



Flea Markets in a Digital Era: Entrepreneur and Consumer Viewpoints Toward the Marketing Mix

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Abstract: The purpose of this study is to address a deficiency in the marketing and entrepreneurship literature regarding the viewpoints of flea market entrepreneurial vendors and consumers toward elements of the marketing mix. Such markets are a prominent element of the retail structure in many geographic areas of the United States and abroad and have retained their popularity and relevance in an age of digitized e-commerce and recent trends in decluttering and downsizing. Surveys of both vendors and consumers were conducted at large flea markets in the southeastern U.S. The surveys were conducted using the personally-delivered self-report method. The response rates were representative of both flea market entrepreneurial vendors and consumers. The SPSS statistical package was utilized to analyze the data empirically. Frequency distributions revealed a significant level of agreement between vendors and consumers regarding the marketing mix elements and the target market. Moreover, crosstabulations with chi-square statistics were the most revealing analyses regarding specific demographics and other variables. Each group appeared to be relatively satisfied with the product offerings, prices, and other experiences at flea markets. However, some dissatisfaction was shared by both vendors and customers with the promotion and effectiveness of facilities. This study has broad application to both marketing and retailing disciplines, given the advent of e-commerce and the need for flea markets to remain relevant in the digital era, both in the U.S. and overseas. This study offers value by surveying and comparing entrepreneurial vendors and consumers. This study may also assist merchants in diverse industries by offering insights into the habits and mindsets of customers who frequent flea markets.

Keywords: *Entrepreneurship, marketing mix, consumer research, flea markets, business*

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INTRODUCTION

Flea market vendors represent some of the most entrepreneurial merchants in the world. Their interactions with customers embody entrepreneurship's finest traditions and spirits in its most basic and primal form. The term "flea market" derives from the French term *marche aux puces*, when *biffins* (rag and bone men) and *chiffonniers* (rag men) combed through trash and garbage in search of items that could potentially be resold (Stanton, 2011). Flea markets are a prominent element of the retail structure in many geographic areas of the United States and provide an excellent case study relative to entrepreneurial orientation (Montiel-Campos, 2018) and entrepreneurial marketing

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(Most, Conejo, & Cunningham, 2018). Many are very popular and attract a large number of entrepreneurs as well as shoppers.

Flea markets have managed to retain their popularity and prominence in the United States and other parts of the world despite the advent and proliferation of digital technologies and e-commerce such as Meta Marketplace (Chang, Lu, & Lin, 2020), Nextdoor App (Patton, 2019) and Craigslist (Lingel, 2019) and the exponential increase in online marketplaces (Constantinescu, Caescu, Botezatu, & Mateescu, 2021). In such digital proliferation, accurate market segmentation becomes imperative (Visser, 2016). Moreover, the efficacy of an effective marketing strategy becomes pivotal in ensuring market competitiveness and retention (Lugina, Rudiana, Budiman, & Taufiq, 2019). This industry has also been impacted by the more recent “decluttering” and “downsizing” movements (Cook & Ryan, 2015; Karim, Nisa, & Imam, 2021; Laitala, Klepp, Haugrønning, Throne-Holst, & Strandbakken, 2021). Flea markets have been and continue to be pervasive across the U.S., providing an opportunity for both entrepreneurial vendors and buyers to interact and more informal opportunities for leisure and socialization (Curran, 2022). As the U.S. economy begins to emerge from the Covid-19 pandemic and people attempt to socialize and reconnect, it is not difficult to envision the social utility inherently offered by flea markets.

Despite their popularity and appeal, these institutions have received little attention from academia concerning consumer behaviour (Peñaloza, Denegri, & Gerhard, 2015). Despite this surprising inattention, flea markets are a complex socioeconomic institution to which marketing researchers have directed surprisingly little empirical research (Sherry Jr, 1990). The research that has been reported is somewhat varied but tends to focus on shoppers regarding demographics, frequency of attendance, and shopping behaviours (Razzouk & Gourley, 1982; Sherman, McCrohan, & Smith, 1985). Other researchers have addressed the subject in terms of extra-economic activity (Sherry Jr, 1990) and that flea markets are an “action scene” (Maisel, 1974). Goffman (2012) explored buyer/seller experiences regarding “consequential change” – pricing, vendor/customer search, bargaining dynamics etc. However, exploring entrepreneurial vendors’ and customers’ viewpoints to enhance the attractiveness of and demand for flea markets in the digital era remains unexplored.

