

## Influence of Personality and Educational Level on Nigerian Consumers Preference for Foreign Goods

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### Abstract

This study examined the Influence of Educational Level and Personality on Nigerian Consumer for Foreign Goods. The study used 253 final year students of Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Ordinary National Diploma Students (OND) and Higher National Diploma Students (HND) of Federal Polytechnic Oko, both in Anambra State of Nigeria. The sample was selected through convenient sampling technique. The participants were composed of 51% male and 49% female students; between the age ranges of 19 to 30 years. The mean and standard deviation of their ages were 23.31 and 4.67. The study used Eysenck Personality Questionnaire (E.P.Q) (adult form) and Consumer Perception Scale (C.P.S) to measure the variables of interest. A two-way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) statistics was used to analyse data gathered from the scales administered. The study found that personality traits and educational level individually, have significant influence on Nigerian consumers' preference for foreign goods, at .05 level of significance.

**Keywords:** Personality, Educational level, Consumers, Foreign Goods

### Introduction

There has been considerable interest in recent years on the effects of the products from country of origin on consumer's perception of products. The preference among Nigerian for foreign made good over Nigerian (local) made goods is both alarming and disturbing especially when considered in the light of its effect on local industries and individuals. The general notion among some Nigerians is that local made goods are inferior to imported and foreign made good in terms of quality and performance to the extent that some local manufacturers have resorted, in a bid to remain relevant, to claiming of foreign origin for their products.

A popular African adage has it that, "one man's meat is another man's poison," this adage shows that consumers preference about products differs from one man to another. There are people who would choose indigenous products anytime, even if they fall within the same price range with foreign products. Also, many patronize foreign products even if they are three times more expensive. Consumer purchasing habits, therefore, vary owing to some factors (Hong and Wyer, 1990; Parameswaran and Pisharodi, 1994).

According to Ogunnaike (2010) as our society undergoes rapid changes and becomes more affluent, newer social forces make consumers spend a greater part of their income in way remarkably different from what took place in the past. Consumers want the advantage of the affluent and latest services that technology and business can offer (Achumba, 1996). These consumers are personalities whose behaviour is governed by different and varied influences such as; his society beliefs, attitude, his past learning, experience, educational level, perception and his expectations. These form his taste choice and product preference. Price is considered as one of the most important factors affecting the consumers' preference of product. Once consumers perceive a price difference between local and foreign items, price differentials begin to affect their preference for local goods. In other words, if they notice that local items are more expensive than foreign ones, they go for the foreign ones. A high priced item may be perceived of being high in quality because of the image created by manufacturers through packaging and advertising (Han 1989; Johansson 1989).

Similarly, a global product may be perceived to be of superior quality as quality is believed to be a prerequisite for international acceptance. Consumers' consider quality when choosing between foreign made product and Nigerian made products. Consumers usually have several options in their choice of product consumption (Schooler, 1965; Ahmed and d' Astous, 2002, 2003; Ahmed and Xia Yang et al 2003). If a brand is perceived as globally available consumers are likely to attribute a superior quality to it, because it's international acceptance is seen as a sign of its high quality. On one hand, consumers seem to value foreign brands and regard them as a status symbol. But they are often criticized for the threatening the local differences leading to a loss of cultural identity.

Sometimes, consumers' purchasing pattern depicts their social status. It is believed that people, especially the young ones, consider current fashions and trends while buying a product. Through television, consumers are becoming increasingly aware of the fashions and trends in other parts of the world (Hong and Wyer, 1989, 1991). Hence, the fashions and trends dictate the preference of some consumers. But most consumers prefer foreign brands rather than local ones. They feel proud when they buy imported items because, to them, it depicts class. The attitudes and perception of consumers toward their choice of goods sometimes depends on categories, for example, electronic goods from Italy may be perceived as a poor quality. And the

Japanese electronic goods would be perceived with positive attitudes, while their clothing will be negatively perceived (Hong and Wyer, 1989, 1990).

Some consumers believe that purchasing local goods promotes patriotism; they, therefore, accuse foreign brands of being a potential threat to a country's economy and employment level. However, it is important to note also that a good item should have some unique proposition to satisfy a consumer needs. However, patriotic consumers believe that our local companies have a competitive edge over foreign competitors because they are closer to consumers here and have a better understanding of what people want. They fear that buying foreign products may hinder the growth of local companies in the country. (The Nation, June 20, 2013).

