THE IMPACT OF DEMOGRAPHIC FACTORS ON CONSUMER PURCHASING PREFERENCES IN DEVELOPING COUNTRIES: EMPIRICAL EVIDENCE FROM KOSOVO

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Abstract: *This paper analyses the role and the level of impact that different demographic factors have on buying preferences during the selection process between local and imported goods in developing and emerging economies, with a specific focus on the Kosovo region. A total of 630 questionnaires were distributed, from which 536 valid responses and an empirical study is applied to test the hypothesis. A probability sample (randomly selected), which was stratified by seven regions throughout the country was applied, by covering all levels of the society, cultural background, different locations (urban and rural), different levels of education, and income. Some of the respondents have shown a preference for imported goods and were willing to pay a price premium for it based on the quality offered by top producers (around 41.79%). Whereas, 58.21% of respondents prefer local products. It is proven that there is a correlation between demographic factors and buying preferences process when deciding between local and imported products. Whereas, price is considered as the main factor in the buying process in developing countries, due to the low income, whereas the level of imported products depends on the country's ability to fulfill the local needs with local products.*

Keywords: *Local; Imported; Behavior; Purchasing; Advantages; Covid-19; Pandemic*

INTRODUCTION

Several research studies have treated the consumer buying decision and the values that impact customer behavior (Ayob and Hussain 2016; Potluri and Johnson 2020). Globalization is considered to have influenced the mindset of customers by allowing them to have access to different products that were not available for them in the past; hence, it offers economic prosperity and a possibility of accessing other markets (Ahmeti 2015). However, for many, it has been a devastating struggle for survival as globalization has also enabled other goods to flow within local markets and this is more evident in developing countries where the local producers are not fully prepared to compete with big companies. It is also commented on the promotion of

local goods by policymakers and their efforts to promote the idea of benefits that locally produced goods have for economic development. Additionally, the consumption of local products and services has a direct impact on the country's development and also impacts on the economic growth and decrease of unemployment, and creating a chain impact by increasing demands in different local industries (Monacelli and Perotti 2010).

As highlighted by Ayob and Hussain (2016), at the individual level, it is influenced by both intrinsic and extrinsic cues. Regarding the impact on buying decision, several elements are considered to directly affect the customer's decision are divided into physical and non-physical factors, i.e. durability, quality, performance, value, and a *Made-in* label (Aqueveque 2006; Wang *et al.* 2019).

Based on the conceptualization of main parties, government institutions, and individual requirements and needs, this paper tends to supplementary comprehend ex-ante buying results between low-income customers in developing countries. Above all, these study objectives are to profile buying habits of Kosovo's population; as an illustration for developing countries. The hypothetical arguments are constructed on the comparative benefit of emerging economies that are present in the region, by identifying and elaborating the most important product features that directly impact customer decision and are taken into consideration by the local population when making a buying decision. The incorporation of knowledge seen from different scopes outlines the contribution of this study. Data was gathered from different randomly selected participants, which live in Kosovo and are active in the market as customers. There are different demographic, cultural, educational, working, and behavior backgrounds and as such, they provide an overall picture of the buying habits of goods in developing countries; thus, providing empirical originality to the general literature in different fields and can also represent several countries in the region that have a similar background, economies, and history.

LITERATURE REVIEW

It all started as a simple local infection and it resulted in the biggest and hardest pandemic that the world has faced, for which the world was not prepared. As it was declared a global pandemic in January 2020 by the WHO (Abodunrin *et al.* 2020), no one was prepared to be isolated and what restrictions are needed to fight the Covid-19 in both aspects, health and economically (Sikder *et al.* 2020). No one has ever thought that the entire world could be closed, shut down. The Covid-19 pandemic has shown that it is possible, although no country was ready for that, in this regard it was evident that no economy can last long and stand alone. Even countries that are considered as the most developed economies in the globe hardly managed to keep their economies going and have struggled to adapt to the new situation created by the lockdown and pandemic (Gurtner 2010).

The pandemic has been shown to have an eminent and radical impact in all aspects all over the world, without any exclusion. Health was and it still is something that experts are worried about, as no one is secure from Covid-19; furthermore, the impact on the global economy was instant and unpredictable, and it will need a long time until it recovers. It has been reported that only during the year 2020, the global GDP was decreased by 3.6%; whereas, the volume of global trade decreased by 5.3%, and the Foreign Direct Investments (FDI), which are crucial for developing and emerging economies, were drastically reduced by 42% (Zhang 2021). One of the indicators that affected the economic decline was the challenges that were in the supply chains, which were mostly disrupted (Baldwin and Freeman 2020), worldwide trade, and production disruption (Chen *et al.* 2021).

