

**CONSUMERS' MOTIVATIONS FOR CHOOSING ALTERNATIVE FOOD
RETAILING MODES: INTERVIEWS AT FARMERS' MARKETS, TRUCK
STALLS, AND THE FARM IN SOUTHERN ALBERTA**

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Abstract

Interviews were conducted at various alternative markets in Lethbridge and on Granville Island to discover consumers' motivations for making shopping choices. Experience economy theory (Pine & Gilmore, 1998) and the new dominant logic for marketing theory (Vargo & Lusch, 2004) were utilized to guide the development of predictions. The study revealed that consumers considered the products more expensive but fresher and the atmosphere more appealing at farmers' markets than at supermarkets or grocery stores. Moreover, consumers visited farmers' markets because they wanted to support the local economy and protect the environment. Consumers shopping at truck stalls and the farm believed the markets or their products shared the benefits of freshness, healthiness, seasonality, tastiness, as well as the costs of high prices, limited selection, and an inconvenient shopping environment, with farmers' markets. Consumers at truck stalls and the farm were concerned about the atmosphere, the local economy, and the environment as well.

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Introduction

A farmers' market consists of individual vendors who set up booths, tables, or stands to sell vegetables, meat products, fruit, and even prepared foods and beverages (Bullock, 2000). Farmers' markets exist worldwide and reflect the local culture and economy; therefore, they change from place to place. For instance, in Eastern Asia, the farmers' markets are usually called "wet markets," since fresh fish and other aquatic products are sold there. Also, they operate year-round because they are the dominant food providers (Goldman, Krider, & Ramaswami, 1999). However, it is a different story in North America. Due to fierce competition from supermarkets, farmers' markets make up a small piece of the food market (Burch & Lawrence, 2007). In addition, their sales are seasonal, and their ability to sell fresh vegetables and meat is hindered by the harsh winter climate. This is typically the case in Canada (Webster, 1970).

Contemporary farmers' markets in Canada have experienced three eras of development (Basil, 2012). The first era was between 1800 and 1915. Immigrants, who came predominantly from Europe, brought with them the concept of farmers' markets. They established these marketplaces based on their memories of the ones they knew in their motherlands. In the second era, from 1916 to 1970, farmers' markets experienced their dark stage as people shifted their reliance from farmers' markets to grocery stores and supermarkets. As a result of the Great Depression and the Second World War, people moved out of the eastern central cities to the suburbs and others settled in the west. This reduced the significance of farmers' markets for two main reasons. First, many of these settlements were not large enough to support the markets (Mayo, 1993), and second, many of these prairie immigrants were farmers who could raise their own crops (Craig, 2009). Third, Canada changed from a large urban nation that mainly

depended on farmers' markets in the 1800s, to a nation that consisted of frontier towns and general stores in the 1900s (Mayo, 1993). However, in the current era, which began in the 1970s, farmers' markets experienced a renaissance; consumers no longer shopped exclusively at supermarkets. This was primarily due to consumers' growing interest in the quality, freshness, and locality of products, combined with political forces and environmental movements (Basil, 2012).

Most studies of farmers' markets were published after the third era, and they focused mainly on consumer demography (Antonio & González, 2009; McGrath, Sherry, & Heisley, 1993), consumer motivations (Bukenya, Mukiibi, Molnar, & Siaway, 2007; Carpio & Isengildina-Massa, 2009; Youngs, 2003b), historical development of the markets (Basil, 2012; Blackman, 1963), business opportunities for farmers (Andreatta & Wickliffe, 2002; Feenstra & Lewis, 1999), organic products (Antonio & González, 2009; Hall & Mogyorody, 2001; Loureiro & Hine, 2002), and other social and environmental issues (Bentley & Barker, 2005; Heisley, McGrath, & Sherry, 1991; Jones, Comfort, & Hillier, 2004).

I am interested in farmers' markets studies, especially in what makes consumers like farmers' markets. How did farmers' markets stand out from the fierce competition of supermarkets? What benefits and costs do farmers' markets have in North America? Questions such as these led me to read the literature about farmers' markets and finally conduct my own research. I believe my research will contribute to the study of consumers' motivation for shopping at farmers' markets, as well as their motivation at other alternative markets that have attributes similar to farmers' markets.

Research Questions

The research questions revolve around the key variables of freshness, healthiness, seasonality, tastiness, atmosphere, price, selection, convenience, supporting the local economy, and protecting the environment. First, what do consumers think about the (a) price, (b) selection, (c) freshness, (d) healthiness, (e) seasonality, and (f) tastiness of the products at the Lethbridge farmers' markets, the truck stalls, and the farm? Second, what do consumers think about (a) the atmosphere and (b) the convenience of the Lethbridge farmers' markets, the truck stalls, and the farm? Third, do consumers care about (a) supporting the local economy and (b) preserving the environment when they go to the Lethbridge farmers' markets, the truck stalls, and the farm? Fourth, how important is the shopping experience to consumers? How can the Lethbridge alternative markets possibly use the Granville Island Public Market for reference? These research questions will lead to the following discussion and predictions.

Literature Review and Prediction Development

Experience Economy

Consumers' selection of farmers' markets can be explained by the theory of experience economy. Consumers who shop at farmers' markets sometimes are not merely looking for goods; instead, a lot of them are experiencing and enjoying the markets. In their article "Welcome to the experience economy," Pine and Gilmore (1998) stated that, following the agrarian economy, the industrial economy, and the most recent service economy, a new experience economy has emerged. This new type of economy orchestrates memorable events for their customers, and that memory itself becomes the product. The "experience" occurs "when a company intentionally uses services as the stage, and goods as props, to engage individual customers in a way that creates a memorable event" (p. 98). For a company to design a successful experience, they have to consider excellent design, marketing, and delivery as seriously as they would have to consider their goods and services. They also have to consider what kind of experience they are delivering to consumers. According to Pine and Gilmore (1998), experience can be sorted into entertainment, educational, escapist, and esthetic, crossing two dimensions: the first corresponds to customer participation (active vs. passive), while the second describes connection (absorption vs. immersion). People who fall into the passive participation zone and the absorption zone are usually TV watchers, concert attendees, who tend to participate more passively than actively, and absorb the information rather than immerse into it. Their experience is considered entertainment. In contrast, people who fall into the active participation zone and the absorption zone are usually students in classes. They are actively involved in the experience, but from an outsider's perspective. This experience is labeled "educational." People immersed in

their experience can be participating either passively or actively. Movie or play actors belong to the escapist experience, since they immerse into their activity and environment and they participate actively. In comparison, tourists and visitors belong to the esthetic experience. Even though they are immersed in the environment, they have a passive way of participation.

Consumers who visit farmers' markets are in the passive participation and immersion zone. On the one hand, those consumers are the recipients of atmosphere, decoration, and olfactory incentives that the marketers design. Therefore, their way of participation is passive rather than active. On the other hand, consumers immerse themselves into this shopping activity and environment by interacting with farmers, vendors, and other consumers, and that plays an important role in the markets. Farmers' market visitors' experiences can be described as esthetic according to the experience economy theory. Understanding that consumers passively absorb the atmosphere and actively interact with farmers will help farmers improve their marketing strategy and increase the consumer's likelihood to return.

A New Dominant Logic for Marketing

Consumers' selection of farmers' markets can also be explained by Vargo and Lusch's (2004) theory, in which they argued that people used to consider marketing as the exchange of goods. However, the dominant logic of marketing has changed from a focus on tangible resources, embedded value, and transactions, to a new perspective of intangible resources, cocreation of value, and relationships. Thus, marketing has moved from a goods-dominant view to a service-dominant view. In this case, farmers' markets provide consumers not only products, which can also be easily found and purchased in

supermarkets or grocery stores, but more importantly, an exclusive and invisible service that satisfies its visitors.

The term “service” being used here does not have the same meaning we have in mind. In fact, it refers to a package of tangible and intangible resources, values, relationships, and so on, that consumers purchase when they go shopping. Either the products or the service can make up one part of the package. Gummesson (1995) believes customers do not buy goods or services; instead they buy offerings that render services that create value: “It is not a matter of redefining services and seeing them from a customer perspective; activities render services, things render services. The shift in focus to services is a shift from the means and the producer perspective to the utilization and the customer perspective.” (pp. 250-251). Consumers need services to satisfy their needs. They need to perform mental and physical activities for their own benefit, to have others perform them for them, or to have goods that assist them with these activities (Gummesson, 1995; Kotler, 1977). Gutman (1982) echoed this idea by pointing out that products are “means” for approaching “end-states,” or “value states of being, such as happiness, security, and accomplishment” (p. 60). This means people often purchase goods for the purposes of owning them, displaying them, and experiencing them. For instance: “enjoying knowing that they have a sports car parked in the garage, showing it off to others, and experiencing its handling ability provide satisfactions beyond those associated with the basic functions of the product” (Vargo & Lusch, 2004, p. 9). In this case, marketing is no longer a simple transaction that can be accomplished as easily as selling and buying, but a package of value cocreation, relationships, and other intangible resources. Similarly, consumers know that they are supporting the local economy and

protecting the environment by shopping at farmers' markets; experiencing the markets and enjoying the atmosphere might provide satisfaction beyond basic shopping.

Vargo and Lusch (2004) stressed that in the traditional goods-centered dominant logic, "the customer is the recipient of goods. Marketers do things to customers; they segment them, penetrate them, distribute to them, and promote to them. In this case, the customer is an operand resource" (p. 7). In comparison, in the emerging service-centered dominant logic, "the customer is a coproducer of service. Marketing is a process of doing things in interaction with the customer. The customer is primarily an operant resource, only functioning occasionally as an operand resource" (p. 7). Grocery stores and supermarkets are typically traditional goods-centered markets, where consumers go to buy what they need, pay, then return back home. Communication is almost impossible, and most want to buy what they need and leave as soon as they can. However, it is a different story in farmers' markets, where consumers take their time to select the vegetables, talk to vendors and other consumers, and enjoy their time spent at the markets. Therefore, the marketing strategy in farmers' markets is service-centered and consumer-involved, which is a huge difference compared to the traditional goods-centered supermarkets and grocery stores.

More specifically, as Lyson, Gillespie, and Hilchey (1995) pointed out, from a neoclassical standpoint, farmers' markets may not make good economic sense, but from a community perspective, they can nurture local economic development, maintain diversity and quality in products, as well as provide opportunities for producers and consumers to come together to solidify bonds of local identity and solidarity. The neoclassical standpoint is outdated in terms of farmers' market shopping; even though farmers' markets sometimes are pricey and inconvenient, consumers are still willing to

sacrifice for the benefits of fresh and healthy food, a friendly environment, and atmosphere. Economic sense is not the key to farmers' market shopping, and it does not motivate consumers to prefer farmers' markets to grocery stores. Moreover, farmers' markets provide consumers opportunities to socially embed through the interactions with the market vendors and to physically embed through the consumption of products identified with the local physical environment (Jackson & Thrift, 1995). Even though the products at farmers' markets have benefits such as freshness, seasonality, flavor, and healthiness, consumers do not go to farmers' markets only for products. They go to participate, to bond with the local economy and local farmers, to help the environment, and to enjoy the process of food shopping. That is the special service farmers' markets provide to consumers. In contrast, supermarkets are merely a place to collect and pay for goods.

Consumers' Perspective

After discussing several aspects of farmers' market research, we now turn to the core of this review, the consumers. Most of the attention in farmers' market research has been devoted to consumers' profiles and motivations, as these are the most interesting and fundamental aspects in farmers' market research. Researchers wanted to know why a significant number of consumers went back to the farmers' markets after the 1970s, considering the environment of competition from supermarkets. To make this question clearer, researchers have conducted numerous interviews and surveys regarding consumers' shopping at farmers' markets. Different consumers have different needs in the markets. For instance, Bukenya, Mukiibi, Molnar, and Siaway (2007) found that, in Alabama public markets, lower-income consumers were more interested in quality and price, while middle-class consumers were more interested in atmosphere, variety of

produce, and buying from farmers. Both of them, however, were interested in organic produce, and 78% were willing to pay a premium for it. A similar categorization of consumers can also be found in the Heisley, McGrath, and Sherry (1991) work. Based on the time consumers arrived and their behaviors in the market, they labeled different consumer groups as the *die-hards*, *the sociable die-hards*, *the very social*, *the late people*, *the bargain hunters*, and *the night people*. Loureiro and Hine (2002) found that in a Colorado farmers' market, consumers were approximately 45 years old, had a higher average educational level, and earned more money on average than general residents in the same area.

Based on existing findings, especially on Hunt's (2006) study, I concluded that three main reasons explain the motivations of consumers visiting farmers' markets: the pursuit of products, the pursuit of atmosphere, and the pursuits of supporting the local economy and protecting the environment. According to former studies and daily experience, products in supermarkets were cheaper and of a wider selection (Archer, Sanchez, Vignali, & Chaillot, 2003), which offered consumers a "one-stop" shopping experience (Kaufman, 1996). By contrast, consumers had to drive a long way to rural farmers' markets primarily only for food (Youngs, 2003a), and perhaps on the way back home, needed to stop at grocery stores to buy spices, napkins, water, and other daily necessities. Consumers could save both time and gas money if they shopped only at grocery stores or supermarkets. This study will look into consumers' motivations for visiting farmers' markets in detail. Their motivations were framed into three main categories: the pursuit of products, the pursuit of atmosphere, and the pursuits of supporting the local economy and protecting the environment.

