

# An Analysis of the Determinants that Influence the Purchase Intention of Frozen Food Products amongst Millennials in Kuala Lumpur Malaysia

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## ABSTRACT

Frozen food products have traditionally been used as a line of products that are utilized for fast and effective consumption among consumers of various age groups. In this fast-paced lifestyle of consumers all over the world, frozen food is commonly used by adults of all ages as a quick meal alternative. In the fast-paced lifestyle of younger adults in Kuala Lumpur, frozen food products are an imminent alternative to fresh food, as it is often faster to prepare than traditional food products. Frozen food products are convenient, as it is often microwaveable and quick to prepare. Rather than making a mess from scratch, it becomes an easy method to prepare the meal as it is fast in its preparation. Consumers who are mainly in the city often are seen to have less time for themselves, as they often lead a very hectic life. It is only common that these groups of consumers will prefer a quick meal, rather than an alternative home-cooked meal, where the meal is cooked from scratch. As young millennials are often lacking in their ability to cook, they are often seeking convenient alternatives to prepare their meals. Various elements interplay here, with various factors that influence the buyers to make a decision in their buying pattern. This research proposes three main factors that act as independent variables, namely Perceived Benefit, Product Packaging, and Price, that seem to affect the purchase intention of millennials. Purposive sampling was implemented to capture data from respondents using a 5-item Likert scale, while the validity of the questionnaire items was further verified using statistical techniques such as Average Variance Extracted, Composite Reliability, and Cronbach's Alpha. Hypothesis testing was tabulated using Structural Equation Modelling in the AMOS SPSS (v.24) program. The results showed a positive impact of Price, Product Packaging, and Perceived Benefit on the purchase intention of millennials towards these frozen food products. This research showed that millennials are more influenced by the frozen food products' perceived benefit to make their purchases, as many tend to be intrigued by the beneficial aspects of frozen food products for their health. Additionally, the price of the products tends to guide the buying intention of millennials, as many of these buyers are still young and use social media to often gauge their price ranges.

**Keywords:** Sustainable Development Goals (SDG-2: Zero Hunger), Millennials, Frozen Food Products, Perceived Benefit, Price, Product Packaging

## INTRODUCTION

The Food industry has been constantly changing over the last decade, leading to an increase in the consumption of fast and on-the-go products by consumers. Younger consumers, particularly millennials, are often at the forefront of changes in their buying habits. With the vast majority of millennials often in front of screens, they frequently use social media as a platform to make various food-related choices (Serbanescu, 2022; Nugroho et al., 2022). The behavioral changes of these millennials are influencing the marketing plans of food-related firms in terms of advertising practices. As most younger millennials are the driving force behind many food and

beverage industries, it is only natural that firms take into account the various determinants that shape these forces, influencing their buying behavior and intentions.

## **Millennials**

Millennials are a unique group of consumers, many of whom strive to keep up with the various global trends. Growing up during the era of social media allows them to be more sensitive to emerging issues, such as human rights and animal rights. Millennials are those born within the years of 1981 to 1996 (Manley et al., 2023; Dimock, 2019). It is observed that millennials are often more exploring in their buying habits and are easily influenced by various factors, such as social media and influencers (Pradhan et al., 2023).

## **Eating Habits of Millennials**

The eating habits of millennials are often diverse, with many being more experimental than those of their older generations. The habits are often diverse in that they always focus on being health-conscious and are very sensitive to how the food they eat affects their bodies. With concepts such as body positivity gaining popularity among younger generations, the environment must understand their choices (Kernan, 2024; Hallberg, 2023). Millennials are often experimental in their actions, with many focusing on nutritious food that is less detrimental to their surroundings.

## **A rise in Frozen-Food products**

Alternative food options are gaining popularity among consumers worldwide. They are handy for those who lead a hectic lifestyle and are always in a rush. People often use fast food products as a source of food consumption because they are busy and have little to no time to cook their own meals (Khare et al., 2021). As more people become increasingly sensitive to health trends and body issues, they are often very selective in their choices. More people are choosing food products that are quick to prepare and are often relaxed about the way these products affect them. With social media being extensively used for promoting food products, it is only natural that these choices are often scrutinized regarding their benefits and how they affect the ease of purchase for buyers, especially younger ones. Aspects such as price, packaging, and beneficial elements of the products are often the influencing dimensions that shape the behavior of the younger generation, as many are often guided by their idols on social media and tend to be driven to look as youthful and fit as them. This causes millennials to strive often to be more embracing of alternative food products that are easy to prepare, such as frozen food products (Tripathi, R., & Seth, P., 2021;). Younger consumers also prefer frozen food, as it is often innovated in a creative way to entice buyers. Many products that are often difficult to buy in wet markets and farmers' markets due to their shelf life, such as certain seafood, are often frozen and made available to buyers (Sen et al., 2021; Waseem et al., 2025).

