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A Comparison of Customer Attendance Motivations at Victoria Park and Manning Farmers' Markets, Perth, Western Australia

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ABSTRACT

In March 2016, a survey of consumer attendance motivations was conducted at Victoria Park Farmers' Market, Perth, Western Australia. Whilst the main motivation, purchase of fresh produce, was the same as described in a number of previous studies, there were also differences. Accordingly, it was decided to conduct a further consumer survey, at a different farmers' market in the Perth area, to confirm or otherwise the Victoria Park findings. Manning Farmers' Market, at a distance of approximately three kilometres from Victoria Park was chosen. The survey was undertaken in May/June 2017. Results were very similar to Victoria Park, for instance around demographics and sociability concerns. Amongst the demographics the only statistically significant difference was in the greater number of attendees over 46 years at Manning Farmers' Market (though modal age group was the same at both markets). Attitudinally the only significant difference to emerge was greater concern for food safety at Manning Farmers' Market. Motivationally, Manning Farmers' Market customers gave a more positive ranking than Victoria Park Farmers' Market customers to purchasing fresh produce and purchasing packaged foods and a lower positive ranking than Victoria Park Farmers' Market customers to purchasing ready to eat foods and attending events/activities and concerts. This paper describes comparative outcomes between Victoria Park Farmers' Market and Manning Farmers' market in detail, assesses the research approaches and results for both, and contextualises them within global research on farmers' markets, through a framework of comparing outcomes at the two markets.

Keywords: Attendance motivations, attendee attitudes, farmers' markets, fresh produce

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INTRODUCTION

Farmers' markets are a physical coming together of buyers and sellers for retail farm products. Sometimes there are strong rules that the sellers are the actual farmers and growers who produced the items for sale. That might be true for some markets in Australia, where the Australian Farmers' Market Association has strict rules to that effect, but often there are other products and services, from knife-sharpening to having your child's face painted.

Farmers' Markets are increasingly popular. The US Department of Agriculture reported (USDA, 2014) 8268 farmers markets in America in 2014, an increase of 76% against 2008. The Department's estimate of total value of local food sales (to include farmers' markets but also other direct sales outlets, such as Community Supported Agriculture) as $6.1 Billion in 2012, when 163,675 farms (7.8% of US farms) were involved in such sales (Low et al., 2015).

This expansiveness is quite the antithesis of the general trend in face-to-face retailing, which has, in recent years, hit a number of issues in USA but also in other countries, for instance UK. Gough (2017) had reported that UK loses 15 retail shops per day and quotes 13.30% of shops as being currently empty. Dorman (2017) reported on Burslem, Stoke-on-Trent, the traditional centre of the UK pottery industry. He labelled Burslem "Britain's most stark ghost town". It has a shop vacancy rate of 31.5%, nearly one in three shops empty. There are also countless empty factories arising from the demise of the pottery industry.

For the USA, Thompson (2017) had reported "From rural strip-malls to Manhattan's avenues, it has been a disastrous two years for retail." Writing in April 2017, Thompson (2017) was already able to report nine major retail bankruptcies, as many as the whole of 2016, not to mention mass store closure programs from J. C. Penney, Radioshack, Macy's and Sears. Amongst the difficulties for face-to-face retailers, particularly those on the high street or main street, has been the rise of online sales. For instance, Amazon's North American sales rose from $16 Billion to $80Billion (Thompson, 2017).

Yet, the surge is not just to be associated with the game-changing disruptive innovators. Largely traditional bricks and mortar retailers are themselves fighting back with the internet, and with more than a measure of success. For instance, in UK, Sainsburys reported that online sales made up 18% of group total sales in their Third Quarter Trading Statement for the fifteen weeks to 7th January 2017 (J Sainsbury plc, 2017).

However, there is much research showing the veracity of a strong customer service offer in brick-and-mortar retailing, in customer loyalty and retention. The work of Yuen and Chan (2010) is particularly interesting in that the authors discovered that product quality did not exert a positive

influence on consumer loyalty, whereas the service environment assuredly did. Professional, helpful staff are a key, particularly through their problem-solving, and not only for loyalty of the customer they are interacting with, but, it is posited, in gaining referral sales through that client. Mehta et al. (2000) found the same in Japan.

