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Retail Mix Strategies Under Market Uncertainty: An Empirical Study of Supermarkets in Bandung Municipality

Ria Arifianti

Department of Business Administration, Faculty of Social and Political Science, Universitas Padjadjaran, Indonesia.

Dian Fordian

Department of Business Administration, Faculty of Social and Political Science, Universitas Padjadjaran, Indonesia.

R. Marsha Aulia Hakim

Department of Business Administration, Faculty of Social and Political Science, Universitas Padjadjaran, Indonesia.

Mochammad Rifky Pamungkas

Department of Business Administration, Faculty of Social and Political Science, Universitas Padjadjaran, Indonesia.

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ABSTRACT: The retail industry, particularly supermarkets, is facing increasingly complex competitive dynamics and changes in consumer behavior under conditions of market uncertainty. This situation requires retailers to design retail mix strategies that are adaptive and oriented toward consumer needs. This study aims to analyze the implementation of retail mix strategies in supermarkets in Bandung Municipality under conditions of market uncertainty, as well as to identify the retail mix elements most prioritized by consumers. This study employs a qualitative approach with an exploratory design. Data were collected through a literature review, interviews with management and consumers, and the distribution of questionnaires to supermarket consumers using a systematic random sampling technique. The data were analyzed descriptively to examine consumer perceptions of retail mix elements. The results indicate that location is the most prioritized retail mix element, followed by price, product assortment, and store atmosphere. In contrast, operational procedures, customer service, and promotional activities receive relatively lower evaluations. These findings suggest that under conditions of market uncertainty, consumers tend to prioritize functional and utilitarian aspects over supporting service elements and marketing communications. This study contributes theoretical insights to the development of retail management literature and offers practical implications for supermarket managers in formulating retail mix strategies that are more adaptive, consumer-oriented, and sustainable.

KEYWORDS: retail mix; supermarkets; market uncertainty; consumer behavior; retail strategy

1. INTRODUCTION

The retail industry constitutes a vital component of the distribution system, serving as a direct link between producers and end consumers. Retail activities extend beyond the mere sale of goods and services to encompass value creation through the provision of products that align with consumer needs and preferences (Berman et al., 2018). Consequently, retail business performance is largely determined by retailers' ability to design consumer-oriented strategies and respond effectively to dynamic business environments.

The development of modern retail formats, particularly supermarkets, has significantly transformed competitive patterns in urban retail markets. Supermarkets offer extensive product assortments, enhanced shopping convenience, and more standardized service systems compared to traditional retail formats. In Bandung Municipality, the retail sector contributes substantially to regional revenue generation and employment absorption, rendering the performance sustainability of supermarkets strategically important from both economic and social perspectives (Arifianti, 2016; Arifianti & Raharja, 2018).

Nevertheless, the retail industry is currently confronted with increasing market uncertainty. Such uncertainty arises from shifts in consumer behavior, fluctuations in purchasing power, intensified competition across retail formats, and changing consumer preferences toward convenience and efficiency in shopping activities. These conditions require retailers to move beyond conventional business practices and adopt more adaptive and responsive strategic approaches (Dunne et al., 2014).

In this context, retail mix strategy becomes a critical instrument for influencing consumer purchase decisions. The retail mix comprises a combination of store location, operational procedures, product assortment and quality, pricing, promotion, customer service, and store atmosphere designed to meet the needs of target markets (Berman et al., 2018; Levy & Weitz, 2012). Effective integration of these elements enables retailers to establish and sustain competitive advantages.

Empirical evidence from supermarkets in Bandung Municipality indicates that retail mix strategies have generally been implemented at a moderate level of effectiveness, particularly with respect to location and pricing. These two elements emerge as the primary considerations influencing consumers' shopping choices (Arifianti & Raharja, 2018). Easily accessible locations and prices aligned with consumers' purchasing power have proven to be dominant factors in attracting store visits. However, other elements—such as promotion, customer service, consistency of product quality, and the utilization of digital media—remain limited in their implementation.

Moreover, evolving consumer preferences for convenience, safety, and time efficiency have encouraged supermarkets to adjust their operational procedures and develop supporting services, including delivery services and the use of digital platforms. Store environment and shopping atmosphere also play a crucial role in shaping consumer experiences and perceived value (Turley & Chebat, 2002). Inadequate management of these aspects may weaken retail competitiveness amid uncertain market conditions.

Based on the foregoing discussion, retail mix strategy is shown to play a pivotal role in maintaining supermarket performance and sustainability under market uncertainty. Accordingly, this study aims to analyze retail mix strategies under conditions of market uncertainty in supermarkets located in Bandung Municipality. The findings are expected to contribute theoretical insights to retail management literature and provide practical recommendations for retailers in formulating adaptive, consumer-oriented, and sustainable retail strategies.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Retail Concepts, Modern Retailing, and the Strategic Importance of Supermarkets

Retailing is understood as the final stage of the distribution process, where goods and services are sold to end consumers for personal or household consumption (Berman et al., 2018). In practice, modern retail formats, including supermarkets, rely on more standardized operational management, broad product assortments, and carefully designed shopping experiences aimed at creating consumer value and loyalty (Levy & Weitz, 2012). As supermarkets operate at the primary point of contact with consumers, even minor shifts in consumer preferences—such as price sensitivity, demand for convenience, or expectations for faster service—can have immediate effects on sales performance, making strategic management critically important (Berman et al., 2018).

