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Diversification of student consumption during the pandemic - Albania, Poland and Portugal

Abstract

This paper aims to identify changes in consumption by students from Albania, Poland and Portugal in the era of the SARS-CoV-2 coronavirus. The study was conducted on a sample of 668 students of the Qiriazi University College and Aldent University in Albania, the University of Warmia and Mazury in Olsztyn, Poland and the School of Technology and Management of Porto Polytechnic in Portugal. The estimated volumes of basic macroeconomic indicators for this period prove that the crisis caused by the COVID-19 epidemic may be the cause of many adverse changes in various areas of life. The empirical study aimed to determine the impact of the epidemiological situation on changes in the shopping habits of students – designated as young consumers. The main goal was to identify differences in the purchasing decisions of young consumers depending on gender and nationality. The research instrument was a standardized survey questionnaire, which was divided into three thematic blocks. The first part of the questionnaire contains questions on the housing conditions of students, in the second part – activity on the labor market, and in the third part – issues related to shopping and the use of cultural services and the way of spending free time. Some conclusions were drawn from the research: (1) pandemic did not change the periodicity of purchases, (2) from online buying did not show a boom in the samples analyzed in this study, (3) students from these countries changed their shopping behavior in terms of shopping places. The conclusions formulated in the study, as well as the topicality of the issues, allow them to be considered useful for institutional entities interested in observing changes in consumption during the pandemic. The scientific contribution of theoretical and empirical considerations is primarily the systematization of theoretical foundations and the conceptualization of the category of factors determining the diversity of purchasing behavior of young people (students).

Keywords

shopping behaviour | pandemic | COVID-19

JEL Codes

JEL: D14, E21, G51

1. Introduction

Consumption occupies a special place in the economic sciences. Reflections on consumption are conducted by representatives of many fields of science, including economists, psychologists and sociologists (Czapiński & Panek, 2015; Di Crosta et al., 2021; Grzywińska-Rapca, 2021). Consumption is important, as from the individual point of view it determines the development of the individual, while from the social point of view it determines social status and lifestyle. Through the literature on the subject, we most often encounter an approach to consumption as a process of using or consuming goods and services in order to satisfy human needs. Market participants, depending on macro- and microeconomic conditions, satisfy their needs and simultaneously change the level of consumption. A change in their behaviour also occurs in the event of crises, which undoubtedly include the COVID19 pandemic. The coronavirus pandemic presented a wide range of phenomena interfering in the spheres of household life and the economy. Unusual shopping behaviour, different than before the pandemic, could be expected. Restrictions on movement introduced by the authorities of many European countries meant that a person was introduced overnight into a dimension of unknown living conditions. The spread of the coronavirus around the world has resulted in a change in household lifestyles and businesses (Gardocka-Jałowiec et al., 2020).

Bearing this in mind, a survey was conducted to determine the impact of the epidemiological situation on changes in the shopping habits of students – young consumers in Albania, Poland, and Portugal. The main objective was to verify whether there are differences in the purchasing decisions of young consumers depending on gender and nationality. The topic was known to be important in the face of observed market trends. Increased demand is caused by panic, manifested by the accumulation of food and/or another kind of goods.

The present paper is organised as follows. After the introduction, a brief theoretical overview will follow on the topic of the shopping behaviour of consumers in general and young consumers specifically. This is followed by a special section related to behaviours during the pandemic situation. Then the data and the methodological approach, based on analysing the online questionnaires, are explained, with the responses reflecting on results, conclusions, and discussions presented at the end.

2. Factors determining the shopping behaviour of consumers

The purchasing behaviour of consumers and households is conditioned by numerous economic, social, and cultural factors (Yin et al., 2022). Some other authors studied dogmatism (a personality trait of individuals who believe that the knowledge and information they have is the correct one) as a shopping behaviour (Laghari et al., 2016; Paul et al., 2021). From one or another perspective, the diversity of behaviours turns difficult to predict; the reactions of human individuals or the households they create differ. However, guided by the principles of rationality, it is possible to determine some dependencies. At least marketers are hoping this to happen – since they “need to understand trends and psychological thinking in consumer behaviour and specifically for young consumers” (Paul et al., 2021).

