaka, 2021). Accordingly, location analysis constitutes a critical aspect in understanding the success and sustainability of minimarkets within increasingly competitive modern retail environments.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Location Decisions in Retail Business

Location selection represents one of the most critical strategic decisions in retail business, as it directly affects consumer accessibility, visitation levels, and sales performance. Retailers choose store locations by considering a range of factors, including the characteristics of the trading area, proximity to other units operated by the same firm, the presence of competitors, and the demographic and socio-economic profiles of the surrounding population. Conversely, consumers also apply their own criteria when selecting shopping locations, such as area attractiveness, travel distance, the availability of alternative retailers and brands, parking convenience, and overall ease of access (Berman et al., 2018).

This framework underscores that retail location decisions are not merely geographic in nature, but rather reflect the interaction between retailers' strategic considerations and consumer preferences. Recent studies indicate that urban consumers tend to favor retail locations that are close to their residences or daily activity centers, offer high visibility, and are easily accessible on foot or by private vehicles (Dewi et al., 2023; Indradjati, 2024; Zhou et al., 2024). Accordingly, location functions as a value-creating factor within the overall shopping experience.

2.2. Location Strategy Based on Business Type

Location decisions are closely linked to the characteristics and strategic objectives of a business. In the manufacturing sector, location strategies are typically oriented toward cost minimization, particularly transportation and distribution costs. In contrast, retail businesses and professional services tend to adopt location strategies aimed at revenue maximization by ensuring proximity to markets and consumers. For certain business types, such as warehousing and logistics, location decisions are often determined by a combination of cost efficiency and delivery speed. Overall, the primary objective of location strategy is to maximize firm profitability through the selection of the most optimal location (Heizer et al., 2021).

Within the context of modern retailing, revenue-maximization strategies have become increasingly salient in response to intensified competition and evolving consumer behavior. Recent empirical studies highlight that strategically located retail outlets are more likely to generate higher customer traffic, strengthen competitive positioning, and support long-term business sustainability (Dekimpe et al., 2023; van Greuningen et al., 2024).

2.3. Retail Location Selection Framework

According to Berman et al., (2018) in *Retail Management: A Strategic Approach*, retail location selection is a strategic, multi-stage decision-making process. The authors conceptualize location decisions into four primary levels. First, retailers evaluate alternative geographic areas or trading areas by considering population characteristics and the existing retail structure. Second, firms determine the type of location, deciding whether the store should operate as an isolated unit within an unplanned business district or be situated within a planned shopping center. Third, a specific site is selected within the chosen location category, such as a particular business district or shopping center. Finally, alternative sites are analyzed (*site selection*) to identify the most optimal location based on a range of operational and market-related criteria.

This framework has been widely adopted in retail research due to its systematic ability to explain the interrelationships among spatial factors, market characteristics, and firm strategy. Recent empirical studies demonstrate that the staged approach proposed by Berman et al., (2018) remains highly relevant for analyzing minimarket locations in densely populated and competitive urban environments.

2.4. Determinants of Location Selection

Beyond the framework proposed by Berman et al. (2018), Heizer et al. (2021) identify eight key components that should be considered in business location selection, particularly in retail contexts. These components include the purchasing power of the surrounding population, the alignment between the firm's services and brand image with the demographic characteristics of target customers, the intensity and quality of competition, the distinctiveness of the location relative to competitors, the physical quality of facilities and the surrounding business environment, corporate operational policies, and the quality of management. These factors interact with one another and collectively determine the effectiveness of a location in supporting business performance (Heizer et al., 2021).

Recent studies reinforce this perspective by emphasizing the importance of integrating economic, demographic, and accessibility-related factors in modern retail location decisions. Locations characterized by strong purchasing power, high accessibility, and a manageable level of competition have been shown to exert a positive influence on sales performance and consumer loyalty (Khairunnisa & Gamal, 2023; Teller et al., 2016).