Pursuit of Products. This is the most fundamental motive for consumers to purchase goods at farmers' markets. After all, a farmers' market is a market where consumers exchange money for products they need. In this regard, the product is the primary motive for consumers to visit a farmers' market. Such pursuits include various fresh, locally grown, seasonally available, organic or low-pesticide-residual foods, more produce choices, and better flavor, and so on, which are not easy to acquire from grocery stores or supermarkets. In the Archer, Sanchez, Vignali and Chaillot (2003) study, 113 out of 272 survey respondents who had been to farmers' markets before said the main reason they wanted to go again is that they liked the food (p. 493). More specifically, 60 consumers mentioned "freshness," 36 mentioned "different things," and 21 thought it had "better food and choice." Wolf, Spittler, and Ahern (2005) supported the importance of this pursuit, as well. Indeed, 25.2% of the consumers chose "products are high quality" and 12.8% chose "products are good value" as their impression of a farmers' market in San Luis Obispo County, California. Moreover, Archer et al. (2003) found out that in latent consumers' perceptions, quality and freshness of products are still the most important attributes of a farmers' market.

Nevertheless, Alonso and O'Neill (2011) found that despite enjoying the fresh and tasty food in two farmers' markets in Alabama, consumers agreed that higher prices is one of the weaknesses of products at farmers' markets. Looking back at the Lyson et al. (1995) theory, farmer's markets maintain the diversity and the quality of the agricultural products that benefit the local community. Therefore, even though products at farmers' markets sometimes are more expensive, consumers are still willing to pay more to benefit from fresh and healthy food. I assumed that consumers understood the

products were more expensive at farmers' markets, but they were still willing to pay the premium for better quality of products. Thus, my first prediction is:

Prediction 1: Food is perceived by consumers as (a) more expensive, but (b) fresher at farmers' markets than at supermarkets or grocery stores.

Pursuit of atmosphere. This pursuit mainly includes enjoyment of the market atmosphere, satisfaction from talking to farmers, and simply going to the market as a social activity (e.g., spending time with family or friends on a Saturday morning). By going to the farmers' market and having one-on-one interactions, consumers can build up loyalty, trust, and reliability and have long-term and close relationships with farmers who satisfy their needs (Andreatta & Wickliffe, 2002). Onianwa, Mojica, and Wheelock (2006) supported this incentive by demonstrating that 42.3% of consumers in their survey preferred the atmosphere in a farmer's market. By comparison, 27.2% preferred supermarkets, while 28.2% did not have a preference. Alonso and O'Neill (2011, p. 294) conducted a study about consumers' attitudes at two farmers' markets (one at Auburn University and the other in Langdale Mill) and obtained confirmation of the desire for atmosphere at the farmers' markets. Specifically, consumers' rationale for visiting farmers' markets included "I can meet other people," "I can meet local/state farmers," "I can get answers about the produce's nutritional value from farmers," and "I can get answers about how the foods are grown from farmers." Last but not least, Andreatta and Wickliffe (2002) found in their surveys that 62% of the consumers went to farmers' markets equally for products and atmosphere. In addition, they pointed out that 23% mentioned the market was a pleasant and nice place to visit, and 10% of them really

enjoyed bonding with local farmers. This is significant as it suggests that the physical and tangible goods transaction is no longer the dominant logic in marketing nowadays. The dominant logic of marketing has shifted from a focus on tangible resources, embedded value, and transactions to a new perspective of intangible resources, cocreation of value, and relationships (Vargo & Lusch, 2004). Atmosphere is one of the intangible resources in farmers' markets that attracts consumers, along with the products. The consumers' appreciation of the farmers' markets led to the second prediction of the study:

Prediction 2: Compared with supermarkets or grocery stores, the better shopping atmosphere is considered by consumers an advantage in farmers' markets.

Pursuits of supporting the local economy and protecting the environment.

As the last main category of motivations, consumers' concerns about society and the environment also contribute a lot to the farmers' markets economy. Urban aspects of local food systems such as farmers' markets provided city residents an opportunity to practice environmentalism within their hometown (Alkon, 2008). Products at farmers' markets usually come from nearby communities and are pesticide-free or organic. Transportation is minimal and lands are not polluted. Thus, some people believe shopping at farmers' markets is friendlier for the environment. Meanwhile, people wanted to buy local products as a way to support the local economy and local farmers (Carpio & Isengildina-Massa, 2009; Loureiro & Hine, 2002). Most supermarkets bought vegetables and animal products from different farmers, then shipped those products to retail outlets in different cities and towns (Blandon, 2006). It is possible that if everyone

shopped only in those supermarkets, the local farmers would end up bankrupt, which would cause serious damage to the local economy and lead to social instability. Thus, due to long-term consideration of the local economy and potential detrimental consequences through overdependence on supermarkets, some consumers spontaneously go to farmers' markets even if they do not need the products there. In fact, a group of consumers went to local farmers' markets just for "hometown pride," and, as a result, agreed to pay more for local produce (Carpio & Isengildina-Massa, 2009). For example, Loureiro and Hine (2002) found regular farm products labeled "Colorado grown" were purchased more frequently than the same products without a label. Similarly, South Carolinian residents were willing to pay 27% and 23% premiums for state-grown produce and state-grown animal products relative to out-of-state grown products, respectively (Carpio & Isengildina-Massa, 2009). In another study, Brown (2003) indicated that 58% of consumers surveyed in Missouri would be willing to pay a premium for locally grown products if they were the same quality as out-of-state products. In fact, 22% of the surveyed consumers indicated they would be willing to pay at least a 5% price premium, and in some cases even higher. Darby, Batte, Ernst and Roe (2008) showed that midwestern consumers were willing to pay more for locally grown strawberries than for strawberries grown elsewhere in the United States, and sometimes the price difference could be twice as much per basket. However, we cannot overemphasize the significance of locality. Hence, consumers' concerns for supporting the local economy and protecting the environment lead to my next prediction:

Prediction 3: Consumers think of (a) supporting the local economy or (b) the environment when they shop at farmers' markets.

Benefits and Costs of Farmers' Markets

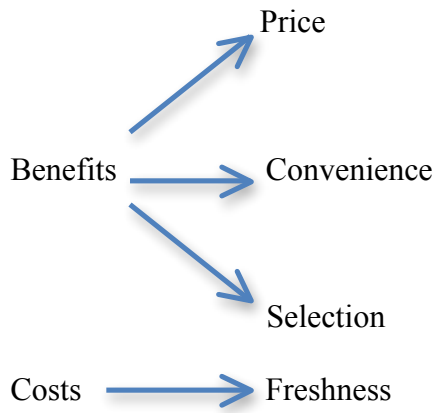
Looking back at the history of food retailing research, scholars have discovered many attributes of supermarket shopping as well as farmers' market shopping. In general, those attributes can be divided into two categories: benefits and costs. In supermarket shopping, benefits include lower price (Alhemoud, 2008), convenience (Archer et al., 2003; Onianwa, Mojica, & Wheelock, 2006; Sommer, Stumpf, & Bennett, 1982), and more selection (Alhemoud, 2008; Orgel, 1997), while the main cost is usually less fresh food (Onianwa et al., 2006). For instance, Alhemoud (2008) did a Likert-type questionnaire of supermarket shoppers in Kuwait, and found several important attributes preferred by consumers, such as the fairness of merchandise prices, wide range of selection of merchandise, and a variety of merchandise brands in supermarkets. In addition, Archer et al. (2003) found that 16% of the survey respondents in northwest England preferred shops and supermarkets to farmers' markets because of convenience and reasonable prices. This was confirmed by Onianwa et al. (2006), who asked 222 consumers about their preferences for product attributes between supermarkets and farmers' markets. In this study, 43.6% of consumers viewed supermarkets as more convenient, while 30.3% favored farmers' markets. Convenience of supermarkets was also supported by Sommer, Stumpf, and Bennett (1982). They claimed that a supermarket can stay open 10-12 hours a day, six to seven days a week, throughout the entire year, which is much more convenient than a seasonal farmers' market that only opens three to five hours, one to two days a week during a certain time of the year. What is more, supermarkets can provide one-stop shopping, compared with only local seasonal produce in the farmers' markets. However, the biggest drawback in supermarkets, especially when compared with farmers' markets, is the unsatisfactory quality of the

foods (Onianwa et al., 2006). In fact, data collected in their study showed 79.9% of consumers preferred farmers' markets in terms of freshness, while 62.1% preferred them for appearance of produce. With regard to food quality, the farmers' markets were totally preferred by consumers.

Compared to supermarkets, the benefits of farmers' markets mainly include freshness (Alonso & O'Neill, 2011; Andreatta & Wickliffe, 2002), healthiness (Youngs, 2003b), seasonality (Youngs, 2003b), and flavor (Sommer et al., 1982). The costs are higher prices (Alonso & O'Neill, 2011), inconvenience (Archer et al., 2003), and limited selection (Brown, Miller, D. A. Boone, H. N. Boone Jr., Gartin, & McConnell, 2007). To be specific, consumers from Auburn and Langdale Mill farmers' markets in Alabama listed greater produce nutritional volume as the reason to visit, and listed availability of fresh produce as the overall experience at the markets (Alonso & O'Neill, 2011). Likewise, Andreatta and Wickliffe (2002) asked consumers in Piedmont Triad Farmers Market (PTFM) to rank some advantages of going to that market from a list, and were told freshness was the main advantage (76%), followed by quality (60%). Advantages of healthiness and seasonality were supported by Youngs (2003b), who looked into consumers' perceptions and attitudes toward 11 northwest England farmers' markets. As a consequence, 90.5% of the consumers thought those markets sold tastier food, 76.5% thought they sold healthier food, and 58.1% thought they sold seasonal produce. Interestingly, Sommer et al. (1982) consolidated the superiority of products' flavor from farmers markets by doing double-blind flavor trials with bell peppers and tomatoes from farmers' markets and from supermarkets, and obtained positive results in favor of the farmers' markets. However, those scholars also clearly stated consumers had to trade off when they went shopping at farmers' markets. One of the costs was higher prices

(Alonso & O'Neill, 2011). In fact, 66.7% of the visitors at Auburn and Langdale Mill farmers' markets listed high prices as the negative attribute in their overall shopping experiences. Besides price, the accessibility and food selections of the farmers' markets can also be limited. In northwest England, several consumers listed "not convenient," "not enough choice," and "too far away" as the main reasons not to go to farmers' markets (Archer et al., 2003). Similarly, even though 90% of the consumers in New Jersey farmers' markets rated the quality of products as good, only half of them also rated the variety of products there as good (Brown et al., 2006). After the discussion of benefits and costs at both supermarkets and farmers' markets, I summarized them as follows:

Supermarkets/grocery stores:



Farmers' markets:

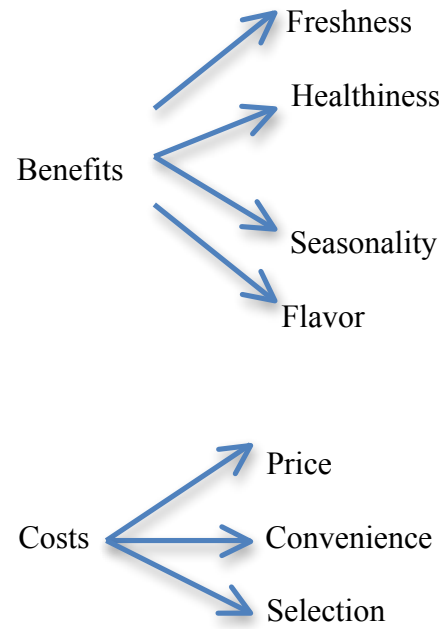


Figure 1. Benefits and costs of farmers' markets versus supermarkets/grocery stores

Truck Stalls and the Farm

In addition to consumers' motivations for shopping at farmers' markets, I also took into account consumers' motivations for shopping at truck stalls and farms. After looking into previous studies in this area, I found that no one has looked into those two retailing modes. Several reasons might explain this. For example, truck stalls are only available in the summer, and they are small in scale, inconspicuous, and move around frequently. Not many people shop at them, and researchers might consider them as less important. Shopping at farms is relatively new, and many people may not have even heard of it. No research has yet addressed these two retailing modes, thus I wanted to include them in my study. In addition, I was curious about similarities and differences between consumers going to farmers' markets and consumers going to truck stalls and farms, and their motivations, as well as the benefits and costs for consumers at both. Were truck stalls and farms more like supermarkets or more like farmers' markets? What were consumers looking for when they shopped at truck stalls and farms, as opposed to farmers' markets or supermarkets? Including consumers' motivations for visiting truck stalls and farms in my study could enrich the current archive of consumers' food selection research and help other researchers better understand how people select their food. In addition, discovering the benefits and costs of truck stalls and farms could help practitioners improve their marketing strategies. Therefore, comparing and contrasting consumers' motivations, benefits, and costs at different markets are the main components of my study. Thus, here are the last two predictions related to truck-stall shopping and farm shopping.

Prediction 4: Truck stalls and farms share the benefits and costs of the farmers' markets. They or their products are perceived by consumers as:

- (a) fresher
- (b) healthier
- (c) more seasonal
- (d) tastier
- (e) pricier
- (f) with less selection
- (g) a more inconvenient shopping environment

than supermarkets or grocery stores.

Prediction 5: Consumers at truck stalls and farms are not concerned about (a) atmosphere, (b) the local economy, or (c) the environment; they are mostly concerned about the products.