The well-known determinants of consumer economic behaviour can be classified into several groups. Even presented in many different ways (Ahn & Park, 2022; Cui et al., 2021; Le et al., 2020; Yang, 2021), they can be organised into five common areas: biological, social, cultural, economic, and emotional/psychological. During and after the COVID-19 pandemic, factors related to health security also played a very important role in the purchasing process of each consumer (Eriksson & Stenius, 2022). According to Truong and Truong (2022), fears for health and fears for financial conditions have effects on customers’ behavioural changes in terms of shopping decisions. On the other hand, Vázquez-Martínez et al. (2021) found that customers’ behavioural changes proved to be more related to consumers’ perceptions of the crisis than to its practical effects. ‘Theory suggests that shoppers have both positive and negative shopping (consumption) orientations (Darden & Reynolds, 1971; Westbrook & Black, 1985) and some conceptual studies (Sheth, 2020) have proposed the coexistence of positive and negative shopper behaviours linked to COVID19’ (Sit et al., 2022).

One way or another, there is no doubt that the pandemic was a boost in the digital transformation process, namely in terms of online shopping (Eriksson & Stenius, 2022), but other concerns such as trust are also important for this buying process (Faqih, 2022). Research conducted by many authors indicates that there are different approaches to identify factors

determining consumer behaviour in the purchasing process (Ahn & Park, 2022; Cui et al., 2021; Le et al., 2020; Yang, 2021). In the Polish literature, in the most commonly used classification of factors determining consumer purchasing behaviour, three sub-basic groups of factors are distinguished: economic, social and psychological (Kieźel 2000). In the Anglo-American and German literature, the key group of factors emphasised by the authors are psychological factors, also referred to as internal or individual (Di Crosta et al., 2021; Gu et al., 2021; Hesham, Riadh & Sihem, 2021; Trommsdorff 2004; Balderjahn & Scholderer 2007; Evans et al., 2006; Solomon et al. 2006; Wright 2006; Kotler & Keller, 2007; Lins & Aquino, 2020). In addition to the listed classifications, many authors point to demographic factors as determinant of purchasing decisions (in several different areas) (Si et al., 2022; Xu et al., 2020), while others did not find a relation between the demographic factor and the purchasing decision (Ahn & Park, 2022; Nimri et al., 2020). The latter found that only gender influenced the decision purchases, in this case, related to green hotels. For the sake of this research, among a large group of factors shaping consumer behaviour, sociodemographic factors (gender, nationality) were considered important. Both gender and nationality are features of the host individual, which are to a large extent associated with the group of socioeconomic determinants. The combination of these features influences individual behaviour in the purchasing process. Purchasing decisions for women are different from men's (Nimri et al., 2020; Kovacheva et al., 2022; Basak et al., 2020; Karpinska-Krakowiak, 2021). Women are more sensitive to information and are more quickly influenced by marketing tools. Women, unlike men, focus more on such product features such as packaging or graphic design.

The education and place of residence of young buyers are factors that affect the type and scope of needs, and consequently affect their specific conduct on the market.

An important role in the purchasing process of a young consumer is played by mass media culture, family, peers, tradition, or consumption patterns. However, it should be noted that the above elements are less important for young consumers as they get older (Bartosik-Purgat 2019).

3. Purchase conditions and restrictions during a pandemic period

Consumers' shopping behaviour is also conditioned by external factors, which include unusual crises or extreme situations. A pandemic is undoubtedly such a situation, during which decisions are made based on the available information (Truong & Truong, 2022; Vázquez-Martínez et al., 2021; Larios-Gómez et al., 2021). The government and population of a given country, at the time of the outbreak of the pandemic, tried to introduce measures to minimise its impact on people's life and the functioning of the economy by imposing new rules for the individuals' behaviour in public areas. The tools and methods differed depending on the level of organisation of the state as well as the effectiveness of the health system. The outbreak of the COVID19 pandemic in the spring of 2020 led to similar health safety measures in the three countries under analysis in this paper (Table 1).