In this regard, the most affected were the developing countries due to their vulnerable economies and incapability to replace all commodities and products that were imported, which represents the majority of the world. As noted by Barnett-Howell *et al.* (2021), developing countries are facing the pandemic differently from developed countries, and how they are facing and dealing with the Covid-19 pandemic. The entire world economy is struggling for manpower due to the issues with lockdown and infections, as also noted by Laborde *et al.* (2021), the damaged supply chain have additionally damaged the economic development as nothing was moving, which had and still has a direct impact on superseded for production. Facing a new chaotic and unknown situation, governments seek to provide support to local producers to create a more reliable local economy, through which the dependence on imported products will be lower. As noted by Laborde *et al.* (2021), due to missing supplies and broken supply channels, logistics was facing a hard time to manage missing supply surge, it was evident that the panic was felt for supply shortage, especially for food shortage.

Marketing and strategic management literature suggest that in many developing countries imported products are considered as superior compared to the local products, as it is assumed that products coming from countries with advanced economies are considered as products with high values and quality, which also represent the warranty of the country-of-origin (Kaynak *et al.* 2000). Further, whereas producers in developing countries have implied other strategies and see it as an advantage by creating low-cost goods; hence, the perception and buying decision process of customers is based and shaped on those global understandings. Many studies have reported that individual perceptions regarding the product, customers are ready to spend more based on the quality perception that the product from a developed country may and can offer and therefore it is more expensive; whereas, price-focused customers can purchase locally in their local market (in case of developing countries) and that is considered less expensive and as such also with lower quality (Ayob and Hussain 2016; Potluri and Johnson 2020). As further highlighted by Hamzaoui-Essoussi *et al.* (2011), micro and macro factors of the region, where customers are active, directly influence the decision as for which

category of products clients decide. It is evident in the past 2 years that there are no sustainable customer behaviors due to the developments that have occurred regarding the pandemic and the impact from other actors that have changed the roles (Elhoush and Lanzini 2020). As further noted by Elhoush and Lanzini (2020), it is assumed that developing countries and emerging economies are lean towards the imitation of their behaviors to those in developed countries. Yet, it is noted that sustainable consumer behavior includes a complex pattern of social matters and personal norms, which enable a better understanding and explanation by extending the customary philosophy of planned consumer behavior (Hosta and Zabkar 201). Not only the present is impacted by the Covid-19 pandemic, but even new generations are also created and they are developing a new conceptual framework of customer behavior, which is shifting even further the traditional consumer habits by making them even more unpredictable in their requests and needs (Zwanka and Buff 2020).

Country-of-origin has shown to be a very important element in buying decision process at the individual level. As noted by Potluri and Johnson (2020), many countries have attempted to use the situation with the issues in the supply chain and replace the foreign products, which are usually highly demanded, with local products. However, having in mind the possibility to produce, technology, know-how, and responsibility together with strict quality control of the quality of products produces by local companies in developing countries, is seen as a lack of proper institutions that way make proper control and guaranty for consumers. The quality issue was also evident during this research and was considered by respondents as the main element in the buying process. The purpose of the study is an analysis of the customer behavior identifies the preferences of individuals and identifies elements that affect the decision-making process when selecting between locally produced and imported goods. Additionally, the intention is also to see why (if) they believe that goods that they decide to purchase are considered a better solution, is there a price issue, quality, or overall institutional (un)trust of entities that should guarantee the control of products. The main demographic factors are analyzed their correlation is tested and their impact on buying-preferences of Kosovo's population.

Gender - As noted by Vijaya *et al*. (2017), gender is considered an important factor in the buying decision process. In this regard, it is a more evident fact that men and women have a slightly different perception of the local vs. imported goods and how they see the country of origin or who stands behind the quality assurance of those goods. As the majority of respondents were male, it is not possible to create any sustainable elaboration compared with females. In this regard, a new study is required to measure the buying habits based on gender, as the sample should be better divided to heave a more significant outcome.

Age - Slabá (2020) noted that there is a clear division between the generations and how they see local and imported goods. Many authors have highlighted there is a

clear difference among generations and how they make de buying decisions, such as memories for specific products, cultural impact as there is a difference in cultural behavior among generations, patriotic background, etc.

