



The Power of Cultural Identity in Consumer Behavior: Social Factors and Purchasing Preferences

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Abstract

Consumer purchasing behavior is shaped by a combination of cultural, social, and personal factors that influence preferences and product choices. In Loja, Ecuador, the preservation of traditions and cultural identity is challenged by globalization and the increasing availability of both national and international products. This study examines the relationship between cultural values and purchasing decisions, highlighting the role of tradition, education, and perceived quality in the selection of local or foreign goods. A quantitative approach was employed through surveys conducted with a sample of 383 consumers in Loja. A Likert scale was used to assess the relevance of various cultural factors in consumer behavior, and chi-square tests were applied to identify significant relationships among variables. Statistical techniques were also implemented to detect consumption patterns and their key determinants. Findings reveal that 85.1% of consumers consider tradition a decisive factor in their purchasing decisions, reflecting a strong cultural attachment. The chi-square analysis confirmed a significant relationship between cultural values and the preference for national and local products ($p < 0.05$). Moreover, product quality (63.7%) and price (55.1%) emerged as the most influential factors, while brand and advertising had a lesser impact. In conclusion, cultural values significantly shape purchasing preferences in Loja, with a strong tendency toward preserving local identity through consumption.

Subject Areas

Marketing

Keywords

Consumer Behavior, Cultural Values, Purchasing Preferences, Local

1. Introduction

Globalization has significantly transformed consumption patterns worldwide, facilitating access to products from diverse origins and reshaping consumer preferences [1]. However, this phenomenon has posed a challenge to the preservation of cultural identity in local markets, such as Loja, Ecuador, where consumers must balance their traditions with the influence of a globalized market [2]. Economic and cultural interconnectedness has driven changes in purchasing habits, raising the need to analyze the extent to which social values and influencing factors affect preferences for local, national, or international products.

Consumer behavior is conditioned by multiple factors, including cultural, social, personal, and psychological dimensions. Previous studies have demonstrated that cultural identity influences the perceived value of a product and its acceptance in the marketplace [3]. In this context, Loja emerges as a relevant case to examine how tradition, quality, price, and other attributes affect purchasing decisions in an environment where the preference for national and local products may be determined by the value placed on cultural identity in contrast to the growing availability of foreign goods.

Moreover, the importance of social values in consumer life has been widely studied in consumer behavior literature [4] [5]. Factors such as education, community, religion, and sustainability can shape product perception and influence purchasing decisions [6]. Understanding how these values relate to the choice of local products provides insights into whether consumers prioritize traditional and socially impactful aspects when acquiring goods in the marketplace.

For conceptual clarity, this study defines social values as the shared norms, beliefs, and expectations that guide individuals' behavior and purchasing decisions within a community, reflecting a sense of belonging and cultural cohesion [7]. Meanwhile, product attributes refer to the perceived characteristics—such as quality, origin, price, design, and functionality—that consumers evaluate when making purchasing decisions [8]. This study aims to evaluate the relationship between purchasing influence factors and product origin preferences, as well as the relationship between the importance of social values and the perception of product attributes. To this end, the following hypotheses were formulated:

First Hypothesis:

Null hypothesis (H_0): There is no significant relationship between cultural, social, personal, and psychological factors and consumer preferences regarding the origin of purchased products.

Alternative hypothesis (H_1): There is a significant relationship between cultural, social, personal, and psychological factors and consumer preferences regarding the origin of purchased products.

Second Hypothesis:

Null hypothesis (H_0): There is no significant relationship between the importance of social values and the perception of product attributes in consumers' decisions to purchase local products.

Alternative hypothesis (H_1): There is a significant relationship between the importance of social values and the perception of product attributes in consumers' decisions to purchase local products.

This research adopts a quantitative approach through surveys administered to local consumers. Two chi-square tests were conducted to analyze significant differences between influencing factors and product origin preferences, as well as the relationship between social values and the perception of product attributes.

The findings of this study contribute to understanding the interrelation between cultural identity and consumer behavior, providing relevant insights for the design of business strategies that enhance the competitiveness of local products in an increasingly globalized market. Furthermore, the results are expected to support the development of market policies that reinforce the value of tradition while acknowledging the dynamics of the modern commercial environment.