Farmers' markets, with their strong face-to face service, where customers are even able to meet the grower of their produce or artisanal maker of prepared foodstuffs, are clear winners in the current retail landscape. Alkon and McCullen (2011) spoke of the motivation to consumers provided through connecting directly with the "hand that grows their food".

Australian farmers' markets have been little researched, the major exception being the work of Coster and Kennon (2005). The aims of this research were to make-up the broad knowledge deficit, gap fill, whilst providing the relevant market managers at Victoria Park and Manning Farmers' Markets with solid empirical evidence on which to base their future local decision-making. The market managers at both Victoria Park and Manning farmers' markets had never conducted any research on the market customers, so they lacked even basic demographic knowledge of who their customers were, let alone any knowledge as to their motivations or attitudes. There is arguably a problem of skilled market management in Australia, but also the problem of trying to future plan, when weighted by present success, the latter particularly true for Manning Farmers' Market. It is to be noted that this research focused on Western Australia, an area not covered by Coster and Kennon (2005) or any other researchers.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The studies at both Victoria Park Farmers' Market and Manning Farmers' Market sought to understand why people attend the markets and their activities while attending this being undertaken through quantitative, questionnaire-based research, though also with a near-contemporaneous qualitative interviewing of participants about their experiences and motivations at the farmers' markets in sequential explanatory mode with the quantitative work (Creswell, 2009). The study's research questions collectively asked:

Whether and how various demographic variables, gender, age, educational level and income, influence reasons for attending each farmers' market.

Whether and how various attitudinal variables, for example concern for diet and health or concern to support local businesses, influence reasons for attending each farmers' market.

Whether and how various motivational variables, such as desire to purchase fresh produce or to meet people, have social interactions, influence reasons for attending each farmers' market.

The research questions derived from the variables set introduced with the study's conceptual framework. The conceptual framework was constructed out of the literature review and researcher

experience within the food industry. A general over-view came out of Spiller (2010). Gumirakiza et al. (2014) could lead away from inconsequential dead-ends, for instance in that their consideration of convenience variables (such as signposting, convenience for the road network) proved inconsequential as motivators to farmers' market attendance. Equally Gumirakiza et al. (2014) discovered significant relationships, offered a robust contribution, following Pascucci et al. (2011) to this study's conceptual framework and thereby offered solid cross-comparison with other recent studies. The researchers believe that all too often there has been spuriousness in making outcome comparisons, including for farmers' market attendance, to the extent that team research methodologies have been very different. That said, there was no sticking slavishly with the Gumirakiza et al. (2014) and Pascucci *et al* lines of research. The researchers were particularly concerned, for instance, to test the Alonso and O'Neill (2011) findings, community developmental in nature, around support of local agriculture and farmers. The researchers were also particularly concerned to question around food provenance in addition to food safety.

Out of this extensive cross-fertilisation came the conceptual framework in Figure 1.

The demographic variables became the studies' H1 hypothesis set, attitudinal variables the H2 hypothesis set, motivational variables the H3 hypothesis set. The H1 hypotheses, as a category, offered that there is a positive relationship between the range of demographic variables in the conceptual framework and reasons for attending the farmers' markets. H2 hypotheses suggested a positive relationship between the conceptual framework's attitudinal variables and reasons for attending. H3 hypotheses offered a positive relationship between the conceptual framework's motivational variables and reasons for attending.