Omonike, Vincent & Adelaja (2011) posited that the abundance of foreign brands of many kinds of product in Nigerian markets makes it easy for consumers to satisfy their yearnings for these imported items. A number of psychological forces also operate in the consumer to influence his perception towards local and foreign products. Firstly, there are individuals who, in the search for distinctiveness, exclusiveness and egotism, seek out those products which can confer these qualities.

For many Nigerians, foreign products probably have images that bestow these qualities on the buyer or the owner. Secondly, for many people, oversea countries are the places they would cherish to visit either for sightseeing or for image boosting purposes. As a result they buy their products as a way of identifying themselves with those countries (Ogunnaike, 2010). In general, made-in-Nigeria goods are perceived as inferior, even when the foreign products were not really better in value or physically different from the domestic alternatives, except for the labels describing them as imported or made-in-Nigeria. No wonder some goods made in Nigeria are sometimes labeled made in England, Paris, London, etc, as to facilitate acceptance. Previous studies have shown that educational level influence how consumers patronize both foreign and Nigerian products. For instance, most educated Nigerian prefers to buy durable goods and commodities. This notion is in agreement with the position of Igele (2013). He said that preference for foreign commodity is directly related to educational level and social strata. It is a fact that sometimes educational level determines people's social strata and this culminate in their buying propensity in term of preference for foreign goods. How much a consumer has in terms of purchasing money does not determine the social class of such consumers but the level of awareness consumers has on purchasing superior and durable goods. These superior and durable goods or commodities can be ascertained if consumers are knowledgeable and well informed on the authenticity of goods or commodities. Therefore educational levels can predict how informed consumers are when it comes to preference for foreign goods in Nigeria. Theoretically the trait of extraversion introversion model is a central dimension of human personality theories. The terms introversion and extroversion were proposed and developed by Carl Jung (1921). Virtually all comprehensive models of personality include these concepts. Examples includes Jung's Analytical Psychology, Eysencks three factor model, Cattell's 16 Personality Factors, the Big Five Personality Traits, the four temperaments, the Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventory and the Myers Briggs Type Indicator. Among these personality theories, Han Eysenck Personality Theory is adopted in this study to analyze its dimension of extroversion and introversion.

Eysenck (1967) described extraversion-introversion as the degree to which a person is outgoing and interactive with other people and the degree to which a person is restricted to himself and not interacting with others. These behavioural differences are presumed to be the result of underlying differences in brain psychology. Extraverts seek excitement and social activity in an effort to heighten their arousal level, whereas introverts tend to avoid social situations in an effort to keep such arousal to a minimum. Eysenck designated extraversion as one of three major traits in his P-E-N model of personality, which also includes psychoticism and neuroticism.

Eysenck originally suggested that extroversion was a combination of two major tendencies, impulsiveness and sociability. He later added several other more specific traits, namely liveliness, activity level, and excitability. These traits are further linked in his personality hierarchy of even more specific habitual responses, such as partying on the weekend. Extroversion is "the act, state, or habit of being predominantly concerned with and obtaining gratification from what is outside the self." Extraverts tend to enjoy human interaction and to be enthusiastic, talkative, assertive and gregarious. They take pleasure in activities that involve large social gatherings, such as parties, community activities, public demonstrations, and business or political groups. Politics, teaching, sales, managing and brokering are fields that favour extroversion. An extroverted person is likely to enjoy time spent with people and find less reward in time spent alone. They tend to be energized when around other people, and they are more prone to boredom when they are by themselves. Introversion is "the state of or tendency toward being wholly or predominantly concerned with and interested in one's own mental life." Introverts are people whose energy tends to expand through reflection and dwindle during interaction (Helgoe, 2008).

Introverts tend to be more reserved and less outspoken in groups. They often take pleasure in solitary activities such as reading, writing, using computers, hiking and fishing. The archetypal artist, writer, sculptor, engineer, composer, and inventor are all highly introverted. An introvert is likely to enjoy time spent alone and

find less reward in time spent with large groups of people, though he or she may enjoy interaction with close friends. Trust is usually issue of significance, a virtue of utmost importance to an introvert choosing a worthy companion. They prefer to concentrate on a single activity at a time and like to observe situations before they participate, especially observed in developing children and adolescents (Gale, 1998). Introverts are easily overwhelmed by too much stimulation from social gatherings and engagement. They are more analytical before speaking (Lemere, 2002).