2. Background

Consumer purchasing behavior has been the subject of numerous studies over time, highlighting the influence of various factors that shape acquisition and consumption decisions. These factors include cultural, economic, technological, social, psychological, and demographic dimensions, which together form a complex network that significantly impacts the way individuals select products and services.

2.1. Influence on Consumption

Consumer behavior is shaped by a combination of cultural, social, personal, and psychological factors that influence perception, purchasing decisions, and brand loyalty [9]. The product differentiation is a key factor in consumer choice. The impact of traditions and customs is particularly relevant in contexts where local identity plays a central role in purchasing decisions. Alvarado Rodas and González Crespo [10] identified that consumers with strong cultural roots prioritize product authenticity and origin, emphasizing the need for commercial strategies aligned with these expectations. This alignment is crucial for consumer loyalty, as affinity with local culture generates trust and a sense of belonging toward the brand. In line with this argument, Barrionuevo López [11] underscores the importance of building a brand identity that reinforces cultural values, thereby promoting consumer loyalty.

At the social level, digital media have redefined how consumers interact with brands and make purchasing decisions. Barros, Landa, and Villalba [12] argue that social networks not only function as promotional platforms but also shape consumer perceptions and preferences, particularly among younger generations.

Social interaction and peer recommendations directly influence product choice, reinforcing the need for companies to adapt their digital presence to audience expectations.

From a psychological perspective, perceptions of status, motivation, and beliefs also play a fundamental role in purchasing decisions. Auricchio [13] found that differences in access to economic resources can influence how consumers perceive products, shaping consumption habits. This reality highlights the importance of developing inclusive marketing strategies that not only address consumer preferences but also account for inequalities in access and purchasing power.

Education, as a personal factor, also affects how consumers process information and make decisions. According to Salazar Duque [14], educational level influences consumers' ability to assess product quality and make informed choices. Moreover, individuals with greater access to education tend to adopt more rational and planned purchasing practices.

Taken together, these cultural, social, personal, and psychological factors show that consumer behavior extends beyond the mere need to acquire goods and services. Tradition, social influence, psychological perception, and education are key determinants in shaping preferences and consumption patterns. Understanding these interactions allows companies to design marketing strategies that highlight cultural identity, foster consumer trust, and strengthen emotional connections with products [15].

Recent research continues to reinforce these perspectives in global and Latin American contexts. Kim and Kim [16] found that consumers in Asian markets maintain strong emotional bonds with culturally congruent brands, suggesting that cultural identity remains a decisive purchasing criterion even under global competition. Similarly, López and Martínez [17] identified that Latin American Millennials and Generation Z consumers perceive locally produced goods as expressions of authenticity and social belonging. Hernández and Choe [18] further demonstrated that, in the post-pandemic period, social and environmental values have become central predictors of purchasing behavior across emerging economies. These findings support the growing relevance of cultural and social identity as sources of differentiation and loyalty in modern markets.

At the social level, digital media have redefined how consumers interact with brands and make purchasing decisions. The social networks not only function as promotional platforms but also shape consumer perceptions and preferences, particularly among younger generations. Social interaction and peer recommendations directly influence product choice, reinforcing the need for companies to adapt their digital presence to audience expectations.

2.2. Analysis of Consumer Behavior and Its Determinants

Consumer behavior is a dynamic process shaped by multiple factors, including cultural, social, and economic variables. According to Rodríguez and Rabadán [19], the purchasing decision process results from a combination of individual

needs and environmental stimuli, which explains why consumers may prioritize certain attributes when selecting products or services. Advertising plays a critical role in shaping consumer perceptions, molding expectations and preferences through effective communication strategies [20]. However, the influence of advertising within a community is not homogeneous across all market segments, as factors such as cultural tradition, product availability, and social impact may alter how consumers perceive brands and goods.

Recent studies have highlighted that shifts in consumer behavior directly affect business development, compelling companies to adapt their market strategies to evolving preferences and habits [21]. In the Ecuadorian context, this phenomenon is particularly relevant in service sectors, where cultural identity plays a key role in purchasing decisions. According to Sigüenza [22], integrating traditional elements into products—such as edible souvenirs inspired by local festivities—enhances market acceptance, reinforcing the connection between commercial offerings and consumer cultural identity.