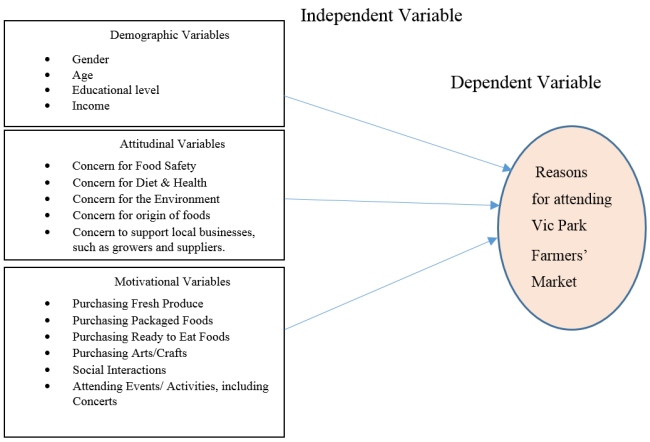

Figure 1. Conceptual framework

Testing of these hypotheses was by quantitative, questionnaire-based survey. Respondents were random sampled, from all adult attendees at both Manning and Victoria Park Farmers' Markets. A researcher or student helper cold-approached any attendee at the venue and supported those in agreement to complete a questionnaire toward that completion in-situ wherever they were on the field. Attendances by researcher and helpers were for two consecutive durations of each market, that is eight hours total on Sundays in the case of Victoria Park Farmers' Market and nine hours total on Saturdays in the case of Manning Farmers' markets A randomly selected sub-set at each market also acted as participants in a qualitative survey, to act as a possible cross-check on the quantitative elements, in sequential explanatory design (Creswell, 2009) where the qualitative elements are a follow-up designed to enhance, complement, maybe consider unexpected findings out of the quantitative work, but, perhaps, above all to ascertain whether the quantitative questionnaire missed questioning around some major issue.

Respondents in the quantitative survey were asked about their demographic profile (age, gender, income and others) and, also, about what they did and what they bought. Additionally, there were questions around respondents' attitudes concerning a range of relevant topics, such as concern for food safety, diet and health or concern to support local suppliers. The questionnaire was considered for validity by an academic expert, considering, mainly the statistical viewpoint and two members of Victoria Park Collective, Perth, Western Australia for local cultural appropriateness. Cronbach's statistical tool covered reliability (Cronbach, 1951). The outcome was a Cronbach Alpha measurement of 0.668 across the attitudinal variable items in the case of Manning and 0.766 in the case of Victoria Park, so a conclusion of reliability in both cases. For Victoria Park Farmers' Market there were 169 completed questionnaires and 8 spoiled. From Manning Farmers' Market there were 246 completed questionnaires and 45 spoiled.

The qualitative survey was through semi-structured interview with pre-determined, but open-ended questions. A blue sky spoken lead-in by interviewers cast participants' minds back and encouraged wide reflection. The idea was for the qualitative data itself to indicate the analytic structure, an inductive approach, with thematic content analysis being chosen as the specific method. At Manning Farmers' Market there were eight qualitative interviews and seven at Victoria Park Farmers' Market.

RESEARCH FINDINGS

Victoria Park Farmers' Market

Data collected in March 2016 was subjected to extensive descriptive and inferential statistical analysis, using the SPSS package and several statistical tools, namely independent sample t-test, one way analysis of variance and Pearson's product moment correlation.

The descriptive statistics run showed that women constituted the highest

percentage of attendees, at 60.6%. Modal age fell within the band 26-35 years of age. At 24.2%, the highest percentage of respondents fell within the income band of AUSD 55 – 89,999K per annum. On final level of education, the highest level of reporting was at 39.8%, for those holding a bachelor degree.

Additional questions were asked around size of the respondent's household, whether the primary shopper for the household and whether the respondent has a home garden. The mean household size was 2.75, so 3 people. 69.2% of respondents reported as the household's primary shopper, 48.8% that they have a home produce garden.

For the inferential statistics, accepting or rejecting hypotheses H1a to H3d was against a 0.05 significance level threshold. Results are in Table 1 below:

Inferential statistical testing continued by considering the H3 hypotheses in rank order from most to least important reasons for attending Victoria Park Farmers' Market. The summary is in Table 2.

Table 1

Summary of hypothesis test outcomes - Victoria Park farmers' market

Hypotheses	Accepted/Not Accepted	Statistical Tool Used
H1 Hypotheses Demographic		
H1a Gender	Not Accepted	Independent sample t-test
H1b Age	Partially Accepted*1	One way analysis of variance
H1c Educational Level	Partially Accepted*2	One way analysis of variance
H1d Income	Not Accepted	One way analysis of variance
H2 Hypotheses Attitudinal		
All Hypotheses	Accepted	Pearson's product moment correlation
H3 Hypotheses Motivational		
All Hypotheses	Accepted	Pearson's product moment correlation

*1 Age and ready to eat food were accepted. *2 Educational Level and ready to eat food were rejected.