In empirical related study Kalu and Ikwegbu (2000) investigated the perception of Nigerian consumers of locally made textiles to their foreign-made counterparts and to analyze it's impact of the identified attitude on the Nigerian economy as a whole. The study used a questionnaire that contains questions that cover the major research questions formulated for the study. The questions are open-ended as well as multiple-choice questions. Some others would involve ranking while others are simply acceptance-rejection types. In order to carry out the study, 300 copies of the questionnaire were distributed to students of higher institution of learning in Port-Harcourt, Rivers State where only 252 questionnaires were found useful for analysis. The study involved both males and females, married and single, people of different age groups ranging from below 15years to 35years, with different educational qualifications. The results indicate that there appears to be a general preference for foreign textiles than locally made ones. This general observation is based on a number of considerations made by the consumers in respect of certain factors of characteristics. These characteristics include price, packaging, product quality, durability, beauty and attractiveness, others are availability, positioning and branding, promotion, and advertisement, and distribution mechanics. The wisdom of such choices and indicated preferences is yet another thing. The revelation is that their perception and associated behaviour is neither patriotic nor in the best interest of the economy.

In other study Ekerete (1996) investigated the factors that influence consumer choice of retail stores. He utilized the survey method where he distributed his questionnaires and renewed about 467 of them. Descriptive statistical tools and contingency chi-square technique were employed in the analysis. The result revealed that there is a statistically significant difference in the perception of consumers studied on the factors that affect their choice of which stores to buy from. This, different classes of shoppers valued different attributes to back up their choice; and this is so because of the consumer's general impression of the store. The predominant factors of influence include the attributes of peer group, store image, and consumer self image. These results tend to agree with the findings of Weale (1961) and Walters (1974) that consumers would seek out those stores that most closely correlated with their self-status image, other factors remaining constant.

The attitude of consumers on choice of retail outlets is not the only issue with border on consumer behaviour. A particularly interesting study was conducted by Ezirim (1987) on the perception and impression of Nigerian consumer on locally fabricated and imported motor spare parts. He used the quasi-experimental mode of study, utilizing the questionnaire as the research instrument. The finding indicate that in terms of prices, locally made spare parts were fair and moderate, while foreign parts were seen as high and costly. In terms of quality, Nigerian-made parts are moderately good as opposed to their foreign counterparts that are seen to be of very good quality. Both brands are seen to be very reliable in use. Foreign made parts are well packaged, smooth and polished as opposed to locally made ones that are rough looking. Local parts are credited with long life, while foreign parts are seen to be of shorter life span. The implication of these finding is that the conditions create an atmosphere where no one consumer may prefer the same brand of product as the other. Another related study is that conducted by Okeafor (1996) on consumer's purchase sacrifices in Nigeria's market place. The author developed a retailing purchase cost questionnaire for the purpose of this study. The result reveals traffic hold-up and travel time and out of the market places was the most significant sacrifices to consumers.

It can be seen that works reviewed, although significant contributed to existing body of knowledge in marketing failed to cover the arrears of clothes and wears which are more likely to reveal the psychological realities of a typical Nigerian consumer. Whereas Ekerete (1996) concentrated on choice of retail outlets, Ezirim (1997) centered on motor parts. The fabrics and wears segment of the market is yet to be studied. It is therefore the major emphasis of this study to unravel the way Nigerian consumers perceive their locally made wears as against the foreign made ones. Foreign brand names affect consumer's evaluations of product in two ways. One involves the consumer's identification of the country-of-origin from the brand names. Khera and Anderson, (1981) examined the degree to which American consumers are aware of the location (Us or foreign) of the manufacturers of various brands of household products. Their findings suggest that brand names give rise to the country-of-origin effects. In response to country-of- origin effects of this type, such firms as Japan's Matsushita and Mitsubishi adopted anglicized brand names in their earlier years in the U.S. market, during the time in which the image of most Japanese products sold in the U.S. was not favourable. The importance of brand names and seller familiarity in consumer perception of quality and product evaluations has long been recognized in consumers behaviour literature (Jacoby, Olson, and Haddock, 1971, Jacoby, Szybillo and Busato-Schach, 1977), as well as in the information economics literature (Nelson 1970) Shapiro, 1982).

