

# Gen Z Consumer Behavior in Jakarta MRT Stations Retail Shop

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## Abstract

This paper focuses on the shopping behavior of Gen Z consumers while shopping in Jakarta MRT station. MRT has become an alternative solution for transportations in Jakarta to get over traffic jam and tends to have punctual schedule. Each MRT stations have different type of brand and retail stores that varies from food and beverages, convenience store and others. Gen Z often use MRT as their preferred transportations and in this study their response towards MRT stations retail and shopping behavior was analyzed during a short interview with the respondents. Analysis in retail shop and how consumers behave towards shopping including their motivations and preferences. In applying a qualitative approach, the study brings forth the Gen Z passengers' preference for punctual, fast travel, brand loyalty, and quick shopping. The results from the research indicate that Gen Z consumers tend to shop at retail shops near the city transit stations in the morning, providing that they love speed and efficiency. It also shows that brand play key role in the Gen Z consuming behavior and how they have planned ahead before actually shopping. The research also indicates that retail firms need to blend the digital way of doing business and social responsibility in order to reach this popular demographic. The dynamics of Gen Z consumers contribute significantly to the choice of products, place, time, and retail shops. Through a deep understanding of these elements, a business can succeed in the trends of the consumers in the urban transit setting.

**Keywords:** MRT, Gen Z, Retail, Shop

## Introduction

In recent years, the retail landscape has undergone significant transformations fueled by a convergence of technological advancements, shifting consumer preferences, and evolving urban environments. One of the notable shifts in consumer demographics is the rise of Generation Z (Gen Z) as a dominant consumer group. Born between the mid-1990s and early 2010s, Gen Z individuals are characterized as digital natives, having grown up in a highly digitized world characterized by the pervasive use of technology and social media (Ayuni, 2019). The Mass Rapid Transit (MRT) system in Jakarta is a significant component of the city's urban infrastructure and transportation network.

MRT stations play a crucial role as hubs of mobility, facilitating the movement of commuters to different parts of the city efficiently. These stations serve as key points of

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connectivity, enabling passengers to access various destinations across Jakarta. Within Jakarta's MRT stations, retail shops play a pivotal role in enhancing the overall passenger experience. These retail outlets offer convenience and amenities to commuters, providing access to a range of goods and services that cater to their needs during transit. From grab-and-go snacks to essential items, retail shops within MRT stations fulfill the diverse requirements of passengers, contributing to their comfort and convenience while traveling.

Understanding the dynamics of consumer behavior within Jakarta's MRT stations, particularly among Gen Z passengers, holds significant implications for businesses aiming to tailor their marketing strategies and product offerings effectively. This research aims to delve into the factors that shape Gen Z consumer behavior in MRT station retail shops, aiming to uncover insights into their preferences, motivations, and decision-making processes. This study seeks to address the evolving landscape of consumer behavior in urban transit environments by focusing on Gen Z passengers, who represent a key demographic group known for their unique consumption patterns and digital-native characteristics. Understanding how Gen Z consumers interact with retail shops within MRT stations can provide valuable insights into their shopping habits, brand perceptions, and engagement preferences.

This research endeavors to shed light on the underlying factors that influence their purchasing decisions and shopping experiences within MRT station retail environments through a nuanced exploration of Gen Z consumer behavior. Businesses can gain actionable insights to enhance their marketing strategies, product offerings, and customer experiences tailored specifically to Gen Z consumers by identifying key drivers and motivations. The findings of this research have the potential to inform strategic decision-making for businesses operating within Jakarta's MRT station retail spaces. Businesses can adapt and innovate their approaches to better meet the evolving needs and preferences of this demographic group, ultimately fostering more meaningful and resonant connections with Gen Z consumers in urban transit settings.

The presence of retail shops within MRT stations presents unique opportunities for brands and businesses to engage with consumers in distinctive environments. Studies in Netherland shows that train travelers shop to makes the waiting time more pleasant and also giving experience while transporting (Ratnawati, 2021). The captive audience of commuters within these stations creates a conducive setting for brands to showcase their products and services, build brand awareness, and foster customer engagement. By leveraging the high foot traffic and visibility offered by MRT station retail spaces, brands can enhance their presence and connect with consumers in a contextually relevant setting.

Businesses can capitalize on emerging technologies and digital platforms to engage with Gen Z consumers in meaningful and impactful ways especially in ethical manners, fostering long-term relationships and brand loyalty compares to traditional selling platform (Djafarova & Bowes, 2021);(Arai & Morimoto, 2023);(Kraus et al., 2022). Understanding the preferences, motivations, and behaviors of Gen Z consumers is paramount for businesses seeking to thrive in Jakarta's retail landscape. Businesses can

adapt their marketing strategies, product offerings, and customer experiences to resonate with this influential demographic group by leveraging insights into Gen Z consumer behavior (Nuryanti & Hanifah, 2022);(Etim, James, Nnana, & Okeowo, 2021);(De Pelsmacker, Van Tilburg, & Holthof, 2018).