The COVID19 pandemic was declared a pandemic by WHO on March 11, 2020, and since then various types of measures have been introduced in many countries to limit the spread of the SARS-COV2 virus. The first key action in Poland, Portugal, and Albania was *the introduction of lockdown*. This was connected with the transition to online work in schools and universities and in some enterprises, and restrictions imposing sanitary rigor (masks, distance and limits of people in service and commercial institutions) were introduced.

4. Methodology

The research was conducted in 2021 on a sample of 668 people studying in Albania, Poland, and Portugal. Therefore, it can be assumed that the date of the study is an appropriate date for analyses allowing for the diagnosis of students' behaviour regarding changes in the housing market, the labour market, and changes in shopping behaviour. The empirical study aimed to determine the impact of the epidemiological situation on changes in the shopping habits of students – young consumers. The essence of defining the term 'young consumer' is to define the age bracket of the consumer who can be classified into this market segment. Analysing the scientific achievements in the field of

Table 1. Summary of developments in education, trade and transport after the pandemic (April 2020) (timeframe)

Specification	Albania	Poland	Portugal
Form of learning – exercises	Face to face only	On-line	on-line
Form of learning – lectures	Face to face only	On-line	on-line
Library accessibility	Face to face with mask restrictions	On-line	Face to face with restrictions. Mandatory booking to collect the books, contactless procedure to return the books.
Trade	In sanitary rigor (masks, distance)	In sanitary rigor (masks, distance). Some establishments were closed, like pubs, or gyms, and some others like restaurants were only allowed to sell in take-away service.	Mask, Distance, and a limited number of people according to the establishment dimension. Some establishments were closed, like pubs, or gyms, and some others like restaurants were only allowed to sell in take-away service.
Health	COVID19 vaccination. The need for quarantine (14 days) after contact with an infected person; Mandatory tests for sars-cov 2 virus, to travel and to accede some places	COVID19 vaccination; the need for quarantine (14 days) after contact with an infected person; the need to test for sars-cov 2 virus.	COVID19 vaccination that started only in December 2020; The need for quarantine (14 days) after contact with an infected person; Mandatory tests for sars-cov 2 virus, to travel and to accede some places
Transport/Communication	Mask, Distance, and limited number of people according to the transport capacity	Mask, Distance, and limited number of people according to the transport capacity	Mask, Distance, and limited number of people according to the transport capacity
Cultural institutions (Cinema, theatre)	Closed	In sanitary rigor (masks, distance)	Closed

Source: own study

consumer behaviour, it can be concluded that among the authors there is a wide variety of proposals for determining the age range describing the category of young consumers. Speaking about the category of young consumers in the context of this study, they are people born after 2000 (Beyhan, 2014; Tarka & Kukar-Kinney, 2022; Shahina & Sachitra, 2021; Guan et al., 2021; Sashikala & Vijayudu, 2021).

The study was conducted using the survey method, and the use of this form of measurement was determined by the possibility of its implementation during lectures and exercises while ensuring the anonymity of students completing the questionnaire. The research instrument was a standardised survey questionnaire, which was divided into three thematic blocks. The first part of the questionnaire contains questions on the housing conditions of students. The second part concerned activity on the labour market, and the third part covered issues related to shopping.

For the purposes of the analyses presented in this paper, out of a dozen or so survey questions, responses to questions concerning the frequency of shopping before the pandemic, the frequency of shopping during the pandemic, and the place of shopping for selected consumer goods, were used.

A division by gender and nationality was done, in order to conduct some comparative analyses.