Shapiro (1982) examined consumer perception of global brand versus local brands in the Indian care

industry. Consumer brand perceptions have substantial implication in marketing. The study explores and understands consumer's perceptions of global and local car brands in India by accomplishing the secondary objectives. The secondary objectives were achieved by highlighting the factors that affect consumer preference for global brands by examining the effects of country of origin on consumer's perception of global brand and local brands, and by studying the effects of consumer's ethnocentrism towards global brands. For creating a deep understanding of consumers insight of global car brands against local car brands, qualitative approach was adopted with an in-depth and semi-structured interviewed process. Interviews as a qualitative tool helped the researcher to uncover individual's covert feelings and emotions towards perception of global brands versus local brands. The findings of the study advised that the consumers who possessed global car brands, preferred their car brands due to factors such as global presence, worldwide reputation, and quality of being a foreign make.

Ogunnaike (2010) studied Nigerian perception of locally made products: A study on Textile Fabrics Consumers in Kaduna State, the study indicated that the closure of many textile company in Nigeria is obviously traceable to low patronage of locally made textile fabrics. As a result of this, the study identified some perceptual variables affecting the buyers buying behaviour. It also explores the influence of marketing strategies on the consumers' perception over locally made textile fabrics. Random sampling method was used for the study. A sample size of 98 respondents was used. The study was limited to the respondent within the age range of 50 to 60 years old at Kakuri, Kaduna State, Nigeria. The statistical tools employed for analysis were chi-square, multiple regression and ANOVA. The study reveals that consumers prefer foreign made textiles to locally made ones. In line with the findings of the study, the summary, conclusion and recommendations were put forward by the researcher for the interested consumer, manufacturer and marketing participants in the area of persuasive communication.

Onyenyi (2009) presents the result of a survey of Nigerian consumers' perception and attitude towards foreign made products. The focus of the study is the source of information in evaluating a product, the evaluation of specific product dimension used by Nigerian consumers in their assessment of different categories. The result show that Nigerian consumers perceive foreign made products as more reliable technologically advanced, stylish and competitively priced than the Nigerian products. More importantly, the most common product information sources are advertising and words of mouth. The managerial implication and limitations of the study are examined.

Based on this premise, it is perhaps pertinent to say that the general notion among some Nigerians is that locally manufactured goods in terms of performance and quality, to the extent that some local manufacturers have sometimes resorted to claiming foreign origin's for their products so as to attract the public to purchase them. This has made Nigeria to become a huge market for dumped products from Europe and China leading to factory closures, unemployment, and poverty.

### Objective of the Study

The objective of this study is to examine the influence of educational level & personality on Nigerian consumer's preference for foreign products. Specifically, the study will examine:

#### Definition of key study variables:

1. **Educational Level:** It means the academic level of the participants. In this variable, educational level were categorized into three and they are; i. OND, ii. HND, iii. B.Sc.
2. **Personality:** This is a distinctive and relatively pattern of behaviour. Personality in this study is categorized into two: Extroverts and Introverts. Extroverts according to Eysenck theory are chronically under-aroused, bored and are therefore in need of external stimulation to bring them up to an optimal level of performance. While introverts are chronically over aroused and jittery and are therefore in need of peace and quiet to bring them up to an optional level of performance.
3. **Consumers' Preference:** It is the tendency for an end-user to choose a particular product over another product base on where it was produced.

#### Research Hypotheses

1. There will be no significant influence of educational level on Nigerian consumer's preference for foreign goods.
2. There will be no significant influence of personality on Nigerian consumer's preference for foreign goods.

#### Method

A total number of two hundred and fifty three (253) final year students of Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Ordinary National Diploma Students (OND) and Higher National Diploma Students (HND) of Federal Polytechnic Oko, in South Eastern Nigeria were used for the study. A convenient sampling technique was used across various

Department of Faculty of Social Sciences and Management Sciences of these Tertiary Institutions. The sample was composed of 51% male and 49% female students. The sample was between the age range of 19 to 30years, with the mean age of 23.3 and standard deviation of 4.67.