With approximately 2,500 regularly operating flea markets in the U.S., each with an average of 900 vending spaces employing around 80,000 people, the industry generates approximately \$30 billion in sales each year (Laibman, 2006) and is deserving of further research. Extant and seminal literature on this topic is examined in the literature review, the research design and sample details are discussed in the methodology section, the research results are presented in the findings section, and implications and recommendations are discussed in the summary and recommendations section.

Objectives of the Study

This study was motivated by the advent and proliferation of e-commerce in recent years and how flea markets, as traditional retailers, can remain relevant in this new digital era. Flea markets in the U.S. and around the world appear to have retained their popularity and appeal, but it is important for flea market retailers to understand the digital realm and consider ways to adapt to and advertise in the digital space.

Research Problem/Novel Contribution

This study aims to address a gap in the academic literature on flea markets as an important and ongoing institution, both in the retailing space and the digital era. Despite the advent and proliferation of technology, connectivity and e-retailing, flea markets have retained their cultural and retail prominence as outlets to shop and haggle and socialize with like-minded buyers and entrepreneurs (Petrescu & Bhatli, 2013). Other notable research conducted concerning flea markets includes an examination of flea markets in the context of cultural diversity (Nipu, 2021), studies relating to the socialization aspect of flea markets (see (Ely-Ledesma, 2022; Marlina, 2019), and a study investigating flea market vendors utilization of space in the modern era (Curran, 2022).

While much exists in the academic literature about flea markets, including studies conducted in the digital era, no studies have attempted to examine the level of agreement between consumers and vendors concerning elements of the marketing mix. The goal underpinning this study is to address a gap in the marketing and entrepreneurship literature pertaining to the viewpoints of flea market entrepreneurial vendors and consumers toward elements of the marketing mix. Specifically, the study investigated and compared the viewpoints of flea market vendors/entrepreneurs and consumers toward elements of the marketing mix.

LITERATURE REVIEW

While the academic literature encompassing flea markets is scant, some empirical articles are noteworthy and are discussed briefly in this section. Flea markets have long been an institution and a key market for the trade of both new and used goods and wares in America and overseas. Flea markets in the U.S. had their inception in the late nineteenth century; being utilized by recently arrived immigrants who used them for social and economic opportunities that were otherwise unavailable to them (Neacu, 2018; Riveira, 2013).

Beginning in the 1950s, flea markets began to cater toward middle and upper-class consumers, growing in popularity in the 1960s (Riveira, 2013). Stillerman (2015) notes that flea markets typically feature used, new, and antique goods, offering vendors entrepreneurial opportunities and buyers the chance to negotiate and haggle for price discounts. Flea markets also provide an opportunity for socialization and a colorful antidote to the sterility often encountered in the conventional retail format (Khan, Jam, Akbar, Khan, & Hijazi, 2011; Stillerman, 2015). Indeed, the socialization aspect is also noted by Petrescu and Bhatli (2013) who find that flea markets fulfill a human need for social interaction and communication. The same study also notes that flea markets represent a neglected area of retail, and that one of the major attractions of flea markets for consumers is the opportunity to take advantage of low prices and opportunistic deals and bargains (Mazhar & Anwar, 2012; Petrescu & Bhatli, 2013). A factor analysis conducted to further understand the traits of flea market shoppers revealed six shopper groups which included value-oriented, variety-seeking, quality-oriented, convenience and recreational shopping.

The previously noted literature with respect to the social dimension of flea markets is supported by Riveira (2013) who notes that flea markets have retained their importance and significance not simply because of their commercial value and appeal, but also because of their abundant opportunities for cultural, social and functional exchange (Riveira, 2013). Such opportunities for cultural and social interchange are much harder if not impossible to effectively replicate in the world of e-commerce, providing some insight into the continued popularity and prominence of these retail outlets. Likewise, Sherry Jr (1990) notes the juxtaposing flea market dynamic of social and market relations.

The literature also notes that despite the proliferation of an array of modern electronic retail outlets such as Meta Marketplace (Belew, 2014), Offerup (Park & Armstrong, 2019) and social media outlets leveraged for selling (Chen, Ma, & Wang, 2021; Turan & Kara, 2018) such as Twitter (Brünker, Marx, Ross, Stieglitz, & Mirbabaie, 2020) and Instagram (Herzallah, Muñoz-Leiva, & Liébana-Cabanillas, 2022), informal markets such as bazaars and flea markets still serve an important function in the retailing space (Hafissou, 2020; Renko & Petljak, 2018).