The emergence of Gen Z as a prominent consumer demographic has brought about distinct consumption patterns and preferences compared to previous generations. Gen Z consumers are known for their affinity for digital platforms, social media influencers, and personalized experiences. They prioritize convenience, quality, and brand in their purchasing decisions, driving demand for brands and products that align with their values and aspirations that correlate with pricing strategies (Djafarova & Fouts, 2022);(Thangavel, Pathak, & Chandra, 2022);.

The influence of Gen Z on retail trends and consumer behavior is particularly pronounced in urban settings like Jakarta. The city's rapid urbanization and infrastructure development have transformed the retail experience, creating new opportunities and challenges for businesses operating within urban environments. Jakarta's dynamic and diverse population, coupled with its vibrant urban culture, provides a fertile ground for experimentation and innovation in retail strategies and offerings (Subawa, Widhiasthini, Pika, Suryawati, & Astawa, 2020).

Studies from Jung (2024) shows that convenience store have shown to be able to create an experience among Gen Z that correlate with their feeling when shopping in the store. Based on qualitative research in South Korea it was shown that their experiencing “momentary happy”, “treasure box” and terms of “my refrigerator” while they were shopping in the convenience stores. This indicate positive response towards how Gen Z imply the shopping experience.

As it was being studied by Kim (2020), Gen Z customer in Jakarta is preferred to shop clothing and food & beverages compare to footwear, technology and cosmetics. This correlate with the previous studies in South Korea that showing how Gen Z show perception towards food & beverages some of convenience stores (Jung et al. 2024). in Studies also shows that the presence of online shopping is not stopping Gen Z offline shopping experience (Kusuma, 2021). Among majority of Gen Z online shopper, there are some Gen Z customer need to see the physical product as their based on purchasing goods. However, to be more adaptive towards Gen Z technology utilization retail should adapt on digitalization which are needed in the development of the business as previous studies have been indicating

### **Research Method**

In this study, a qualitative research design is chosen to explore the factors influencing Gen Z consumer behavior in retail shops within Jakarta MRT stations. Qualitative research is well-suited for this investigation because it allows researchers to delve deeply into complex phenomena and understand the subjective experiences and perspectives of individuals.

The qualitative research design enables researchers to explore the multifaceted nature of Gen Z consumer behavior within the specific context of MRT station retail shops. Through open-ended questioning and probing, researchers can uncover the underlying motivations, preferences, and decision-making processes that shape Gen Z consumers' interactions with retail environments. Qualitative research allows for flexibility and adaptability in data collection and analysis methods. Researchers can iteratively refine interview questions and adapt their approach based on emerging themes and insights from earlier interviews. This iterative process enhances the depth and richness of the data collected, contributing to a comprehensive understanding of Gen Z consumer behavior.

Convenience sampling is a common method used in qualitative research, especially in settings where accessibility and practicality are prioritized. Convenience sampling is chosen to select participants due to the dynamic nature of the MRT station environment. Convenience sampling allows researchers to recruit participants who are easily accessible and willing to participate in the study.

In this study, the aim is to understand Gen Z consumer behavior in Jakarta MRT station retail shops, and convenience sampling provides access to individuals who regularly utilize these facilities. Researchers aim to capture firsthand insights into the behaviors, preferences, and motivations of this demographic group by targeting Gen Z passengers who regularly utilize Jakarta MRT stations and engage in shopping activities within the retail shops located in these stations. Diversity in participants' backgrounds, lifestyles, and shopping preferences can enrich the data collected and provide valuable insights into the variability and complexity of Gen Z consumer behavior within the context of Jakarta MRT stations.

Data will primarily be collected through semi-structured in-depth interviews with participants. Semi-structured interviews provide flexibility in exploring participants' perceptions, behaviors, and motivations regarding their shopping experiences in MRT stations. Conducting interviews in a private and comfortable setting will help create an environment conducive to open and candid responses from participants. There are 13 correspondents of MRT passengers that will be interviewed to gather insights into Gen Z consumer behavior within Jakarta MRT station retail shops. This sample size is reasonable for a qualitative study and allows for a depth of understanding while maintaining practical feasibility within the research context.

The data analysis will be carried out through a meticulous scan to identify and record the primary and secondary characteristics mentioned by the respondents regarding their attitudes towards Mass Rapid Transit. In the initial step, this scanning will only help in the categorization of the responses into distinct themes that can be further explored in a systematic manner.