## **Purchase Intention**

The term refers to the internal willingness and desire of a buyer to purchase a product for their own consumption (Peña-García et al., 2020; Bleize., 2019). The intention of a buyer is often the precursor to their acting on that intention and behaving in a manner that leads to purchasing the product (Jafar et al., 2023). Purchase intention is considered a crucial factor in influencing consumers' buying behavior and leading them to make a purchase. With millennials often on social media, it is evident that they frequently use this platform to be influenced by various social media elements when making their purchases.

## **Price**

Price is a crucial factor that influences the purchasing behavior of millennials. Price is often considered a key factor affecting the purchase intentions of buyers, particularly younger buyers who have recently entered the workforce (Kusniawati, 2021; Al Mamun et al., 2023). Millennials are perceived to be distinct from other buyers, as they appear to be less price-sensitive and may consider other factors, such as ethical considerations, when determining their intention to purchase a product (Patel et al., 2021; Asbar et al., 2021). Hedonism plays a crucial

role in millennial consumption, with many resorting to buying for pleasure, leading them to spend more easily compared to consumers of previous generations (Rofiah, 2022; Rahmawati, 2024). This enables firms to market their products strategically, focusing on attracting millennials to make informed purchasing decisions. Alternatively, studies have also shown that millennials may also be limited in their spending power as they are new to the workforce. Since millennials may be just starting to earn an income, they may find frozen food products too pricey as an alternative to fresh produce. Price playing a role in deciding to purchase their food-related products may also be a factor for new buyers. This means that they have a more frugal way of spending, as they may also be new earners, and money may be a limiting factor in their spending (Alam.,2023). As Frozen Food products are often more costly than their fresh counterparts, they are purchased by those who are affluent (Kapferer, J. N., & Valette-Florence, P.,2021). This brings us to the first hypotheses as follows:

H<sub>1</sub>: Price has a positive relationship with the purchase intention of millennials towards frozen food products in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

### **Product Packaging**

Product packaging is an element that is seen to react with the buying behavior of many consumers. Young consumers, particularly millennials, are often drawn to vibrant colors in the packaging of these products as a precursor to their selection (Hallez et al., 2023). Most frozen food products do exactly as they are said to, with attractive-looking packaging enticing buyers of various food products (Hallez et al., 2023). It is seen that colorful food packaging is influencing the behavior of consumers in the present day, particularly those who have a lot of information on it (Mahajan, H., & Vidani, J ,2023). The package serves as an informative hub for consumers who want to seek answers about the details of the products they are buying. Information such as nutritional information and safety aspects is often beneficial when dealing with picky buyers (Hernandez-Fernandez et al., 2022). A package of frozen food products educates consumers on various aspects of the necessary details for buyers, making it easier for them to decide if the products are beneficial for them (Schifferstein et al., 2021). This thus creates the second hypothesis as seen below:

H<sub>2</sub>: Product Packaging has a positive relationship with the purchase intention of millennials towards frozen food products in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

### **Perceived Benefit**

Perceived benefit refers to the behavior of a person that makes them assume that the product bought has a benefit to him/ her. It outs the fact that the product is somehow advantageous to the buyer, often being a huge precursor of the buying behavior of the consumer. Perceived benefit can often be a guide to educate the consumer of the various reasons why they should make a choice to purchase the item, as it informs the buyer of the various means of making a choice to purchase the item. Among millennials, perceived benefit has been an important element in guiding consumers to choose a product, as they often spend a longer time making a choice to buy a product, given that it is an important element in their psyche (Valaskova et al.,2021; Guan et al., 2022). Usage of social media is almost always a guide in ensuring that choices are made smartly, making these millennials extremely choosy of their products, with many choosing items based on benefits rather than other factors (Beke et al., 2021; Sun et al., 2022). In the food industry, millennials are often making choices based on how a food product is beneficial to their bodies, with many being vain and reflecting their buying choices on their impact on the body. This will make it easier for them to make a choice, many times buying products, such as food-related products, only by scrutinizing the various effects it has on their bodies. Health benefits are often a main force in ensuring the buying intention of consumers, with past research showing a perfect correlation with beneficial elements of food towards buying from younger consumers, mainly millennials.