Education Level - According to Sorana and Mityko (2012), education level plays a crucial role in the buying decision process. As further stressed by the author, the higher the education levels the more information regarding different products customers have and on the available products; hence, they make a more informed buying decision. Within this, education may be seen as an important element on how the different levels of education may have affected individuals in the buying decision process.

Earnings - Due to the price difference and the level of income in developing and developed countries, the customer income level is considered as an important factor, as it has a direct impact on the buying-decision process (Mehra and Singh 2016).

Influences on Buying Decisions - Several factors may have a direct or indirect impact on buying decisions. As emphasized by Ayob and Hussain (2016), the most important factors are price, brand, or country-of-origin, and another important element that is specific for emerging economies is also family, as they are more closed and more traditional on any decision (Ayob and Hussain 2017).

Another important element is also the brand or the country-of-origin (COO) of products (Godey *et al.* 2016). However, the information about the product must be available for potential buyers regarding the products in the market. It is highlighted by Kaynak *et al.* (2000) that family plays an important role in buying decisions especially in developing countries, where families have a more traditional and conservative culture. In this regard, 3 sub hypotheses are developed and proposed to test as complementary for the fourth hypothesis.

Following the elaboration of each demographic factor and their importance on the buying preference of local customers, the following hypotheses are developed and tested:

H1: There is an association between customer age and the choice between local and imported goods.

H2: There is a connotation among the education level and the choice between local and imported goods.

H3: There is a correlation between income level the choice between local and imported goods.

H4: Customer's decisions on buying decision process are impacted by outside factors.

H4a: Price cognizant consumers are more likely to buy local products.

H4b: Quality and the COO cognizant consumers are more likely to buy imported products.

H4c: Family influences the decisions-buying process when selecting local or imported products.

METHODOLOGY

As this research intends to analyze and measure the impact of demographic factors that have a significant impact on the buying preferences of individual clients when it comes to deciding between the locally produced and imported products, the targeted population involves residents living in Kosovo. Hence, the presented result of this study can be considered as more accurate and the generalization of the same is possible for the targeted residents.

For this research, a questionnaire is developed containing all the questions that will enable the researcher to develop a sustainable and significant output, where along with usual questions regarding their demographic characteristics, questionnaire offer to respondents the possibility to give answers for specific questions were also included, which will provide information to test the hypotheses. There were several sources based on the contemporary literature used to develop questions, which asked respondents about their buying-decision process and their opinions regarding the choice between Local products and imported products. Further, the questionnaire regarding the buying habits of individuals in Kosovo and characteristics were included to determine what influences their attitudes towards purchasing local or imported products. Respondents were asked also about their readiness to pay more for quality, or are price-centric, and also what is their main reason for purchasing local or imported goods. Additional information that was not part of the questionnaire but was mentioned often is the quality assurance of local goods by the respective governmental institutions. This should be another issue that should be treated in the future.

A total of 630 questionnaires were distributed. Having in mind that Kosovo is a small country, and the issue with the Covid-19 pandemic that is imposing radical restrictions on movement and social contact, it was impossible to make a wider inclusion of respondents. For the present study, there was a rigorous evaluation of returned questionnaires, and were evaluated if they have all needed (mandatory) information and were accepted for developing the results. In total, 536 valid responses were used for this study. The area of this research is Kosovo. All seven regions are included, where both, urban and rural, areas were included. As emphasized by Saunders *et al.* (2009), there are 2 major types of sampling methods, probability, and non-probability samples.

As further noted by Gravetter and Forzano (2015), the sample is considered accurate and reliable if it offers the same opportunity to each member (individuals) in the region that is intended to be studied. Furthermore, according to Gravetter and Forzano (2015), a good sample should offer all individuals equal opportunity to participate and the research sample method should be neutral and adequate in size so that the results are reliable (Gravetter and Forzano 2015).

In this regard, for this study, it was applied the probability samples (randomly selected), were stratified by seven regions throughout Kosovo. Stratification has taken into the consideration the population size from each of the seven regions, which would be accepted to develop appropriate and reliable representative data (Verma and Verma 2020). To have more reliable data, a population of more than 18 years is selected and considered to be part of the research, as they can provide their own opinion regarding the buying decisions and are potentially either working or studying and this gives them a free choice on that process.

RESULTS

Aiming to encounter the objectives and hypothesis testing, respondents were asked if they are ready to give information regarding their habits on buying preferences between Local and Imported products within the local market where they are active.