After the identification of the keywords, these are to be used to organize the data into various groups. For example, the responses could be categorized under themes such as 'safety', 'efficiency', 'cost', 'accessibility', and 'comfort'. Each category will not only contain the direct mentions but will also contain related sentiments and sub-themes that

may emerge in the initial coding phase. This will help in the more structured and focused analysis and will allow us to easily observe patterns or trends in the attitudes expressed by different demographics or user groups. Lastly each Triangulation was applied to validate the words being described by researcher to reduce bias and get more valid understanding.

### Result and Discussion

The research is based on 13 in-depth interviews conducted with Gen-Z MRT riders, each interview for about 5-10 Minutes to gain the answer about the customer perspective on retail stores in MRT Stations and how Gen-Z considers their shopping in MRT Stations. The triangulation method was applied to see the words that represent the data. The response was divided into different approaches. First is on the transportation experience, second is regarding shopping experience, third is how customers respond to retail stores and last is about factors that influence shopping experience. Each part is categorized and analysed using the words that represent similar answers.

#### Transportation experience

It was shown that car has been used more frequent compare to other transportation, followed by train and other online transportation. It was claimed that the choice of using MRT is based on their punctuality on schedule and faster speed. Other than that, the words comfort is being repeated 5 times. According to Kusuma (2021), gen Z prefers something comfortable when purchasing goods or services. Among 13 respondents, only 2 claims to rarely use MRT and only use them just to avoid traffic. The following are the respondents that state that MRT was comfortable.

**Table 1 Respondents that Asserted that MRT was Comfortable**

| <b>Respondent</b> | <b>Specific Comments on Comfort</b>   |
|-------------------|---|
| <b>Kezia</b>      | “MRT is on time and comfortable in transporting, less shaky and people are more in order”   |
| <b>Farah</b>      | “ Because, besides it is closer, the timing schedule is clear. It is also comfortable and safe when I’m using MRT”                  |
| <b>Mutia</b>      | “ I think for MRT , looking from its facility, the train is the most comfortable..”   |
| <b>Rashad</b>     | “.. for comfortable aspect I prefer MRT. It is simpler , punctual and scheduled. Every 5 minute during rush hour the train comes..“ |
| <b>Zahra</b>      | “ ... I think MRT is more comfortable, I don’t now why, but it is more comforting compare to use KRL”                               |

#### Shopping experience

Female respondent shows that makeup and skincare have already become their shopping list. In contrast for male respondents practical foods are the ones that become first priority. In terms of frequency, it was shown that customers who routinely shop in MRT train consume drinks and snacks that have established brands, which is in line with a theory that posits that this generation likes consuming snacks (“Indonesia Gen Z Report

2022”, 2022). Most of the respondents agree that they prefer to buy quick food and drinks to grab by. “Snack” and “drink” were repeatedly said among respondents as shown in the table below.

**Table 2 Results on products Gen Z bought**

| Words               | Words Count |
|---------------------|-------------|
| Snacks              | 6           |
| Drinks              | 4           |
| Heavy Meals         | 2           |
| Make Up             | 2           |
| Skin Care           | 1           |
| Cooking Ingredients | 1           |

It was shown that Coffee is preferred as a fast-moving product in drinks among all respondents, which aligns with research finding that this generation prefers coffee most of the time (Wang, Opoku, & Tham, 2024). They are also linked their consumption based on the coffee brand as per their response. “.. so usually I stopped by to buy coffee, the brand is kopi bawah tangga..” – Nahdona “..yes coffee brand is kopi djago.. lately they have several branches in between MRT stations..”- Farahdifa Urgent needs such as medicine and ointment were also described in the interview showing other responses compared to consumptive products; this was confirmed by research that stated that 36% of Gen Z “used an urgent care” in the last six months (Stanek, 2019).

From the interview, the questions on how much time spent shopping in MRT Station is majority 10 min. Three respondents shop for only 5 min and one respondent spends 15 minutes. Mainly they are in a hurry due to train schedule because they live a fast-paced life (Indonesia Gen Z Report 2024”, 2024). They claimed to already plan ahead on what to buy during shopping. Since it is planned, the amount of time is short.