5. Results –shopping behaviours by gender and nationality

The sociodemographic characteristics of the respondents differentiate the preferences of students in terms of the frequency of shopping to a relatively small extent. The obtained results indicate that

Table 2. Change in the frequency of purchases after the pandemic

Has „one-time” quantity of products purchased during the pandemic changed?	Nationality (Country)						
	Albania		Poland		Portugal		
	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	
[%]							
Food and non-alcoholic drinks	Decreased	8.9	12.5	5.7	4.6	4.2	4.4
	Increased	20.0	25.0	27.3	27.5	12.5	14.0
	Kept the same	71.1	62.5	67.0	67.9	81.9	80.1
Alcoholic drinks and tobacco	Decreased	48.9	37.5	27.7	30.3	18.1	16.2
	Increased	8.9	16.7	13.5	23.9	6.9	8.8
	Kept the same	42.2	45.8	58.9	45.9	69.4	68.4
Clothes and footwear	Decreased	24.4	37.5	58.9	43.1	37.5	29.4
	Increased	20.0	8.3	14.2	10.1	9.7	10.3
	Kept the same	55.6	54.2	27.0	46.8	51.4	58.8
Cosmetics	Decreased	37.8	37.5	37.2	20.2	37.5	19.1
	Increased	13.3	4.2	12.1	22.0	5.6	2.2
	Kept the same	48.9	58.3	50.7	57.8	55.6	73.5
Personal hygiene items	Decreased	4.4	8.3	5.0	10.1	1.4	4.4
	Increased	51.1	41.7	26.2	27.5	15.3	25.0
	Kept the same	44.4	50.0	68.8	62.4	81.9	69.1
Household Chemicals	Decreased	6.7	8.3	6.0	8.3	2.8	6.6
	Increased	53.3	58.3	21.6	17.4	22.2	14.0
	Kept the same	40.0	33.3	72.3	74.3	73.6	75.7

Source: own study

more than half of Albanian and Polish students made purchases upon the occurrence of the need before the pandemic. The responses obtained by Portuguese students indicate that both before and during the pandemic they made purchases once a week (Figure 1 and 2).

As a consequence of the lockdown and sanitary restrictions introduced by the government of the countries during the pandemic, changes in single-dose purchase quantities of selected consumer goods were recorded. The one-time amount of purchases of food and soft drinks and cosmetics has not changed (Table 2).

Based on the presented list of respondents' answers (Table 2), it can be concluded that after the pandemic, female students from Albania increased

the one-off amount of purchases related to personal hygiene (indications of 51.1%). Both males and females also increased the consumption of products defined as household chemicals (indications of 53.3% of women and 58.3% of men), which were the only registered increases.

Regarding the behavioural changes in terms of a shopping decrease, we see a change among Albanian male students regarding alcohol and tobacco consumption. In Poland, female students decreased their shopping for clothes and footwear. All the remaining items stayed the same.

Another issue analyzed in the context of changes in students' shopping habits during the pandemic was the indication of the place where shopping was done (Table 3). Analyses concerning the research on