The literature further indicates that retail competition is not confined to rivalry among similar retailers but often overlaps across different retail formats (e.g., wholesalers functioning as retailers), thereby expanding the competitive landscape and increasing the need for clear differentiation strategies (Clarke, 2000). Retailing, particularly supermarkets, also contributes significantly to regional economic development and employment creation; therefore, the analysis of retail mix strategies is relevant not only at the firm level but also within the broader context of urban economic ecosystems (Arifianti & Raharja, 2018).

2.2 Retail Strategy and the Retail Mix Framework

Retail strategy can be understood as a comprehensive plan that guides retail firms in defining their business scope, objectives, target markets, long-term positioning, implementation of the retail mix, and periodic performance evaluation (Berman et al., 2018). Within this framework, the retail mix serves as the primary managerial tool through which retailers address customer needs and influence purchasing decisions (Levy & Weitz, 2012). Conceptually, the retail mix typically comprises several key elements: (a) store location, (b) operational procedures, (c) merchandise and services offered, (d) pricing tactics, (e) store atmosphere, (f) customer service, and (g) promotional methods (Berman et al., 2018; Dunne et al., 2014).

This framework is important because it enables researchers to conceptualize retail strategy not as a single action, but as an integrated set of mutually reinforcing policies. For example, price discounts that are not supported by product availability or a comfortable in-store experience often result only in short-term sales increases rather than sustained customer loyalty.

2.3 Market Uncertainty and the Need for Adaptation: Resilience, Risk, and Channel Dynamics

Market uncertainty in retailing may be triggered by demand-side shocks (such as changes in shopping patterns and price sensitivity) as well as supply-side disruptions (including product availability and instability in logistics costs). Within the supply chain resilience literature, organizational capabilities related to adaptability—such as flexibility, collaboration, redundancy, and transparency—are frequently positioned as key mechanisms for surviving disruptions and uncertainty (Roque Júnior et al., 2023). Other studies further emphasize that inventory strategies, multi-sourcing, and flexible supply contracts constitute essential components of resilience in addressing supply disruption risks and demand uncertainty (Guo et al., 2025).

Although much of this literature is grounded in supply chain research, its implications are highly relevant for supermarkets. Stock availability, price stability, and the smooth fulfillment of orders form the foundation of the consumer shopping experience. Beyond supply-related factors, market uncertainty also reshapes how consumers interact with retailers across shopping channels. Omnichannel literature suggests that cross-channel integration—encompassing physical stores, mobile applications, and delivery services—has become increasingly critical for maintaining competitiveness, as consumers demand seamless, convenient, and consistent experiences (Thaichon et al., 2024).

Consumer behavior may further evolve into habitual omnichannel usage when convenience, positive experiences, and value expectations are repeatedly fulfilled (Sharma et al., 2024). Accordingly, market uncertainty should not be understood solely in terms of fluctuations in purchasing power, but also as a shift in the standards of service that consumers increasingly expect from retailers.

2.4 Store Atmosphere, Shopping Experience, and Its Influence on Consumer Behavior

At the store level, one of the most extensively discussed elements in retailing is store atmosphere (or atmospherics). Turley & Chebat (2002) emphasize that store atmosphere is not merely decorative, but a strategic variable capable of influencing shopping behavior and consumer responses. More recent research reinforces that visual merchandising and store atmospherics are closely interconnected and should be understood in an integrated manner, particularly as traditional and digital retail environments increasingly intersect (Basu et al., 2022). The “store-as-a-brand” perspective further suggests that social cues, design, ambient factors, and merchandise shape consumers' internal evaluations and encourage approach and purchasing tendencies (Kumar & Kim, 2014).

In the context of supermarkets in Bandung Municipality, store atmosphere and shopping comfort emerge as salient consumer concerns, including aspects such as spatial layout, cleanliness, and the shopping experience during peak hours. These findings are consistent with the literature that positions atmosphere as a key determinant of the shopping experience, which ultimately contributes to customer satisfaction, revisit intentions, and word-of-mouth—particularly when consumers are faced with numerous and highly substitutable retail options (Elmashhara & Soares, 2022).

2.5 Price, Location, and Value: Enduring Classic Determinants

Despite the growing prominence of digital trends, classical determinants such as location and price remain highly dominant in retailing, particularly in supermarkets. From a theoretical perspective, location is closely associated with target market selection and accessibility; therefore, location decisions directly influence other elements of the retail mix (Berman et al., 2018). Consumers tend to prioritize location and price as the most preferred retail mix attributes due to ease of access and affordability relative to their purchasing capacity. Practically, this reinforces the argument that under conditions of market uncertainty, value for money and accessibility continue to serve as the primary anchors of shopping decisions, while other retail mix elements function as complementary sources of differentiation.

2.6 Digitalization of Retail Services and E-Grocery: Empirical Evidence

The transformation of shopping channels (online–offline integration) has become a prominent theme in recent literature. In Indonesia, online shopping behavior for daily necessities has shown a growing trend, although it is influenced by factors such as risk perception, price sensitivity, and convenience. A study on online grocery shopping in Indonesia finds that price considerations, health-related risks, and reference group influence play significant roles in driving consumers' adoption of online grocery services (Warganegara & Babolian Hendijani, 2022).

Systematic reviews on e-grocery adoption further highlight that convenience, trust, and situational factors contribute significantly to consumers' decisions to use digital grocery shopping services (Wemona et al., 2022). Accordingly, the strengthening of digital services in supermarkets should be understood as an extension of the retail mix rather than a complete substitution for physical stores.