Firstly, demographic data was asked from respondents and then the opportunity to express their preferences regarding the decision that they make and what and how that decision is or may be affected and their impact on their decision. Also, the questionnaire was developed to provide other factors that stimulate respondents to decide between local and/or imported products. Furthermore, the study tends to understand the current trends correlated regarding the buying habits and preferences for local and imported goods in developing countries. The demographic information of the sample is shown in Table 1, where N is the number of respondents to each question.

Table 1: Demographic Information of Participants (Source: Author's depiction)

Category	N	Percent
Gender		
Female	190	35%
Male	346	65%
Age		
18-30	180	34%
31-40	178	33%
41-50	72	13%
51-65	44	8%
65+	62	12%
Education		
Primary	98	18%
Secondary	172	32%
University	266	50%
Income		
<200 €	160	30%

200-500 €	176	33%
500-1000 €	110	21%
>1000 €	90	17%

As there was explained above in the sample part, respondents were selected randomly as they all are in one or another way are buyers and make (directly or indirectly) decisions regarding buying preferences. Also, they are participating and influencing the buying decision within their living environment, regardless if they make them as a family, individually, or as a community (Flavián *et al.* 2006).

As shown in Table 2, the majority of respondents (58.21%) have reported that they buy local products compared to 41.79% of residents that have reported that they prefer imported goods. It is also interesting to mention that the preference is not based only on price, which is seen in many studies as the main factor in buying-decision between local and imported products, but this study has revealed that several other indicators influence the preference of the buyer.

Table 2: Respondents Participating in Kosovo's Market (Source: Author's depiction)

Variable	Description	All Respondents	
		Frequency	*Percent*
Consumer Preference	Local Products	312	58.21%
	Imported Products	224	41.79%

As revealed by respondents 'imported' does not necessarily mean from other developed countries or only a quality product. There are countries, such as Albania, North Macedonia, and Serbia that by many aren't considered as foreign countries, as they consume the same products for many decades before Yugoslavia has split into 7 new countries. In this regard, on several occasions, respondents have reported that they prefer imported goods, but they have also mentioned that they don't consider it as a foreign product. Another important element that was evident regarding the imported products and the quality that they represent, is that many products from China and other Asian regions are cheaper but don't represent the quality. Regardless, the study treats all products that are not produced within Kosovo, as foreign products.

Table 3 shows the age of respondents is divided into 5 major groups to cover all preferences within different generations and probably, within different personal stubs that they have within their living environment. The 18-30 years of age group is represented by 34% of total respondents, and 31-40 years of age group which make up 33%, followed by 41-50 years of age group with 13%, 51-60 years of age group with 8%, and 60+ years of age group with 12% of the total respondents.

Table 3: Age and Buying Preferences (Source: Author's depiction)

Variable	Description	All Respondents		Imported Products		Local Products	
		Frequency	*Percent*	*Frequency*	*Percent*	*Frequency*	*Percent*
Age	18-30	180	34%	64	29%	116	37%
	31-40	178	33%	100	45%	78	25%
	41-50	72	13%	24	11%	48	15%
	51-60	44	8%	12	5%	32	10%
	60+	62	12%	24	11%	38	12%

As shown in the groups that are in favor of buying local products are 18-30 years of age group, whereas the 31-40 years of age group prefers the imported goods. The explanation is given comparing different age groups from the total number of respondents. However, to present performance that is within each group, it is imperative to elaborate buying habits of each of them. Table 3 highlights the preference within each group. As shown in Table 3, the group between 18-30 years of age prefers 64% of local goods compared to 36% of imported goods. The group between 31-40 years of age is the only group that has higher preferences for imported (56%) compared to the local products (44%), which is based on their buying power and the level of income. 41-50 years of age group is the second-highest group preferring local (67%) compared to imported (33%) goods. The group that is still highly connected (mainly emotionally) with many products from the past, which are produced locally, is the 51-60 years of age group. And followed by the 60+ years of age group that is also linked to local goods (61%) compared to those imported goods (39%).

Table 4: Education and Buying Preferences (Source: Author's depiction)

Variable	Description	All Respondents		Imported Products		Local Products	
		Frequency	*%*	*Frequency*	*%*	*Frequency*	*%*
Education	Primary	98	18%	30	13%	68	22%
	Secondary	172	32%	58	26%	114	37%
	University	266	50%	136	61%	130	42%

The level of education for all respondents is presented in Table 4. The highest number of participants is with higher education, mainly university students and also employees that were ready to respond to our questions. The group with the highest level of education prefers more imported products (61%) compared to other groups that prepare mainly local products, secondary education, and primary education.