Method

The main qualitative methodology in this study is case study, which can be defined as an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within the real context (Yin, 2002). To be specific, I used a linear analytic structure as the narrative form that begins with the outline, literature review, theoretical framework, analysis, and ends with the findings and conclusions. The case study can be viewed as a research approach rather than a method, since quantitative data can also be constructed as a case. Both qualitative and quantitative analysis can be constructed together in three ways: triangulation, facilitation, and complementarity (Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2008). In my research, I used both qualitative and quantitative data analysis side by side to enrich the case; hence, complementarity with a case study method fits best here. Even though my research focuses on qualitative interpretation of the consumers' perceptions, I still quantified some of the interview data for descriptive purposes in the presentation of the data, and I used a chi-square test to compare different markets. Additionally, restricted by time and totally different attributes of alternative markets in different regions, I took into consideration only farmers' markets, truck stalls, and farms in the Lethbridge area and the public market at Granville Island in Vancouver. In general, my research is structured as an intensive case study that focuses on finding as much as possible in several cases, which refers to the markets in Southern Alberta and Granville Island. As the main subject of the study, Albertans have food selections that are different from residents living in other provinces of Canada, because of the local environment and culture. I observed a lot of poultry and livestock meat such as chicken, pork, and beef being consumed in this area on a daily basis, while seafood is not as favored. Living in Southern Alberta, I had easy access to the markets, and I was interested in discovering

people's attitudes around me. That is why I chose to focus on the area in Southern Alberta around Lethbridge. The Granville Island Public Market is one of the most renowned markets in Canada. Many local residents and tourists go to the market every day, shop the diverse and enormous collections of products, and enjoy the pleasant shopping atmosphere. I was interested in obtaining some key variables such as atmosphere, price, selection, and convenience of shopping to compare with the markets in Lethbridge. I was also interested in what defined a good shopping experience, and how a good shopping experience offsets the weaknesses of an alternative market.

Qualitative face-to-face interviews were used in this study to obtain consumers' attitudes, perceptions, and motivations in shopping at farmers' markets, truck stalls, and farms in Lethbridge, with different interview questions testing each of the predictions proposed in this study. During the second round of data collection, the interview questions were modified to focus on the key aspects of this study. A different qualitative interview protocol was used at Granville Island. Instead of testing predictions, it was mainly used to obtain consumers' feedback on their shopping experience, and justification of shopping choice. The qualitative interview was chosen in this study since many interview questions are open questions, which are not suitable in a survey. Also, instead of focusing on numbers and statistical data, I wanted to achieve an in-depth understanding of the consumers' shopping experiences at farmers' markets, truck stalls, and farms in their own words and using their own frames of reference (Barnes, 2008). Motivation is an abstract concept; therefore, I was not confident whether consumers were able to precisely express their opinions by answering a survey with fixed and framed options for questions. I believed well-structured qualitative face-to-face

interviews would extract more meaningful and insightful thoughts behind the consumers' shopping behaviors.

Description of Interview Venues

Farmers' markets. The Lethbridge downtown farmers' market had about 30 vendors who set up booths to sell their products. Such products included fresh vegetables from a Hutterite colony, fresh fruit and jam from local producers, homemade honey from local beekeepers, handcrafts and jewelry from local craftspeople, and so on. It is located on 6th Street South, between 3rd and 4th Avenues, and is open every Wednesday from July to September. It expands on a consistent basis every year, but overall, it is small and limited in the number and variety of its products.



Figure 2. Lethbridge downtown farmers' market

The Lethbridge Exhibition Park farmers' market is located in Exhibition Park, 3401 Parkside Drive South. It is open every Saturday from May to October, and is rated as one of the top 10 best farmers' markets in Alberta. Local producers bring handcrafts, fresh fruit and vegetables, homemade baking, meat products, artwork, and handmade clothing to this farmers' market every week. With more than 80 vendors and over 2,000 visitors a day, there is a lot more to see, to purchase, and to enjoy.



Figure 3. Lethbridge Exhibition Park farmers' market (overview)



Figure 4. Lethbridge Exhibition Park farmers' market (Hutterites' vegetable booth)

Truck stalls. Fruit trucks come from the Okanagan, British Columbia, and can be found in several places in Lethbridge. I conducted my interviews at the one on 5th Avenue North, because I gained the owner's consent for interviews there. At the fruit truck, there are a few selections such as plums, peaches, apples, and cherries that consumers can choose from.



Figure 5. An Okanagan fruit truck in Lethbridge

The Nobleford vegetable truck comes from the small town of Nobleford in Southern Alberta. Consumers sign a contract with them, pay money in advance, and pick up their fresh products at a certain time every Monday throughout the summer. Their products change without notice every time, so consumers had to accept what they received.



Figure 6. The Nobleford vegetable truck in Lethbridge

The farm. I tried to incorporate two farms into my study; however, unfortunately, my trips to Harvest Haven farm did not result in any useful data. Therefore, I limited my data collection to the Broxburn farm. The Broxburn farm is an 80-acre space located five kilometers east of Lethbridge and one kilometer south of Highway #3 on the Broxburn Road. There are greenhouses, a “you-pick” farm, a produce store, a restaurant, and a playground with swings, a slide, and beautiful views.



Figure 7. The Broxburn farm (overview)



Figure 8. The Broxburn farm (produce store)

Granville Island Public Market. The Granville Island Public Market is located on Granville Island in downtown Vancouver, where vendors sell jewelry, art and photography, clay and porcelain, handmade soaps, tea, fruit and vegetables, meat and seafood, and so on. This indoor market is open year-round to embrace visitors from around the world (detailed description about the GIPM can be found in discussion).



Figure 9. A fruit stall in the Granville Island Public Market



Figure 10. A seafood stall in the Granville Island Public Market



Figure 11. The dock on Granville Island

Qualitative Interview Procedure

This research comprised 59 consumers at the Lethbridge downtown and the Exhibition Park farmers' markets, the Okanagan fruit truck and the Nobleford vegetable trucks, and the Broxburn farm, and 25 consumers at the Granville Island Public Market. I conducted all the interviews with the consumers. Prior to the start of each session, participants were asked to read and sign consent forms. I followed an interview guide with a selection of questions and possible probes before I designed the research questions. The first 30 interviews in Lethbridge were taken by pen and paper in 2012, and, in order to catch more details, the last 29 interviews in Lethbridge were audio recorded in 2013. The 25 interviews conducted at Granville Island were also audio recorded in 2013. After each interview, I gave each participant a copy of the letter of consent for potential future questions and requests. The interview protocol for

Lethbridge initially consisted of 17 questions and took on average 10 minutes for each participant. In the second round of data collection in 2013, I modified the questions and ended up with 16. The interview protocol for Granville Island consisted of 14 questions and took on average 7 minutes for each participant. The interview questions mainly included consumers' motivations for shopping at those markets, the experience of shopping at those markets, and demographic characteristics. After the data collection, I transcribed the interviews then deleted all the audio recordings. I then analyzed the transcribed data and used them to test the predictions and answer the research questions.

The basic interview procedure is shown as follows:

1. Informed consent
2. Interview questions
 - (a) Motivations
 - (b) Experience
 - (c) Demographics
3. Contact information/results request

Participants

Subjects in this study consisted of lone adult male and female consumers at the Lethbridge downtown and Exhibition Park farmers' markets, the Okanagan fruit truck and the Nobleford vegetable trucks, the Broxburn farm in the Lethbridge area, and the Granville Island Public Market in downtown Vancouver. All samples selected were convenience samples. Most of the consumers were interviewed after they finished their shopping tasks and were walking out of the markets. This was done to make sure their shopping experience was fresh. However, I interviewed some tourists at the Granville Island Public Market who had not shopped yet. I was primarily interested in their

experience at the market. This study consisted of 59 participants from Lethbridge, with 20 participants from the farmers’ markets, 20 from the truck stalls and 19 from the farm. The rationale is that 59 participants should be enough to provide a comprehensive pool of data to test the research predictions. With regard to the specific numbers in each market, it is mainly due to convenience and equality. Collecting equal amounts of data in each market allows for fairness of data comparison. One sample from the Broxburn farm was dropped due to an incomplete recording.

During my data collection, I recorded the participation rate in each market. The findings are listed in Table 1.

Table 1. *Compliance Rate of Interview Participants*

	Farmers’ Market (DT)	Farmers’ Market (EP)	Fruit Truck	Vegetable Truck	Broxburn Farm	Granville Island Public Market
Compliance rate	30.3%	25.6%	24.4%	32.3%	26.8%	24.8%

According to the findings, consumers at the Nobleford vegetable truck had the greatest level of compliance, followed by the Lethbridge downtown farmers’ market. Consumers at the Okanagan fruit truck and the Granville Island Public Market had the lowest acceptance of interview requests.

Most of the consumers declined an interview due to time constraints. Those who participated asked me questions such as “How long is it going to take?” But once we started recording and the conversation began, they tended to forget the time and contributed their thorough thoughts. There were a few people who were uncomfortable with audio recording, so I apologized to them and looked for other interviewees. I gave

my name and phone number to every participant for future reference, but I was not contacted with any questions, and nobody asked to drop the study.

I tried to approach only lone shoppers to avoid group interruption. However, I interviewed several people who were waiting for others, and in the middle of the interviews their friends returned. Most of the interviewees explained to their friends that we were doing interviews and asked their friends to wait. If their friends stayed and tried to interrupt, I explained to them patiently that this is a single-participant interview and if they were interested, they could participate next.

Validity issues

Participant selection: How did I avoid bias of my data collection? I spread out the time in which I collected the data from all of those markets collectively. Focusing on one market, finishing all interviews there, and moving to the next market might bias my research, if certain types of consumers happened to show up at that market on those specific days. For example, during strawberry season many people would go to the Broxburn farm to pick strawberries. Those people rarely visited any farm after the strawberry season was over. Collecting too much data in one day from any market was also not reasonable, as perhaps many people came for similar purposes that day. For example, if the vendors offered a discount that day, many consumers might be there specifically for that discount. Therefore, I interviewed no more than five consumers in each place during each visit from September to early October 2012, and from June to September 2013, which provided me with 59 completed interviews from Lethbridge and 25 from Granville Island. Age and gender of the participants were irrelevant to this study, however, only consumers who were over 18 years old were interviewed due to the fact that people must be 18 years or older in Alberta to give informed consent. Those under

18 years might give irresponsible answers, and were unlikely to visit the markets independently. Also, only lone subjects were selected to avoid potential interruptions from group shoppers, and the interviewee might not be able to concentrate on the interview if he or she did not want their friends to wait for too long.

Participants' answers: I believe that participants gave their true perceptions of the markets because I am a student. The power difference was minimal here. Many consumers answered "no" to some of my questions without any apparent discomfort. More importantly, participants were required to sign the consent form before the interview, which guaranteed their anonymity, confidentiality, and withdrawal up to the data-analysis stage. Only my supervising committee members and me had access to the data, and all of the data related to this project will be destroyed after five years. I also provided the participants my contact information for any future issues, but I was not contacted by anyone.

Method of Data Analysis

I coded the data from the 59 interviews conducted in Lethbridge: 10 interviews at the Lethbridge downtown farmers' market and 10 at the Lethbridge Exhibition Park farmers' market, 10 at the Nobleford vegetable truck and 10 at the Okanagan fruit truck, and 19 at the Broxburn farm. I also coded 25 interviews conducted at the Granville Island Public Market. Comparison of the differences among the data generated significant insight about consumers' perceptions of shopping at these alternative markets, as compared to supermarkets or grocery stores.

The data from the 59 Lethbridge interviews were divided into three groups: Group 1 consists of the 20 interview data from the Lethbridge farmers' markets, Group 2 consists of the 20 data from the vegetable and fruit trucks, and Group 3 consists of the 19

data from the Broxburn farm. The consumers interviewed were asked to express their perceptions of 10 variables about the products at farmers' markets, truck stalls, and the farm and these markets in general. These 10 variables were selected from the interview questions to test the predictions identified earlier in this study. Consumers' perception to those 10 variables are: perception of price, perception of freshness, perception of healthiness, perception of seasonality, perception of tastiness, perception of atmosphere, perception of supporting the local economy, perception of the environment, perception of selection, and perception of convenience. These variables were coded into three values: "negative," "neutral," and "positive." As shown in Figure 12, a value of -1 was assigned to the negative terms, a value of 0 represents neutral terms while a value of 1 represents positive terms. Negative terms included people's negative impressions and descriptions of certain aspects in any of the alternative markets. Positive terms included people's positive impressions and descriptions of certain aspects in any of the alternative markets. Under Question 4: "What do you think of the price of the food here, compared with supermarkets or grocery stores?" I coded the terms such as "more" and "higher" as positive and "lower" and "cheaper" as negative. This is because "higher" is bigger than "lower" by nature, and the coding had to be consistent for every question. Since I coded "more friendly" for the atmosphere question as positive, I had to code "more expensive" for the price question as positive as well. Neutral terms included "not sure" and "I can't think of any difference," and people who used both positive and negative terms to answer the same question. For instance, I coded "Some might be higher, some might be lower. It's hard to judge." as neutral, since both positive and negative terms were involved.

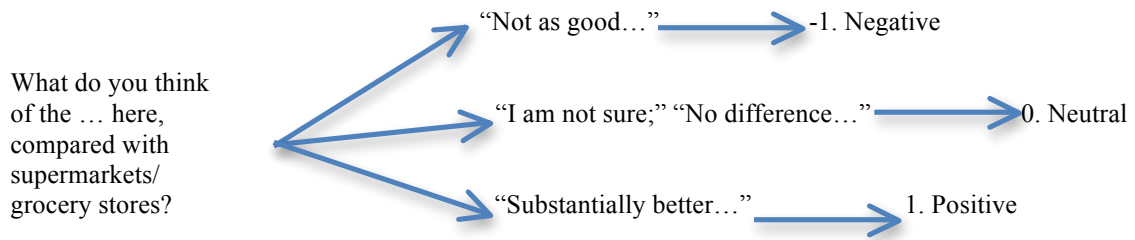


Figure 12. Coding of the Perceptions

Predictions and Interview Questions

Prediction 1 highlights a comparison of food quality and price between farmers’ markets and supermarkets or grocery stores. The research participants were from the Lethbridge downtown and Exhibition Park farmers’ markets; Prediction 1(a) was addressed by interview Question 4 and Prediction 1(b) was addressed by Question 5 in the Motivations section.

4. What do you think of the prices of the food here, compared with supermarkets/grocery stores?
5. Compared with supermarkets/grocery stores, what do you think of the freshness of the food here? (healthiness, seasonality, or tastiness)?

Prediction 1: Food is perceived by consumers as (a) more expensive but (b) fresher at farmers’ markets than at supermarkets or grocery stores.