The literature is not silent on another recent trend that has affected flea markets: that of downsizing and decluttering. Downsizing, often associated with older generations, is often accompanied by the need to reduce possessions (Luborsky, Lysack, & Van Nuil, 2011) and make decisions as to what objects to keep, and evaluating their changing meanings over the years (de Medeiros, 2021). Likewise, an associated trend is that of decluttering which could reference long-term dispossessions such as real-estate sales and associated contents (Grant & Handelman, 2020) through a more immediate need to simplify one's life and existence, drawing on the old adage that "less is more" (Boden, 2021; Tosun & Sezgin, 2021). In both instances, flea markets can prove to be a timely and useful outlet to help people in either category quickly and conveniently sell goods no longer wanted or needed (Laitala et al., 2021; Minter, 2019).

Flea markets in the digital era continue to be the subject of a variety of studies in the academic literature to wit: Alshanfari, Hassan, and Migin (2022) adopt the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) to discuss the impact of education on entrepreneurial intentions in the context of flea markets, Zulfiqar, Ambreen, and Mohyuddin (2022) examine informal flea market economies' influence of local industry in Pakistan, and Ledesma and Giusti (2021) analyze Latino flea markets in selected U.S. states from the lens of physical setting, social activity and interactions, and economic activity. Likewise, and pertaining specifically to the marketing mix, Shazi and Cherry (2021) surveyed flea market customers in an attempt to ascertain preferred advertising and promotional strategies utilized by vendors, and Sriharat, Choi, and Thathong (2022) discuss business successes and marketing mix factors, but only included entrepreneurial flea market vendors in their study.

While the scant studies present in the literature provide a certain degree of topological, contextual, and descriptive information on flea markets across the U.S., and help to partially explain their continued prominence and popularity, there is a paucity of research pertaining to buyers and sellers' attitudes and viewpoints on this industry, and the level of agreement and conformity between the two.

METHODOLOGY

Initially, two focus groups each consisting of 10 participants were conducted consisting of flea market vendor-entrepreneurs and flea market aficionados-consumers respectively. Findings from the sessions, along with information obtained from secondary research were used to develop a questionnaire that was pre-tested and subsequently administered to flea market vendors, with a similar questionnaire being administered to customers. Data from 40 out of 51 vendors were collected using the personally-delivered, self-report method, yielding a seventy-eight percent overall response rate. In addition to demographics, question areas were related to operational considerations and a number of Likert-type statements related to the target market and elements of the marketing mix – product, price, place, and promotion. Consumer data were collected via a self-administered questionnaire among shoppers at flea markets who were willing to respond. Seventy usable responses were collected out of 82, yielding a response rate of 85%. Question areas included were similar to those contained in the vendor questionnaire. However, the scale questions related to the marketing mix were more extensive. Upon completion of data collection, chi-square statistical testing was performed to ensure that the responses were not randomly selected. The data was then entered into spreadsheet format in preparation for statistical analysis and checked for completeness and accuracy. Both samples were deemed to be representative of the vendor and consumer populations. Responses to the Likert-type questions were cross-tabulated with the demographic variables, and Chi-square statistics were utilized to determine significance. As many of the questions administered in the survey instruments to both vendors and consumers were measuring various aspects of the marketing mix constructs, Cronbach's Alpha was used to confirm the reliability of each instrument. Cronbach's Alpha is used to help ensure that scales and tests adopted for research projects are fit for purpose (Taber, 2018). Cronbach's Alpha statistical testing for both surveys yielded scores of .86 and .89 respectively for vendors and consumers, indicating a high level of reliability. In order to help ensure validity of the instruments before the main survey data were collected, a pilot survey instrument was administered to a small group of participants at a local flea market in order to ensure the questions were appropriately worded and accurately captured the topic under scrutiny. The SPSS statistical package was utilized for data analysis.

RESULTS/FINDINGS

General Findings

Frequency distributions revealed several noteworthy findings related to the marketing mix and target market elements, as follows:

Product

- Vendors and consumers agree that the most sought-after items at flea markets are antiques (31%/29%), clothing (23%/28%), and tools (20%/19%) respectively.
- About half of the vendors (46%) reported that they sell 25 percent or less of the merchandise they bring. A similar proportion of the vendors sell between 26% and 50% of what they take to a flea market.

Promotion

- Both vendors and consumers agree that advertising is the most effective way to attract more participation from both groups (38%/36%).
- Both vendors and consumers agree that weekly community (shopper) newspapers would be an effective form of advertising for flea markets (60%/52%).