Table 3. Variation place to shop before and during the pandemic

type of products	location of purchase (variation= during minus before)	Nationality (Country)					
		Albania		Poland		Portugal	
		Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male
[%]							
Food and non-alcoholic drinks	Hypermarket	-2.20	16.70	-4.20	-3.70	-6.90	-1.40
	On-line	0.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	2.80	1.50
	Small Shop (close to home)	-2.20	0.00	1.80	3.70	-1.30	0.80
	Supermarket	6.70	-12.50	1.40	0.00	5.60	-2.20
Alcoholic drinks and tobacco	Hypermarket	-2.20	0.00	-7.00	-4.60	-4.20	-2.90
	On-line	0.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.75
	Small Shop (close to home)	-2.20	4.20	-3.20	-2.80	1.40	1.50
	Supermarket	8.90	0.00	9.30	7.40	2.80	-1.50
Clothes and footwear	Hypermarket	-2.30	8.30	-0.70	-1.80	-13.90	-5.10
	On-line	0.00	8.30	2.80	-1.00	33.30	15.50
	Small Shop (close to home)	4.50	0.00	0.70	0.00	-15.30	-7.30
	Supermarket	0.00	-12.50	-2.80	1.80	-4.20	-4.40
Cosmetics	Hypermarket	-2.20	8.30	-0.70	-7.40	-11.10	-3.70
	On-line	2.20	0.00	2.50	-3.60	22.20	4.50
	Small Shop (close to home)	-4.40	0.00	1.00	1.00	-7.00	0.00
	Supermarket	4.40	-4.20	-2.90	10.10	-4.20	-2.90
Personal hygiene items	Hypermarket	-6.60	4.20	-7.50	-6.40	-7.00	-2.90
	On-line	-4.40	4.20	2.10	1.80	8.30	1.50
	Small Shop (close to home)	6.70	0.00	2.10	1.80	-2.80	-0.70
	Supermarket	11.20	0.00	3.20	2.70	0.00	0.80
Household Chemicals	Hypermarket	8.90	8.30	13.10	14.70	44.40	36.00
	On-line	-2.20	0.00	5.60	1.90	1.40	1.50
	Small Shop (close to home)	6.70	0.00	1.70	1.80	0.00	0.00
	Supermarket	4.40	4.20	-0.70	6.40	1.40	-0.80

Source: own study

preferred shopping places were conducted by m.in. Urban and Michałowska (2013), and Angowski and Domańska (2015). The authors emphasise that the choice of the place of purchase of goods and services is one of the stages of the purchasing process. At this stage, the information at the disposal of the shopper and the provided opportunities allow the consumer to choose the place of purchase, which is a crucial issue, especially during the pandemic, due to maintaining health security. With the pandemic's arrival, people changed their behaviour. *According to Forbes (2020), in*

2019, 81% of US consumers had never purchased groceries online. However, with the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, the situation has turned the other way around. In 2020, 79% of US consumers ordered their groceries online' (Tyrväinen & Karjaluoto, 2022). According to the same authors, online shopping was inevitable during the pandemic, and the challenge was how to keep it going.

The indications of the place of shopping by respondents shown before and during the pandemic pointed out that the most popular place to buy products

such as food and non-alcoholic beverages, alcoholic beverages and tobacco products, personal hygiene products and household chemicals, is the supermarket. In the case of purchasing clothing and footwear as well as cosmetics, the most popular place to shop, according to the indications of students participating in the study, are online stores. Thus, it might be said that there is a variability in the shopping behaviour in terms of purchasing place (Table 3). In the table, the positive variations above 5% are assigned in bold, while the negative ones, below 5%, are gray shaded.

From Table 3 the first conclusion to be drawn is that the impact on online shopping was not the expected one (an increase). In fact, in some categories there was a decrease in online shopping: clothes and footwear and cosmetics among Polish males, and personal hygiene items and household chemicals among Albanian females. However, in these four identified situations the decrease was below 5%. The Portuguese students shifted their clothing and footwear shopping from hypermarkets and small shops to the online option. Still, in Portugal, females also increased their online shopping for cosmetics items. The most relevant increases were noticed in household chemicals. This result is aligned with the tendency observed from the literature review on health concerns (Jacobs et al. 2010; Gaşior 2012; Eriksson & Stenius, 2022; Truong & Truong, 2022).

The remaining items presented some changes but the figures or the changes don't appear to be relevant for the purposes of this research.

From Table 4 it is possible to conclude that Polish students drastically decreased their consumption of books, newspapers and magazines (95.7% in males and 89% in females). Besides these drastic decreases, some other not so relevant decreases can be pointed out:

- Cinema, theater, and museums – male and female from the 3 analysed countries
- Relaxation treatment and spas – all the participants except for the Portuguese males
- In Poland, a significant decrease was registered in the purchases of books, newspapers and magazines (male 95.7% and female 89%). Music, hairdressing services, gyms and fitness services and different types of studies were also reduced.
- In Portugal and Albania, the most relevant decreases occurred at gyms and fitness services and restaurants. In Portugal, this might be justified because those establishments were either closed or working under several restrictions. On the other

hand, the Polish males increased their shopping in pubs and restaurants.