3. Research Method

This study adopts a descriptive qualitative approach aimed at capturing and interpreting the phenomenon in depth based on factual conditions observed in the field. The descriptive method is employed to examine a variable

or phenomenon independently, without testing causal relationships among variables. This approach is particularly appropriate for retail research, as it enables a contextual understanding of minimarket location characteristics as experienced by consumers and directly observed within the research setting. Descriptive qualitative research focuses on systematically and accurately portraying empirical realities in accordance with actual field conditions (Creswell & Creswell, 2017).

Data collection was conducted using multiple complementary techniques to enhance the depth and validity of the findings. First, a literature review was undertaken by examining textbooks, peer-reviewed journals, and scholarly articles relevant to retail location concepts, minimarkets, and the analytical framework proposed by Berman and Evans. This step aimed to establish a robust theoretical foundation and ensure alignment with recent developments in the literature. Second, semi-structured interviews were conducted with minimarket consumers in Bandung City as the primary informants. This interview format was selected to elicit in-depth insights into consumers' perceptions of minimarket location attributes, including accessibility, visibility, shopping comfort, and proximity to daily activities, thereby allowing for a richer and more contextual understanding of consumer perspectives (Guest et al., 2013). Third, field surveys were carried out through direct observation of minimarket locations and their surrounding environments, including proximity to residential areas, traffic intensity, and the presence of competing retail outlets within the same area.

Data analysis employed descriptive qualitative techniques by organizing, categorizing, and interpreting the collected data to identify meaningful patterns and themes. Interview and observational data were analyzed interpretatively to portray minimarket location characteristics from the consumer perspective. To ensure the trustworthiness of the findings, this study applied source triangulation by cross-checking information obtained from consumer interviews, field observations, and secondary data from the literature. Triangulation was used to enhance the credibility and reliability of the findings, which is particularly important in qualitative research that prioritizes depth of understanding over statistical generalization (Creswell & Creswell, 2017; Miles et al., 2020).

4. Result and Discussion

Based on the descriptive qualitative approach adopted in this study, the analytical findings are structured with reference to the retail location selection framework proposed by Berman et al. (2018). This framework conceptualizes location decisions as a strategic and interrelated, multi-stage process, ranging from the evaluation of geographic or trading areas to the identification of the most optimal alternative sites. Accordingly, this section focuses on discussing empirical findings that are classified into several key dimensions or decision levels of business location selection. Each stage is examined by linking the actual conditions of minimarkets in Bandung City with consumer perspectives and relevant theoretical foundations, thereby providing a comprehensive understanding of how location strategies are implemented in modern retail practice.

4.1. Trading Area Characteristics

Evaluating trading area characteristics constitutes a critical initial stage in the minimarket location selection process, as it determines the feasibility and suitability of a given area as the operational base for retail activities. Geographic area analysis involves the consideration of various external factors, including physical environmental conditions, population demographics, and local government regulations, particularly land-use planning and business licensing stipulated in regional policies. This approach is consistent with Berman et al. (2018), who emphasize that trading area analysis aims to identify core market potential capable of sustaining retail performance over time.

From the retailer's perspective, an ideal trading area is typically characterized by high population density and stable economic activity. Field findings indicate that minimarkets in Bandung City tend to target locations in close proximity to dense residential areas, apartment complexes, schools, and office districts. These locations are considered strategic due to their relatively consistent consumer flows throughout the day. In addition, minimarket operators take into account household income levels in the surrounding area, as purchasing power serves as a key indicator of potential sales volume and long-term business viability. Recent empirical studies confirm that population density and income levels are primary determinants in the formation of primary trading areas for small-format modern retail such as minimarkets (Hunneman et al., 2023).

From the consumer perspective, trading area characteristics influence shopping decisions primarily through proximity and ease of access. Consumers tend to prefer minimarkets located close to their residences or routine activity nodes, such as commuting routes to schools or workplaces. Geographic proximity enables consumers to fulfill daily needs quickly without incurring substantial transportation costs or time expenditure. Research further suggests that, for urban consumers, minimarkets function not merely as retail outlets but as integral components of daily mobility patterns that prioritize efficiency and convenience (Teller et al., 2016).