Place

- Having cleaner facilities is considered important as a means of attracting more participation. However, cleaner facilities are more important among vendors (30%) than customers (21%).
- There is some disparity between vendors and consumers relative to the distance they will travel to a flea market. About the same percentage of vendors traveled less than five miles, 6-10 miles, 11-20 miles, and 31-60 miles respectively. Only six percent traveled more than 60 miles. It appears that flea markets are more of a "local" event among customers – 76 percent surveyed traveled less than 20 miles.
- Over three-fourths of the entrepreneur-vendors had been vending at markets fewer than eight years. Over half (58%) preferred to rent space by the week and about 42 percent chose to rent by the month. One fourth of the customers surveyed had been attending flea markets between nine and twelve years.

Price

- About two-thirds (62.5%) of the customers surveyed reported that they visit 21 or more booths during each visit to a flea market. About half (48.6%) of them say they spend less than \$30. However, one-third (37.5%) spend between 30 and 50 on an average visit.
- More than three-fourths of the customers said their primary reason for shopping at flea markets was “bargain hunting.”

Target Market

- Three-fourths of the vendors (entrepreneurs) said their main reason for vending at flea markets was to earn additional income. Socializing was a distant second at 18 percent.
- About two-thirds of the vendors indicated that flea markets should open at 6 a.m. and close at 3 p.m. (43%) or 1 p.m. (23%). Customers preferred that flea markets operate between 6 a.m. (47%) and 4 p.m. (46%). Almost all (95%) of the vendors said that they do most of their business between 8 a.m. and noon. Similarly, 90 percent of the consumers reported doing most of their shopping during that same time period.

Marketing Mix Findings

One of the purposes of the study was to determine the differences between entrepreneurial vendors and consumers concerning specific marketing mix attributes – product, price, promotion, and place. A further purpose was to compare the viewpoints of vendors and customers toward the target market.

Table 1 *VENDOR AND CUSTOMER PRODUCT FREQUENCIES*

Statement	Vendor Strongly Agree/Agree	Customer Strongly Agree/Agree
There is a wide variety of merchandise for sale at flea markets	62.5%/32.5%	52.9%/38.6%
I would rather take my product home than sell below cost/walk away empty-handed than buy a product that I think cost too much	35.9%/ 17.9%	40.0%/42.9%
I sell/buy mostly new merchandise	30.0%/30.0%	16.9%/26.8%

Table 1 shows relative percentages of respondents who strongly agreed or agreed. About two-thirds (63%) of the vendors and over half (53%) of the customers strongly agreed with the statement that “there is a wide variety of merchandise for sale at flea markets.” More than one-third (36%) of the vendors strongly agreed that they would rather take their products home than sell them below cost. On the other hand, almost half (43%) of the customers agreed that they would “rather walk away empty-handed than buy products that they think cost too much.” About one-third of the vendors reported that they sell mostly new merchandise, while almost one-half of customers purchase mostly new merchandise.

Table 2 *VENDOR AND CUSTOMER PRICE FREQUENCIES*

Statement	Vendor Strongly Agree/Agree	Customer Strongly Agree/Agree
My/vendor prices are similar to prices at other flea markets I have visited	42.5%/52.5%	45.8%/41.7%
I will continue to negotiate until I make a sale/purchase	22.5%/50.0%	33.3%/37.5%

Almost half (43%) of the vendors said that their prices are similar to prices at other flea markets where they have sold merchandise. Similarly, 46 percent of the customers strongly agreed. Noteworthy also is that customers agreed that they like to negotiate (38%).

Table 3 *VENDOR AND CUSTOMER PROMOTION FREQUENCIES*

Statement	Vendor Strongly Agree/Agree	Customer Strongly Agree/Agree
I would recommend flea markets to others	64.1%/28.2%	63.2%/33.8%
Weekly community (shopper) newspapers would be an effective form of advertising for flea markets	60.0%/37.5%	52.2%/31.9%
Holidays would be a great time to vend	48.7%/25.6%	45.7%/34.3%

Comments related to promotion are summarized in Table 3. Entrepreneurial vendors believe that weekly community (shopper) newspapers would be an effective place to advertise flea markets (60%). Customers also like weekly community (shopper) newspapers (52% strongly agreed). About two-thirds of the vendors strongly agreed that they would recommend flea markets to other vendors. Likewise, customers strongly agreed that they are willing to recommend flea markets to other customers (63%).