- It is interesting to notice that Albanian students present the opposite behaviour in terms of studies when compared with Poles. Albanians increased the acquisition of different studies.

To estimate the relationship between the place of shopping before and during the pandemic, a chi-squared independence test was performed (refer to Table 5). The analysis was carried out taking into account the gender and nationality of the students. Regarding the shopping place change only in the case of male students from Albania, it can be concluded that there is no dependence. The significance for this group of respondents was at the level of 0.81 for food and non-alcoholic beverages and personal hygiene products and household chemicals. The chi-squared test performed for the remaining dependencies was at the level of < 0.001 (for $= 0.05$). The determined v-Cramer coefficient for the relationship between the place of shopping for food and non-alcoholic beverages before and during the pandemic reached the highest value in the group of males from Albania (v-Cramer coefficient = 0.871), and the lowest for females from Albania (v-Cramer coefficient = 0.625). In the case of the place where alcoholic beverages and tobacco are purchased, the strongest relationship between the place of shopping before and during the pandemic can be determined based on statistical analysis in the group of females from Portugal (v-Cramer coefficient = 0.947). The lowest value of the v-Cramer coefficient was achieved for a group of Polish females (v-Cramer coefficient = 0.562). The determined v-Cramer coefficient for the relationship between the place of shopping for clothes and footwear before and during the pandemic reached the highest value in the group of males from Portugal (v-Cramer coefficient = 0.803), and the lowest for Polish males (v-Cramer coefficient = 0.519). The value of the v-Cramer coefficient for the relationship between the place of shopping for cosmetics, personal hygiene items, and household chemicals before and during the pandemic reached the highest value in the group of males from Albania (v-Cramer coefficient = 0.917), a male from Portugal (v-Cramer coefficient = 0.732), and female from Portugal (v-Cramer coefficient = 0.794), respectively.

Based on the results obtained, it can be concluded that there is a strong relationship between the place of shopping before and during the pandemic. At the

Table 4. Changes in the level of spending in the pandemic

Considering the monthly expenses	The characteristics of the change	Nationality (Country)					
		Albania		Poland		Portugal	
		Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male
							[%]
Books, newspapers, magazines	Decreased	35.6	37.5	95.7	89.0	20.8	9.6
	Increased	11.1	25.0	0.4	3.7	13.9	14.0
	Kept the same	53.3	37.5	3.9	7.3	65.3	74.3
Cinema, Theater, Phillarmonic Hall, Museum	Decreased	57.8	45.8	50.0	52.3	68.1	42.6
	Increased	6.7	33.3	12.8	11.9	1.4	5.9
	Kept the same	35.6	20.8	37.2	35.8	30.6	48.5
Music	Decreased	28.9	20.8	63.5	67.9	38.9	13.2
	Increased	15.6	20.8	15.2	16.5	6.9	20.6
	Kept the same	55.6	58.3	21.3	15.6	54.2	61.8
Restaurants, Pubs, ...	Decreased	48.9	45.8	22.0	26.6	58.3	45.6
	Increased	15.6	16.7	38.7	44.0	9.7	11.0
	Kept the same	35.6	37.5	39.4	29.4	30.6	40.4
Gymn, Fitness, Swimming pool	Decreased	42.2	41.7	60.6	53.2	63.9	37.5
	Increased	15.6	16.7	9.9	18.3	4.2	19.1
	Kept the same	42.2	41.7	29.4	28.4	31.9	39.0
Fees for cable, internet, streaming platforms	Decreased	11.1	16.7	41.8	32.1	6.9	2.2
	Increased	40.0	25.0	16.3	24.8	29.2	40.4
	Kept the same	48.9	58.3	41.8	43.1	63.9	52.9
Hairdressing services	Decreased	42.2	37.5	56.0	64.2	44.4	21.3
	Increased	11.1	12.5	16.3	5.5	6.9	8.1
	Kept the same	46.7	50.0	27.7	30.3	48.6	66.9
Beauty services	Decreased	33.3	41.7	56.7	85.3	51.4	23.5
	Increased	13.3	8.3	13.8	6.4	4.2	3.7
	Kept the same	53.3	50.0	29.4	8.3	44.4	68.4
Relaxation treatments, SPA	Decreased	44.4	45.8	84.0	89.9	52.8	25.7
	Increased	11.1	20.8	5.7	3.7	4.2	3.7
	Kept the same	44.4	33.3	10.3	6.4	43.1	65.4
Postgraduate studies	Decreased	33.3	33.3	84.0	85.3	19.4	8.1
	Increased	66.7	66.7	8.5	9.2	4.2	7.4
	Kept the same	0.0	0.0	7.4	5.5	69.4	78.7
Language courses	Decreased	44.4	54.2	89.0	85.3	18.1	8.8
	Increased	55.6	45.8	3.5	5.5	11.1	10.3
	Kept the same	0.0	0.0	7.4	9.2	65.3	74.3
Vocational Courses and Training	Decreased	44.4	41.7	89.4	78.9	19.4	11.0
	Increased	55.6	58.3	5.3	6.4	19.4	8.8
	Kept the same	0.0	0.0	5.3	14.7	55.6	73.5