This poses the next hypotheses:

H<sub>3</sub>: Price has a positive relationship with the purchase intention of millennials towards frozen food products in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

## RESEARCH METHODS

The research methods in this study are a method to understand the various methods to perform this research. The methods of research are as seen in the next subtopics.

### Framework of study

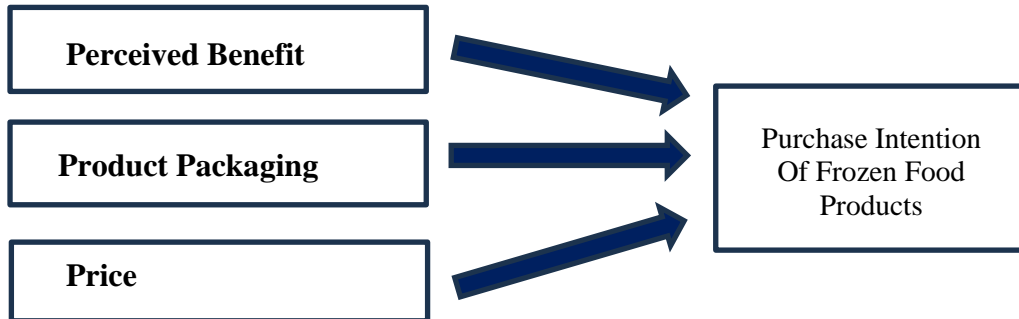


Figure 1: Framework used for this study

### Sampling method

This study employs the purposive sampling method, targeting respondents from areas populated by millennials. The younger buyers were sampled in shopping malls in the city. The instrument used was a 5-scale Likert-based questionnaire administered to millennials who visited malls in the Klang Valley. These questionnaires were submitted via a QR code accessed through their mobile phones. The sampling method used in this study is primarily purposive sampling, as it is considered easier for the researcher to gain a more precise understanding of the sample under study. As this study involves millennials, most of them are often found in areas with a high concentration of malls and food establishments. This is because millennials spend a higher amount of time on activities that involve socializing and tend to be in areas such as establishments that offer a more relaxed social setting (Elkhatib, 2023).

### Instrument Design

The inquiries were conducted in a bifurcated format, with the initial segment focusing on the demographic characteristics of the respondents to substantiate variables such as age and gender. The second segment examines the variables pertinent to the study, which supports the correlation between the independent variables and the buying intentions of millennials. The questionnaire was predominantly structured in a clear Likert scale manner, facilitating ease of response for participants. Each item underwent reliability testing through statistical methods, including Cronbach's alpha, average variance extracted (AVE), and composite reliability (CR), all of which significantly exceeded the requisite threshold (Hair et al., 2011; Bagozzi & Yi, 1988; Yarimoglu et al., 2019).