Prediction 2 concentrates on the atmosphere of the farmers’ markets. Many researchers found consumers enjoyed the atmosphere at farmers’ markets (Onianwa et al., 2006; Andreatta & Wickliffe, 2002), but almost no one considered the atmosphere in supermarkets as a benefit. Therefore, I predicted the atmosphere as an advantage at the Lethbridge farmers’ markets. Questions 2 and 3 in the Motivations section tested this prediction.

2. What is the difference between shopping here and shopping at supermarkets/grocery stores?

3. What do you think of the atmosphere here, compared with supermarkets/grocery stores?

Prediction 2: Compared with supermarkets or grocery stores, the better shopping atmosphere is considered by consumers an advantage in farmers' markets.

The next prediction is relevant to consumers' concerns about protecting the local economy and the environment when they shop at Lethbridge farmers' markets.

Questions 6 and 7 in Motivations section tested this prediction.

6. Some people believe shopping at this market supports the local economy, what do you think? Why?

7. Some people believe shopping at this market helps the environment, what do you think? Why?

Prediction 3: Consumers think of (a) supporting the local economy or (b) the environment when they shop at farmers' markets.

Prediction 4 is designed to understand participants' views about the benefits and costs of shopping at truck stalls and farms. Based on my review of the literature, I hypothesized that they not only shared the similar fresh, healthy, seasonal, and tasty products as the farmers' markets, but also could not avoid the higher prices and limited selection, as well as an inconvenient shopping environment. Questions 4, 5, 8, and 9 in the Motivations section of the interview are linked to this prediction.

4. What do you think of the prices of the food here, compared with supermarkets/grocery stores?

5. Compared with supermarkets/grocery stores, what do you think of the freshness of the food here? (healthiness, seasonality, or tastiness)?

8. What do you think of the selection of the products here, compared with supermarkets/grocery stores?

9. What do you think of the convenience of shopping here, compared with supermarkets/grocery stores?

Prediction 4: Truck stalls and farms share the benefits and costs of the farmers' markets. They or their products are perceived by consumers as:

- (a) fresher
- (b) healthier
- (c) more seasonal
- (d) tastier
- (e) pricier
- (f) with less selection
- (g) a more inconvenient shopping environment

than supermarkets or grocery stores.

The last prediction refers to the main difference among farmers' markets, truck stalls, and farms. From my observation, the truck stalls were very small and unstable at locations, so it was difficult to generate atmosphere there. The farm was big enough but too far from the city, with too few people visiting there at the same time, and farmers were unlikely to spend the time and money to develop attractive displays there.

Therefore, atmosphere was almost impossible to generate as well. Hence, I predicted consumers who shop at truck stalls and farms are just looking for products. They do not have any concern of other attributes such as atmosphere, supporting the local economy,

and protecting the environment. Questions 1, 3, 6, and 7 in Motivations can be used to test this prediction.

1. Why do you come here?

3. What do you think of the atmosphere here, compared with supermarkets/grocery stores?

6. Some people believe shopping at this market supports the local economy, what do you think? Why?

7. Some people believe shopping at this market helps the environment, what do you think? Why?

Prediction 5: Consumers at truck stalls and farms are not concerned about (a) atmosphere, (b) supporting the local economy, or (c) the environment; they are mostly concerned about the products.

Results

Analysis and Results

Price. In Prediction 1(a), I predicted that consumers considered products more expensive at farmers' markets than at supermarkets or grocery stores.

During the interviews, I asked people what they thought about the price of the products, and I asked them to compare it with supermarkets or grocery stores when they considered this question. The frequency table was adopted as the main quantitative approach to present the findings. As a consequence, Table 2 shows the perception of price at the two farmers' markets and other alternative markets: 60% of the consumers believed that the products were more expensive at farmers' markets than at supermarkets or grocery stores, 30% of the consumers felt neutral about the price, and 10% of the consumers considered the products cheaper at farmers' markets.

Qualitatively, the interview participants provided detailed positive comments about the price of the products at farmers' markets: "You have to be careful, more expensive. Paying for someone else's time, rather than mass production." "Reasonable, not bad, a little bit more here. But you're paying for less chemicals and freshness." "Higher, but I know I'm paying for healthy benefits." People knew they were paying more but they justified the higher prices by listing the benefits.

All in all, both quantitative and qualitative results show that consumers perceived the food as more costly at farmers' markets than at supermarkets or grocery stores. Therefore, Prediction 1(a) was supported.

Freshness. In Prediction 1(b), I predicted that consumers considered products fresher at farmers' markets than at supermarkets or grocery stores.

During the interviews, I asked people what they thought of the freshness of the products, and I asked them to compare it with supermarkets or grocery stores when they considered this question. The results show that 95% of the consumers interviewed prefer farmers' markets to supermarkets or grocery stores, while 5% of the consumers were neutral.

Qualitatively, the interview participants provided detailed positive comments about the freshness of the products at farmers' markets: "Good, you can tell if you see and feel it." "Fresher, not keeping a long time," "Absolutely amazing; the flavor you can't get in supermarkets."

All in all, both of the quantitative and qualitative results show that consumers perceived the food as fresher at farmers' markets than at supermarkets or grocery stores. Therefore, Prediction 1(b) was supported as well.

Atmosphere (farmers' markets). In Prediction 2, I suggested that consumers prefer the atmosphere at farmers' markets to that of supermarkets or grocery stores.

To find out, I asked people at the farmers' markets what they thought of the atmosphere compared with supermarkets or grocery stores. Quantitative findings are displayed in Table 3: 90% of the consumers used positive terms to describe their preference of the atmosphere at farmers' markets over supermarkets or grocery stores. Ten percent of the consumers had neutral opinions.

Participants considered a farmers' market as a more personal, friendly, and nice place where everybody seemed to be happy. Consumers interviewed mentioned: "I like the chaos here; it reminds me of when I was a kid, I used to go with grandma. More fun, more environmental here," "Hometown style, traditional, you can do window-shopping first, and more variety here such as jewelry," and "Good, festival atmosphere."

The findings reveal that the majority of consumers interviewed enjoyed the atmosphere of farmers' markets more than that of supermarkets or grocery stores. Hence, Prediction 2 was supported.

Supporting the local economy (farmers' markets). In Prediction 3(a), I predicted that consumers want to support the local economy when they shop at farmers' markets.

To avoid tweaking the interviews, the question was designed and asked in a neutral way: "Some people believe shopping at this market supports the local economy, what do you think? Why?" The findings are quite straightforward: 100% of the consumers supported the local economy by coming to farmers' markets.

Consumers from farmers' markets provided detailed comments about supporting the local economy. "Yes, definitely. Need to support the local economy. So we can have more of this and keep Lethbridge going." "It does. Either from here or B.C., it supports Canada more than foreign products." "Definitely, we can't rely on oil forever. We need to be as self-sufficient as we can."

The findings show that consumers felt they supported the local economy when they shopped at farmers' markets. Therefore, this study has provided evidence to support Prediction 3(a).

Protecting the environment (farmers' markets). In Prediction 3(b), I predicted that consumers are concerned about protecting the environment when they shop at farmers' markets.

As presented in Table 4, 60% of the interview participants agreed with the motivation of preserving the environment by shopping at farmers' markets. In comparison, 10% disagreed, and 30% were neutral about it.

Consumers who agreed with the motivation of protecting the environment said: “Definitely, no pesticides, no chemicals, no electricity,” “Absolutely, no truck in with gas and diesel,” “Yes, no big trucks, and you bring your own bags.”

The findings show that consumers thought of protecting the environment when they shopped at farmers’ markets. Therefore, this study has provided evidence to support Prediction 3(b).

Benefits and costs (truck stalls and the farm). The next research question shifts the focus to truck stalls and farms. In the literature review section, this study looked into previous research on the benefits and costs of farmers’ markets. Benefits included freshness, healthiness, seasonality, and tastiness, while costs included higher prices, limited selection, and an inconvenient shopping environment. This research question asks: As two alternative markets, what kind of attributes do truck stalls and farms have? I predicted that truck stalls and farms have similar benefits and costs as farmers’ markets, where the products are 4(a) fresher, 4(b) healthier, 4(c) more seasonal, and 4(d) tastier, but 4(e) pricier, 4(f) with less selection, and the truck stalls and farm have 4(g) a more inconvenient shopping environment than supermarkets or grocery stores. To test these predictions, I asked consumers their opinions on the freshness, healthiness, seasonality, tastiness, price, and selection of the products at fruit and vegetable trucks and the Broxburn farm, along with the convenience of shopping. I found that, compared to products at supermarkets or grocery stores, 95% and 100% of the consumers from truck stalls and the farm, respectively, confirmed the benefit of freshness in each market. Seventy-eight point nine percent of the consumers from the Broxburn farm confirmed the healthiness, while 21.1% were neutral. By contrast, 60% of the consumers from the vegetable and fruit trucks considered healthiness a benefit, while the rest had neutral

views. Similar to freshness, consumers at both truck stalls and farms acknowledged the benefit of seasonality unanimously. The results of perception of tastiness show that only two persons (10%) from vegetable and fruit trucks were neutral about the comparison, while every interviewed consumer from the farm was positive. As for costs, according to Table 5, 80% of the consumers from the truck stalls and 63.2% from the Broxburn farm agreed that the selection was limited at each location compared to supermarkets or grocery stores. Fifty-five percent and 63.2% of the consumers from truck stalls and the farm, respectively, perceived the price of products as more expensive than supermarkets or grocery stores. Forty percent and 31.6% were neutral. For the convenience variable, only 55% and 52.6% of the consumers from each location agreed with Prediction 4(g) that truck stalls and farms shared the cost of an inconvenient shopping environment with farmers' markets. The remainder, 45% and 47.4% of the consumers interviewed, thought shopping was easy at these places.

Consumers from the fruit and vegetable trucks and the Broxburn farm provided similar qualitative comments as those from farmers' markets on the variables of freshness, healthiness, seasonality, tastiness, price, selection, and the convenience of shopping. For example, consumers who were strongly in favor of freshness said: "Fresher, you can actually taste the difference. No chemical taste" and "Great, picked right away, no artificial additives." Those who preferred the seasonality of the products said: "Always in season," "In season with our climate," "Yes, they are only here during mid-summer," and "More in season, because you can never see them in winter." People also believed these products had "much more flavor" and the tastiness is "much better because it's so fresh." In comparison, even though some of the consumers were neutral about the healthiness of the products, the majority of the consumers still believed

products at the truck stalls and the farm were healthier. People said that the products were “Better because fresher,” “Healthier, because of fresh, less storage time, organic, and better to body,” and “A lot better, natural, no pesticide, top notch.” As predicted, the prices of the products at the truck stalls and the farm were perceived to be higher than those at supermarkets or grocery stores. With respect to selection, consumers at truck stalls or farms found it was “not as wide;” “not so much, since it is a small store;” “less selection, something can’t be produced in Canada,” in contrast to supermarkets or grocery stores. A lot of the people who thought it was more convenient to shop at farmers’ markets, truck stalls, or farms than supermarkets or grocery stores said that they either lived or worked close to these markets, so they could drop by the markets on their way to or from work. However, for the majority of the consumers, convenience was considered a big obstacle for shopping at the alternative markets. People said: “Not quite as convenient. Convenience-wise, you’d better go to supermarkets” and “Not as convenient, not one-stop shopping, and out of town.”

All in all, the products at the selected truck stalls and the farm were considered fresher, healthier, more seasonal, and tastier, but pricier, and the markets were considered to have less selection and were less convenient than supermarkets or grocery stores. Therefore, the interview data have provided different levels of support for Predictions 4(a), 4(b), 4(c), 4(d), 4(e), 4(f), and 4(g) for the truck stalls as well as the Broxburn farm.

Atmosphere (truck stalls and the farm). Prediction 5(a) shows consumers at the truck stalls and the farm did not care about these extra elements as they focused on products. I asked consumers what they thought about the atmosphere at the truck stalls and the farm. The findings are shown in Table 3: 75% of the customers at the vegetable

and fruit trucks and 94.7% from the Broxburn farm expressed their preference of the atmosphere compared to that of supermarkets or grocery stores. One person from each site was not sure about the comparison. This means, contrary to what was predicted, that consumers enjoyed the atmosphere at truck stalls and the farm more than that of supermarkets or grocery stores.

Qualitatively, almost every person interviewed at the truck stalls and the farm thought the atmosphere was friendlier, more personal, and more social. They said, “The vendor is able to answer questions with more knowledge,” “Nice, you can talk to the vendors,” and “You are outside, and it is always better.”

Therefore, Prediction 5(a) was not supported. Consumers considered the atmosphere at the truck stalls and the farm to be better than the atmosphere at supermarkets or grocery stores.

Supporting the local economy (truck stalls and the farm). In Prediction 5(b), I predicted that people at the truck stalls and the farm would be different from their counterparts at farmers’ markets. They were not concerned about supporting local farmers and the local economy as their main motivation was to purchase the products. The question I asked interviewees was: “Some people believe shopping at this market supports the local economy, what do you think? Why?” Contrary to the prediction, 85% of the consumers interviewed from the truck stalls and all of the consumers interviewed from the Broxburn farm agreed that the local economy would benefit from their shopping behavior. The proof was contrary to the prediction.

In qualitative details consumers mentioned that since they shopped at the truck stalls and the farm, their money stayed here. This keeps the local farmers in business. Some worried that if no one shopped at those markets, local farmers would be out of

business and the local economy would eventually suffer. As a motivation, one person said, “Yes, not the primary reason, but it is a good thing.” Another said, “Yes, it is my biggest motivation. Regardless of here or in B.C., they are a Canadian business.”

Therefore, even though the levels of acceptance are different, people still were concerned about the local economy when they visited the truck stalls and the farm.

Prediction 5(b) was not supported. Consumers at truck stalls and the farm wanted to support the local economy.