Table 2

Mean and standard error - Motivational (H3) variables – Victoria Park farmers' market

Reasons	Mean± SE
Purchasing Fresh Produce	1.96 ± 0.100a
Purchasing Ready to Eat Foods	2.71 ± 0.117b
Social Interactions/Meeting People	3.23 ± 0.128c
Attending Events/Activities/Including Concerts	3.77 ± 0.120d
Purchasing Packaged Foods	4.64 ± 0.110e
Purchasing Arts and Crafts	4.67 ± 0.102e

The rank order was tested for statistical significance through one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA), locating significance as (α): 0.05 and substantiated through Duncan Multiple Range Test. Statistical significance was confirmed.

In respect of the Attitudinal (H2) variables, using Pearson's product moment correlation, a wide range of significant correlations was found:

There is a highly significant positive relationship between "I am concerned about food safety" and "Purchasing Fresh Produce" ($r = 0.237$, $p<0.01$).

There is a negative relationship between "I am concerned about food safety" and "social interaction/meeting people" ($r = -0.196$, $p<0.05$).

There is a highly significant positive relationship between "I am concerned about diet and health and "Purchasing Fresh Produce" ($r = 0.237$, $p<0.01$).

There is a highly significant positive relationship between "I am concerned about the environment and favour products with low environmental impact" and "Purchasing fresh produce" ($r = 0.209$, $p<0.01$).

There is a negative relationship between "I am concerned about the environment and favour products with low environmental impact" and "Purchasing ready to eat food" ($r = -0.178$, $p<0.05$).

There is a highly significant positive relationship between "I am concerned to know the origins of foodstuffs, their history, their grower, where grown, how grown, etc." and "Purchasing Fresh Produce" ($r = 0.248$, $p<0.01$).

There is a significant negative relationship between "I am concerned to know the origins of foodstuffs, their history, their grower, where grown, how grown, etc." and "Purchasing ready to eat food" ($r = -0.160$, $p<0.05$).

There is a significant positive relationship between "I am concerned to know the origins of foodstuffs, their history, their grower, where grown, how grown, etc." and "Purchasing Arts and Crafts" ($r = 0.161$, $p<0.05$).

There is a negative relationship between "I am concerned to support local business such as growers and suppliers" and "Attending events/Activities including concerts" ($r = -0.166$, $p<0.05$).

The demographic data was less significant (see above), in inferential terms, than that around the other variables. Age in relation only to ready to eat food was accepted, against, otherwise, rejection. Educational level and ready to eat food was rejected, against acceptance otherwise.

Manning Farmers' Market

Data collected on 27th May and 3rd June, 2017 was subjected to a wide range of descriptive and inferential analysis, using the SPSS package and various statistical tools, to include independent sample t-test, one way analysis of variance and Spearman's rank correlation co-efficient. The descriptive statistics showed that women constituted the highest percentage of attendees, at 64.2%. Modal age fell within the band 26-35 years of age. At 25.9%, the highest percentage of respondents fell within the income band of

AUSD 55,000 – 89,999 per annum. Final level of education saw the highest level of reporting, at 35.8%, for those holding a bachelor degree.

Questions were also asked around the size of the respondent's household, whether the primary shopper for the household and whether the respondent had a home garden. The mean household size was 3.01, so three people. 67.7% of respondents reported as the household's primary shopper and 54.2% that they had a home produce garden.

Accepting or rejecting hypotheses used a 0.05 significance level and the results are in Table 3 below:

Inferential statistical testing now considered the H3 hypotheses in rank order from most to least important determinant of attendance at Manning Farmers' Market. The summary is as per Table 4 below:

Table 3
Summary of hypothesis test outcomes – Manning farmers' market

Hypotheses	Accepted/Not Accepted	Statistical Tool Used
H1Hypotheses Demographic		
H1a Gender	Not Accepted	Independent sample t-test
H1b Age	Not Accepted	One way analysis of variance
H1c Educational Level	Not Accepted	One way analysis of variance
H1d Income	Partially Accepted*1	One way analysis of variance
H2Hypotheses Attitudinal		
H2a Food safety	Accepted	Spearman's rank correlation coefficient
H2b Environment	Not Accepted	Spearman's rank correlation coefficient
H2c Diet and health	Accepted	Spearman's rank correlation coefficient
H2d Origin of goods	Accepted	Spearman's rank correlation coefficient
H2e Support local business	Accepted	Spearman's rank correlation coefficient
H3 Hypotheses Motivational		
All Hypotheses	Accepted	Spearman's rank correlation coefficient