Moreover, delivery services and the use of third-party platforms as well as proprietary supermarket applications have emerged as part of retailers' operational and service responses under unstable market conditions. This is consistent with omnichannel literature, which emphasizes the importance of integrating order fulfillment, usability, and seamlessness to ensure a consistent cross-channel customer experience (Al-Adamat et al., 2024).

2.7 Synthesis Theory

Synthesizing insights from the literature, market uncertainty necessitates adaptive retail strategies through (1) strengthening value propositions (price and availability), (2) optimizing location and accessibility, (3) enhancing the in-store experience (atmosphere, cleanliness, and comfort), and (4) integrating cross-channel services (omnichannel/e-grocery) to ensure convenient and consistent consumer experiences (Sharma et al., 2024; Thaichon et al., 2024; Turley & Chebat, 2002). However, there remains a need for empirical research that identifies which retail mix elements are most dominant within specific local contexts and how consumer priorities are formed under conditions of market uncertainty.

At this point, the present study becomes particularly relevant because it (a) adopts the context of supermarkets in Bandung Municipality, (b) practically maps retail mix elements—namely location, operational procedures, products, pricing, store atmosphere, customer service, and promotion—and (c) identifies consumer preferences for dominant elements (location and price) while simultaneously highlighting areas for improvement in product quality, product guidance, promotional activities, and services. By reframing “market uncertainty,” the findings of this study can be positioned as strategic lessons that remain relevant for various future shocks and market volatilities.

3. METHODS

This study adopts a qualitative approach with an exploratory design to obtain an in-depth understanding of the implementation of retail mix strategies under conditions of market uncertainty. The qualitative approach is employed because it enables the exploration of meanings, perceptions, and individual experiences related to the social phenomena under investigation (Creswell & Creswell, 2017). Data were collected through a literature review, interviews, and questionnaires. The literature review was conducted to establish the conceptual foundation of the study, while interviews were carried out with company representatives and consumers to obtain empirical insights into retail mix strategy practices. Questionnaires were distributed to supermarket consumers using a systematic random sampling technique based on the sequence of respondents' arrival until the required sample size was reached.

The data were analyzed using descriptive analysis by describing and interpreting the research findings. Questionnaire data were processed using the mode to identify prevailing trends in consumer perceptions of retail mix elements. This analytical approach was selected because it aligns with the study's objective of mapping phenomena and developing an understanding of the empirical context rather than testing causal relationships (Creswell & Creswell, 2017).

4. RESULTS & DISCUSSIONS

Berman et al., (2018) emphasize that retailing represents a distinctive combination of store location, operational procedures, merchandise and services offered, pricing tactics, store atmosphere, customer service, and promotional methods. Accordingly, the results and discussion of this study are presented as follows:

4.1 Location Strategy under Conditions of Market Uncertainty

Location is a key element of the retail mix because it directly determines accessibility, convenience, and store attractiveness for consumers. Berman et al., (2018) emphasize that store location influences specific elements of retail strategy, particularly in shaping perceptions of value and shopping convenience. Under conditions of market uncertainty, location decisions become increasingly strategic, as consumers tend to prioritize efficiency, ease of access, and risk minimization in their shopping activities (Berman et al., 2018; Levy & Weitz, 2012).

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics of Location Strategy

N	100
1	0
2	2
3	33
4	27
5	27
Sum (Control)	89
Actual Score	346
Max Score	445
Min Score	89
Continuum Score	72.19%

The descriptive analysis shows that the location aspect achieved a continuum score of 72.19%, indicating that the majority of respondents perceived supermarket locations in Bandung Municipality as being in the “good” category. This finding suggests that supermarket locations generally meet consumer expectations, particularly in terms of accessibility and proximity to daily activities. Empirically, consumers tend to choose supermarkets located near residential areas, office districts, or centers of economic activity, as such locations help reduce travel time and transportation costs—especially in market conditions that emphasize spending efficiency and mobility (Arifianti & Raharja, 2018).

Ease of transportation access and location affordability emerge as dominant factors in supermarket choice decisions. Consumers perceive stores that are easy to find and accessible by public transportation as offering greater convenience than those located in less accessible areas. This finding is consistent with Levy & Weitz (2012) who argue that strategically located retail outlets not only increase customer traffic but also enhance opportunities for impulse buying and repeat visits. Under market uncertainty, preferences for easily accessible locations reflect increasingly rational and cautious consumer behavior in allocating resources, particularly time and financial expenditures.

Beyond accessibility, environmental comfort surrounding the store also constitutes an important consideration in location evaluation. Consumers show a tendency to shop at supermarkets that provide a sense of safety, comfort, and pleasantness. Such comfort is influenced not only by geographical position but also by surrounding conditions, including the availability of parking areas, neighborhood density, and ease of navigation to the store. Retail literature emphasizes that an effective location should support the overall shopping experience rather than merely serve as a point of sale (Turley & Chebat, 2002).

From a strategic perspective, these findings indicate that location functions as a fundamental element of the retail mix for supermarkets in Bandung Municipality. High consumer evaluations of location suggest that retail strategies oriented toward proximity to consumers and ease of access remain relevant and effective under market uncertainty. Nevertheless, a strategic location must be integrated with other retail mix elements—such as pricing, product availability, and service quality—to create sustainable competitive advantage (Dunne et al., 2014).