### Customer Response to retail

There are several words describing the pain and gain regarding retail at the MRT station. Convenience, Quality, and Speed are those describing how the customer perceives the stores as the gain factors. On the contrary, Space and Lack of Variety become the pain factor of the stores. In the shopping experience, the terms that describe the most are Fast and Small Space which align with the pain and gain factor on how the respondent describes during the interview. The considerations factor on their decision to shop is the location in which were passed by and how the customer is familiar with the brands of products sold. Other than that, cheap price, service, and rarity were also mentioned as some factors that initiate buying factor. The following is the recap of the interview results

**Table 3 Interview Results**

| Respondent | Convenience                     | Quality | Space & Lack of Varieties                                      | Speed                     |
|------------|---------------------------------|---------|--|---------------------------|
| Vara       | Values the convenience of store | -       | Complains about the cramped space and lack of product variety. | Praises the fast service. |

|                 |   |  |   |  |   |
|-----------------|---|--|---|--|---|
|                 |   | locations and quick service options.   |   |  |   |
| <b>Michelle</b> |   | Describes shopping at MRT stations as convenient, especially when combined with commuting. | Pleased with the quality and pricing of products.                                   | -  | -   |
| <b>Kezia</b>    | - |  |   | Expresses dissatisfaction with limited space, finding it cramped.  | Describes the shopping experience as quick.   |
| <b>Dona</b>     | - |  | Notes that the quality of products is up to standard but some stores could improve. | Mentions long queues and poorly directed queue areas that interfere with station exits.  | Appreciates the fast service where available. |
| <b>Calvin</b>   | - |  |   | Highlights the need for more varied and better-known retail brands, expressing a desire for more engaging retail environments. | -   |
| <b>Brian</b>    |   | Notes the convenience of shopping locations within MRT stations.                           |   | -  | -   |
| <b>Farah</b>    | - |  | Praises the quality of offerings at specific stores like "Kopi Jago".               | -  | Highlights the quick service at "Kopi Jago".  |

### Factors influencing shopping experience

As part of the shopping experience, all the respondent agrees that the most convenient time is after peak hour during office rush hour. To add on more services within retail stores, the suggestions that are given are mostly for mobile apps integrations and fast payment methods. Other factors that are being suggested are thematic stores and seating lounge areas. For the products sold by retail, some respondent suggests more varieties, unique points, availability, and urgent needs or first aid products. Factors that could influence their shopping decisions are Pricing, Fast Service, Store Ambience, Complete Assortments, and Travelling Packaging.

From this research, four approaches are being observed. The transportation experience, shopping experience, customer response towards retail, and factors influencing shopping experience. Findings in this research show that the major reason for using MTR is because of the timing factor. Gen-Z grows in an era in which all information can be obtained fast and it influences the way they transport. Punctuality also plays a part

in their decision to use MRT as Gen Z has a very fast-paced life (Indonesia Gen Z Report 2024”, 2024).

This also influences how they spend their time to shop. It was said that most respondents agreed to spend 10 minutes to complete their shopping transactions. Interestingly, some claimed to already plan ahead before entering the store, so they could save time in deciding on what to buy. Gen Z are known to have an instant culture due to the use of technology and their ability to get information fast becoming one factor in their psychological factor in their purchasing behavior (Subawa, Widhiasthini, Pika, Suryawati, & Astawa, 2020).

Snacks and Drinks including coffee are the products that were looked for. Brands on the products play a part in their decision-making as a study shows that Gen Z tends to be loyal toward branded products Shin (2022) It turns out that Gen Z customers are aware of the brands that they are buying. Other than that, they are aware of the varieties and availability of the products. The main concern is how to navigate proper stocks in small space stores since this becoming a pain as part of the decision-making factors. As additional factor , Gen Z also have higher trust on influencer-related brand (“Indonesia Gen Z Report 2022”, 2022).

Location and direct access are also factors in how they decide on shopping if the store locations are located in a proper place when customers pass by as stated in the interview. However crowded store is also mentioned as one of the negative perceptions due to a longer waiting time to finish their transactions. In one interview, it is suggested that available space in MRT stations can be transformed into a creative space that could attract people as a destination on their travel (Twenge, 2023). Others said that retailers can also provide a lounge or seating area. Another interesting idea that is being said in the interview is discussing how packaging can be modified to be more suitable for traveling. This also can be a factor that influences people to buy due to the convenience.

## **Conclusion**

The study focuses on understanding Gen Z's preferences and behaviors related to the MRT system in Jakarta. Gen Z chooses the MRT primarily due to its reliability and efficiency, reflecting their fast-paced lifestyle and preference for punctuality. Moreover, the shopping experience at MRT stations, characterized by quick access to snacks and fast-moving consumer goods, caters to their need for instant gratification and convenience. However, challenges such as limited space and product variety impact overall satisfaction and impulse buying. Digital integration through mobile apps for payments and promotions is seen as crucial, aligning with Gen Z's tech-savvy nature. The study's limitation lies in its single-line focus on MRT Jakarta, emphasizing the potential for future expansion and its implications for retail development within stations.



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