Table 4
Rank order of motivations for customers attending Manning farmers' market

Reasons	Mean ± SE
Purchasing Fresh Produce	1.33 ± .058
Purchasing Ready to Eat Foods	3.00 ± .091
Social Interactions/Meeting People	3.20 ± .102
Purchasing Packaged Foods	4.13 ± .094
Attending Events /Activities/Including Concerts	4.62 ± .094
Purchasing Arts and Crafts	4.66 ± .088

The rank order was tested for statistical significance through one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA), locating significance as (α): 0.05 and substantiated through Duncan Multiple Range Test. Statistical significance was affirmed.

The H2 Attitudinal variables were tested through Spearman's rank correlation coefficient. There is a significant positive correlation between purchasing fresh food and the concern about food safety, $r = 0.259$, $p < 0.05$.

The concern about diet and health is also significantly positively correlated with purchasing fresh produce, $r = 0.313$, $p < 0.05$.

Concern about the environment and favouring products with low environmental impact has no significant correlation with any of the reasons for visiting Manning Farmers' Market, $r = 0.029$, $p > 0.05$

Concern to know the origins of foodstuffs, their history, their grower, where grown and how grown is positively correlated with purchasing fresh produce, $r = 0.201$, $p < 0.05$.

Concern to support local business such as growers and suppliers is also significantly positively correlated with purchasing fresh produce, $r = 0.246$, $p < 0.05$.

The demographic data was less significant (see above), in inferential terms, than that concerning the other variables, with only partial acceptance of the hypotheses around income.

Manning and Victoria Park Farmers' Markets

Data from the Manning and Victoria Park Consumer Studies was now merged, to allow of valid comparison between the two sites. Simple descriptive comparisons were made for both sites, with a focus on demographics, as in Table 5 below:

Table 5

Victoria Park and Manning farmers' markets respondent demographics compared

Variables		Farmers' Market	
		Manning (%)	Victoria Park (%)
Gender	Male	72 (35.8)	63 (39.4)
	Female	129 (64.2)	97 (60.6)
Age	18 – 25	24 (12)	21 (13.1)
	26 – 35	57 (28.5)	55 (34.4)
	36 – 45	33 (16.5)	41 (25.6)
	46 - 55	41 (20.5)	16 (10)
	Over 55	45 (22.5)	27 (16.9)
Annual Income	Less than $30k	43 (21.8)	27 (17.8)
	$30k - $54,999k	35 (17.8)	26 (17.1)
	$55k - $89,999k	51 (25.9)	39 (25.7)
	$90k - $$129,999k	37 (18.8)	34 (22.4)
	$130+	31 (15.7)	26 (17.1)

Table 5 *(Continued)*

Variables		Farmers' Market	
		Manning (%)	Victoria Park (%)
Highest Level of Education	Year 11 or below	11 (5.5)	7 (4.4)
	Year 12 or equivalent	22 (11)	17 (10.6)
	Certificate III or IV	24 (12)	16 (10)
	Bachelor Degree	72 (36)	64 (40)
	Graduate Diploma	28 (14)	21 (13.1)
	Postgraduate	43 (21.5)	35 (21.9)
Are you the primary shopper	No	65 (32.3)	49 (30.8)
	Yes	136 (67.7)	110 (69.2)

Next the demographic data was subjected to inferential testing, using the chi-square statistical tool, the exception being number of people in the household, where independent sample t-test was used. Significance was located as (α): 0.05, with results as in Table 6:

Table 6

Summary of significantly different demographics between Manning and Victoria Park farmers' markets

	Significant Difference	No Significant Difference
Gender		
Age	✓*	
Income		✓
Education		✓
Primary Shopper		✓
Household Size		✓

* Whilst modal age group was the same for both markets, a significantly greater number of people aged 46 and above attended Manning Farmers' Market.