This empirical analysis reinforces the argument that under uncertain market conditions, an appropriate location strategy serves not only as an initial driver of consumer attraction but also as a key pillar supporting supermarket performance stability. Locations that are easily accessible, close to consumers’ activity centers, and conducive to comfortable shopping experiences are shown to represent an effective adaptive strategy for addressing market dynamics and uncertainty.

4.2 Operational Procedure Strategy under Conditions of Market Uncertainty

Operational procedures constitute an important element of the retail mix because they are directly related to how services are delivered to consumers in a consistent and efficient manner. Berman et al., (2018) explain that operational procedures encompass the regulation of operating hours, employee service standards, transaction mechanisms, and internal rules that shape the overall shopping experience. Under conditions of market uncertainty, operational procedures function as adaptive instruments to ensure service continuity while simultaneously controlling operational costs and risks (Dunne et al., 2014).

Table 2. Descriptive Statistics of Operational Procedure

N	100
1	32
2	43
3	15
4	10
5	10
Sum (Control)	110
Actual Score	253
Max Score	550
Min Score	110
Continuum Score	32.50%

The descriptive analysis indicates that the operational procedure aspect achieved a continuum score of 32.50%, suggesting that consumer perceptions of operational procedures in supermarkets in Bandung Municipality fall into the low category. This finding reveals a gap between the

operational standards implemented by management and consumer expectations regarding service convenience and comfort. From an empirical perspective, the relatively low score reflects that existing operational procedures have not fully supported an efficient shopping experience amid market dynamics that demand speed and flexibility (Berman et al., 2018; Sharma et al., 2024; Thaichon et al., 2024).

Nevertheless, in terms of service interaction quality, consumers perceive friendliness and the attitudes of store employees as key strengths. Courtesy, responsiveness, and a non-intrusive approach in serving customers reflect a service orientation focused on customer comfort. Retail literature emphasizes that the quality of personal interaction constitutes a central component of the service encounter, significantly influencing perceived value and customer satisfaction (Levy & Weitz, 2012). Allowing consumers to explore products without pressure also contributes to a more positive shopping atmosphere (Elmashhara & Soares, 2022; Kumar & Kim, 2014).

However, operational procedures are determined not only by human resources but also by the service systems and process flows implemented. The low operational procedure score indicates that service hour arrangements, transaction flows, and service consistency have not yet been fully optimized. In the context of market uncertainty, consumers tend to expect procedures that are simple, fast, and easy to understand so that shopping activities do not require excessive effort (Berman et al., 2018). Inefficient procedures may reduce comfort and weaken revisit intentions, even when location and pricing are perceived as attractive (Dunne et al., 2014; Roque Júnior et al., 2023).

From a transaction facility perspective, the availability of both cash and non-cash payment options (e.g., credit cards) is positively perceived by consumers because it provides flexibility and convenience in transactions. This finding aligns with Dunne et al., (2014), who argue that transaction convenience is an integral component of operational procedures that enhances efficiency and customer satisfaction. Under uncertain market conditions, flexibility in payment methods represents a relevant operational strategy for serving diverse consumer segments with varying preferences (Al-Adamat et al., 2024; Thaichon et al., 2024).

Strategically, these findings suggest that operational procedures in supermarkets in Bandung Municipality require further strengthening, particularly in terms of service standardization, operational flow efficiency, and process clarity for consumers. Although interpersonal interactions are generally perceived positively, inefficient procedures may hinder the creation of an optimal shopping experience. Therefore, under conditions of market uncertainty, supermarket managers should position operational procedures as a strategic element that supports retail performance stability rather than merely as routine internal activities.

Overall, this analysis confirms that operational procedures play a crucial role within the retail mix strategy. Enhancing the quality of operational procedures—integrated with employee service delivery and flexible transaction systems—can represent a strategic step toward strengthening the competitiveness of supermarkets in Bandung Municipality amid market dynamics and uncertainty.

4.3 Product Offering Strategy under Conditions of Market Uncertainty

Within the retail mix, products represent a core element that directly determines the value received by consumers. Product strategy in a retail context not only encompasses the variety and quantity of goods offered, but also relates to product availability, relevance, and the ease with which consumers can obtain products that meet their needs. Under conditions of market uncertainty, an appropriate product strategy becomes increasingly important, as consumers tend to prioritize efficiency, completeness, and reliable product availability within a single shopping location (Berman et al., 2018; Levy & Weitz, 2012; Thaichon et al., 2024).

Table 3. Descriptive Statistics of Product Offering

N	100
1	0
2	44
3	0
4	34
5	34
Sum (Control)	112
Actual Score	394
Max Score	560
Min Score	112
Continuoum Score	62.95

The descriptive analysis indicates that the product offering achieved a continuum score of 62.95%, suggesting that consumer perceptions of product variety and availability in supermarkets in Bandung Municipality fall within the “moderately good” category. This finding implies that supermarkets have generally been able to provide a relatively comprehensive range of products to meet consumers’ daily needs. In the context of market uncertainty, product variety becomes particularly important, as consumers seek efficiency by consolidating their purchases in a single location capable of supplying multiple categories of necessities (Levy & Weitz, 2012; Thaichon et al., 2024).