Two instruments were utilized in this study, the Eysenck Personality Questionnaire (E.P.Q) (adult form) developed by Eysenck and Eysenck (1975) that measures personality for ages 16 – 69years on self report responses to 90 items were used for the study. The E.P.Q measures four aspect of personality namely; Psychoticism, Extraversion – Introversion, Neuroticism and lie. But the researcher used the Extraversion – Introversion sub-scale of the E.P.Q. Participants responded by indicating their agreement to each of the 20items which uses “Yes” and “No” scale. The EPQ has a test-retest-reliability of 1 month interval, alpha coefficients of  $E = .60$  and test-retest coefficients of  $E = .89$  respectively for males. The EPQ also demonstrated divergent validity between EPQ and Progressive Metric Intelligence Test of 0.0 as expected low and not significant at  $P \leq .05$  (Eysenck, 1975). The instrument was validated and adopted to be used in Nigeria by Adelaja (1978). A score that is higher than the norms indicates extraversion, and a score that is lower than the norms indicate introversion. Second, is the Consumer Perception Scale (CPS). The Consumer Perception Scale (CPS) was developed by Oyeruyi (2009). The Consumer Perception Scale (CPS) is a five point Likert Scale which measures Nigerian Consumers’ perceptions towards made in Nigeria and foreign made goods.

The participants responded by indicating their extent of agreement to the 20 items scale, which uses a five point likert scale of 1 (Very Good), 2 (Good), 3(Manageable), 4(Bad) and 5(Very Bad). Oyeniyi (2009) reported an alpha coefficient of 0.83 for the Consumer Perception Scale (CPS) and obtained a two weeks test-retest reliability of 0.65. The questionnaires were both administered through convenient sampling techniques to the participants by the researcher in classroom and in the hostels of the participants. The instruments were given to the participants where the researcher met with the participant. The survey instrument consisted of 43 content questions, five demographic questions, twenty personality questions and eighteen question on consumer perception in a five-point Likert type Scale. The researcher explained to the participants that the exercise was for research purpose and pleaded that the participants should respond to the questionnaire, but none of the participants were coerced to respond to the questionnaires. The total of four hundred (400) copies of questionnaire were distributed to the participants and only two hundred and fifty three (253) were correctly filled and retrieved, while the rest were not properly filled or returned. Therefore, the total of 253 filled questionnaires was used for the data analysis of the study.

A 2 x 3 factorial design was adopted in the study. The researchers was interested in knowing the influence of personality (Extrovert and Introvert) and Educational level (OND, HND, B.Sc) on Nigeria, consumer preference for foreign goods. The data were analyzed with 2-way analysis of variance to find the relative and combined influence of personality and educational level on Nigerian consumer preference for foreign goods.

## Results:

**Table 1: Summary Table of Mean and Standard Deviation of the Variables**

Personality Traits	Mean	Std Deviation	N
Introvert PT	53.43	8.89	188
Extroverts PT	54.68	9.46	65
<b>Total</b>	<b>54.05</b>	<b>9.17</b>	<b>253</b>

The result in table above indicates that the mean of introverts is 53.43, with standard deviation of 8.89 and number of 188, while extroverts had mean of 54.68, with standard deviation of 9.46 and number of 65. This result showed no significant difference between the mean of introverts and extroverts Nigerian consumers on preference for foreign goods.

**Table II: Summary Table of Mean and Standard Deviation of the Variables**

Educational Level	Mean	Std Deviation	N
OND	55.89	9.59	88
HND	55.05	8.43	44
B.Sc	51.72	8.43	121
<b>Total</b>	<b>54.22</b>	<b>8.81</b>	<b>253</b>

The result showed the mean of OND students to be 55.89, with standard deviation of 9.59 and the number of participants is 88. HND students had a mean of 55.05, with standard deviation of 8.45, and the number of participants is 44, while B.Sc had a mean of 51.72 with the standard deviation of 9.04 and the number of participants is 253. This result showed that there is no significant mean difference across the levels of education.