Behavioral and social factors also influence purchasing decisions, especially in specific segments such as beauty products. Sánchez, Ochoa, and Landaverde [23] found that women prioritize products based on social trends, advertising, and the influence of their environment. This interaction between individual perception and social pressure underscores the importance of psychological factors in shaping consumption preferences.

In the food and beverage sector, service marketing strategies have proven essential for attracting and retaining customers. Salazar D. [14] studied the relationship between marketing strategies and consumer behavior in luxury restaurants, concluding that customer experience, personalized service, and perceptions of exclusivity are decisive in consumer choice. Similarly, Serrano Janampa [24] analyzed purchasing behavior in restaurants and found that perceived quality and establishment reputation significantly influence consumer loyalty.

These findings highlight the complexity of consumer behavior and the need to consider multiple factors when formulating business strategies. As consumers evolve and encounter new social and economic influences, companies must adapt their approaches to meet market demands, prioritizing authenticity, personalization, and alignment with cultural and social values. This new consumer profile demands rapid and tailored responses, creating both challenges and opportunities for businesses in managing customer relationships [25].

2.3. Culture and Its Impact on Purchasing Decisions

Culture is a key factor in shaping consumption habits. According to Sánchez *et al.* [26], customs, values, and traditions influence product perception and selection. In local contexts such as Loja, the preservation of cultural identity has impacted purchasing decisions, with a preference for traditional products that reinforce cultural heritage. However, the influence of foreign cultures and the erosion of cultural values have also introduced changes in consumption trends [27].

2.4. Psychological and Social Factors in Consumer Behavior

Consumer behavior depends not only on external factors but also on psychological and social variables. According to Solomon [28], the consumer decision-making process is influenced by perception, motivation, and social influence, all of which affect product preference and brand loyalty. Recent studies have also shown that factors such as resilience and personality can shape how consumers respond to different marketing and advertising strategies [29].

Family and reference groups also significantly influence purchasing behavior. According to Tornés *et al.* [30], value-based education within the family unit shapes consumption habits, impacting preferences for certain products and services. Likewise, environmental awareness and interest in responsible consumption have gained importance, particularly influencing the intention to purchase ecological products [31]. Nevertheless, religion and personal values remain critical determinants in purchasing decisions, influencing perceptions of quality and loyalty toward products aligned with consumer beliefs [32].

2.5. Marketing Factors and Their Influence on Purchasing Decisions

Marketing strategies have evolved over time, adapting to emerging trends and consumer needs. Social Media Marketing (SMM) has enabled stronger connections between brands and consumers, with influencer marketing standing out as a powerful tool for product promotion [33]. Furthermore, price, perceived quality, and product availability continue to be decisive factors in purchasing decisions [34].

Content marketing has also gained relevance as an informative and educational tool that guides consumers through their purchasing process. According to Cossío Silva, Vega Vázquez, and Revilla Camacho [35], creating relevant and engaging content fosters stronger connections with audiences and enhances brand perception. Similarly, factors such as value co-creation and product innovation directly influence consumer tastes and preferences [36]. Consumer behavior is also conditioned by digital interaction, where online platforms play a central role in shaping the purchasing experience [37].

The motivation to purchase across different market segments responds to both emotional and rational factors, which vary according to socioeconomic and cultural contexts [38]. In this sense, the generation of value-based experiences and the perceptions of other consumers significantly influence decision-making. Moreover, the rationality of consumer behavior has been debated in recent studies, suggesting that decision-making does not always follow a strictly logical model but is instead influenced by individual perceptions and beliefs [39].

Overall, purchasing behavior is a dynamic and multifactorial process influenced by economic, social, cultural, technological, and psychological variables. The interaction of these factors determines consumer preferences and decisions, shaping an ever-evolving landscape. Understanding these elements is essential for

developing effective business strategies that meet consumer needs and generate value in the marketplace.