The products offered by supermarkets are perceived to cover a wide range of categories, from food items to household goods. Broad and easily accessible product availability provides consumers with a sense of convenience by reducing the need to visit multiple stores. Retail literature emphasizes that assortment breadth and depth play a critical role in enhancing perceived value and customer satisfaction, particularly in modern retail formats such as supermarkets (Berman et al., 2018; Dunne et al., 2014). Under uncertain market conditions, a comprehensive product strategy enables supermarkets to maintain their attractiveness as one-stop shopping destinations.

Beyond variety, consistent product availability constitutes a crucial aspect of product strategy. Consumers respond positively when required products are readily available without crowding or stockouts. From a theoretical perspective, consistency in product availability is closely linked to operational reliability and retail supply chain management, which ultimately influence consumer trust and loyalty (Guo et al., 2025; Roque

Júnior et al., 2023). When markets are unstable, a supermarket's ability to maintain product availability serves as a signal of organizational stability and managerial professionalism.

The continuum score that has not yet reached a very high category indicates remaining opportunities for improvement in product strategy. Recent literature highlights that product strategy is not solely concerned with quantity and variety, but also with product relevance to evolving consumer needs, including quality, packaging, and ease of in-store access (Elmashhara & Soares, 2022; Sharma et al., 2024). Accordingly, supermarkets need to continuously adjust their product composition to remain aligned with consumer preferences amid market dynamics and uncertainty.

Overall, this empirical analysis demonstrates that the product strategies implemented by supermarkets in Bandung Municipality have made a positive contribution to the consumer shopping experience. Within the retail mix framework, products function as a central element that must be integrated with pricing, location, and service strategies to create sustainable competitive advantage. Therefore, strengthening product strategies through effective management of variety, availability, and relevance represents a critical strategic step for supermarkets in responding to uncertain market conditions (Berman et al., 2018; Thaichon et al., 2024).

4.4 Pricing Strategy under Conditions of Market Uncertainty

Price is one of the most sensitive elements of the retail mix because it directly influences value perception, purchase decisions, and consumer loyalty. Under conditions of market uncertainty, pricing strategy functions not only as a competitive tool but also as an adaptive mechanism to maintain affordability for consumers while ensuring the sustainability of retail operations. Retail literature emphasizes that pricing strategies should be designed flexibly by considering cost structures, competitive dynamics, and consumers' purchasing power in order to create balanced value for both retailers and customers (Grewal et al., 2017; Hübner et al., 2016).

Table 4. Descriptive Statistics of Price

N	100
1	0
2	25
3	9
4	25
5	25
Sum (Control)	84
Actual Score	302
Max Score	420
Min Score	84
Continuoum Score	64.88%

The descriptive analysis indicates that the pricing strategy achieved a continuum score of 64.88%, suggesting that consumer perceptions of supermarket pricing in Bandung Municipality fall within the moderately good category. This finding implies that, in general, the prices set by supermarkets are perceived as relatively aligned with consumer expectations and purchasing capacity. From an empirical perspective, this condition reflects that supermarket pricing strategies have been able to maintain a balance between affordability and competitiveness, even when market conditions are not fully stable (Grewal et al., 2017; Liozu & Hinterhuber, 2022; Liozu et al., 2011).

Pricing decisions in supermarkets are typically made by considering cost structures and competitors' price levels. Based on interviews with management, prices are determined through agreements with suppliers, whereby order volume influences procurement prices. Larger order volumes increase the likelihood of supermarkets obtaining more competitive purchase prices, thereby creating room to offer more attractive prices to consumers. This approach is consistent with a cost-based pricing strategy combined with competitive pricing, which is widely recommended in retail literature as a viable approach for coping with fluctuating market conditions (Bolton et al., 2010; Hinterhuber et al., 2021).

The continuum score that has not yet reached a very high category indicates that there is still room for improvement in pricing strategies. Recent literature suggests that consumers in uncertain markets are increasingly sensitive to price changes and tend to compare prices across stores and channels before making purchase decisions (Hamilton, 2024; Shankar et al., 2021). Therefore, price consistency, clarity of price promotion information, and perceptions of price fairness become critical aspects that supermarket managers must address in order to maintain consumer trust. These findings demonstrate that price remains a primary instrument for attracting and retaining supermarket consumers in Bandung Municipality. Within the retail mix framework, an effective pricing strategy must be integrated with product, location, and service strategies to create a coherent value perception. Under conditions of market uncertainty, adaptive, transparent, and value-oriented pricing management (value-based pricing) can serve as a sustainable competitive advantage for modern retailers (Grewal et al., 2017; Liozu & Hinterhuber, 2022).

4.5 Store Atmosphere under Conditions of Market Uncertainty

Store atmosphere constitutes an important element of the retail mix, as it plays a central role in shaping the overall consumer shopping experience. Store atmosphere encompasses spatial layout, cleanliness, lighting, comfort, and product arrangement, all of which can influence consumers' emotions and behaviors while they are in the store. Under conditions of market uncertainty, store atmosphere becomes increasingly relevant because consumers tend to choose shopping environments that provide comfort, safety, and pleasantness as part of efforts to minimize discomfort and psychological risk during shopping activities (Grewal et al., 2014; Merfeld et al., 2025; Puccinelli et al., 2009).