Theoretically, trading area evaluation is closely associated with the concept of location attractiveness, whereby an area is assessed based on its ability to attract and retain consumers. Areas characterized by high population density, mixed land-use functions—such as residential, educational, and office uses—and adequate infrastructure support tend to exhibit higher levels of attractiveness for minimarkets. Such conditions enable retailers to reach broader consumer segments while mitigating demand volatility. Within the context of modern retail competition, the ability to accurately interpret trading area characteristics represents a strategic advantage that differentiates resilient and growing minimarkets from less competitive counterparts (Dewi et al., 2023; Swoboda et al., 2013).

Accordingly, the analysis of trading area characteristics serves not only as a foundational basis for location selection but also as a strategic instrument for aligning minimarket objectives with consumer preferences. The integration of demographic, environmental, and regulatory factors enables minimarkets to establish a strong position within the dynamic and highly competitive structure of urban retail markets.

4.2. Determination of Location Type

The determination of location type constitutes a strategic stage in retail location decision-making, undertaken after the evaluation of trading area characteristics. At this stage, minimarkets consider several key factors,

including population density, accessibility levels shaped by traffic conditions, proximity to competitors, and consistency with local land-use planning regulations. Empirical observations indicate that minimarkets in urban contexts such as Bandung City typically select locations within dense residential areas, office districts, and along major arterial roads with high traffic intensity. This choice of location type reflects retailers' efforts to engage consumers more effectively within their everyday activity patterns.

From the minimarket perspective, the most dominant location format is the isolated store. This format is characterized by stand-alone outlets situated either within dense residential neighborhoods or along primary road corridors. Isolated stores are perceived to offer greater operational flexibility, strong visibility, and direct accessibility for consumers. Strategically, this format enables minimarkets to maximize the potential for spontaneous or impulse visits, particularly among consumers seeking immediate access to daily necessities. Recent retail studies demonstrate that isolated stores possess distinct advantages in attracting proximity-based consumers and delivering rapid service, especially within small-format retail such as minimarkets (Dekimpe et al., 2023; Hunneman et al., 2023).

The preference for stand-alone locations is closely associated with the implementation of a convenience strategy. This strategy emphasizes the provision of products and services that are easily accessible, fast, and comfortable, with the primary objective of saving consumers' time. In practice, convenience-oriented strategies are reflected in the placement of minimarkets near residential or office areas, extended operating hours of approximately 15 hours per day, a wide assortment of daily necessities, and simplified payment systems, including QR-based payments, debit cards, and cash transactions. From the retailer's standpoint, this strategy is designed to align with urban lifestyles that increasingly prioritize efficiency and practicality in shopping activities (Dholakia et al., 2018; Elg & Welinder, 2022).

From the competitor perspective, the determination of location type is also closely linked to spatial competition dynamics. The analysis reveals that minimarkets with similar formats—such as Alfamart, Indomaret, and Yomart—are frequently located in close proximity to one another, often adjacent to traditional grocery stores or traditional markets. This pattern indicates the presence of overlapping trading areas within the retail landscape. Such a phenomenon reflects a clustering strategy, whereby retailers co-locate in areas that have already demonstrated strong market potential. While this strategy intensifies competitive pressure, it simultaneously offers advantages through the concentration of consumer flows within specific locations (Fahlutvy & Dirgantara, 2021; Sirilertsuwan et al., 2020).

Accordingly, the determination of minimarket location type is influenced not only by physical and demographic factors but also by competitive strategies and consumer preferences. Both isolated stores and planned shopping centers offer distinct advantages depending on environmental characteristics and retailers' operational objectives. The integration of convenience-oriented strategies, an in-depth understanding of consumer behavior, and careful analysis of competitor positioning is therefore essential in identifying the most optimal location type to support minimarket sustainability within an increasingly competitive modern retail environment.

4.3. Specific Site Selection

Specific site selection represents a subsequent stage that determines the successful implementation of retail location strategies after the location type has been established. At this stage, minimarkets conduct a more detailed assessment of site characteristics based on vehicular accessibility, pedestrian reachability, and the intensity of surrounding traffic flows. Empirical findings indicate that minimarkets tend to favor locations along two-way roads that allow flexible vehicle entry and exit while remaining easily accessible on foot. Such sites are typically situated in areas with high population density and intense traffic activity, thereby increasing the likelihood of consumer visits throughout the day.