Protecting the environment (truck stalls and the farm). In Prediction 5(c), I predicted that unlike those at farmers’ markets, visitors at the truck stalls and the farm did not care about the environment. To find out, I asked, “Some people believe shopping at this market helps the environment, what do you think? Why?” and again, my findings show a different picture from the prediction. According to Table 4, 60% of the consumers interviewed at the truck stalls and 63.2% at the farm provided affirmative feedback. Ten percent of those from the truck stalls were negative about this, while 30% and 36.8% of the people from truck stalls and the farm were neutral.

Some people felt there was no environmental difference between the Okanagan fruit trucks from British Columbia or importing food from the United States. As well, some people did not give any thought to protecting the environment when they visited the truck stalls and the farm, but more than half of the consumers interviewed still considered sustainable farming important. They said, “Yes, not trucked that far and not packaged the same way,” “Yes, no chemicals, less trucking,” “Yes, we are supporting growers who do not use pesticides, which is a good attitude,” and “Probably yes. They alternate their crops, which protects the soil.”

Hence, Prediction 5(c) was not supported. Consumers were concerned with

protecting the environment when they visited truck stalls and the farm.

In conclusion, quantitatively Predictions 1, 2, 3, and 4 were supported at different levels. Consumers perceived food as more expensive but fresher at the farmers' markets, the truck stalls, and the farm, and fresh food was one of the biggest motivations to explain their shopping decisions. Consumers' motivations also included shopping atmosphere, supporting the local economy, and protecting the environment at farmers' markets, truck stalls, and the farm. Consumers perceived truck stalls and farms as similar to farmers' markets, where the food was fresh, healthy, seasonal, and tasty; but it was also pricey, with limited selection, and the shopping environment was inconvenient. However, Prediction 5 was not supported. People who shopped at truck stalls and farms cared about the atmosphere, the local economy, and the environment, and the level of concern was not significantly lower than what people had in farmers' markets.

Farmers' Markets Versus Truck Stalls Versus the Farm

Even though all were labeled as alternative markets, they were compared to mainstream supermarkets and grocery stores. Farmers' markets, truck stalls, and the farm share similarities but had their individual specialties. Prediction 4 has been supported in that truck stalls and the farm share the benefits with farmers' markets of freshness, healthiness, seasonality, and tastiness, and the costs of price, selection, and convenience. But on what level are truck stalls and farms similar to farmers' markets with these benefits and costs? What other similarities and differences do these alternative markets have when compared to each other? These questions will be tackled subsequently.

Freshness. First of all, a multigroup chi-square test was conducted to test whether different groups of consumers had different perceptions of freshness. A

nonsignificant chi-square statistic was obtained for the perception of freshness variable, $X^2(2, N = 59) = .98, p = .61$. This means farmers' markets, truck stalls, and the farm are not significantly different from each other statistically on the perception of freshness. In fact, almost everyone at any of the alternative market thought food was fresher than food from supermarkets or grocery stores.

Healthiness. A multigroup chi-square test was conducted to test whether different groups of consumers had different perceptions of healthiness. A nonsignificant chi-square statistic was obtained for the perception of healthiness variable, $X^2(2, N = 59) = 2.5, p = .280$. This means farmers' markets, truck stalls, and the farm are not significantly different from each other statistically on the perception of healthiness. However, a relatively higher rate of individuals held neutral opinions of the healthiness at fruit and vegetables trucks (40% compared to 20% and 21.1%). Most of these neutral people were not sure or assumed the healthiness was equivalent to supermarket products. One person explained that he did not know if the fruit at the fruit trucks went through inspections, so he was not sure about the healthiness.

Seasonality. A multigroup chi-square test was conducted to test whether different groups of consumers had different perceptions of seasonality. A significant chi-square statistic was obtained for the perception of seasonality variable, $X^2(2, N = 59) = 6.2, p = .046$. This means farmers' markets, truck stalls, and the farm are significantly different from each other statistically on the perception of seasonality. The most significant difference came from the farmers' markets, where three people had a neutral perception of this variable, while the other markets had none.

Tastiness. A multigroup chi-square test was conducted to test whether different groups of consumers had different perceptions of tastiness. A nonsignificant chi-square

statistic was obtained for the perception of tastiness variable, $X^2 (2, N = 59) = 5.9, p = .052$. This means the farmers' markets, the truck stalls, and the farm are not significantly different from each other statistically on the perception of tastiness.

Price. A multigroup chi-square test was conducted to test whether different groups of consumers had different perceptions of price. A nonsignificant chi-square statistic was obtained for the perception of price variable, $X^2 (4, N = 59) = .92, p = .92$. This means the farmers' markets, the truck stalls, and the farm are not significantly different from each other statistically on the perception of price.

Table 2. *Descriptive Frequency for the Perception of Price*

	Farmers' markets	Vegetable & fruit trucks	Broxburn farm
Negative	2 (10.0%)	1 (5.0%)	1 (5.3%)
Neutral	6 (30.0%)	8 (40.0%)	6 (31.6%)
Positive	12 (60.0%)	11 (55.0%)	12 (63.2%)
Total	20 (100.0%)	20 (100.0%)	19 (100.0%)

Atmosphere. A multigroup chi-square test was conducted to test whether different groups of consumers had different perceptions of atmosphere. A nonsignificant chi-square statistic was obtained for the perception of atmosphere variable, $X^2 (4, N = 59) = 4.3, p = .37$. This means the farmers' markets, the truck stalls, and the farm are not significantly different from each other statistically on the perception of atmosphere. However, a relatively higher percentage of consumers interviewed at the fruit and vegetable trucks had neutral perceptions (Table 3). Also, one person at the Okanagan fruit truck reported he did not enjoy the atmosphere there mainly because he worried "many cars come and go, so I need to wash my fruit twice." This was the only consumer who disliked the atmosphere at the alternative markets.

Table 3. *Descriptive Frequency for the Perception of Atmosphere*

	Farmers' markets	Vegetable & fruit trucks	Broxburn farm
Negative	0 (0.0%)	1 (5.0%)	0 (0.0%)
Neutral	2 (10.0%)	4 (20.0%)	1 (5.3%)
Positive	18 (90.0%)	15 (75.0%)	18 (94.7%)
Total	20 (100.0%)	20 (100.0%)	19 (100.0%)

Supporting the local economy. A multigroup chi-square test was conducted to test whether different groups of consumers had different perceptions of supporting the local economy. A significant chi-square statistic was obtained for the perception of supporting the local economy variable, $X^2(2, N = 59) = 6.2, p = .046$. This means farmers' markets, truck stalls, and the farm are significantly different from each other statistically on the perception of supporting the local economy. The most significant difference existed in the data collected from the truck stalls. Among all of the interview participants, only three people from the truck stalls denied this motivation. Their common explanation was that Okanagan fruit trucks could not be considered local.

Protecting the environment. A multigroup chi-square test was conducted to test whether different groups of consumers had different perceptions of protecting the environment. A nonsignificant chi-square statistic was obtained for the perception of protecting the environment variable, $X^2(4, N = 59) = 2.1, p = .716$. This means farmers' markets, truck stalls, and the farm are not significantly different from each other statistically on the perception of protecting the environment. The only noticeable difference is that, even though two people from the farmers' markets and the truck stalls disagreed with the motivation of helping the environment, the farm experienced none.

Table 4. *Descriptive Frequency for Perception of Protecting the Environment*

	Farmers' markets	Vegetable & fruit trucks	Broxburn farm
Negative	2 (10.0%)	2 (10.0%)	0 (0.0%)
Neutral	6 (30.0%)	6 (30.0%)	7 (36.8%)
Positive	12 (60.0%)	12 (60.0%)	12 (63.2%)
Total	20 (100.0%)	20 (100.0%)	19 (100.0%)

Selection. A multigroup chi-square test was conducted to test whether different groups of consumers had different perceptions of selection. A nonsignificant chi-square statistic was obtained for the perception of selection variable, $X^2(4, N = 59) = 2.7, p = .605$. This means the farmers' markets, the truck stalls, and the farm are not significantly different from each other statistically on the perception of selection. Nevertheless, a relatively higher percentage of interview participants had negative opinions about the selection at fruit and vegetable trucks: 80%, compared to 65% at farmers' markets and 63.2% at the farm.

Table 5. *Descriptive Frequency for Perception of Selection*

	Farmers' markets	Vegetable & fruit trucks	Broxburn farm
Negative	13 (65.0%)	16 (80.0%)	12 (63.2%)
Neutral	2 (10.0%)	0 (0.0%)	2 (10.5%)
Positive	5 (25.0%)	4 (20.0%)	5 (26.3%)
Total	20 (100.0%)	20 (100.0%)	19 (100.0%)

Convenience. A multigroup chi-square test was conducted to test whether different groups of consumers had different perceptions of convenience. A nonsignificant chi-square statistic was obtained for the perception of convenience

variable, $X^2(2, N = 59) = 0.1, p = .951$. This means farmers' markets, truck stalls, and the farm are not significantly different from each other statistically on the perception of convenience.

Comparison and analysis of individual market. In order to understand and compare consumers' perceptions in each individual market, I separated the interview data of the Lethbridge downtown and Exhibition Park farmers' markets from the category "farmers' markets," and I also separated the data of the Okanagan fruit and the Nobleford vegetable trucks from the category "truck stalls." I coded consumers' perceptions of the same 10 variables in each of those markets, and generated information that is presented in Figure 13.

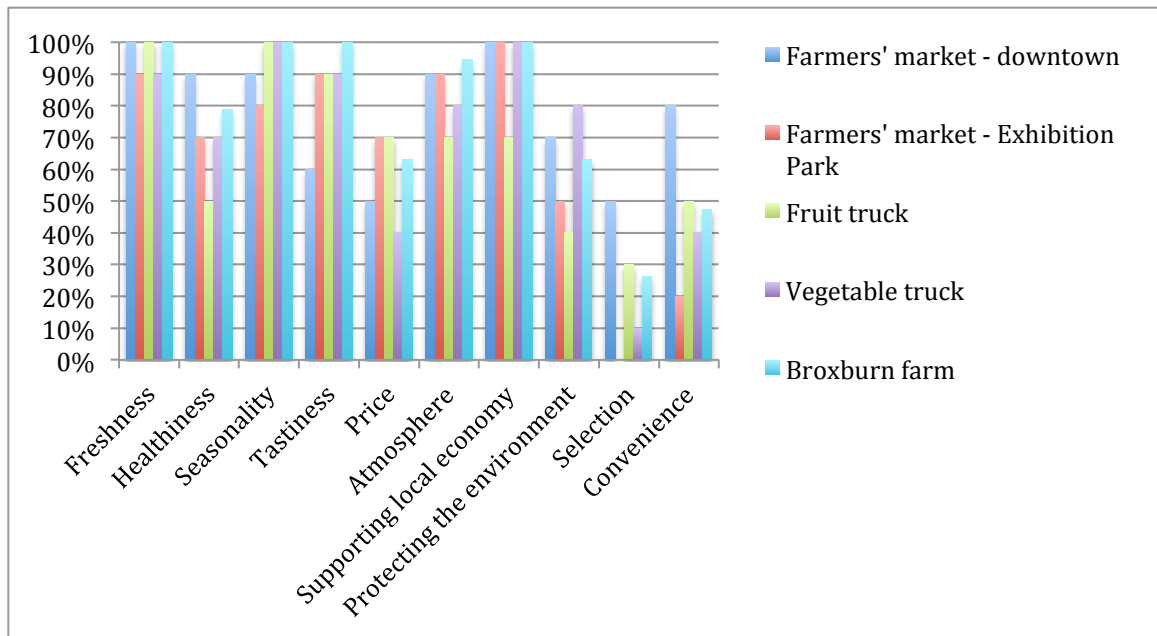


Figure 13. Consumers' positive perceptions of different variables at each of the selected alternative markets

As presented in the chart, 100% of the consumers interviewed from the Lethbridge downtown farmers' market, the fruit truck, and the Broxburn farm had a positive perception of the freshness of products, while the other two markets showed

90% positive perception when compared to supermarkets or grocery stores. For healthiness, the positive perception rates dropped to 90% for the downtown farmers' market, 70% for the Exhibition Park farmers' market, 50% for the fruit truck, 70% for the vegetable truck, and 78.9% for the farm. By comparison, the fruit and vegetable trucks and the farm enjoyed 100% positive comments from consumers on their perception of seasonality, while the numbers were 90% and 80% for the downtown and the Exhibition Park farmers' markets. Ninety percent of the consumers interviewed from the Exhibition Park farmers' market, the fruit truck, and the vegetable truck thought the produce was tastier, while 100% at the farm agreed; however, only 50% at the downtown farmers' market agreed. With regard to the price, half of the consumers interviewed at the downtown farmers' market, 70% from the Exhibition Park farmers' market and the fruit truck, 40% from the vegetable truck, as well as 63.2% from the farm thought the prices were higher than supermarkets or grocery stores. Only 70% of the consumers interviewed at the fruit truck preferred the atmosphere, while 90% from the downtown and the Exhibition Park farmers' markets, 80% from the vegetable truck, and 94.7% from the farm did. One hundred percent of the consumers from every market but the fruit truck (70%) wanted to support the local economy, while the percentages of those wanted to protect the environment fluctuated from 40% to 80% from the fruit truck to the vegetable truck. Interestingly, none of the consumers interviewed at the Exhibition Park farmers' market thought the selection was better than supermarkets or grocery stores, but half of the consumers at the downtown farmers' market did. By comparison, 30%, 10%, and 26.3% of the people at the fruit truck, the vegetable truck, and the farm preferred the selection. For the last variable, convenience, 80% and 20% of the consumers interviewed from each farmers' market preferred the convenience, while 50%

and 40% from the fruit truck and the vegetable truck, and 47.4% from the Broxburn farm had the same preference.