Tabel 5. Descriptive Statistics of Store Atmosphere

N	100
1	10
2	15
3	45
4	30
5	30
Sum (Control)	130
Actual Score	445
Max Score	650
Min Score	130
Continuoum Score	60.58%

The descriptive analysis indicates that the store atmosphere aspect achieved a continuum score of 60.58%, suggesting that consumer perceptions of supermarket store atmosphere in Bandung Municipality fall within the moderately good category. This finding implies that, in general, store atmospheres have been able to support shopping activities, although they have not yet reached an optimal level. From an empirical perspective, this score reflects that the physical and environmental elements of stores provide a relatively comfortable experience, while certain conditions may still reduce consumer comfort (Grewal et al., 2014).

Store size is perceived as important by consumers because it is directly related to the smoothness of shopping activities and in-store movement. Consumers feel more relaxed and comfortable when sufficient space is available to select products without being disturbed by crowding. Theoretically, adequate spatial layout contributes to consumers' perceptions of control and comfort, which in turn influence visit duration and purchase intensity (Basu et al., 2022; Bitner, 1992). Nevertheless, during peak shopping periods with high visitor density, consumers may still experience pressure due to spatial congestion, which can diminish the quality of the shopping experience.

In addition to spatial layout, store cleanliness is a highly salient atmospheric aspect for consumers. Consumers feel more comfortable and at ease when shopping in clean, orderly, and litter-free environments. Retail literature indicates that cleanliness serves as a signal of service quality and managerial professionalism, which influences overall store evaluations and revisit intentions (Almohammad et al., 2025; Elmashhara & Soares, 2022). Under uncertain market conditions, store cleanliness also functions as a key determinant of consumer trust in modern retail formats.

Product arrangement and categorization through clear labeling further contribute to a conducive store atmosphere. Systematic labeling and product organization facilitate consumers' ability to locate desired items, thereby reducing search effort and potential frustration. Recent studies confirm that effective in-store navigation and visual merchandising enhance shopping efficiency and strengthen consumers' perceived value (Basu et al., 2022; Sarstedt et al., 2023).

Overall, this analysis indicates that store atmosphere in supermarkets in Bandung Municipality has made a positive contribution to consumers' shopping experiences, although there remains room for improvement. Within the retail mix framework, store atmosphere should be managed consistently and adaptively to support consumer comfort, efficiency, and satisfaction. Amid conditions of market uncertainty, strengthening store atmosphere strategies can serve as an effective non-price differentiation mechanism for sustaining competitiveness and consumer loyalty (Grewal et al., 2017).

4.6 Customer Service Strategy under Conditions of Market Uncertainty

Customer service represents an important element of the retail mix, as it serves as the primary point of direct contact between firms and consumers. Service strategies are not limited to employee attitudes and interpersonal interactions, but also encompass transaction convenience, service flexibility, and the provision of supplementary services that enhance shopping comfort and efficiency. Under conditions of market uncertainty, customer service becomes a strategic instrument for maintaining consumer trust, satisfaction, and loyalty, particularly as consumers become increasingly selective in choosing retail outlets (Puccinelli et al., 2009).

Table 6. Descriptive Statistics of Customer Service

N	100
1	7
2	33
3	60
4	0
5	0
Sum (Control)	100
Actual Score	253
Max Score	500
Min Score	100
Continuoum Score	38.25%

The descriptive analysis indicates that the customer service strategy achieved a continuum score of 38.25%, suggesting that consumer perceptions of customer service in supermarkets in Bandung Municipality fall within the low category. This finding reveals a gap between the services provided

and consumer expectations. From an empirical perspective, the relatively low score reflects that customer service has not yet been able to deliver an optimal and consistent shopping experience amid market dynamics that demand speed, convenience, and service flexibility (Grewal et al., 2014; Verhoef et al., 2009).

From a transaction facility perspective, the availability of non-cash payment options such as credit cards is perceived as providing greater convenience for consumers. However, the uneven availability of such facilities across supermarkets constitutes a factor that may reduce perceived service quality. Retail literature emphasizes that service consistency across stores and channels is critical for building perceptions of professionalism and service fairness, which directly affect customer satisfaction and revisit intentions (Bolton et al., 2010; Lemon & Verhoef, 2016).

Delivery services have also become an increasingly relevant component of customer service strategies in modern retailing. Such services are typically offered to consumers who make purchases above a certain threshold, with additional charges depending on distance and location. Theoretically, delivery services represent a form of value-added service that can enhance consumer convenience, but may also generate negative perceptions if service costs, delivery times, and terms are not clearly communicated (Thaichon et al., 2024). This highlights the importance of transparency and standardization in managing delivery services as part of customer service.

Furthermore, the utilization of supermarket applications and digital platforms represents an innovation in customer service that is positively perceived by consumers. Consumers indicate that the use of specific store applications can accelerate transaction processes and facilitate product access. Recent literature suggests that the integration of digital services into customer service enhances efficiency and convenience, provided that such systems are supported by user-friendly interfaces and reliable infrastructures (Pantano et al., 2022; Shankar et al., 2021). Nevertheless, uneven adoption and incomplete integration of technology may limit the positive impact of these service innovations.

Overall, this analysis indicates that customer service remains a retail mix element requiring particular attention. Under conditions of market uncertainty, customer service functions not only as a transactional support mechanism but also as a form of non-price differentiation that can strengthen long-term relationships with consumers. Accordingly, improving service consistency, expanding transaction facilities, optimizing delivery services, and strengthening digital-based services constitute important strategic steps for supermarkets in Bandung Municipality to enhance competitiveness and consumer loyalty (Grewal et al., 2014, 2017).