Table 4 *VENDOR AND CUSTOMER PLACE FREQUENCIES*

Statement	Vendor Strongly Agree/Agree	Customer Strongly Agree/Agree
A license to sell at flea markets should be required	2.5%/15.0%	9.7%/16.7%
The restrooms need to be checked every 2 hours	87.5%/12.5%	63.4%/28.2%
Flea market pavilions need to be more aesthetic	75.0%/22.5%	60.6%/23.9%
I think that indoor flea markets need better lighting	N/A	66.7%/23.6%
I think that a “customer service/information booth” is needed	77.5%/22.5%	N/A

As shown in Table 4, vendors strongly agreed (88%) that restrooms needed to be checked at least every two hours. About two-thirds (63%) of customers had similar feelings. Both groups felt that flea market pavilions should be more aesthetic. Customers were most concerned (67%) about there being better lighting at indoor flea markets, while vendors (100%) preferred a “customer service/information booth.” Customers, however, did not seem to be interested in such a facility.

Table 5 *VENDOR AND CUSTOMER TARGET MARKET FREQUENCIES*

Statement	Vendor Strongly Agree/Agree	Customer Strongly Agree/Agree
I am happy with the attitudes of customers/vendors at flea markets	67.5%/32.5%	47.2%/47.2%
An official needs to be present during the hours of operation	60.0%/15.0%	29.6%/33.8%
I feel safe when setting up my booth/shopping at flea markets	57.5%/37.5%	26.4%/41.7%

Vendors were happy with the attitude of the customers (68% strongly agreed) and customers were somewhat happy with the attitude of the vendors (47% strongly agreed). Both vendors and customers agreed that a flea market official needs to be present during the hours of operation. Vendors and customers, however, feel relatively safe while they are at the market.

Crosstabulations and Chi-Square Analyses

The Likert-type statements regarding the marketing mix were crosstabulated with the demographic variables and chi-square analyses were performed for both entrepreneurial vendors and customers. Significant ($p < .05$) crosstabulations for vendors were found for product (11), pricing (1), promotion (7), place (11), and target market (7) and are referenced in Tables 6–10. Likewise, significant ($p < .05$) crosstabulations for consumers were found for product (4), pricing (2), promotion (3), place (7), and target market (7) and are referenced in Tables 11–15

Table 6 SIGNIFICANT VENDOR MARKETING MIX CROSSTABULATIONS – PRODUCT

#	Crosstabulation by Product	Chi-Square	p-Value
1	Flea market vendors who do not attend competing flea markets are more likely to agree that there should be a separate area for food vendors.	9.87	$p = .020$
2	Flea market vendors who are married are more likely to strongly agree that they sell mostly new merchandise.	17.1	$p = .046$
3	Flea market vendors who own a home are more likely to strongly disagree that they buy products from vendors at flea markets to resell.	14.8	$p = .022$
4	Flea market vendors with some college or trade/vocational training are more likely to disagree that there should be rules on the kinds of products that can be sold.	26.0	$p = .037$
5	Flea market vendors who are married are more likely to strongly disagree that there should be rules on the kinds of products that can be sold.	18.1	$p = .034$
6	Flea market vendors who live in the south are more likely to tend to disagree that there should be rules on the kinds of products that can be sold.	9.06	$p = .028$
7	Flea market vendors who attend competing flea markets are more likely to disagree that there should be rules on the kinds of products that can be sold.	8.18	$p = .042$
8	Flea market vendors who do not attend competing flea markets are more likely to agree that there should be rules on the kinds of products that can be sold	8.42	$p = .038$
9	Flea market vendors who wrote comments are more likely to strongly agree that their overall impression of flea markets is positive.	10.0	$p = .007$
10	Flea market vendors who wrote comments are more likely to tend to disagree that they think the overall quality of merchandise is poor.	9.33	$p = .025$
11	Flea market vendors between the ages of 18-25 are more likely to tend to agree that they welcome competition from vendors selling the same items.	27.3	$p = .026$

Vendors who are married, live in the south, and have some trade/vocational training are more likely to disagree that there should be rules on what can be sold at flea markets. Moreover, entrepreneurs who vend at competing flea markets are more likely to disagree, while those who do not vend at other flea markets are more likely to agree that there should be rules related to the kinds of products that may be sold.

Vendors between the ages of 18-25 welcome competition from other vendors selling the same types of merchandise, while married vendors sell mostly new items. Vendors who own their home typically do not buy products from other vendors to resell. Finally, vendors who do not attend competing flea markets think that there should be a separate area for food vendors. Vendors who wrote comments were more likely to have a more positive overall impression of flea markets, and to think that the overall quality of merchandise sold was good.