Motivational variables were considered between Manning and Victoria Park Farmers' Markets, using independent sample t-test, locating significance as (α): 0.05, with results as in Table 7:

Table 7

Summary of significantly different motivational variables between Manning and Victoria Park farmers' markets

	Significant Difference	No Significant Difference
Purchasing Fresh Produce	✓*	
Purchasing Ready to Eat Food	✓*	

Table 7 *(Continued)*

	Significant Difference	No Significant Difference
Purchasing Packaged Food	✓*	
Social Interactions/ Meeting People		✓
Attending Events / Activities, etc	✓*	
Purchasing Arts and Crafts		✓

* Manning Farmers' Market customers gave a more positive ranking than Victoria Park Farmers' Market customers to purchasing fresh produce and purchasing packaged foods. They gave a lower positive ranking than Victoria Park Farmers' Market customers to purchasing ready to eat foods and attending event/activities and concerts.

Finally, attitudinal variables were considered between Manning and Victoria Park Farmers' Markets, using chi-square testing, with significance located at (α): 0.05, with results as in Table 8:

Table 8

Summary of significantly different attitudinal variables between Manning and Victoria Park farmers' markets

	Significant Difference	No Significant Difference
Food Safety	✓*	
Diet and Health		✓
Environmental Concerns		✓
Origins of Foodstuffs		✓
Supporting Local Business		✓

*Manning Farmers' Market customers gave a significantly more positive ranking on food safety concerns than Victoria Park Farmers' Market Customers.

In respect of the attitudinal variables, a Cronbach reliability test was also conducted (Cronbach, 1951), as an indicator for analysis of the merged data from Victoria Park and Manning Farmer's Markets. The outcome was a Cronbach alpha of 0.731, indicating reliability.

The findings of the Victoria Park and Manning studies are quite similar. There are limited significant differences around demographic (age) and attitudinal (food safety) variables. There are more significant differences around motivational variables. Manning Farmers' Market customers gave a more positive reception to fresh produce than did Victoria Park customers. They also gave a more positive response to packaged foods, but a lower positive response to ready to eat foods. Manning customers, though, gave a lower positive rating to attending events/activities/concerts than did Victoria Park customers.

Relative to rank order of the motivational variables for Manning Farmers' Market, purchasing fresh produce is the strongest motivator to attend, followed by purchasing

ready to eat foods. Next comes social interactions/meeting people, followed by purchasing packaged goods. Attending events / activities/ including concerts comes next, with the least strong reason being purchasing arts and crafts.

Rank order of motivational variables at Victoria Park Farmers' Market is similar, but not exactly the same. At Victoria Park, fourth and fifth in the rank order were attending events/activities and concerts, followed by purchasing packaged foods. At Manning Farmers' Market the order was purchasing packaged foods fourth, followed by events, activities and concerts.

The complete rank order for the motivational variables at Manning was as per Table 9 below:

Table 9

Rank order of motivational variables at Manning farmers' market

	Mean ± SE
Purchasing Fresh Produce	1.33 ± 0.058[a]
Purchasing Ready to Eat Foods	3.00 ± 0.091 [b]
Social Interactions / Meeting People	3.20 ± 0.102 [b]
Purchasing Package Foods	4.13 ± 0.094 [c]
Attending Events / Activities / Including Con.	4.62 ± 0.094 [d]
Purchasing Arts and Crafts	4.66 ± 0.088 [d]

This rank order was tested for statistical significance, through one-way analysis of variance, locating significance as (α): .05, and substantiated through Duncan Multiple Range Test. Statistical significance was affirmed

The complete rank order for the motivational variables at Victoria Park was as per Table 10 below:

Table 10

Rank order of motivational variables at Victoria Park farmers' market

Reasons	Mean± SE
Purchasing Fresh Produce	1.96±0.100[a]
Purchasing Ready to Eat Foods	2.71±0.117[b]
Social Interactions/Meeting People	3.23±0.128[c]
Attending Events/Activities/Including Con.	3.77±0.120[d]
Purchasing Packaged Foods	4.64±0.110[e]
Purchasing Arts and Crafts	4.67±0.102[e]