3. Methodology

This study adopts a quantitative approach with a non-experimental, cross-sectional, and correlational design. Its purpose is to analyze the influence of cultural, social, personal, and psychological factors on purchasing preferences for local, national, and international products in Loja, Ecuador. Through chi-square tests, the relationship between the importance attributed to specific social values and the perception of product attributes in purchasing decisions is examined.4.1.

3.1. Population and Sample

The target population consisted of consumers residing in the Loja canton, located in southern Ecuador. According to the National Institute of Statistics and Census [40], the canton has an estimated economically active population of approximately 200,000 inhabitants. Based on this figure, the final sample size of 383 respondents was calculated using the finite population formula, applying a 95% confidence level and a 5% margin of error to ensure statistical representativeness. A simple random probability sampling method was employed, and a 96% effective response rate was achieved. The sample adequately represented diverse demographic segments, considering variables such as gender, age, and educational level.

3.2. Instruments

A structured questionnaire with closed-ended questions was used, applying a five-point Likert scale. The instrument covered two main dimensions:

- The importance of social factors in consumers' lives, including family traditions, religion, education, community, innovation and technology, and environmental care.
- The factors influencing the purchase of local products, such as price, quality, availability, brand, support for the economy, tradition and culture, recommendations from other customers, advertising, and innovation.

Prior to data collection, the instrument underwent a content validation process conducted by three academic experts in marketing and consumer behavior to ensure conceptual clarity and relevance. A pilot test was subsequently applied to a group of 30 consumers with similar sociodemographic characteristics to the study population. The internal consistency of the Likert-scale items was assessed using Cronbach's alpha, obtaining a coefficient of 0.87, which indicates high reliability of the questionnaire.

3.3. Data Processing Method

Data were processed using SPSS software version 25, complemented with Microsoft Excel spreadsheets for descriptive statistical analysis.

3.4. Variable Handling

To analyze the relationship between social values and purchasing influence factors, variables were grouped into levels of importance and influence:

Social factors were classified into three levels of importance—low, medium, and high—based on Likert scale ratings.

Purchasing factors were categorized into three levels of influence—low, medium, and high—according to the extent to which consumers considered them determinants in their purchasing decisions. The classification of weighted variables used in this analysis is summarized in **Table 1**.

Table 1. Weighted variables.

Variables	Low (<3.0)	Medium (3.0 - 3.9)	High (≥4.0)
Social Factors	<3.0	3.0 - 3.9	≥4.0
Purchasing Factors	<3.0	3.0 - 3.9	≥4.0

3.5. Hypothesis Testing

Two hypothesis tests were formulated based on chi-square analysis:

Relationship between cultural, social, personal, and psychological factors and product origin preference.

H₀: There is no significant relationship between these factors and purchasing preferences by product origin.

H₁: There is a significant relationship between these factors and purchasing preferences by product origin.

Relationship between the importance of social values and the perception of product attributes.

H₀: There is no significant relationship between the importance of social values and the perception of product attributes in purchasing decisions.

H₁: There is a significant relationship between the importance of social values and the perception of product attributes in purchasing decisions.

3.6. Ethical Considerations

Confidentiality and anonymity of participants were ensured. Respondents were informed about the objectives of the study and their right to withdraw consent at any stage.

4. Results and Discussion

4.1. Influence of Traditions and Customs on Purchasing Behavior

Findings confirm that respect for local traditions and customs is a decisive factor in consumer purchasing behavior in Loja. Specifically, 51.7% of respondents rated this aspect as “very important,” and 33.4% as “important.” Together, these categories account for 85.1% of the sample, evidencing a strong emphasis on cultural identity in consumption decisions. In contrast, 11.7% were neutral, 2.6% consid-

ered it of little importance, and 0.5% rated it as not important. These results suggest that, while a minority is indifferent to local traditions in their purchasing behavior, the majority explicitly considers them (see **Table 2**).

Table 2. Degree of importance of respect for local traditions and customs in purchasing.

Likert rating	Count	%
Not important	2	0.5%
Of little importance	10	2.6%
Neutral	45	11.7%
Important	128	33.4%
Very important	198	51.7%
Total	383	100.0%

This finding is consistent with prior research showing that community values, beliefs, and customs directly influence purchasing decisions (Schiffman & Kanuk, 2010). In the Loja context, attachment to local customs not only shapes consumer preferences but also differentiates local offerings from foreign products. Perceptions of authenticity and emotional connection to local-origin goods may explain this trend.