Table 7 SIGNIFICANT VENDOR MARKETING MIX CROSSTABULATIONS – PRICE

#	Crosstabulation by Product	Chi-Square	p-Value
1	Flea market vendors with a household income of less than \$20,000 are more likely to strongly agree that they are satisfied with the amount of money that they make at flea markets.	26.5	$p = .033$

As Table 7 indicates, vendors who have lower levels of household income are more likely to report that they are satisfied with the amount of money they earned while vending at flea markets.

Table 8 *SIGNIFICANT VENDOR MARKETING MIX CROSSTABULATIONS – PROMOTION*

#	Crosstabulation by Promotion	Chi-Square	p-Value
1	Flea market vendors who own a home are more likely to strongly agree that they would be willing to open a booth on a weekend near Christmas.	13.3	$p = .038$
2	Flea market vendors who do not sell at competing flea markets are more likely to strongly agree that they would be willing to open a booth on a weekend near Christmas.	9.72	$p = .021$
3	Flea market vendors with a full-time job are more likely to tend to agree that there are very few people who know about flea markets.	29.8	$p = .012$
4	Flea market vendors with a full-time job are more likely to strongly agree that they would recommend flea markets to other vendors.	18.6	$p = .045$
5	Flea market vendors who do not sell at competing flea markets are more likely to strongly agree that billboard ads would be the best way to attract more customers.	10.5	$p = .014$
6	Flea market vendors who do not sell at competing flea markets are more likely to strongly disagree that advertising does not really attract more customers.	11.9	$p = .007$
7	Flea market vendors who do sell at competing flea markets are more likely to strongly disagree that advertising does not really attract more shoppers.	8.15	$p = .043$

Vendors who do not sell at competing flea markets are more likely to strongly agree that billboard ads would be the best way to attract more customers and would be willing, like vendors who own a home, to open a booth on a weekend near Christmas. Both vendors who do and do not sell at competing flea markets strongly disagree that advertising does not attract more customers.

Entrepreneurial vendors with a full-time job are more likely to recommend other flea markets to fellow vendors and to think that very few people know about flea markets.

Table 9 *SIGNIFICANT VENDOR MARKETING MIX CROSSTABULATIONS – PLACE*

#	Crosstabulation by Place	Chi-Square	p-Value
1	Flea market vendors who have a high school diploma or GED are more likely to strongly disagree that a license to sell at flea markets should be required.	46.8	$p = .000$
2	Flea market vendors who are male are more likely to strongly agree that they think indoor flea markets need better lighting.	8.87	$p = .003$
3	Flea market vendors who wrote comments are more likely to strongly agree that they think indoor flea markets need better lighting.	7.25	$p = .007$
4	Flea market vendors who own a home are more likely to strongly agree that restrooms need to be checked at least every two hours.	16.7	$p = .000$
5	Flea market vendors who are female are more likely to strongly agree that they feel their customers are safe while shopping at flea markets.	7.15	$p = .028$
6	Flea market vendors between the ages of 36-45 are more likely to strongly agree that their customers are safe while shopping at flea markets.	25.4	$p = .044$
7	Flea market vendors who are male are more likely to strongly agree that indoor flea markets need to be painted regularly.	6.09	$p = .047$
8	Flea market vendors who are married are more likely to strongly agree that indoor flea markets need to be painted regularly.	12.6	$p = .049$
9	Flea market vendors who own a home are more likely to strongly agree that indoor flea markets need to be painted regularly.	11.1	$p = .025$
10	Flea market vendors with a full-time job are more likely to tend to agree that their customers complained that they did not have a place to park.	26.2	$p = .035$
11	Flea market vendors who do not attend competing markets are more likely to tend to agree that their customers complained that they did not have a place to park.	8.99	$p = .029$

Flea market vendors who have only a high school diploma or GED are more likely to strongly disagree that a license to sell at flea markets should be required. Vendors who are male, married, and own a home are more likely to strongly agree that indoor flea markets need to be painted regularly. Vendors with a full-time job and those who do not sell at competing flea markets feel that their customers do not have access to convenient parking. Female vendors and both females and males age 36-45 years old are more likely to strongly agree that they feel their customers are safe while shopping at flea markets.