Source: own study

Table 5. Relationship between where you shop before and during a pandemic

type of products	Statistics	Nationality (Country)						
		Albania		Poland		Portugal		
		Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	
Food and non-alcoholic drinks	Chi-kwadrat Pearsona	Value	35,196	6,730	177,637	85,641	167,529	285,638
		df	10	3	9	4	12	16
		Asymptotic significance (two-sided)	<.001	,081	<.001	<.001	<.001	<.001
	V Kramera	Value	,625	,871	,458	,627	,881	,725
		Approximate significance	<.001	<.001	<.001	<.001	<.001	<.001
Alcoholic drinks and tobacco	Chi-kwadrat Pearsona	Value	44,563	39,260	267,537	79,069	193,833	354,956
		df	10	6	9	4	9	16
		Asymptotic significance (two-sided)	<.001	<.001	<.001	<.001	<.001	<.001
	V Kramera	Value	0.704	0.904	,562	,602	,947	,808
		Approximate significance	<.001	<.001	<.001	<.001	<.001	<.001
Clothes and footwear	Chi-kwadrat Pearsona	Value	70,686	25,402	258,893	87,973	169,811	350,391
		df	21	6	9	9	16	16
		Asymptotic significance (two-sided)	<.001	<.001	<.001	<.001	<.001	<.001
	V Kramera	Value	,724	,727	,553	,519	,768	,803
		Approximate significance	<.001	<.001	<.001	<.001	<.001	<.001
Cosmetics	Chi-kwadrat Pearsona	Value	46,725	40,406	309,054	106,152	184,008	365,397
		df	15	8	9	9	16	16
		Asymptotic significance (two-sided)	<.001	<.001	<.001	<.001	<.001	<.001
	V Kramera	Value	,588	,917	,604	,570	,799	,820
		Approximate significance	<.001	<.001	<.001	<.001	<.001	<.001
Personal hygiene items	Chi-kwadrat Pearsona	Value	39,259	11,257	264,285	150,115	133,637	291,304
		df	12	6	9	9	16	16
		Asymptotic significance (two-sided)	<.001	,081	<.001	<.001	<.001	<.001
	V Kramera	Value	,660	,484	,559	,678	,681	,732
		Approximate significance	<.001	,081	<.001	<.001	<.001	<.001
Household Chemicals	Chi-kwadrat Pearsona	Value	33,622	14,232	224,144	129,318	192,771	342,632
		df	12	3	9	9	12	16
		Asymptotic significance (two-sided)	<.001	,003	<.001	<.001	<.001	<.001
	V Kramera	Value	,611	,770	,515	,629	,794	,791
		Approximate significance	<.001	,003	<.001	<.001	<.001	<.001

*. Chi-squared statistics are relevant at the level of ,05.

same time, the values of the assigned statistics indicate differences between gender and nationality.