4.7 Promotional Strategy under Conditions of Market Uncertainty

Promotion is a retail mix element that functions as a communication mechanism between supermarkets and consumers in conveying product information, price offers, and value propositions. Under conditions of market uncertainty, promotional strategies are not solely aimed at stimulating short-term sales, but also at maintaining brand visibility, shaping value perceptions, and sustaining relationships with consumers. Retail literature emphasizes that effective promotion should be aligned with consumer characteristics, the communication channels employed, and the dynamic market context (Puccinelli et al., 2009; Shankar et al., 2021).

Table 7. Descriptive Statistics of Promotional

N	100
1	21
2	30
3	49
4	0
5	0
Sum (Control)	100
Actual Score	228
Max Score	500
Min Score	100
Continuum Score	32.00%

The descriptive analysis indicates that the promotional strategy achieved a continuum score of 32.00%, suggesting that consumer perceptions of supermarket promotional strategies in Bandung Municipality fall within the low category. This finding indicates that existing promotional efforts have not yet been fully effective in capturing consumer attention or optimally influencing purchase decisions. From an empirical perspective, the relatively low score reflects a gap between the promotional formats adopted by supermarkets and consumer preferences and expectations in an uncertain market environment (Lemon & Verhoef, 2016; Roggeveen & Sethuraman, 2020).

The promotional media employed by supermarkets are predominantly conventional, including brochures, leaflets, and pamphlets distributed around stores or commercial centers. These media are primarily used to introduce new products or communicate discount information. Although print-based media continue to play a limited role, recent literature suggests that the effectiveness of conventional promotions has declined as consumer behavior increasingly relies on digital and real-time information sources (Hamilton, 2024; Pantano et al., 2022). This shift may partly explain the low consumer evaluations of existing promotional strategies.

In addition to promotional media, sales promotion tools such as price discounts, direct gifts, and quantity-based discounts are commonly employed to attract consumer interest. Consumers tend to respond positively to price-based promotions, particularly when discounts are linked to specific purchase values. Retail studies indicate that sales promotions are effective in stimulating short-term purchasing behavior; however, they have limited effectiveness in fostering long-term loyalty if they are not integrated with consistent brand communication strategies (Bolton et al., 2010; Hamilton, 2024).

The low promotional strategy score also suggests that promotional activities have not yet been optimally integrated with digital channels. Recent research highlights that omnichannel promotional integration can enhance reach, message relevance, and consumer engagement, particularly in unstable market conditions (Verhoef et al., 2021; Warganegara & Babolian Hendijani, 2022). Without such integration, promotional efforts risk being perceived as temporary or fragmented activities with limited impact on purchase decisions.

Overall, this analysis indicates that promotional strategy remains one of the weakest elements of the retail mix among supermarkets in Bandung Municipality. Under conditions of market uncertainty, promotion should function as a strategic communication tool capable of strengthening value perceptions, enhancing consumer engagement, and supporting other retail mix elements such as pricing and product offerings. Therefore, strengthening promotional strategies through the selection of more relevant media, digital channel integration, and message consistency represents an important step toward improving promotional effectiveness and supermarket competitiveness (Clarke, 2000; Roggeveen & Sethuraman, 2020).

4.8 Retail Mix Elements Prioritized by Consumers under Conditions of Market Uncertainty

Within the retail mix strategy, each element—location, operational procedures, products, pricing, store atmosphere, customer service, and promotion—contributes differently to shaping consumer perceptions and purchase decisions. Under conditions of market uncertainty, consumers tend to prioritize retail mix elements that provide efficiency, affordability, and convenience in shopping activities. Therefore, mapping the retail mix aspects most emphasized by consumers is essential for understanding the adaptive strategies adopted by supermarkets to maintain competitiveness (Berman et al., 2018; Levy & Weitz, 2012).

Based on interview results and consumer questionnaires, as illustrated in Figure 1, the retail mix elements most prioritized by consumers are location (72.19%), followed by price (64.88%), product offerings (62.95%), and store atmosphere (60.58%). Meanwhile, customer service (38.25%), operational procedures (32.50%), and promotion (32.00%) occupy relatively lower positions. These findings indicate that supermarket consumers in Bandung Municipality place greater emphasis on functional and utilitarian aspects rather than communication-related and supporting service elements under uncertain market conditions (Roggeveen & Sethuraman, 2020; Verhoef et al., 2021).

The dominance of location underscores that accessibility and proximity to consumers' activity centers remain primary considerations in supermarket choice. Easily accessible locations near residential areas or office districts allow consumers to save time and transportation costs, thereby delivering high practical value. This finding is consistent with Berman et al., (2018), who argue that location is the most fundamental element of retail strategy due to its direct relationship with target market segments. Recent literature further suggests that under volatile market conditions, consumers increasingly prefer retailers whose locations provide ease and certainty of access (Hübner et al., 2016).

Price ranks as the second most prioritized factor for consumers. Price is perceived as important because it is directly related to purchasing power and perceived value. Consumers tend to choose supermarkets that offer prices aligned with their income levels or affordability thresholds. From a theoretical perspective, this aligns with the concept of value-based pricing, whereby consumers evaluate prices based on the balance between benefits received and sacrifices made (Hinterhuber et al., 2021; Liozu et al., 2011). Price sensitivity becomes more pronounced in uncertain market situations, reinforcing pricing strategy as a key competitive instrument in retailing.