From the minimarket perspective, specific site selection is oriented toward optimizing customer flow and operational efficiency. Adequate vehicular access facilitates spontaneous stop-in visits, particularly among motorcycle and private car users, while pedestrian accessibility supports regular visits from nearby residents. The combination of these access modes is considered strategically advantageous, as it broadens the range of customer segments that minimarkets can serve. Retail research indicates that locations characterized by high visibility and dual accessibility—serving both vehicles and pedestrians—are positively associated with increased visit frequency and transaction volume in small-format retail settings (Migdadi & Abdel-Rahman, 2020).

From the consumer perspective, the specific location of a minimarket is perceived as an integral component of shopping convenience in everyday activities. Consumers tend to prefer minimarkets located along frequently traveled routes, such as commuting paths to and from workplaces or schools. Proximity to residential areas combined with high traffic exposure enhances store recognition and accessibility without requiring deliberate planning. This reinforces the role of minimarkets as convenience-based retail outlets, where shopping decisions are often spontaneous and strongly influenced by locational ease (Khairunnisa & Gamal, 2023). Consequently, specific site selection affects not only physical distance but also consumers' perceptions of comfort and time efficiency.

From the competitor perspective, specific site selection reflects the intensity of spatial competition within the minimarket industry. Sites located in densely populated and high-traffic areas often attract multiple retailers with similar formats, leading to direct competition at the site level as firms compete for the same consumer base within a limited geographic area. However, research suggests that the concentration of minimarkets in a single location does not necessarily produce negative outcomes, as high-traffic areas typically generate sufficient demand to support multiple operators simultaneously (Pallikkara et al., 2021). In this context, competitive advantage is shaped not solely by location, but also by service differentiation, transaction speed, and overall shopping comfort.

Theoretically, specific site selection aligns with the concept of site attractiveness, which posits that an ideal location maximizes retailer-consumer interactions through accessibility, visibility, and surrounding activity intensity. Locations situated in densely populated and high-traffic environments offer greater opportunities for minimarkets to establish stable and sustainable customer bases. Accordingly, specific site selection serves as a critical determinant in ensuring that location strategies formulated at earlier stages are effectively translated into operational performance in minimarket retailing.

4.4. Alternative Locations

The analysis of alternative locations (*site selection*) represents the final stage in the retail location selection process, focusing on the evaluation of specific site attributes prior to the final decision. At this stage, minimarkets assess a range of locational attributes that directly influence consumers' ability to locate, access, and utilize retail services. Key attributes include store visibility, site accessibility, operating hours, shopping comfort, and the availability of supporting facilities such as parking areas. This stage is highly operational in nature, as it determines how effectively a chosen location translates retail strategy into everyday shopping experiences.

From the minimarket perspective, visibility constitutes a critical factor in selecting alternative sites. Visibility refers to the ease with which a store can be recognized by potential consumers, either from a distance or from surrounding traffic flows. Minimarkets with clearly identifiable façades, prominent signage, and locations along high-traffic corridors tend to experience higher levels of spontaneous visits. Retail studies indicate that strong visibility contributes significantly to increased walk-in customers and impulse purchases, particularly in everyday retail formats such as minimarkets (Swoboda et al., 2013). In addition to visibility, site accessibility is a primary consideration. Accessibility refers to the ease with which consumers can reach a minimarket location, whether on foot or by vehicle. Field observations suggest that minimarkets are commonly located at sites that can be accessed from multiple directions, are situated near dense residential areas, and are closely integrated with daily community activities. From an operational standpoint, good accessibility allows minimarkets to reach a broader customer base without reliance on a single mode of transportation. Recent empirical evidence confirms that dual accessibility—serving both pedestrians and vehicles—has a positive effect on visit frequency and consumer loyalty (Öner, 2017).