4.2. Cultural and Other Factors by Product Origin Preference

Consumer behavior in Loja shows a clear preference for national products (46.0%), followed by local products (38.4%) and, to a lesser extent, international products (15.7%). This pattern suggests that consumers value domestic production, possibly due to accessibility, familiarity, and trust in Ecuadorian product quality (**Table 3**).

Table 3. Factors influencing purchase preference by product origin.

Product origin	Influencing factor (examples)	Count	% of table N
Local (Total 147; 38.4%)	Cultural (traditions)	53	13.8%
	Social (third-party suggestions; roles, status)	15	3.9%
	Personal (lifestyles, tastes)	72	18.8%
	Psychological (beliefs, attitudes, perception, motivation)	7	1.8%
National (Total 176; 46.0%)	Cultural	40	10.4%
	Social	36	9.4%
	Personal	92	24.0%
	Psychological	8	2.1%
International (Total 60; 15.7%)	Cultural	4	1.0%
	Social	8	2.1%

Continued

International (Total 60; 15.7%)	Personal	42	11.0%
	Psychological	6	1.6%
Overall (N = 383; 100.0%)	Cultural	97	25.3%
	Social	59	15.4%
	Personal	206	53.8%
	Psychological	21	5.5%

Overall, personal factors (lifestyle and preferences) carry the greatest weight (53.8%), suggesting that individual needs are prioritized when choosing products. Cultural influence ranks second (25.3%), underscoring tradition's role—especially for local and national goods. Social influence accounts for 15.4%, while psychological factors represent 5.5%.

- Association between Influencing Factors and Product Origin

A Pearson chi-square test indicates a statistically significant association between influencing factors and preferences by product origin, $\chi^2(6) = 27.353$, $p < 0.001$ (Table 4). Consumers with a stronger cultural orientation tend to prefer local or national products, whereas stronger personal influence aligns more with international products.

Table 4. Pearson's Chi-square test.

Variables	χ^2	df	p
Cultural, social, personal, psychological factors × Product origin	27.353	6	<0.001*

* Significant at $\alpha = 0.05$.

Hypothesis test: Given $p < 0.05$, the null hypothesis is rejected and the alternative accepted: influencing factors are significantly related to preferences by product origin (local, national, international).

- Importance of Social Values in Consumers' Lives

Social values play a pivotal role in consumers' perceptions and decisions. Table 5 shows the hierarchy and impact of these values. Respondents assign the highest importance to education (90.1%), environmental care (86.4%), and family traditions (81.7%), while community has the lowest share (66.6%). These results combine traditional and modern values, implying that market strategies should highlight education, sustainability, and cultural connectedness.

- Most salient factors.

Education ($M = 4.47$) leads, suggesting that knowledge and training are central in consumers' lives. Environmental care ($M = 4.35$) signals a growing eco-consciousness likely to favor sustainable products. Family traditions ($M = 4.32$) and religion ($M = 4.08$) remain important anchors of social identity. Innovation and technology ($M = 4.04$) indicate openness to modernization, while community ($M = 3.81$) carries comparatively less weight.

Table 5. Importance of social factors.

		Count	Likert points	%	Likert mean
Family traditions	Not important	1	1	.3%	4.32
	Of little importance	21	42	5.5%	
	Neutral	48	144	12.5%	
	Important	97	388	25.3%	
	Very important	216	1080	56.4%	
	Total	383	1915	100.0%	
Religion	Not important	16	16	4.2%	4.08
	Of little importance	26	52	6.8%	
	Neutral	56	168	14.6%	
	Important	100	400	26.1%	
	Very important	185	925	48.3%	
	Total	383	1915	100.0%	
Education	Not important	0	0	0.0%	4.47
	Of little importance	17	34	4.4%	
	Neutral	21	63	5.5%	
	Important	109	436	28.5%	
	Very important	236	1180	61.6%	
	Total	383	1915	100.0%	
Community	Not important	5	5	1.3%	3.81
	Of little importance	34	68	8.9%	
	Neutral	89	267	23.2%	
	Important	155	620	40.5%	
	Very important	100	500	26.1%	
	Total	383	1915	100.0%	
Innovation & technology	Not important	5	5	1.3%	4.04
	Of little importance	21	42	5.5%	
	Neutral	73	219	19.1%	
	Important	138	552	36.0%	
	Very important	146	730	38.1%	
	Total	383	1915	100.0%	
Environmental care	Not important	1	1	.3%	4.35
	Of little importance	11	22	2.9%	
	Neutral	40	120	10.4%	
	Important	131	524	34.2%	
	Very important	200	1000	52.2%	
	Total	383	1915	100.0%	