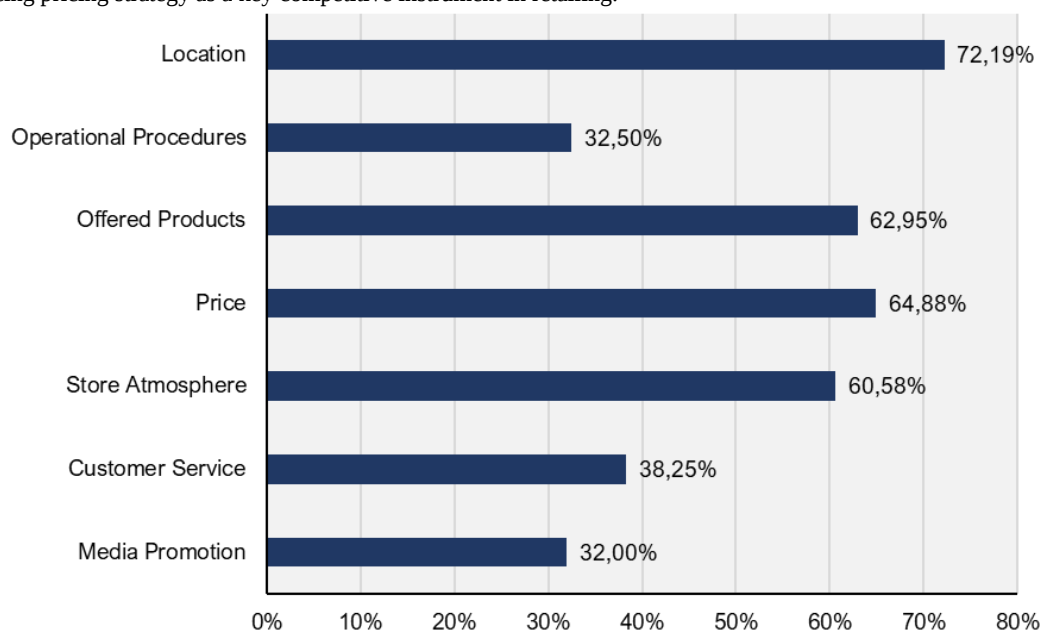


Figure 1. Implementation Retail

Product offerings and store atmosphere occupy intermediate positions in consumer priorities. Product variety and availability enable consumers to satisfy multiple needs in a single location, while a comfortable store atmosphere supports a pleasant shopping experience. Retail literature emphasizes that the combination of comprehensive product assortments and a conducive store environment can increase visit duration and purchase likelihood, even if these factors are not the primary determinants of initial store choice (Basu et al., 2022; Elmashhara & Soares, 2022).

Conversely, the lower prioritization of customer service, operational procedures, and promotion suggests that consumers tend to regard these elements as supporting rather than determining factors. This indicates that as long as core retail functions—such as strategic location, affordable pricing, and product availability—are adequately fulfilled, consumers are relatively more tolerant of limitations in service and promotional

activities. This finding is consistent with studies suggesting that under market uncertainty, consumers focus more on fulfilling core needs than on symbolic experiences or marketing communications (Lemon & Verhoef, 2016; Thaichon et al., 2024).

Overall, this analysis indicates that supermarket retail mix strategies in Bandung Municipality should prioritize strengthening the elements most valued by consumers—namely location, price, and product—while gradually improving service, operational procedures, and promotional activities. Within the retail strategy framework, understanding these consumer priorities provides an essential foundation for formulating adaptive retail mix policies oriented toward business performance stability amid conditions of market uncertainty (Al-Adamat et al., 2024; Berman et al., 2018).

5. CONCLUSION & SUGGESTIONS

This study aims to analyze the retail mix strategies implemented by supermarkets in Bandung Municipality in responding to conditions of market uncertainty. Based on the descriptive analysis and discussion, the findings indicate that the effectiveness of retail mix strategies varies across elements. The results reveal that location is the most prioritized retail mix element among consumers, as reflected by the highest continuum score. Easily accessible locations, proximity to consumers' activity centers, and convenient transportation support are shown to be the primary factors influencing supermarket choice. These findings confirm that accessibility and spatial efficiency remain key determinants of consumer shopping behavior under market uncertainty.

In addition to location, price and product offerings also occupy important positions in consumer priorities. Prices are perceived as generally aligned with consumers' purchasing power and value perceptions, while product variety and availability enable supermarkets to function as one-stop shopping destinations. These aspects suggest that consumers tend to be oriented toward functional value and efficiency in meeting daily needs. Store atmosphere is evaluated as moderately good and contributes to consumer comfort and shopping experiences. Store layout, cleanliness, and ease of in-store navigation are perceived to support shopping activities, although opportunities for improvement remain, particularly during periods of high customer density.

In contrast, operational procedures, customer service, and promotional activities receive relatively low evaluations. These findings indicate a gap between the practices implemented by supermarket managers and consumer expectations, particularly with respect to service flow efficiency, consistency of transaction facilities, quality of supporting services, and the effectiveness of promotional strategies. The low evaluations of these elements suggest that non-physical aspects and marketing communications have not yet been fully leveraged as sources of competitive advantage. Overall, this study concludes that under conditions of market uncertainty, supermarket consumers in Bandung Municipality place greater priority on functional and utilitarian retail mix elements—particularly location, price, and products—than on service and promotional elements. Accordingly, adaptive retail mix strategies should focus on strengthening these core elements while implementing gradual improvements in supporting aspects to achieve sustainable retail performance.

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