Table 10 *SIGNIFICANT VENDOR CROSSTABULATIONS BY TARGET MARKET*

#	Target Market	Chi-Square	p-Value
1	Flea market vendors who do not sell at competing flea markets are more likely to strongly agree that an official needs to be present during the hours of operation.	9.35	$p = .025$
2	Flea market vendors who are between the ages of 46-55 are more likely to strongly agree that the majority of their business is repeat customers.	28.5	$p = .018$
3	Flea market vendors whose income is less than \$20,000 are more likely to strongly agree that the majority of their business is repeat customers.	49.5	$p = .000$
4	Flea market vendors who are married are more likely to strongly agree that they are happy with the attitudes of customers.	7.89	$p = .048$
5	Flea market vendors who do not sell at competing flea markets are more likely to strongly agree that they are happy with the attitudes of customers.	49.2	$p = .048$
6	Flea market vendors who are female are more likely to strongly agree that they feel safe when setting up their booths.	8.12	$p = .017$
7	Flea market vendors who do not sell at competing flea markets are more likely to agree that their overall impression of the flea market is positive.	6.47	$p = .039$

Vendors who do not sell at competing flea markets are more likely to agree that (1) an official needs to be present during hours of operation, (2) they feel safe when setting up their booths, and (3) they are more likely to have a more positive impression of flea markets.

Those vendors whose annual income is less than \$20,000 and vendors between the ages of 46-55 years old are more likely to strongly agree that the majority of their business comes from repeat customers. Vendors who are female are more likely to strongly agree that they feel safe when setting up their booths at flea markets.

Table 11 *SIGNIFICANT CUSTOMER MARKETING MIX CROSSTABULATIONS – PRODUCT*

#	Crosstabulation by Product	Chi-Square	p-Value
1	Customers who are married are more likely to strongly agree that a souvenir shop featuring local products will bring in customers to flea markets.	22.7	$p = .007$
2	Customers who are male are more likely to tend to disagree that the overall quality of the merchandise is poor.	5.9	$p = .050$
3	Customers who are married are more likely to tend to disagree that the overall quality of merchandise is poor.	20.7	$p = .014$
4	Customers who are married are more likely to tend to agree that vendors are selling the same items.	13.2	$p = .039$

Married consumers are more likely to tend to disagree that the overall quality of merchandise is poor, and are also more likely to agree that vendors are selling the same items. Married customers are also more likely to strongly agree that a souvenir shop featuring local products would help to attract customers.

Table 12 *SIGNIFICANT CUSTOMER MARKETING MIX CROSSTABULATIONS – PRICE*

#	Crosstabulation by Price	Chi-Square	p-Value
1	Customers with a high school diploma or GED are more likely to tend to agree that the prices at flea markets tend to be similar.	27.3	$p = .026$
2	Customers between the ages of 46-55 are more likely to strongly agree that the prices at flea markets tend to be similar.	26.3	$p = .034$

Consumers between the ages of 46-55 and consumers with a high school diploma or GED are more likely to agree that the prices at flea markets tend to be similar.

Table 13 *SIGNIFICANT CUSTOMER MARKETING MIX CROSSTABULATIONS – PROMOTION*

#	Crosstabulation by Promotion	Chi-Square	p-Value
1	Customers who are retired are more likely to tend to agree that live entertainment should be offered.	25.5	$p = .043$
2	Customers who attend multiple flea markets are more likely to tend to disagree that balloons and signs would attract them to a booth.	3.7	$p = .003$
3	Customers who attend multiple flea markets are more likely to tend to agree that advertising does not attract more shoppers.	8.8	$p = .032$

Customers who attend multiple flea markets are more likely to tend to disagree that balloons and signs would attract them to a booth. Moreover, customers who attend multiple flea markets tend to agree that advertising does not attract more shoppers. Also noteworthy is that retired customers are more likely to agree that live entertainment should be offered at flea markets.

Table 14 *SIGNIFICANT CUSTOMER MARKETING MIX CROSSTABULATIONS – PLACE*

#	Crosstabulation by Place	Chi-Square	p-Value
1	Customers who reside in the survey region are more likely to strongly agree that indoor flea markets need better lighting.	8.1	$p = .033$
2	Customers with a high school diploma or GED are more likely to strongly agree that port-a-potties should be placed on every floor.	25.7	$p = .041$
3	Customers who make less than \$20,000 annually are more likely to strongly agree that indoor flea markets need to be painted.	26.1	$p = .036$
4	Customers who are 26-35 years old are more likely to tend to agree that vendors set up their booths in the same spot every time.	34.8	$p = .003$
5	Customers who reside in the survey region are more likely to tend to agree that vendors set up their booths in the same spot every time.	20.2	$p = .016$
6	Customers who are married are more likely to strongly agree that flea markets need to improve the cleanliness of restrooms.	8.0	$p = .034$
7	Customers who have a high school diploma or GED are more likely to tend to agree that flea markets are one of their favorite places to shop.	30.1	$p = .001$

Customers who reside in the survey region are more likely to strongly agree that indoor flea markets need better lighting, need to be painted more regularly, and further agree that vendors tend to set up their booths in the same location. Moreover, customers who attend competing flea markets and are between the ages of 26-35 also agree with this last statement. Adequate parking is a concern for many customers, especially those who attend competing flea markets.