6. Conclusions

This paper results from a study performed in three different countries (Albania, Poland, and Portugal) aiming to analyse the shopping behaviour differences among students. The research focused on the pandemic period, and from the literature reviewed it was clear that the conditions brought about by this pandemic led to a change in general shopping behaviour, from the physical to the online world. The pandemic made grandparents learn how to use social networks and pushed several firms towards e-commerce and process digitalisation.

This situation has affected the health security of students, as well as the level of their economic safety. A significant proportion of students have been working in the sectors of the economy most affected by the pandemic (tourism, gastronomy, trade). The pandemic has left young consumers without income overnight. At the same time, the need for remote education and, in many cases, the return to family homes have retrogressed their process of becoming independent. A negative effect on young people was also the limitation of the possibilities of undertaking activities and tasks specific to this group.

Regarding the factors analysed in this research, nationality and gender, the literature tends to identify women as more sensitive to marketing tools. No studies were found mentioning different behaviours according to nationality. However, the literature suggests that the place of residence influences the needs of young consumers. Mass media (where social networks are included) also influences consumption patterns among younger consumers.

From the research performed some conclusions were found that can be summed up as follows:

- The pandemic did not change the periodicity of shopping, since both Albanian and Polish students sustained the tendency to shop according to their needs, while the Portuguese, in the habit of a different behaviour (shopping once a week), also kept this shopping pattern. In general, a decrease in daily shopping habits was identified.
- When analysing specific items, it was verified that in terms of food there were no changes in the

amount purchased. The same result was obtained for the cosmetics category.

- In the remaining categories (alcohol and tobacco; clothes and footwear; personal hygiene items; household chemicals) most of the groups also purchased the same amount of items. There was an exception for female Albanians, who decreased the amount of alcohol and tobacco and increased the amount of household chemicals purchased. The last was also a tendency observed in Albanian males. Polish females also indicated that they reduced the amount of clothes and footwear purchased.
- Online shopping did not present a boom in the samples analysed in this study. Only in Portugal did some items like clothes and footwear (male and female), and cosmetics (female) present a relevant change from other places to the online market. Even though, when testing the dependence of the variables in regards to the place of shopping before and during the pandemic, only in the group of Albanian males in the items 'food and non-alcoholic drinks' and 'personal hygiene' was the nonexistence of dependence found (even with a remarkable percentage change in shopping from super- to hypermarkets in the category of food and non-alcoholic drinks). All the remaining items and groups showed a valid statistical change in the place of shopping before and during the pandemic. Even though there was not a huge increase in online shopping, students from these countries changed their shopping behaviour in terms of shopping places.
- Another surprising change in shopping behaviour was a drastic reduction in the purchase of books, newspapers, and magazines reported in Albania. A decrease of 89% among females and 96% among males was reported for this item. On the other hand, Albanian students increased the acquisition of different studies (postgraduate studies, languages, and vocational courses).

The conclusions formulated in the study, as well as the topicality of the issues, allow them to be considered useful for institutional entities interested in observing changes in consumption during the pandemic. Functioning during a pandemic is undoubtedly an unusual situation and there are factors (such as health security) that determine the change in consumption behaviour. The scientific contribution

of the theoretical and empirical considerations is mainly the systematisation of theoretical foundations and the conceptualisation of the category of factors determining the diversity in the purchasing behaviour of young people (students).

Among the results presented above, some are unexpected, in particular the unexpected small change in terms of online shopping. That might occur due to online shopping habits that existed before the pandemic. This result opens an interesting research area for the future. What are the younger consumption habits after the pandemic? Are they more digital nowadays or did they return to the 'old normal'? How are companies dealing with e-commerce and process digitalisation after the wave that gave the 4th Industrial Revolution a push? These are questions that the authors would like to research in the near future, enlarging the aim of the project that started by analysing students' consumption behaviour under the Covid19 crisis.

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