When elaborating individuals within each group, it is evident that the respondents within the groups that have primary education and secondary education

level, tend more on buying local products with 69% and 66%. Whereas, individuals within the group with higher education are in favor of buying the imported products with 51% compared to 49% for local products.

Table 5: Monthly Income and Buying Preferences (Source: Author's depiction)

Variable	Description	All Respondents		Imported Products		Local Products	
		Frequency	*%*	*Frequency*	*%*	*Frequency*	*%*
Monthly Income	<200 €	160	30%	44	20%	116	37%
	200-500 €	176	33%	70	31%	106	34%
	500-1000 €	110	21%	54	24%	56	18%
	>1000 €	90	17%	56	25%	34	11%

In Table 6, we can see that the majority of respondents fall in the group with income between 200-500 Euros with 33% and within the group that earns less than 200 Euros with 30% of total respondents' part of this study are the main group of respondents with 29.2%.

Table 6: Influences on Buying-Decision (Source: Author's depiction)

Variable	Description	All Respondents		Imported Products		Local Products	
		Frequency	*Percent*	*Frequency*	*Percent*	*Frequency*	*Percent*
Influences	COO	74	14%	50	22%	24	8%
	Family	154	29%	62	28%	92	29%
	Price	308	57%	112	50%	196	63%

Another element that is seen as important and has an enormous influence on the buying decision process is the influence factor. In pre-testing of the questionnaire, many have claimed that their buying decision is influenced by several factors that are not in their power to change, and from those, 3 were selected and included in the final questionnaire. As shown in Table 6, price is considered the main factor that influences buying decisions when it comes to local or imported products with 57%, followed by the family with 29%, and finally, the COO with 14%. It is evident that in developing countries the price is the main factor as the income level is much lower than in developing countries, where the imported prices are sane.

To test the correlation between different factors and the buying preferences between local and imported products the Chi-Square Test was applied, which details are presented in Table 7.

Table 7: Chi-Square Tests (Source: Author's depiction)

Variable	Pearson Chi-Square Value	Df	Asymp. Sig. (2-Sided)
Age	24.198	4	0.0000729
Education	19.172	2	0.0000687
Monthly Income	31.581	3	0.0000006
Influences on Buying Decisions	24.090	2	0.0000059

DISCUSSION

To test if the data presented in the tables above confirm the presented hypothesis, three statistical tests. The results of the test applied to test each hypothesis are presented in Table 8 and the status for each hypothesis is scattered throughout three statistical tests used for testing hypotheses. Although, the gender variable was part of the questionnaire and respondents have given responses to all questions related to buying habits, as the majority of respondents were male, it is not possible to create any sustainable elaboration compared with females. In this regard, a new study is required to measure the buying habits based on gender, as the sample should represent equally both genders to heave a more significant outcome. Therefore, it was not proven that the hypothesis was related to gender and as such couldn't be tested.

Table 8: Hypotheses Table (Source: Author's depiction)

	Hypotheses	Chi-Square Tests
H1:	There is an association between customer age and the choice between local and imported goods	Supported
H2:	There is a connotation among the education level and the choice between local and imported goods	Supported
H3:	There is a correlation between income level the choice between local and imported goods	Supported
H4a	Price cognizant consumers are more likely to buy local products	Supported
H4b	Quality and the COO cognizant consumers are more likely to buy imported products.	Supported
H4c	Family influences the decisions-buying process when selecting local or imported products.	Supported

H1 states that: there is a correlation between customer age and the choice between local and imported goods. Based on the Chi-Square test (Value=24.198, Df=4, and Sig.<0.05) from Table 7 for H1, it is supported that there is a correlation between customer age and their preference for local and/or imported goods. Hence, hypothesis H1 is supported (see Table 8). Although the hypothesis confirms that buying preference is affected and influenced based on the customer age, the study provides evidence from

Kosovo, and as such it may be applicable in the neighboring countries with similar backgrounds and history and also in developing and emerging countries. However, it couldn't be confirmed for developed countries as they have different markets and standards. Findings from this study are similar to findings of other authors (Slabá 2020) that have provided research evidence from emerging countries.