This rank order was tested for statistical significance, through one-way analysis of variance, locating significance as (α): .05, and substantiated through Duncan Multiple Range Test. Statistical significance was affirmed

Qualitative survey results on consumer attendance for Victoria Park and Manning were, in a sense, remarkably similar in that in neither case did grand themes emerge. Participants, seven interviewees at Victoria Park and eight at Manning Farmers' Market, almost without exception wished to talk about domestic issues of that location (which, in itself, might be regarded as a theme). For instance, at Victoria Park the need for more shade was mentioned frequently (43% of participants), while tables, chairs (62.5% of interviewees asked for more tables and chairs) and parking were topics brought frequently forward by Manning participants. By contrast, across both locations, only one participant wanted to get into detail discussion of prices and for Manning there was no discussion of market prices at all.

DISCUSSION

Extensive similarities have been shown between results from the Manning and Victoria Park Farmers' Market studies. In essence, the one confirms the other. Perhaps the most obvious statement of that lies in the rank order of the motivational variables.

An important question, however, is how much the results for Manning and Victoria Park confirmed, or otherwise, results from other studies of consumer behaviour at farmers' markets. Results are, then, very mixed, the clearest-cut similarity being in purchasing fresh produce as the primary motivational variable. Such was discovered by Coster and Kennon (2005) for elsewhere in Australia, but likewise by other researchers at a variety of venues in different countries. For example, Gumirakiza et al. (2014) found, in their study of Utah and Nevada farmers' markets that attending to buy fresh produce was the primary motivation, with that reported by 78% of respondents.

To look at another motivational variable, purchasing ready to eat foods, it is found that the high ranking at second for Manning and Victoria Park Farmers' Markets does not sustain across other studies. For instance Gumirakiza et al. (2014) found only 5% of respondents in Utah and Nevada offering purchase of ready to eat foods as a primary response.

Equally, the high priority given to social engagement at both Manning and Victoria Park also does not show in such studies as Gumirakiza et al. (2014) for Utah and Nevada. Indeed, speculation might lead to consideration of a connection between the findings on ready to eat foods and sociability, if the ready to eat foods are eaten at the market, for instance as breakfast.

In terms of attitudinal variables both the Victoria Park and Manning Farmers' Market Studies found strong correlations. An example was the correlations between concern for diet and health and attending to purchase fresh produce. Additional to this being a strong correlation in both

the Victoria Park and Manning surveys, Gumirakiza et al. (2014) found a similarly strong correlation in Utah and Nevada.

Comparing demographic results for Manning and Victoria Park Farmers' Markets with those from other studies shows varied outcomes. For example, rounded to full figures household size was the same, at three persons, for both Manning and Victoria Park and as reported by Gumirakiza et al. (2014) for Utah and Nevada, and Pascucci et al. (2011) for the Italian farmers' markets they surveyed.

Age, was though, very different for the various locations. The modal age range was reported as 26-35 years at both Manning and Victoria Park Farmers' Markets. For Utah and Nevada a mean respondent age of 42 years was reported (Gumirakiza et al., 2014). The Italian respondents were of average age 55 years (Pascucci et al., 2011). These differences can have substantial knock-on effects. For instance, Pascucci et al. (2011) suggested that, given the age of the parents, child attendances were not a dynamic at the Italian markets.

Overall, though, in Italy, farmers' markets are buoyant (Pascucci et al., 2011). They were, indeed given a major boost by the Finance Act 2007 (Pascucci et al., 2011), which mandated local authorities to take over their promotion.

Global buoyancy of farmers' markets, has been mentioned for USA, for instance, total annuals sales at farmers' markets having been estimated by US Department of Agriculture as at $1.5 Billion in 2015. Farmers' markets are similarly buoyant in, for example UK (McKeever, 2016). This is an important confirmation of the face-to-face retailing that is withering elsewhere. Hunt (2007) spoke of consumers interacting with both each other and vendors. 94% of his Maine respondents indicated not just enjoying social interaction but specifically talking with the farmers. Oberholtzer and Grow (2003) saw the impact of farmers' markets in terms of "making a place for social activity and promoting a sense of community" beyond simply provisioning local people and providing income to local businesses. Alonso and O'Neill (2011) found strong social motivations among consumers. Grando (2009) spoke of food buying becoming a pleasant and sociable activity.