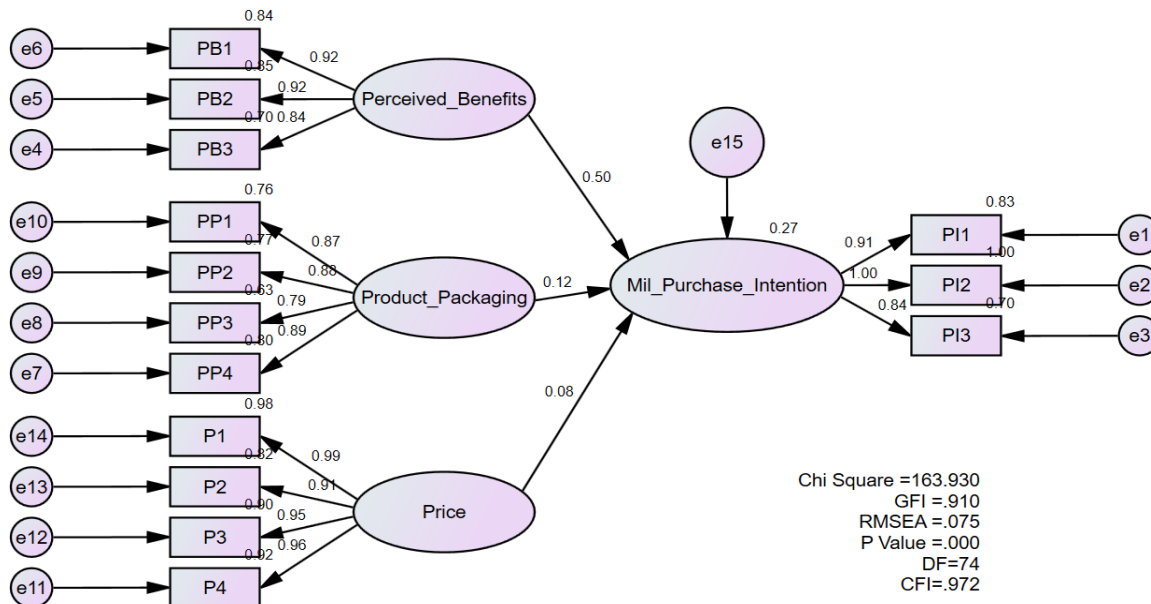
## RESULTS

The results show a positive response of all the variables tested, namely Perceived Benefit, Price and Product Packaging towards the purchase intention of frozen food products.

Table 1: Demographic Analysis

	Frequency	Percentage
<b>Gender</b>		
Male	128	59.0
Female	89	41.0
<b>Age</b>		
18-21 Years Old	49	22.6
21-26 Years Old	153	70.5
>30 Years Old	15	6.9

<b>Monthly Household Income (MYR)</b>		
Less than 2000 MYR	13	6.0
Around 2000-5000 MYR	181	83.4
More than 5000 MYR	23	10.6
<b>Frequency of Frozen Food Products (Per Week)</b>		
1-2 times per week	139	64.1
3-5 times per week	74	34.1
6-7 times per week	4	1.8



**Figure 2: Path Analysis of the variables**

As seen in Figure 2, the various variables seem to have a relationship with the purchase intention of millennials towards frozen food products. It shows a positive relationship between all three independent variables, with the dependant variable, purchase intention of millennials. This shows that the values tabulated, particularly perceived benefit, have a high value indicating positive strong relationship with the buyer purchase intention of millennials.

**Table 2: CFA (Confirmatory Factor Analysis)**

Indices for Model Fit	Values
Chi-Square	163.930
RMSEA	0.075
CFI	0.972
GFI	0.910
P value	0.00

**Table 3: Hypotheses Analysis**

Hypothesis Testing	Estimate	Result	P value
H <sub>1</sub> PB → PI	0.50	Supported	0.00
H <sub>2</sub> PR → PI	0.08	Supported	0.00
H <sub>3</sub> PP → PI	0.12	Supported	0.00

\*PB: Perceived Benefits

\*\*PR: Price

\*\*\*PI: Purchase Intention of Frozen Food Products

\*\*\*\*PP: Product Packaging

As seen in Table 3, all the hypotheses were supported due to the results aligned with the study. The regression weights of each relationship showed a positive result, thus supporting our study.

## DISCUSSION

The results indicate a significant influence of all independent variables, perceived benefit, price, and product packaging, on the buying intention of millennials towards frozen food products. Frozen food is a significant benefit for millennials due to its convenience and ease of preparation (Dharmesti et al.,2021). Ease of preparation is a factor that often guides the various mindsets of millennials. As seen in the study, all three independent variables had a positive effect on millennials' purchase intentions. The perceived benefit showed the strongest relationship with purchase intention, with many consumers exhibiting a positive behavior towards buying a product due to the perceived benefit of the product (Gomes et al.,2023). This is as predicted by past literature, with millennial consumers' affinity for purchasing products based primarily on the benefits they may provide (Dharmesti et al.,2021; Patel et al., 2021). Product packaging also played a significant role in the purchase intentions of millennials, as it is often perceived as a key factor influencing their decisions in these frozen food purchases. Millennials are drawn to bright and vibrant packaging of products, particularly food and drinks, as it influences their purchasing decisions (Herman, 2023). Product details are scrutinized when purchasing a product, with many linking bright, good packaging to an informative element within their product packaging.

## CONCLUSION

The study highlighted the importance of further understanding the influence of various elements on the buying intentions of millennials. As seen in this research, millennials are highly influenced by perceived benefits, especially when it comes to buying practices such as those for frozen food products, as they are primarily attracted to the effects of what they eat and how it affects their bodies. Product packaging also has an effect on the purchase intention of millennials as it constitutes an essential initial impression, safeguarding products throughout transportation and display, while its style and content affect consumer purchase choices and assist customers in differentiation. Price, even though seen in the study as a weaker influence of purchase intention, is still significant in effecting buying intention of these younger consumers, as many buyers seem to be frugal in their buying behavior and may use price sensitive features to influence their buying.

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