H2 states that: there is a link between the education level and the choice between local and imported goods. According to the data for H2 in Table 7, the Chi-Square test (Value=19.172, Df=2 and Sig.<0.05), the hypothesis H2 is supported and the relation between education level and buying preferences is confirmed. Based on the data presented in Table 7, there is a trend that proves that as the education level decreases to a certain level, there are other issues that may influence their preference during the buying-decision process. It has been proven that other factors (i.e. family, culture, politics, etc.) are present in developing countries, and as such, it is also in the Kosovo region. The same was also reported by Sorana and Mityko (2012), who claimed that the education level and the individual buying preferences of customers are correlated.

H3 states that: there is a correlation between income level the choice between local and imported goods. As shown in the Chi-Square test Table 7 (Value=31.581, Df=3, and Sig.<0.05), hypothesis H3 is also confirmed and supported. It is imperative to mention that the income allows customers a wider selection option and that is evident in many developing countries, as quality is usually presented with a higher price (usual products from developed countries), whereas the cheap products are considered to have lower quality and are usually local products (Ayob and Hussain 2016).

For hypothesis **H4**, 3 different elements are set to be measured to have a more reliable result. In the pre-test, it was clear that it isn't sufficient to measure only influence (from outside) in the buying process. It has been reviled that 3 major factors have the most impact when t comes to influence that is behind the customer's possibilities to impact. Hence, the following sub-hypothesis were developed: H4a - price cognizant consumers are more likely to buy local products, H4b - quality and the COO cognizant consumers are more likely to buy imported products, H4c - family influences the decisions-buying process when selecting local or imported products.

As shown in Table 7, the Influence is seen as important especially in more traditional (conservative) families, where the decision on what is bought is more conservative and is mainly made by the elderly family members. The correlation between the Influence of the 3 identified factors and buying preference of individuals in Kosovo, is confirmed by the Chi-Square test (Value=24.090, Df=2, and Sig.<0.05). This was also noted by Kaynak *et al.* (2000) and Godey *et al.* (2012), that there is a correlation between education level and the individual buying preferences of customers, especially in developing countries.

CONCLUSION

The choice between local and imported goods is a challenge in developing countries due to many factors that may impose the choice for many individuals. Many factors determine the buying-process flow and even some factors are so impactful that may dominate the result of the buying process. As many developing countries and emerging economies are not able to fulfill the needs of their local population with goods and services, imported goods are becoming a standard in both versions, as a cheap solution and also in the case of the COO with higher values and quality. Kosovo is no exception and is part of those emerging economies that is not so well at producing their goods, rather the majority is covered through imports from neighboring countries. As a result, understanding customer purchasing habits and identifying elements that may influence that process is essential.

The results have shown that many companies from developing countries and neighboring countries are seeking to market their products in Kosovo's market, although they may have similar socio-economic, technological, and overall economic development compared to Kosovo. The study has shown that the COO is one of the most important factors influencing the local population's preferences. The study has discovered that were available in the market originating from developed countries are perceived to be associated with higher quality and the customers that have higher income are willing to pay the quality price. Whereas, on the contrary, locally produced and offered products are perceived to be less qualitative and it is expected that the price should be a direct indicator. As confirmed by the study, the quality perception for local products is related to cheap and low-quality. There are certain managerial implications of these findings. To be more competitive, local producers should focus to develop more qualitative products and increase customer awareness on the quality, rather than seeking low-income customers, as shown in the study.

The research has proven that the Covid-19 pandemic changed the ability to distribute goods and changed the overall manner of customers buying patterns, where some have been forced to shift from imported to local goods. Moreover, referring to marketing strategies, this situation should be used by local companies to develop a more comprehensive promotional strategy to inform local (potential) buyers of the benefits of locally produced goods. This would enable customers to gain more information and be convinced of the quality and benefits of local goods; hence, companies should strive to gain new market shares. Nevertheless, some of the research faces some limitations.

First, the sample size is rather limited due to the Covid-19 pandemic and the testing does not include the differences based on ethnicity or religion, and the non-income consumer groups are rather individuals that have indirect income through their family members.

Another issue was the gender variable; although it was part of the questionnaire and respondents have given responses to all questions related to buying habits, as the majority of respondents were male, it is not possible to create any sustainable elaboration compared with females. In this regard, a new study is required to measure the buying habits based on gender, as the sample should represent equally both genders to heave a more significant outcome.

COMPLIANCE WITH ETHICAL STANDARDS

Statement of human rights:
All procedures performed in studies involving human participants were following the ethical standards of the institutional and/or national research committee and with the Declaration of Helsinki and its later amendments or comparable ethical standards.

Statement on the welfare of animals:
This article does not contain any studies with animals performed by any of the authors.

Informed consent:
Not applicable.

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