**Table III: Summary Table of Two-way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) of Personality Traits and Educational Levels on Consumer for Foreign Goods**

Source	Type III Sum of Square	df	Mean Square	F	Sig
Personality Traits	367.164	1	367.164	4.745	.030
Educational Level	973.410	2	486.705	486.705	.002
Personality Trait * Educational Level	321.926	2	160.963	2.080	.127
Error	19112.207	247	77.377		
<b>Total</b>	<b>751446.00</b>	<b>253</b>			

**a. R Square = .072 (Adjusted R Square = 0.53)**

The result above revealed that there is significant influence on personality trait of participants  $F(1,253) = 4.745, P < .030$ , with respect to consumers' preference of foreign goods over made in Nigeria goods. Therefore, the hypothesis, which stated that there will be no significant influence of personality on consumer preference of foreign good over made in Nigeria goods, were rejected at  $P < .05$ . And the alternative hypotheses were accepted.

Furthermore, the result indicated that there is significant influence between educational level, at  $F(2,243) = 6.290, P < .002$ . Therefore, the second hypothesis that states that there will be no significant influence of educational level on consumer preference of foreign good over made in Nigeria good was rejected at  $P < .05$ ; since the result found that there was significant difference at  $P < .05$ . Therefore, the researchers accept the alternate hypothesis; that there is significant influence of educational level on consumer preference of foreign goods over made in Nigeria goods.

Lastly, the result of the 2 way analysis of variance showed that there is no significant interaction influence between personality trait and educational level on consumers preference of foreign goods over made in Nigeria good, at  $F(2,245) = 2.080, P < .127$ ; therefore, the hypothesis that states that, there will be no significant interaction influence of personality and educational level on consumer preference of foreign goods over made in Nigeria goods was accepted at  $P < .05$ .

### Discussion

There are two findings in this study. The first finding of the study indicated that a personality trait, being introverted or extraverted has significant influence on Nigerian consumer's preference for foreign goods. This finding is supported by the prediction of Kalu and Ikwuegbu (2000) that there is general preference for foreign goods by Nigeria consumers. This observation is based on a number of considerations made by Nigerian consumers in respect of certain factors or characteristics about these goods. These characteristics include price, packaging, product quality, durability beauty and attentiveness, availability, branding, promotion, advertisement and distribution mechanics. They also showed that extroverts prefer foreign goods more than introverts. This is as a result of their tendency to enjoy human interactions and to be enthusiastic, talkative, assertive, and gregarious than the introverts that take pleasure in solitary activities such as reading, writing, hiking and fishing. An introvert is likely to enjoy time spent with large groups of people, though he or she may enjoy interaction with close friends. The revelation is that consumers' perception and associated behaviour is neither patriotic nor in the best interest of the economy, rather than that of utility seeking behaviour.

The study found that there is significant influence of educational level on Nigerian consumers' preference for foreign goods and the associated behaviour is neither patriotic nor in the best interest of the economy, rather it is on the utility seeking behaviour. This finding is unique as the researcher could not find any study that investigated educational level of consumers on consumer preference of foreign goods over made in Nigeria goods. The study showed that the higher the educational level of consumers the lower their tendency to prefer foreign goods over made in Nigeria goods; in details participant with OND in view had the highest preference rate (mean = 55.89), followed by participants with HND in view (mean = 55.05), while participants with B.Sc in view had the lowest preference (mean = 51.72) for foreign goods over made in Nigeria goods. The need to be patriotic in other to encourage and develop our industry is the factor that contributes to encourage consumers to purchase made in Nigeria good over their foreign counterparts. If a consumer is to be influenced based on packaging price and quality, most consumers will prefer foreign good over made in Nigeria goods. The study concludes that both personality traits and educational level individually, have significant influence on consumer's preference of foreign good.

### Recommendations

1. The government should enforce laws intended to reduce the exploitation of consumers by producers in area of product quality, price and promotions. In this regard, the standard organization of Nigeria should conduct the inspection of local manufacturers more vigorously and extensively. Its accreditation lists should be made available for public consumption and it should not hesitate to delete the name of any firm whose product quality has declined below acceptable standard.

2. Manufacturers should constantly undertake marketing research to identify the most important psychological factors such as personality traits and educational level, which affect consumer's taste and preference of their products so as to evolve a target marketing strategies for effective exploit of the market.

3. Marketing strategies should be employed such as pricing strategy, promotional strategy, and advertising among others for made in Nigeria goods. Finally the government should restrict the importation of goods that can be manufactured locally in sufficient quantities.

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