Observations

Most of the consumers interviewed believed the freshness, healthiness, tastiness, and seasonality of the products offered at the farmers' markets, the truck stalls, and the farm were better than products provided by their major competitors – supermarkets and grocery stores. Some consumers were neutral, meaning either they were not sure about the comparison, or they could not tell any difference. This situation typically happened for comparison of healthiness. Since the level of healthiness is quite intangible, and perhaps requires tests from labs to confirm, consumers were uncertain about the answers. Consumers admitted that the food was more seasonal at the alternative markets but sometimes considered that a disadvantage. Seasonality usually associates with freshness but it also limits the access to a specific time of the year. In terms of the differences among the alternative markets, I found they differed from each other primarily on healthiness. There were more concerns about sanitation since truck stalls were relatively more exposed to the traffic.

Despite being enjoyed at all alternative markets, the atmospheres were quite different at the farmers' markets, the truck stalls, and the farm. Farmers' markets were noisy because of the large number of vendors and consumers engaged in conversation, while the Broxburn farm was tranquil and serene and provided a place to escape from the hustle and bustle of urban life. The acceptance of the interviewees to these two different atmospheres was equally high; no matter if noisy or peaceful, people still perceived that the farmers' markets and the Broxburn farm had better atmospheres than supermarkets. However, consumers showed relatively less interest in the atmosphere at truck stalls (Table 3). One interviewee at the Okanagan fruit truck stated, "I don't care about the atmosphere, I just want the fruit." This aligns with Prediction 5, but cases like this were

too few, so Prediction 5 was not supported. On the other hand, people also thought the vendors cared about the consumers, were friendlier, and were able to answer questions knowledgeably, which also created an appealing atmosphere.

It is difficult to compare the prices at different alternative markets, primarily because the selection, quantity, and quality were different. Many consumers who thought the prices were higher also mentioned they understood why. They paid a premium for better quality and other people's labor. This justified why they shopped at the alternative markets. Also, among the consumers who thought prices were lower at the alternative markets, many of them were not the primary shoppers in their homes. Therefore, their knowledge of prices was low, or they were not sure about the regular price at supermarkets or grocery stores.

The farmers' markets offered much more selection than the truck stalls and the farm. The Lethbridge downtown farmers' market had over 30 vendors who sold vegetables, fruit, honey, jams, herbal teas, handcrafts, and root beer, for example. The Lethbridge Exhibition Park farmers' market is said to be Southern Alberta's largest farmers' market, and enjoys over 2,000 visitors a day. Consumers could find whatever was in the downtown farmers' market, plus jewelry, fresh bagels, exotic meats, preserves, baked goods, and clothes. By contrast, the Okanagan fruit trucks offered only up to 10 types of fruit. The Nobleford vegetable truck provided only vegetables. The Broxburn farm had a few more options than the trucks, and according to consumers, the selection is expanding each year, although the options are significantly less than what could be found at the farmers' markets. One distinctive feature of the Broxburn farm is that they offer a you-pick service, where consumers could pick the strawberries from the field themselves. This is not only a practical way to select the most appealing

strawberries, but also a great experience. Parents came with their children and retired people came with their friends. They all looked excited and enjoyed the experience as much as they would enjoy their fruit. Another distinctive feature of the Broxburn farm is the restaurant. With easy access to fresh and seasonal vegetables in their backyard, they cooked astonishing food that attracted consumers from all over in Southern Alberta. Many consumers spent half a day at the restaurant and the farm: enjoyed a great meal with friends, picked some fresh strawberries at the farm, shopped for other fruit and vegetables, then returned home. People mentioned that shopping at Broxburn was an outing, an activity, or an escape, and they definitely loved spending half a day there.

In general, shopping at any alternative market was not as convenient as shopping at supermarkets or grocery stores, not just because of the location, but also because of the selection and other issues. The Lethbridge downtown farmers' market was located in the central area of the city, which was even more convenient than a lot of supermarkets. A number of consumers who worked downtown walked to the market during their lunch break because the downtown farmers' market was very accessible to them. However, people who drove there had to pay for parking, and there was not always an empty parking space. Those were the main downsides of the downtown farmers' market, with regard to convenience. The Exhibition Park farmers' market was a lot bigger and provided many more parking spaces, however it was more out of the way. The Okanagan fruit truck and the Nobleford vegetable truck parked at developed areas of the city, so traffic was not an obstacle. The main difficulty, which also existed in other alternative markets, was that they could not offer "one-stop" service. People committed their time there for specific items, and then needed to go to other stores to collect their groceries and other items. This kind of commitment definitely consumed more time. For most of

the city dwellers, the Broxburn farm was the most difficult venue to access; it is located along the highway between Lethbridge and Coaldale, approximately a 20-minute drive from west Lethbridge. For people who lived or worked closer to it the location was not a challenge. Also, it was not too busy there, so there were always available parking spots and they did not have to wait in line.

I was surprised to see how many people were motivated to support the local farmers and the local economy by visiting the alternative markets. Only three customers from the Okanagan fruit truck said they did not agree with supporting the local economy by shopping there, the explanation being that the fruit trucks came from British Columbia, therefore they should not be considered local. Other than that, everyone else confirmed the importance of supporting the local economy. One consumer told me clearly that supporting the local economy was the biggest motivation for him to visit the market. Another consumer from the Broxburn farm told me that she ran a small business that relied on the Broxburn farmers, so shopping there was a way of mutual support. She also worried if no one shopped at local and small businesses, our economy will soon be monopolized by multinational companies.

Consumers' perception of protecting the environment varied significantly from each other. Even though most of the interview participants believed their shopping choices would benefit the environment in ways such as using less bagging, purchasing products that required less trucking, and supporting sustainable farming, several customers from the farmers' markets and truck stalls disagreed. They believed farming always hurt the environment, no matter how you farm, therefore environmentally there was no difference. There were also those who did not think of preserving the environment when they visited the alternative markets. The motivation of protecting the

environment was not as strong as other motivations. Even though more than half of the consumers interviewed agreed with it and this refuted Prediction 5, the percentages were only slightly above fifty percent. People who visited the alternative markets were mostly looking for fresher products while enjoying the shopping atmosphere and providing support to the local farmers. Protecting the environment could be an extra benefit, but it rarely was anyone's motivation.

Granville Island Public Market

After several trips to the Lethbridge downtown farmers' market and the Exhibition Park farmers' market, I noticed both the products and service at these two places were great and almost every shopper enjoyed it. However, Lethbridge is a small city on the prairie and its history can be traced back only to the late 19th century. Limited by its size, population, location, weather, and history, the farmers' markets are undersized and underdeveloped. To discover what was missing at the Lethbridge farmers' markets, I spent a week at one of North America's most renowned markets – Granville Island Public Market. Even though a public market is not identical to a farmers' market, many positive attributes were noted. Twenty-five interviews at the public market were conducted to gain an understanding of consumers' shopping experiences. During the interviews, consumers were asked to provide their perceptions, evaluate their shopping experience, and provide suggestions for future changes to the market.

Granville Island versus Lethbridge. Even though the main purpose of going to Granville Island was to discover new themes, a few themes such as atmosphere, price, selection, and convenience will be discussed. Questions about these themes were incorporated into my interviews mainly to break the conversation ice, provoke people's

thoughts, and acquire some information to compare with data from Lethbridge. Interview data were coded in the same manner as the interview data from Lethbridge: negative = -1, neutral = 0, and positive = 1. Also, for comparison purposes, I consolidated the 59 interview data from Lethbridge into Group 1, and assigned the 25 interview data from Granville Island Public Market into Group 2.

Atmosphere. As displayed in Table 6, 100% of the consumers interviewed perceived the atmosphere at the Granville Island Public Market as better than that in supermarkets (86.4% positive, 11.9% neutral, and 1.7% negative at Lethbridge alternative markets). A chi-square test was conducted to determine whether the consumers' perception of the atmosphere at the GIPM was significantly different from consumers' perception of the atmosphere at the Lethbridge alternative markets. The result shows that these perceptions were not significantly different from each other, $X^2(2, N = 84) = 3.7, p = .154$. The noteworthy difference is that the atmosphere at the GIPM was outstanding enough to make every interview participant appreciate it, which did not happen for any alternative market in Lethbridge. Moreover, people at the GIPM specifically brought up foreign, creative, and diverse cultures, which did not normally exist at the Lethbridge alternative markets. Interviewees also pointed out that a lot of the people at Granville Island were there for leisure, not for shopping.

Table 6. *Descriptive Frequency for Perception of Atmosphere (GIPM)*

	Lethbridge alternative markets	Granville Island Public Market
Negative	1 (1.7%)	0 (0.0%)
Neutral	7 (11.9%)	0 (0.0%)
Positive	51 (86.4%)	25 (100.0%)
Total	59 (100.0%)	25 (100.0%)

Vancouver is a world-renowned tourist attraction and one of the most multicultural cities in Canada. The diversity of Vancouver equips its Granville Island Public Market with a special atmosphere that did not exist in Lethbridge. In Lethbridge, the Broxburn farm stands out as it has similar attributes as the GIPM: nice views, open playground, peaceful environment. But without the size, environment, history, demographic, and scenery, it is still not as special as the GIPM.

Price. Eighty-four percent of the consumers perceived prices as more expensive at the Granville Island Public Market than in supermarkets or grocery stores, compared to 59.3% from the Lethbridge alternative markets. Neutral and negative perceptions were 16% and 0%, compared to 33.9% and 6.8% from Lethbridge, respectively (Table 7). A chi-square test was conducted to determine whether the consumers' perception of prices at the GIPM was significantly different from consumers' perception of prices at the Lethbridge alternative markets. The results show that these perceptions were not significantly different from each other, $X^2(2, N = 84) = 5.3, p = .072$. People noticed the price difference, but they were willing to pay a premium for better quality.

Table 7. *Descriptive Frequency for Perception of Price (GIPM)*

	Lethbridge alternative markets	Granville Island Public Market
Negative	4 (6.8%)	0 (0.0%)
Neutral	20 (33.9%)	4 (16.0%)
Positive	35 (59.3%)	21 (84.0%)
Total	59 (100.0%)	25 (100.0%)

Convenience. As shown in Table 8, 60% of the consumers interviewed at the Granville Island Public Market thought shopping was inconvenient, while 12% were neutral and 28% were positive. By contrast, 52.5% thought it was inconvenient and 47.5% thought it was convenient at the Lethbridge alternative markets. A chi-square test was conducted to evaluate whether the consumers' perception of convenience at the GIPM was significantly different from consumers' perception of convenience at the Lethbridge alternative markets. The results show that these perceptions were significantly different from each other, $X^2(2, N = 84) = 8.9, p = .012$. The main difference is the numbers of positive and negative answers in Lethbridge are almost evenly distributed, while a larger ratio of consumers at the GIPM had negative thoughts, and there were fewer positive responses and more neutral responses.

Table 8. *Descriptive Frequency for Perception of Convenience (GIPM)*

	Lethbridge alternative markets	Granville Island Public Market
Negative	31 (52.5%)	15 (60.0%)
Neutral	0 (0.0%)	3 (12.0%)
Positive	28 (47.5%)	7 (28.0%)
Total	59 (100.0%)	25 (100.0%)

My observation and explanation of the differences are: the Granville Island Public Market provides year-round service. It closes only on Christmas Day and New Year's Day, which is a lot more accessible than the Lethbridge alternative markets that operate primarily in the summer. Nevertheless, the Granville Island Public Market is isolated from the rest of the city by False Creek. The island is connected to downtown by Granville Bridge, and people can choose to get there by car, by bike, on foot, or by water ferry. Bus service has been cancelled, so the water ferry is the only public transportation available. Water ferry service costs \$3.50 for a single trip and \$5.50 for a round trip, which might be acceptable and considered distinctive by tourists, but for regular shoppers, this was too expensive. Driving was problematic in that, even though the island is big, there were many people and stores, but not many parking spaces. Those who drove had to avoid rush hour and spent some time finding a parking space. Some people chose to bike, but that limited them to sunny days and a cyclist could only carry a limited amount of groceries. Considering the heavy rainfall in Vancouver, biking was not always practical. Hence, the isolated location, limited parking spaces, and limited and overpriced public transit created an inconvenient shopping environment.

Selection. The biggest difference between the Lethbridge alternative markets and the Granville Island Public Market was the selection. Having been identified as a disadvantage in Lethbridge, the perception of the selection at the GIPM is totally different. Eighty-eight percent of the consumers interviewed enjoyed the selection at the GIPM, while 12% were neutral. At the Lethbridge alternative markets the positive feedback was 23.7%, while the negative was 69.5% and the neutral constituted 6.8% (Table 9). A chi-square test was conducted to determine whether the consumers' perception of selection at the GIPM was significantly different from consumers' perception of selection at the Lethbridge alternative markets. The results show that these perceptions were significantly different from each other, $X^2 (2, N = 84) = 34.9, p = < .01$. In fact, people believed the selection at the GIPM was even better than the selection at supermarkets or grocery stores, in terms of variety and quality. The selection was considered better than that of the Lethbridge alternative markets. "High end," "vast," "diverse," and "excellent" were typical words used to describe the selection.

Table 9. *Descriptive Frequency for Perception of Selection (GIPM)*

	Lethbridge alternative markets	Granville Island Public Market
Negative	41 (69.5%)	0 (0.0%)
Neutral	4 (6.8%)	3 (12.0%)
Positive	14 (23.7%)	22 (88.0%)
Total	59 (100.0%)	25 (100.0%)

The GIPM is a lot bigger than any of the alternative markets in Lethbridge and the selection was much more diverse and enormous. For instance, the GIPM had many exotic and aquatic selections that people would not normally see in Lethbridge. At the

GIPM, Asian people were making herbal tea and handcrafts, Europeans were baking bread, and Indian people were cooking delicious soup, for example. All of these international vendors contribute more depth and breadth to the product selection at the GIPM.