- Attributes Influencing the Purchase of Local Products

Decision-making for local products reflects both functional and symbolic attributes. The data show product quality (63.7%) and price (55.1%) as the most influential drivers—pointing to a value assessment grounded in objective product features. Availability (40.5%) and support for the local economy (36.3%) also matter, indicating concern for access and local impact. Among symbolic attributes, tradition/culture (37.1%) is relevant, reflecting a desire to reinforce cultural identity. Brand (27.9%), other customers' recommendations (36.6%), and advertising (36.0%) exert less influence, suggesting decisions are guided more by inherent product attributes than by external marketing signals (Table 6).

Table 6. Attributes driving purchase decisions for local products.

Which factors most influence your decision to purchase local products?		Count	Likert points	% of table N	Likert mean
Price	Not	4	4	1.0%	4.35
	Little	15	30	3.9%	
	Neutral	36	108	9.4%	
	Influential	117	468	30.5%	
	Very influential	211	1055	55.1%	
	Total	383	1915	100.0%	
Quality	Not	3	3	0.8%	4.51
	Little	10	20	2.6%	
	Neutral	21	63	5.5%	
	Influential	105	420	27.4%	
	Very influential	244	1220	63.7%	
	Total	383	1915	100.0%	
Availability	Not	6	6	1.6%	3.80
	Little	25	50	6.5%	
	Neutral	102	306	26.6%	
	Influential	155	620	40.5%	
	Very influential	95	475	24.8%	
	Total	383	1915	100.0%	
Brand	Not	26	26	6.8%	3.43
	Little	54	108	14.1%	
	Neutral	114	342	29.8%	
	Influential	107	428	27.9%	
	Very influential	82	410	21.4%	
	Total	383	1915	100.0%	
Support for the local economy	Not	7	7	1.8%	3.89
	Little	20	40	5.2%	

Continued

Support for the local economy	Neutral	99	297	25.8%	
	Influential	139	556	36.3%	
	Very influential	118	590	30.8%	
	Total	383	1915	100.0%	
Tradition/Culture	Not	8	8	2.1%	3.91
	Little	24	48	6.3%	
	Neutral	86	258	22.5%	
	Influential	142	568	37.1%	
	Very influential	123	615	32.1%	
	Total	383	1915	100.0%	
Recommendations from other customers	Not	28	28	7.3%	3.51
	Little	37	74	9.7%	
	Neutral	103	309	26.9%	
	Influential	140	560	36.6%	
	Very influential	75	375	19.6%	
	Total	383	1915	100.0%	
Advertising	Not	22	22	5.7%	3.57
	Little	41	82	10.7%	
	Neutral	100	300	26.1%	
	Influential	138	552	36.0%	
	Very influential	82	410	21.4%	
	Total	383	1915	100.0%	
Innovation	Not	12	12	3.1%	3.87
	Little	32	64	8.4%	
	Neutral	80	240	20.9%	
	Influential	128	512	33.4%	
	Very influential	131	655	34.2%	
	Total	383	1915	100.0%	

- Means overview

Quality ($M = 4.51$) is the top attribute, followed by price ($M = 4.35$). Environmental concern also trends high in the study (discussed in social values), suggesting competitive potential for sustainable offerings. Innovation/technology ($M = 4.04$) and tradition/culture ($M = 3.91$) show intermediate influence, signaling a search for products that blend modernity and cultural meaning. Availability ($M = 3.80$) underscores the role of access. Lower-impact factors include brand ($M = 3.43$), advertising ($M = 3.57$), and peer recommendations ($M = 3.51$).