In fact, farmers' markets are, of course, public space, social spaces, with a role in community development. Farmers' markets match the classic definition of a community institutional asset, as considered by Kretzmann and McKnight (1993) for asset-based approaches to community development. As such, Tiemann (2008) had spoken of their role as places of informal association, yet also with solid roles in community economic development, bringing footfall to rundown Central Business Districts or adding footfall in currently successful areas. This was remarked on by the Rotorua Daily (Martin, 2016) of a new farmers' market, started in October 2016. Local traders were clearly delighted by the footfall brought to the Centre on a Sunday, normally a slow trading day.

So successful is the farmers' market format that it has bred imitation by the supermarkets sector (McKeever, 2016). Amongst many examples McKeever (2016) instances Lidl, in UK, actually holding a pop-up farmers' market. It was stocked with Lidl's normal stock. What, though, it did not have was any farmers, people of passion, knowledge, experience, people who had got their hands dirty nurturing that produce, and, as ever had that story or two to tell. It is the interaction with these vendors that builds loyalty and trust and the willingness of consumers not just to buy, but also pay premium prices through their inclusion of experience elements (Pine & Gilmore, 1998) as a component in acceptable pricing, or, at the least highly attenuated views of service (Yuen & Chan, 2010). It seems that as social bonds develop, relationships build, information and knowledge is exchanged, premium pricing is supported, irrespective that classical economics recognises no social component in price determination, specifically that no social element is embedded (Granovetter, 1985) in a transaction. That the shortened supply chain represented by farmers' markets sustains high prices (eg. Pesch & Keeler, 2015) also negates the classical supply chain assumption that the shorter the supply chain, the lower the price to the end user, as middle-men are reduced.

A final note beyond commercial imitation of farmers' markets is that so important can their role in community development be that the format has been adopted and promoted by Government in, say, Italy (Pascucci et al., 2011). Local authorities have been given a specific remit to promote farmers' markets. In Wales, the Welsh Government (Business Wales, 2016) sees farmers' markets as an important contributor in the aim of growing the food and drink sector by 30% by 2020.

CONCLUSION

The broad conclusion of the comparative study of the Victoria Park and Manning Farmers' Markets consumer attendance motivations research is that the outcomes of the studies support each other. There are, of course, some minor differences, for instance in demographics and the rank order of motivations, but those compare with substantial differences between these two studies and many that went before them. The correlation testing between the Perth Farmers' Markets, so close together and with fairly similar demographics, from the researchers' knowledge of the area, was important to the farmers' market managers' confidence to believe in and have confidence to act from the results. Likewise, the researchers had a heightened confidence in Perth results, before moving on to Brisbane, the next area for research, the aim of the studies in Perth being toward inter-state comparisons of both farmers' market customer motivations and vendor motivations, toward filling the relative gap on Australian Farmers' Market research, whilst never forgetting an original aim of giving hard-pressed individual market managers the tools to manage, whilst, maybe, moving toward a generalisability

(such as illustrating the rise of sociability) that would help many more farmers' market managers and management committees in their decision-making.

The next need is undoubtedly for further testing of the studies' hypotheses in another or other locations, at a distance from Victoria Park and Manning, for instance in a different Australian State.

Such a further study or studies should:

- Abandon the rank order questioning, despite its recommendation by Gumirakiza *et al* (2014), in favour of singular use of Likert scale-based questioning. At Manning Farmers' Market, respondents were confused by the rank order questioning, illustrated by the high number of voids associated with that question.
- Consider the relationship between attendance motivations and pricing through additions to the questionnaire.
- Consider the relationship between the farmers' market and local community development, through questionnaire additions.

An observation on the last is that at the macro level there is a need to abandon speculation on the role of farmers' markets in community development in favour of quantification.

This paper is limited in terms of its geographical reach and timescale of observations. Insofar as the results reported on here are largely similar to those found elsewhere, it is believed that a reasonable degree of generalisability of the results may be claimed. This claim will be tested through additional future research.

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