From the consumer perspective, alternative minimarket locations are evaluated based on ease of access, comfort, and time efficiency. Extended operating hours—approximately 15 hours per day, from 06:00 to 21:00—reinforce the perception of minimarkets as responsive to consumer needs. Flexible operating hours are regarded as a value-added attribute, particularly for consumers with limited shopping time due to work or school commitments. Moreover, the implementation of self-service systems with well-organized and easily reachable product layouts enhances shopping comfort and expedites purchase decision-making (Roslin & Rosnan, 2012; van Greuningen et al., 2024). In this context, strategic locations are not assessed solely on geographic positioning, but also on their capacity to support practical and efficient shopping experiences.

From the competitor perspective, the selection of alternative sites reflects the intensity of competition at the site level. Minimarket locations situated in dense residential areas, office districts, apartment complexes, or school environments tend to attract multiple retailers due to their strong demand potential. As a result, several minimarkets with different brands may operate within close proximity. Under such conditions, differentiation is no longer driven solely by location, but by the quality of supporting facilities, including parking availability, ease of vehicle entry and exit, and the overall comfort of the surrounding environment. Empirical studies suggest that locations offering adequate and secure parking facilities are more competitive than those with limited parking capacity, particularly for consumers who rely on private vehicles (Elg & Welinder, 2022; Indradjati, 2024; Ukamaka, 2021).

Theoretically, site selection analysis underscores that optimal retail locations are those capable of integrating high visibility, strong accessibility, shopping comfort, and adequate supporting facilities. The combination of these factors enables minimarkets to compete effectively within dense and highly competitive modern retail environments. Accordingly, the selection of alternative locations functions not merely as a technical decision, but as a strategic mechanism for building competitive advantage and ensuring the long-term sustainability of minimarket operations.

5. Conclusion

Penelitian ini menunjukkan bahwa pemilihan lokasi minimarket di Kota Bandung merupakan proses This study demonstrates that minimarket location selection in Bandung City constitutes a strategic, staged, and interrelated process, as articulated in the framework proposed by Berman and Evans. At the trading area stage, minimarkets tend to favor areas characterized by high population density, stable economic activity, and mixed land-use functions that generate consistent consumer flows. From the consumer perspective, geographic proximity and ease of access emerge as dominant determinants of shopping preferences.

At the stage of determining location type, minimarkets predominantly operate as isolated stores rather than within planned shopping centers. This pattern reflects the adoption of a convenience-oriented strategy that emphasizes rapid access, operational flexibility, and strong visibility. Nevertheless, minimarkets located in planned shopping centers remain relevant for capturing pedestrian flows and public activity. The clustering of minimarkets further indicates overlapping trading areas, signaling high market potential in specific locations.

The specific site selection stage underscores that minimarkets commonly choose sites along two-way roads with good vehicular and pedestrian access and high traffic intensity. Such locations enable spontaneous visits while sustaining regular patronage. In the final stage of alternative site selection, store visibility, accessibility, extended operating hours, shopping comfort, and parking availability emerge as the primary determinants of final location decisions. Overall, minimarket location success is shaped by the integration of spatial characteristics, location strategies, consumer preferences, and the dynamics of retail competition.

Theoretically, this study reinforces the relevance of the Berman et al., retail location framework within the context of urban minimarkets in Indonesia and highlights the critical role of consumer perspectives in location analysis. Practically, the findings provide guidance for minimarket operators in formulating more comprehensive and adaptive location strategies. For local governments, the results offer policy-relevant insights for spatial planning and retail licensing to ensure that minimarket growth aligns with urban sustainability and the coexistence of traditional retail.

This study adopts a descriptive qualitative design; therefore, its findings are contextual and not intended for broad generalization. In addition, the analysis focuses on consumer perspectives in Bandung City and does not incorporate quantitative indicators such as sales performance or transaction volumes. Future research is encouraged to integrate qualitative and quantitative approaches to develop a more comprehensive understanding of

the relationship between location decisions and minimarket performance. Comparative studies across regions with varying levels of urbanization, as well as the incorporation of social and environmental sustainability dimensions, are also recommended to advance research on modern retail location strategies.

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