Experience. The Granville Island Public Market is located at the center of Granville Island in downtown Vancouver, surrounded by a wide range of boutique clothing stores, street performers, shows, restaurants, and the famous Granville Island Brewing Company. The market itself provides visitors a great selection of products such as art, jewelry, fashion accessories, coffee, tea, poultry, livestock, seafood, fruit, and vegetables. There was not only more selection than at the Lethbridge farmers' markets, but also more variety of each selection. The market was also several times bigger than those in Lethbridge, and enjoyed higher rates of visitors. Outside the market there were street performers singing and dancing, pigeons eating out of people's hands, and a breathtaking view of downtown Vancouver and the coast to indulge in. The locals and tourists sit outside every day, watching the sea, and enjoying the wind blowing on their faces and in their hair. In fact, quite a few visitors mentioned that they came to "visit this market and seashore," "sightseeing, shopped a little bit," "just for fun, like to look around," and "enjoy scenery, have a cup of tea, a muffin, and some exercise." The location of the market is an attraction for both locals and tourists, together with the broad selections in the market and entertaining decorations and activities - the Granville Island Public Market has created an extraordinary experience that incorporates aromas, visuals, and sounds for its visitors. Everyone seemed to enjoy the shopping experience: "Great time, don't feel finished yet," "great, I discovered a new store that I would come back for

many times,” and “great, peaceful because of this location. You are still in the city, but it is natural.”

The Granville Island Public Market, with all of its amazing aspects, has created a great experience for each individual visitor. Visiting this market, and even the island itself, generated an experience that would even exceed the significance of shopping. Some people, especially tourists, came to the island to experience rather than shop. They considered the GIPM a must-see place in Vancouver, and they enjoyed the scenery of the market, the seashore, the seagulls, and people moving around. This kind of comfortable shopping experience worked together with the various and selective products at the GIPM to become a tremendous force to convince people to shop. Thus, the new theme identified at the GIPM is experience. A pleasant shopping experience creates hedonistic incentives to consumers who would have more fun while shopping. Seeing and tasting something new, meeting nice people, and even receiving a little gift from vendors would make one’s shopping experience unforgettable. Good shopping experiences result in customer loyalty and more purchases. There was so much to do, to explore, and to experience at Granville Island. In addition to the famous market, there was a summer farmers’ market where local vendors brought fresh and local products to the local community. A boutique mall with art collections, posters, souvenirs, and fine wines was also nearby. After a couple of hours of looking around, people could rest on a stone bench and watch and listen to street performances, enjoy beer and snacks at the Granville Island brewery, or sit by the seashore and smell the fresh air.

The interview participants who believed prices were high or shopping was inconvenient were asked what their motivation for visiting the GIPM was if prices and transportation stood in the way? Apart from looking for fresh and uncommon products,

experiencing the market played a vital role. People believed they came for leisure as well as shopping, and they always had fun whenever they came to the island. Typical answers to this question were, “Leisure as well as shopping,” “Atmosphere makes up for it, experience, interesting to see people,” “An interesting place to come to, lots of different things to see,” “Tourist attraction here. Why not come down and enjoy a beautiful day and wander around?” and “Enjoy it, fun to come, Canadian and Asian products, products and everything are different, always have fun whenever I come here.”

Discussion

Implications and Conclusion

Price. Research Question 1(a) asked consumers what they thought about the price of products at the Lethbridge farmers' markets, truck stalls, and the farm. In a previous study, Alonso and O'Neill (2011) found that consumers at Auburn and Langdale Mill farmers' markets listed high price as the main negative attribute of their shopping experience. In Predictions 1(a) and 4(e), I predicted that in the Lethbridge downtown and the Exhibition Park farmers' markets, the Okanagan fruit and the Nobleford vegetable truck stalls, or the Broxburn farm, consumers would perceive the products as more expensive than products at supermarkets or grocery stores. The findings support the predictions and demonstrate that 60% of the consumers interviewed at farmers' markets, 55% at the truck stalls, and 63.2% at the farm perceived the price of products as more expensive than that of supermarkets or grocery stores. There was no significant difference among consumers' perception of price at these different alternative markets. This suggests that consumers at the selected Lethbridge alternative markets perceived products as more expensive. At the Granville Island Public Market, I found that 84% of the consumers interviewed perceived the price of products as more expensive than products at supermarkets or grocery stores. There was no significant difference between consumers' perception of price at the Lethbridge alternative markets and the GIPM. The results show that people from both locations noticed the price difference, but were willing to pay a premium for better quality and other features.

Selection. Research Question 1(b) asked consumers what they thought about the selection of products at the Lethbridge farmers' markets, the truck stalls, and the farm? Brown, Miller, D. A. Boone, H. N. Boone Jr., Gartin, and McConnell (2006) found that

at New Jersey farmers' markets, even though 90% of the consumers rated the quality of products as good, only half of them also rated the variety of products there as good. Apparently, selection was a challenge at New Jersey farmers' markets, and it could be a challenge at the Lethbridge alternative markets as well. Thus, in Prediction 4(f), I hypothesized that consumers at the Okanagan fruit and the Nobleford vegetable truck stalls or the Broxburn farm would be similar to consumers at the Lethbridge downtown and the Exhibition Park farmers' markets, where they perceive less selection than supermarkets or grocery stores. Based on the findings, 65% of consumers interviewed from the farmers' markets, 80% from the truck stalls, as well as 63.2% from the farm supported the prediction by admitting the selection is limited compared to supermarkets or grocery stores. There was no significant difference among consumers' perceptions of selection at these different alternative markets. The Granville Island Public Market shows a totally different picture, where 88% of the consumers interviewed thought the selection was greater than the selection at supermarkets or grocery stores. The findings show that consumers perceived the selection as a disadvantage at the Lethbridge alternative markets, but as an advantage at the GIPM, when compared to supermarkets or grocery stores.

Freshness. Research Question 1(c) asked what consumers thought about the freshness of products at the Lethbridge farmers' markets, the truck stalls, and the farm. Archer et al. (2003) found that consumers considered liking the food the main reason they visited farmers' markets in northwest England, and a lot of them mentioned freshness. Therefore, in Predictions 1(b) and 4(a), I predicted that in the Lethbridge downtown and the Exhibition Park farmers' markets, the Okanagan fruit and the Nobleford vegetable truck stalls, or the Broxburn farm, consumers perceive the products

as fresher than those in supermarkets or grocery stores. The findings support the predictions and show that 95% of the consumers interviewed at the farmers' markets, 95% at the truck stalls, and 100% at the farm believed the products were fresher than products at supermarkets or grocery stores. There was no significant difference among consumers' perceptions at these different alternative markets. In conclusion, consumers at the Lethbridge farmers' markets, the truck stalls, and the farm all perceived the products as fresher than those at supermarkets or grocery stores.

Healthiness. Research Question 1(d) asked what consumers thought about the healthiness of products at the Lethbridge farmers' markets, the truck stalls, and the farm. Youngs (2003b) studied 11 farmers' markets in northwest England and found that 76.5% of the consumers thought the food was healthier. Inspired by this, in Prediction 4(b), I predicted that consumers at the Okanagan fruit and the Nobleford vegetable truck stalls and the Broxburn farm would be similar to consumers at the Lethbridge downtown and the Exhibition Park farmers' markets, where they perceived products as healthier than that of supermarkets or grocery stores. The findings support this prediction and show that 80% of the consumers from the farmers' markets, 60% from the truck stalls, and 78.9% from the farm perceived the products as healthier. There was no significant difference among consumers' perception of healthiness at these different alternative markets. In general, consumers at those alternative markets believed the products were healthier than that of supermarkets or grocery stores.

Seasonality. Research Question 1(e) asked what consumers thought about the seasonality of products at the Lethbridge farmers' markets, the truck stalls, and the farm. Youngs (2003b) found that 58.1% of the consumers interviewed believed that farmers' markets in northwest England sold seasonal produce. Therefore, the relevant Prediction

4(3) is that the consumers at the Okanagan fruit and the Nobleford vegetable truck stalls or the Broxburn farm should be similar to the consumers at the Lethbridge downtown and Exhibition Park farmers' markets, where they perceived products as more seasonal than that of supermarkets or grocery stores. The findings support this prediction and show that 85% of the consumers from the farmers' markets, 100% from the truck stalls, and 100% from the farm preferred the healthiness of the products at each market. The main difference among these three alternative markets is three people from the farmers' markets did not think the seasonality of products was better. However, this difference does not stand in the way of supporting the prediction that consumers perceived the products at the truck stalls and the farm as more seasonal than products at supermarkets or grocery stores.

Tastiness. Research Question 1(f) asked what consumers thought about the tastiness of products at the Lethbridge farmers' markets, the truck stalls, and the farm. Youngs (2003b) found that 90.5% of the consumers interviewed believed that farmers' markets in northwest England sold tastier food. Inspired by this, Prediction 4(d) hypothesized that consumers at the Okanagan fruit and the Nobleford vegetable truck stalls or the Broxburn farm should be similar to consumers at the Lethbridge downtown and the Exhibition Park farmers' markets, where they perceived products as tastier than that of supermarkets or grocery stores. According to the findings, 75% of the consumers interviewed from the farmers' markets, 90% from the truck stalls, and 100% from the farm support this prediction by agreeing that the food was tastier. There was no significant difference among consumers' perception of tastiness at these different alternative markets. This means consumers at the Lethbridge farmers' markets, the truck

stalls, and the farm all believed the products were tastier than those at supermarkets or grocery stores.

Atmosphere. Research Question 2(a) asked what consumers thought about the atmosphere at the Lethbridge farmers' markets, the truck stalls, and the farm. Onianwa et al. (2006) revealed that 42.3% of consumers in their survey preferred the atmosphere at a farmer's market. In comparison, 27.2% preferred supermarkets, while 28.2% did not have a preference. In Lethbridge, 90% of the consumers interviewed from the farmers' markets, 75% from the truck stalls, and 94.7% from the farm consider the atmosphere better than at supermarkets or grocery stores. There was no significant difference among consumers' perception of atmosphere at these different Lethbridge alternative markets. At the Granville Island Public Market, 100% of the consumers interviewed perceived the atmosphere as better than that in supermarkets. The main noticeable difference between the Lethbridge alternative markets and the GIPM is that the atmosphere at the GIPM was outstanding enough to make every interview participant appreciate it, which was not the case for any alternative market in Lethbridge.

Convenience. Research Question 2(b) asked what consumers thought about the convenience of the Lethbridge farmers' markets, the truck stalls, and the farm. In northwest England, several consumers found the main reasons not to go to farmers' markets were that they were not convenient, there was not enough choice, and they were too far away (Archer et al., 2003). Prediction 4(g) suggested that in Lethbridge, the truck stalls and the farm were considered an inconvenient shopping environment as were the farmers' markets, where consumers experienced more inconvenience than at supermarkets or grocery stores. I found that 50% of the consumers interviewed from the farmers' markets, 55% from the truck stalls, and 52.6% from the farm expressed their

dissatisfaction with the convenience of each market. Therefore, Prediction 4(g) was supported. There was no significant difference among consumers' perception of convenience at these different Lethbridge alternative markets. At the Granville Island Public Market, 60% of the consumers interviewed thought shopping was less convenient than supermarkets or grocery stores. The number of people with positive and negative perceptions at the Lethbridge alternative markets was almost evenly distributed, while a larger ratio of consumers at the GIPM had negative thoughts, with fewer positive and more neutral.

Supporting the local economy. Research Question 3(a) asked what consumers thought about supporting the local economy when shopping at the Lethbridge farmers' markets, the truck stalls, and the farm. Loureiro and Hine (2002), as well as Carpio and Isengildina-Massa (2009), found that people wanted to buy local products as a way to support the local economy and local farmers. In Lethbridge, 100% of the consumers interviewed from the farmers' markets, 85% from the truck stalls, and 100% from the farm agreed that their shopping behavior would contribute to the local economy. The main difference among consumers at these three alternative markets is that three people did not believe they were supporting the local economy when they shopped at the Okanagan fruit trucks because these trucks came from British Columbia.

Protecting the environment. Research Question 3(b) asked what consumers thought about protecting the environment when they shop at the Lethbridge farmers' markets, the truck stalls, and the farm. Alkon (2008) mentioned that urban aspects of local food systems such as farmers' markets provided city residents an opportunity to "do" environmentalism in their hometown, the San Francisco Bay area. I was curious to determine if people from Lethbridge considered shopping at the farmers' markets and

other alternative markets as helping the environment. In Lethbridge, 60% of the consumers interviewed from the farmers' markets, 60% from the truck stalls, and 63.2% from the farm agreed that their shopping behavior would preserve the environment. There was no significant difference among consumers' perceptions of protecting the environment at these different Lethbridge alternative markets. This means consumers at all selected Lethbridge alternative markets were concerned with protecting the environment.

Findings and theories. Most of my findings aligned with Vargo and Lusch's (2004) theory. The dominant logic of marketing has shifted from tangible resources, embedded value, and transactions to intangible resources, co-creation of value, and relationships. Marketing is no longer only the exchange of goods and money. Consumers at the Lethbridge farmers' markets, the truck stalls, the Broxburn farm, and the Granville Island Public Market also visited their particular market because of the atmosphere, supporting the local economy, protecting the environment, or the experience, as well as shopping for produce.

Consumers' feedback from the Granville Island Public Market aligned with Pine and Gilmore's (1998) experience economy theory. The Granville Island Public Market utilized good service, beautiful decoration, and appealing performances to engage consumers in a way that created a memorable experience. Therefore, even though 60% of the consumers interviewed were dissatisfied with the convenience of shopping (Table 8), and 84% of them were displeased with the prices (Table 7), 100% of them enjoyed the atmosphere (Table 6). Clearly, this outstanding shopping experience offset the negative elements of the GIPM.