Table 15 *SIGNIFICANT CUSTOMER CROSSTABULATIONS BY TARGET MARKET*

#	Target Market	Chi-Square	p-Value
1	Customers who have a household income of \$55,000 or more are more likely to strongly agree that an information booth is needed.	25.9	$p = .038$
2	Customers who currently own their homes are more likely to strongly agree that an information booth is needed.	5.0	$p = .014$
3	Customers who attend competing flea markets are more likely to agree that every flea market needs an information booth.	9.2	$p = .026$
4	Female customers are more likely to tend to disagree that an official needs to be present during hours of operation.	14.5	$p = .024$
5	Customers who have an income of \$55,000 or more are more likely to tend to disagree that they purchase items from the same vendors every time.	35.1	$p = .002$
6	Customers with a high school diploma or GED are more likely to tend to agree that they are happy with the attitudes of flea market vendors.	41.8	$p = .000$
7	Customers who are employed full-time are more likely to tend to disagree that it would not be interesting to shop at flea markets during Thanksgiving holiday.	30.0	$p = .012$

Customers who attend competing flea markets, own their own homes, and have a household income of \$55,000 or more are more likely to strongly agree that an information booth is needed at flea markets. Customers with this income demographic are more likely to tend to disagree that they purchase items from the same vendors each time.

Female customers are more likely to disagree that an official needs to be present during hours of operation. Finally, customers employed full-time would be interested in shopping at flea markets during the Thanksgiving holiday.

DISCUSSION/ANALYSIS

This study has revealed a high level of agreement among vendors and customers relative to the attributes of flea markets. Further, each of the groups appear to be relatively satisfied with the facilities and their experiences at the markets. However, there are some overall recommendations that could lead to greater satisfaction. These recommendations are:

- Having a wide variety of merchandise for sale – both new and preowned.
- Offering bargains to entice more customers.
- Making flea markets a destination for entertainment and food.
- Offering better and more convenient (free) parking.
- Increasing advertising – weekly community (shopper) newspapers appear to be a good medium since most customers and vendors are local. Billboards and newspapers represent other media for advertising as well as internet and social media outlets.
- Putting greater emphasis on cleaner facilities, particularly rest rooms.
- Indoor facilities should have better lighting and should be repainted more frequently.
- Shorter hours of operation may bring greater efficiency.
- An official needs to be present during hours of operation and flea markets should have an informational booth.

CONCLUSION

This research has highlighted a large degree of agreeability between entrepreneurial flea market vendors and customers with respect to the attributes of flea markets. Previous studies pertaining to flea markets and the marketing mix have only surveyed either consumers or vendors, whereas this study represents both a notable and viable addition to the literature in that the research simultaneously sampled both in order to compare and contrast viewpoints and needs regarding aspects of the marketing mix. This study also highlights and offers practical suggestions and mechanisms which can be utilized to ensure that flea markets remain relevant in the digital age. For example the study extends the literature in this area by highlighting needs for a wide variety of merchandise, more convenient parking for patrons and vendors, and notably making flea markets a destination for hospitality such as food and entertainment.

The results of this study could be leveraged to inform economic policy and development pertaining to entrepreneur and consumer preferences and needs, as well as governmental and municipal incentivizing of flea markets as catalysts of economic growth and mobility in different regions of the world. Moreover, considering the advent and proliferation of technology in the digital era, it is imperative that flea markets and their entrepreneurial vendors remain relevant with respect to the marketing mix. This study has shown a high level of agreement between consumers and entrepreneurial vendors relative to the attributes of flea markets which represents welcome news to vendors and consumers alike.

Study Limitations

Research was limited to U.S. data, but the implications for flea market vendors and merchants around the globe abound. Follow-up research could include replicating the existing study to confirm its application to other regions of the U.S. and/or other countries.

A suggested corollary to this research study would be an investigation into how changing demographics may have impacted flea market demand in the U.S. and internationally over the past few decades. Future research studies are also needed to examine how both flea market vendors and customers could better leverage technologies such as the internet and social media to increase branding, awareness and promotional opportunities to maximize utility for both entrepreneurial vendors and consumers.

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