- Relationship between Social Values and Purchase Attributes

To evaluate the relationship between the importance of social values and pur-

chase attributes, responses were grouped into low, medium, and high levels for both constructs. Results show that 89.0% of consumers with high valuation of social factors also assign high importance to product attributes in their decisions—suggesting that consumers with strong traditional values tend to prefer products featuring quality, tradition, and positive local economic impact (Table 7).

Table 7. Cross-classification of influence and importance levels.

Influence (attributes)\Importance (social factors)	Low	Medium	High
Low	0 (0.0%)	6 (1.6%)	1 (0.3%)
Medium	0 (0.0%)	13 (3.4%)	49 (12.8%)
High	0 (0.0%)	23 (6.0%)	291 (76.0%)
Total	0 (0.0%)	42 (11.0%)	341 (89.0%)

A chi-square test confirms a significant association, $\chi^2(2) = 50.675$, $p < 0.001$ (Table 8).

Table 8. Pearson's Chi-square.

Variables	χ^2	df	p
Grouped influence of attributes × Grouped social factors	50.675	2	<0.001*

* Significant at $\alpha = 0.05$.

Hypothesis test: With $p < 0.05$, the null hypothesis is rejected and the alternative accepted: there is a significant relationship between social values and the perception of product attributes in local purchasing decisions.

5. Conclusions

The findings of this study show that cultural, social, personal, and psychological factors significantly influence consumers' purchasing decisions in Loja. Cultural identity continues to play a central role in preferences for local and national products, with tradition and community connections standing out in consumption choices. The chi-square analysis confirms a significant relationship between product origin and the factors that motivate purchases, allowing us to reject the null hypothesis and accept the alternative. This suggests that consumers with deeply rooted cultural values prefer national and local products, whereas those more strongly influenced by personal factors tend to opt for international goods.

The second hypothesis test confirms the relationship between the importance of social values and the perception of product attributes. Quality and price emerge as the most influential attributes in purchasing decisions, followed by availability and the perceived economic impact on the community. These results reinforce the idea that, although tradition and cultural identity matter, consumers ultimately prioritize quality and cost as key elements in their final choices. In addition, sup-

port for the local economy and environmental sustainability is salient, indicating growing social and ecological awareness in consumption decisions.

Another relevant finding is that social factors such as third-party recommendations and advertising have a comparatively smaller effect on the purchase of local products than cultural and personal factors. This suggests that consumers base their choices more on individual criteria and internal values than on external marketing strategies. Even so, the influence of innovation and technology indicates that Loja consumers seek a balance between modernization and the preservation of traditional values.

6. Limitations of the Study

Despite its contributions, this research presents certain limitations that should be acknowledged. First, the data were collected through self-reported surveys, which may be subject to recall and social desirability biases. Second, the study employed a cross-sectional design, which limits causal inferences about the relationships identified. Third, the sample was concentrated in the urban area of the Loja canton, excluding rural populations that may exhibit different consumption patterns. Future studies could adopt longitudinal or mixed-method approaches to broaden the scope of analysis and capture the evolving dynamics of cultural identity and consumer behavior.

7. Managerial Recommendations

From a managerial perspective, two practical implications arise from the findings. First, local enterprises and producers should develop marketing strategies that emphasize cultural authenticity and the symbolic value of local identity to foster consumer attachment and brand loyalty. Second, differentiation strategies should highlight product quality, sustainability, and origin, positioning Loja-made goods as competitive alternatives to imported ones. These recommendations provide actionable insights for businesses aiming to align their commercial practices with cultural values while responding to modern market dynamics.

Overall, this study provides evidence of the importance of cultural and social values in shaping purchasing behavior within a globalized context. The findings can inform commercial strategies that strengthen demand for local products by integrating identity-based elements with quality attributes that enable them to compete with international offerings. Moreover, the combination of traditional and modern factors in purchasing decisions suggests that firms should pursue a hybrid approach—blending innovation, sustainability, and cultural connection—to meet contemporary consumer expectations.

Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare no conflicts of interest.

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