Several findings were incorrectly predicted. Consumers were concerned with the atmosphere, supporting the local economy, and protecting the environment when they shopped at the truck stalls and the farm in Lethbridge. I underestimated the importance of those elements to consumers even at the most inconspicuous vegetable truck. Vargo and Lusch's (2004) and Pine and Gilmore's (1998) theories not only apply to comprehensive food shopping sites such as farmers' markets or public markets, but also apply to small and singular food shopping sites such as truck stalls and farms.

Granville Island Public Market's Implication on Lethbridge Farmers' Markets

A public market is a public space that features locally owned and operated businesses, and that has broader public purposes such as improving community health or neighborhood revitalization. A farmers' market meets most of these criteria, with the fundamental distinction that it features vendors who grow or produce their own food ("The Difference Between," 2012).

The Granville Island Public Market is operated by professional vendors in the Vancouver area. With all of its aromatic, visual, and auditory benefits, it has created an impressive shopping experience for its visitors. When asked the question: "What do you think of today's shopping experience?" 83.3% of the consumers interviewed responded with positive feedback, while 16.7% had a neutral perception. No one was unhappy. By contrast, local farmers, instead of professional vendors, run the Lethbridge farmers' markets. Even though farmers' markets and public markets are different, these local farmers can still learn something from the successful case of the GIPM to enrich their consumers' shopping experience, and to make the Lethbridge farmers' markets better shopping experiences. One suggestion might include entertainment specifically for the farmers' markets, including singers, dancers, magicians, or acrobats, and have the

audience participate as part of the performance. This kind of participation could engage consumers and create a better shopping experience. Also, even though the food court at Granville Island is nothing out of the ordinary, it at least offered people a place to dine and rest. Unfortunately, there was nothing like this at the Lethbridge downtown or the Exhibition Park farmers' markets. People had to return home after shopping if they were hungry. Another reasonable suggestion would be to have benches. There is no place to sit and rest at the downtown farmers' market. One interview participant was very displeased about it: "They are so mean (city government), they took the benches away just because some homeless people would sleep on them. Bring the benches back!" A few benches would keep people at the markets longer and potentially generate more consumption. Entertainment, benches, and a food court could turn a one-hour farmers' market shopping trip into an outing of several hours, which enriches consumers' experience. Furthermore, vendors could put up more decorations, outside and inside the market, display their products in a more organized way, give out more free samples, and not put too much pressure on consumers.

The vendors at the Lethbridge alternative markets need to understand that the markets function as stages; entertainment, food court, benches, and even their commodities are props on the stage. The memorable and engaging experience those can create for consumers is what really matters – the show itself. According to Pine and Gilmore (1988), businesspeople need to "wrap experiences around their traditional offerings to sell them better." (p. 98) Based on consumers' feedback during the interviews, I found that most of the consumers at the alternative markets were not just looking for products. They understood that the food was more expensive, the shopping was inconvenient, and the selection was limited. However, those negatives did not

prevent them from shopping. They stated that they enjoyed the atmosphere, loved to talk to the farmers, liked to be outside, wanted to experience the market, and so on. They were doing it for hedonistic consumption. Therefore, why not amplify the hedonistic aspects of the markets and augment the atmosphere to make the consumers' shopping experience more fun and more memorable? Jugglers, restaurants, benches, decorations, free samples are certainly ways to reach this goal, but the operators could likely come up with more ideas if they keep this goal in mind.

Consumers' Suggestions on Future Changes at the Granville Island Public Market

Even though 10 of the total 25 interview participants preferred to see the GIPM remain the same, the majority of the interview participants would like to see some changes. According to consumers' feedback, first, current access to the market is a big negative. Limited to the expensive public ferry service, some people proposed that the government should consider bringing the bus service back. Some also suggested building another bridge that links the island to the south side of the city, or building an escalator up the hill on the north side. Either a bridge or an escalator could substantially alleviate the burden of current access. Second, interviewees suggested improvements to the parking on the island. Many of the suggestions conflict: Some people proposed the elimination of private cars on the island, and demolishing the parking lots to give space back to the island, while others suggested building more parking lots, since the current number does not accommodate the increasing parking needs. Third, another conflicting issue is tourists; one interviewee said, "Cut down the tourists a little bit. One of the worst things is tourists taking pictures of the products and stand in my way." However, others worried that cutting down the number of tourists might reduce the prosperity of the market, since tourists contribute significantly to the economy of Granville Island. Fourth,

one consumer had constructive suggestions for selection at the food court. She said, “Add some new things, especially in the food court, where there should be more special stuff, and the fries don’t deserve to be there.” Other suggestions for future changes included giving out food samples, lowering the prices, providing more signs and maps, and services to help people get around, expanding the varieties, adding more local farmers, adding more street performers, and renovating the exterior of the market.

Other Implications

Truck stalls. According to consumers’ feedback at the Okanagan fruit truck, possible improvements included more selection, lower prices, detailed online notices of the fruit information, a winter fruit truck, more signs and marketing information, and covers on top of the fruit to make sure they are clean. I did not ask questions about future changes when interviewing consumers at the Nobleford vegetable truck in the summer of 2012. However, from my perspective, the farmers could try to come to town twice a week instead of only once. Fresh vegetables might be appreciated more often, and not every consumer would be able to come on Mondays.

Broxburn farm. Most of the consumers interviewed were quite content with the current situation at the farm, and they could not think of any improvements. There were only a few suggestions such as more variety, you-pick vegetables, and better service (the cashier in the produce room did not talk much). The only obstacle was the inconvenient location, but Broxburn farmers are doing their best by bringing their produce to the Lethbridge Exhibition Park farmers’ markets on Saturdays, so Lethbridge residents can enjoy their fresh vegetables without driving to the farm.

Implication of my data collection. I interviewed only lone shoppers in the market, so as to avoid group interruption. I do not think lone shoppers represent any

different or special demographic of consumers. During my interviews, I asked people for demographic information such as if he or she is the primary grocery shopper, the number of household dwellers, occupation, and level of education attained. This resulted in enriched and diverse data. Those interviewed varied from regular grocery shoppers to occasional shoppers, people who lived alone to those who lived with up to five people, students to the retired, and high school dropouts to PhDs--practically all demographics in the city. Therefore, I do not think lone shoppers are any different from group shoppers, and I do not think the method of data collection would bias my study. Also, I cannot think of any demographic difference between those who complied with the interview requests and those who refused. Most of the people who refused me did so because they didn't have time, had an unpleasant experience with interviews, or worried about having their private information exposed. But demographically, I do not think they were any different than other participants.

Other Issues

I noticed a recent trend that supermarkets are trying to imitate farmers' markets by selling local produce. Last summer the Save-on Foods supermarket in west Lethbridge set up a stand of local Taber corn and "Everything Wine and More" in West Lethbridge advertised their brewed-in-Alberta beer. Supermarkets and other chain stores seem to have noticed consumers' desire for local produce and accommodated their marketing to gain those consumers' attention.

Limitations

First, limited by the time and scale of this project, I took into consideration only two cities in Canada, Lethbridge and Vancouver. The limited number of alternative markets and restricted area of research inevitably affected the validity of this study. The study conducted at the Granville Island Public Market complements the study done in Lethbridge. However, the interviews at the GIPM focused on consumers' shopping experience and contained only limited questions about motivations such as price, atmosphere, selection, and convenience. I believe conducting the same interviews, as the ones conducted in Lethbridge, in other farmers' markets across Alberta could improve the validity and enrich the data for my study. Farmers' markets in Calgary and Edmonton have more similarities to farmers' markets in Lethbridge. The Calgary farmers' market is open four days a week throughout the year, and has approximately 78 vendors with various products. The Old Strathcona farmers' market in Edmonton has over 130 vendors, and opens every Saturday year-round. With more selection and longer business hours than their counterparts in Lethbridge, one could assume that consumers in those markets have better perception of atmosphere, selection, and experience, and I believe there are other valuable motivations to explore at those markets. Therefore, I believe comparisons of consumers' different perceptions in different farmers' markets across Alberta would provide more depth and breadth to the study of what motivates consumers to visit farmers' markets.

Second, even though this study contains five major predictions and 15 minor predictions, the first three major predictions have been tested by other researchers and relevant research questions have been answered. Looking into these research questions and predictions in Lethbridge is a complementary case study, but the contribution is

limited. The main contribution exists in consumers' perception and motivation of shopping at truck stalls and farms. However, only two truck stalls and one farm are included in this study, and there are only two major predictions to explore their benefits and costs, as well as consumers' concerns. More research questions can be developed to compare their similarities and differences with farmers' markets, find out their positions between farmers' markets and supermarkets, and see how they supplement consumers' needs for fresh vegetables and fruit besides farmers' markets and supermarkets.

Last but not least, I was the only interview recorder, transcriber, and coder in this study. Human interpretation is subjective and somewhat biased. I believe a second transcriber and coder would have substantially decreased the possibility of bias.

Future Research

Future research could look into Asian farmers' markets and compare them with farmers' markets in North America on topics such as product quality, atmosphere, selection, convenience, and other motivations consumers may have. Farmers' markets in Asian countries are quite different from their counterparts in North America. According to Goldman, Krider, and Ramaswami (1999), farmers' markets exist worldwide, they reflect the local culture and economy, and they meet local farmers' living habits and styles. In Asia, farmers' markets are usually called "wet markets" as vendors sell fresh vegetables, fresh meat, live fish, and other aquatic products there. Also, they operate year-round because they are the dominant food providers. I believe that discovering consumers' motivations in Asian farmers' markets and comparing them with consumers' motivations in North American farmers' markets will help researchers understand how different farmers' markets' consumers' concerns are in different countries.

This study utilized qualitative interviews to collect consumers' perceptions of a range of attributes at different markets. Future research could mix different methods together to obtain more thoughts and concerns from consumers. Simple yes/no questions can be structured into quantitative surveys to save time, and open, insightful, and thought-provoking questions can call for focus groups to allow more feedback. One of the challenges I had during my interviews was most of the consumers interviewed did not want to give deep consideration of the questions, because they did not want to spend too much of their private time on interviews. However, I believe moderately compensated focus groups would change this situation. Future researchers are suggested to recruit alternative market shoppers and pay them to sit together and share their thoughts and experiences on specific questions about the markets. A meeting coordinator

is suggested to chair the focus group discussion and a protocol has to be followed. A meeting coordinator must insure that the rule of discussion is strictly followed and all of the research questions are covered.

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Appendix A

Interview Questions (Lethbridge 2012)

General Information

1. What do you think of this market? What are the first three words off the top of your head?
2. How often do you shop here?
3. Do you visit other farmers' markets (trucks stalls or farms)?

Motivations

1. Why do you come here?
2. What is the difference between shopping here and shopping at supermarkets/grocery stores?
3. What do you think of the atmosphere here, compared with supermarkets/grocery stores?
4. What do you think of the prices of the food here, compared with supermarkets/grocery stores?
5. Compared with supermarkets/grocery stores,
 - A. What do you think of the freshness of the food here?
 - B. What do you think of the healthiness of the food here?
 - C. What do you think of the seasonality of the food here?
 - D. What do you think of the tastiness of the food here?
6. Do you think shopping at this market supports the local economy, can you tell me why?
7. Do you think shopping at this market helps the environment, why is that?
8. What do you think of the selections of products here, compared with supermarkets/grocery stores?
9. What do you think of the convenience of shopping here, compared with supermarkets/grocery stores?

Demographic (to help understand a little bit more about you)

1. Are you the primary grocery shopper in your household?
2. How many people are living in your household including you?
3. What do you do for a living? (Occupation)
4. What is the highest level of education you have accomplished?

Follow-up question

1. If I have any additional questions, would it be possible to contact you by phone? If you are willing to, please provide your phone number.

Appendix B

Interview Questions (Lethbridge 2013)

Motivations

1. Why do you come here?
2. What is the difference between shopping here and shopping at supermarkets/grocery stores?
3. What do you think of the atmosphere here, compared with supermarkets/grocery stores?
4. What do you think of the price of the food here, compared with supermarkets/grocery stores?
5. Compared with supermarkets/grocery stores,
 - A. What do you think of the freshness of the food here?
 - B. What do you think of the healthiness of the food here?
 - C. What do you think of the seasonality of the food here?
 - D. What do you think of the tastiness of the food here?
6. Some people believe shopping at this market supports the local economy, what do you think? Why?
7. Some people believe shopping at this market helps the environment, what do you think? Why?
8. What do you think of the selections of products here, compared with supermarkets/grocery stores?
9. What do you think of the convenience of shopping here, compared with supermarkets/grocery stores?

Experience

1. What do you think of today's shopping experience?
2. What is the best farmers' market shopping experience that you have ever had? Why is that?
3. What future changes in this market you would like to see to make the shopping experience more endearing?

Demographic (to help understand a little bit more about you)

1. Are you the primary grocery shopper?
2. How many people are living in your household including you?
3. What do you do for a living? (Occupation)
4. What is the highest level of education you have accomplished?

Appendix C

Interview Questions (Granville Island, 2013)

Motivations

1. Why do you come here?
2. What is the difference between shopping here and shopping at supermarkets/grocery stores?
3. What do you think of the atmosphere here, compared with supermarkets/grocery stores?
4. What do you think of the prices of the food here, compared with supermarkets/grocery stores?
5. What do you think of the selections of products here, compared with supermarkets/grocery stores?
6. What do you think of the convenience of shopping here, compared with supermarkets/grocery stores?

According to the literature and previous interviews, the answers to questions 4 – 6 should be negative. If so in this case as well. There will be one addition question:

7. Why do you still want to visit this market in spite of high prices, limited selections, or inconvenience?

Experience (new questions)

1. What do you think of today's shopping experience?
2. What is the best farmers' markets shopping experience you have ever had? And why is that?
3. What future changes in this market you would like to see to make the shopping experience more endearing?

Demographic (to help understand a little bit more about you)

1. Are you the primary grocery shopper?
2. How many people are living in your household including you?
3. What do you do for a living? (Occupation)
4. What is the highest level of education you have accomplished?